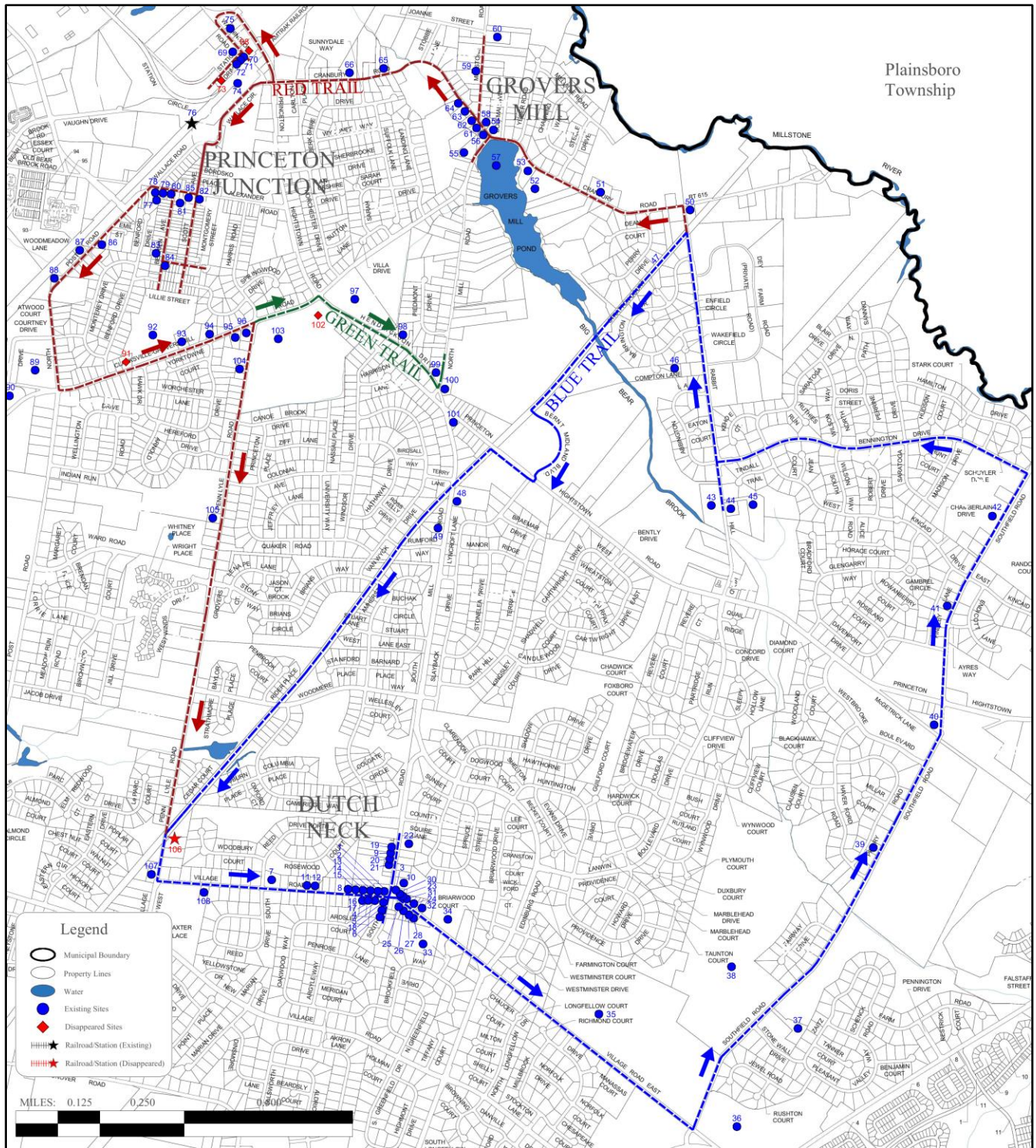


WEST WINDSOR HISTORIC BIKE TRAIL

Updated 08.13.2019



Welcome! Back in 2009, I started mapping this trail as part of my Boy Scout Eagle Project. I was interested in making West Windsor's vibrant history accessible and tangible to its residents. In 2011, I completed the project, which explored close to 40 sites throughout the township along an 11-mile bike route.

Now, 8 years later, I am revising this trail. I have been delving into various surveys, manuscripts, and publications from the 1800s and 1900s, and have discovered a bounty of new information. Thus, what was once a single trail exploring 40 sites has become **three trails** exploring **over 100 sites**.

Before embarking on your bicycle ride, please visit wwhistoricbiker.weebly.com to gain a brief insight into the context of this trail. Despite detailing over 100 sites, the trail's scope represents only a **fraction** of the municipality's history.

Thus, a new website - an online museum providing a comprehensive documentation and exploration of West Windsor's history and transformation, from its first settlement thousands of years ago current dynamics - will be coming this fall. I have been constructing this resource in tandem with the Historical Society of West Windsor in order to digitize and archive the township's history and make learning about West Windsor's development accessible to anyone, anywhere, at any time.

Thank you, and happy riding!

-Paul Ligeti

Note 1: There are three trail options. This pamphlet will help you navigate these options when they split:

- **BLUE TRAIL** (~9 miles): Explores Dutch Neck and 18 individual sites, for a total of 51 sites.
- **RED TRAIL** (~15 miles): Explores Dutch Neck, Grovers Mill, Princeton Junction, and 21 individual sites for a total of 99 sites.
- **GREEN TRAIL** (~1.5 miles): Actually an extension of the Red Trail, for those wanting to explore 5 more sites (Total: 106 sites).

Note 2: The starting point for this trail is the kiosk at the intersection of Village Road East/West and South Mill Road. Please note: Although the kiosk mentions plaques marked "H#," for use in conjunction with this trail, please disregard these instructions. As the trail has expanded, those are obsolete site numbers. The correct site numbers refer to the map on the previous page.

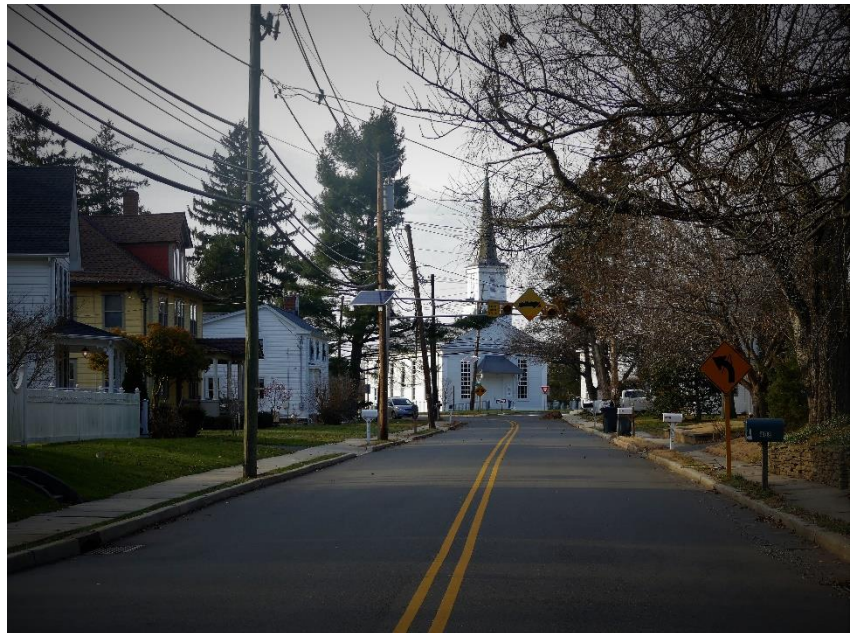
Dutch Neck- 1737

Bike down Village Roads East and West or South Mill Road and it is impossible not to note the uniquely vibrant historical character of Dutch Neck. Settled in 1737 - concurrent to Penns Neck - by two Dutch Families - the Bergens and the Vorhees - the hamlet is home to over 35 structures that evoke the story of the municipality's evolution from quiet agrarian settlement to suburban commuter town. The village's geographic centrality in the township, coupled with the preservation of such a quantity of sites, cements Dutch Neck's status as West Windsor's best-preserved hamlet.

Soon after the Bergens and Vorhees arrived in the "neck" (a Dutch moniker for a tract of land), others began to emigrate to the area, attracted by rich farmland. These include families whose surnames appear throughout the township's history: Clark, Everett, Fisher, Mount, Post, Perrine, Rogers, Scudder, Tindall, Van Dyke, and Van Nest. Many residents of these families still call West Windsor home and have been active in shaping the municipality's history.

The earliest settlers of villages often met in taverns, private homes, or houses of worship to conduct public business. Dutch Neck is no exception: some of the first township minutes in 1801 (4 years after West Windsor's incorporation) make mention of the Neck Meeting House - predecessor of the current Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church that dominates town center. This practice of meeting in informal settings continued until the early 1900s, when the old town hall was constructed in Dutch Neck, due to its geographically central location within West Windsor.

A few early references, including Gordon's Gazetteer (1834) and Boyd's Trenton Directory (1874) - make mention of a number of commercial establishments in the town. These include a tavern, general store, blacksmith, mail contractor, hotel, carpenter, cobbler, and wheelwright. Many of the buildings that use to house these businesses still stand. All have long since been converted into private residences.



A number of organizations have also called Dutch Neck Home. The earliest, the West Windsor Mutual Fire Insurance Association, was organized in 1857. The West Windsor Pursuing and Detecting Society was formed shortly afterwards in 1882. A product of its time, it was responsible for recovering stolen horses, wagons, automobiles, and even poultry! One of New Jersey's first YMCA chapters also called Dutch Neck its home; an 1882 program shows monthly services hosted in the Presbyterian Church.

In the first half of the twentieth century, houses began to fill in farmland within the village. Dutch Neck Elementary School was built simultaneously, representing a transformation in the township's focus on education. A series of post-WWII developments further erased agrarian land. Despite this, the village's historic identity continues to evince itself through what remains. Farmland - still in use by the township - bookends the east and west ends of the hamlet. A quick glance behind houses shows the existence of a number of well-established barns. Dutch Neck's town center - at the crossroads of South Mill Road and Village Roads East and West - is particularly dominated by several centuries-old structures, including a former post office, general store, church, tavern, courthouse/library, schoolhouse, and numerous residences. In addition, prompted by the village's historical integrity and centralized location within the township, The West Windsor Historic Bike Trail - a permanent, self-guided bike tour that explores the history of dozens of the township's most historic sites - calls Dutch Neck home.

It is this preservation that so strongly sets Dutch Neck apart from much of West Windsor's other historic clusters and makes it such a fascinating case study of life in the township throughout the centuries.

Site 1: 154 South Mill Road - Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church (1816)

Undoubtedly the most prominent landmark of Dutch Neck, the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church is also one of the hamlet's older structures. Like the Penns Neck Baptist Church, this edifice, and all the effort that was put into its construction and expansion, are emblematic of the importance of religion to the town's earliest settlers.

In 1797, a log structure, known as the "Neck Meeting House" was constructed on the site of the current church to serve members of the local congregation, a branch of the Cranbury Church. This building was both a house of worship and meetings, hosting municipal gatherings during the years following its construction. However, religious services were infrequent and no formal congregation would be formed for another 19 years.

In 1816, residents of the village, used to travelling to both Kingston and Cranbury to attend regular services, successfully submitted an application to organize the Presbyterian Congregation of Dutch Neck. Its first pastor, the Reverend David Comfort, served from 1816-1824. During his first year of leadership, the Neck Meeting House was razed and the central part of the current structure was constructed. The congregation's original membership totaled 25 residents, among whom were a number of elders: Willaim Post, John R. Covenhoven, Peter Hooper, and Levi Updike.

Various expansions and renovations to the church occurred frequently over seven decades. Additions to the front and rear of the church covered over some graves. Around 1885, the structure that stands today was completed. In the 1960s, the large, 2-story cinderblock building to the north was constructed as a Christian education building to supplement the church's accommodations.

Throughout its existence, the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church has witnessed a variety of clergy members, but none as memorable as the Reverend Amzi L. Armstrong. Armstrong was a pastor who served the church for over four decades, from 1857-1900. However, for all his years of service, his life was unfortunately overshadowed by the grim nature of his death.

On Thanksgiving evening of 1910, gunshots pierced the silence of Dutch Neck. The next morning, the Reverend and his wife, Anne Rue, were found dead in their living room by Rachel Sears, their housekeeper. Rachel sent her son, Jack (30 at the time), to get help from a neighbor, George Dennison, who owned a telephone. Police officers, a coroner, and a prosecutor promptly arrived and commenced an investigation.

The immediate suspect was Jack, a 30-year-old mixed-race adopted son of the Armstrongs. He and Rachel had lived with the Armstrongs since Jack was a baby, after being abandoned by his father when Rachel was found to be pregnant. The Armstrongs took them into their home, but Jack - half black (his mother's side) and half white (his father's side) grew to resent his second-class position in the household, let alone in a society that mistreated minorities.



Jack claimed that he was in New Brunswick with a friend, Rudolph Nordhaus, at the time of the murder - an alibi that was not corroborated when Nordhaus stated that Jack had failed to show up for their scheduled appointment. Furthermore, Jack had borrowed a shotgun which was like the one used in the Armstrong murder.

Further questioning by the police resulted in a confession, revealing Jack's motives. First, Sears had believed that his chicken-raising business, which had failed several times before, would be a success this time, and wanted to go to New Brunswick to meet Nordhaus. However, Armstrong wanted him to travel to a local mill instead. Sears and Armstrong subsequently fought and, after Armstrong flung racial slurs at his adoptive son, Sears shot Armstrong. When Mrs. Armstrong ran in to investigate, flinging a vase at Sears, he shot her as well.

Jack Sears was tried and found guilty of murder shortly afterwards. He was sentenced to death by electrocution via Trenton State Prison's newly-built electric chair, and died on March 16, 1911. This was the first execution of its kind in Mercer County. His mother, suffering from heart failure, had died nearly a month before, on February 19. The racially-tinged crime, trial, punishment, and funeral were highly-publicized throughout the region.



Site 2: Dutch Neck Cemetery (1771)

This cemetery is one of Dutch Neck's oldest historic sites. Containing hundreds of gravestones, it bears witness to numerous residents from a variety of families of varying levels of wealth and political prominence throughout 4 centuries. Although the Neck Meeting House (later the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church) was constructed in 1797, gravestones in this cemetery date to well before that year - one as early as 1771.

More so than any structure in the township, this cemetery, like its counterparts in Penns Neck, reveals the longtime occupancy of the township by a number of prominent families. Names still familiar to current residents include the Grovers, Schencks, Bergens, Hawks, Perrines, Applegets, Tindalls, Everetts, and Updikes. A number of graves were moved during the expansion of the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church in the mid-late 1800s.

Site 3: 420 Village Road East - Dutch Neck General Store (pre-1850)

This rectangular building at the intersection of South Mill Road and Village Road East was Dutch Neck's general store and post office at one time. The store was on the lower level; the owners slept on the second floor. The building's central location in Dutch Neck undoubtedly made for a good location to set up shop. Later, it was turned into a pizza parlor, and then a private residence. The building has undergone various alterations since its construction; the canopy above the front porch, as well as much of the rear of the building, no longer exist.

In 1900, a local newspaper reported on a failed robbery of the post office: *"A gang of robbers made a daring attempt to rob the post office at Dutch Neck about 3 o'clock Wednesday (Feb. 14) morning. The office is in connection with a general country store, over which is a residence. Postmaster Frank R. Adams was awakened by the noise made in blowing open the safe. Adams was sleeping in the room above the office, and, hearing men talking downstairs, fired four shots in the dark through a hole in the floor. The robbers immediately started on a run towards Princeton Junction. The farms in the vicinity quickly organized a posse. But they could find no trace of the gang. The flight of the robbers was so hurried that they failed to take away any valuables."*





Site 4: 505 Village Road West: Dutch Neck Chapel/Library/Court (1882)

In 1880, the congregation of the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church purchased this lot directly across the road. In 1882, this Victorian Gothic building was constructed, with further additions of a library and kitchen. In 1924, the entrance was moved from the road-facing facade to the rear of the building when a balcony (since disappeared) was constructed on the front. In 1938, two wings were added. The chapel functioned as a church school until it was sold to the municipality. It was subsequently turned into a township court and county library. In 1983, it was converted into offices for the West Windsor Plainsboro Board of Education.

Site 5: Old Town Hall/WWII Memorial (c. 1900/1957)

You may be wondering, "isn't the municipal center on Clarksville/North Post roads?" You'd be right. However, the municipal complex was only constructed in the mid-1970s. Before that, Town Hall was located right here in Dutch Neck. In fact, the kiosk, and current World War II memorial right next to it, are located exactly where Town Hall once stood!

Prior to the old Town Hall's construction c. 1900, municipal meetings were often held in Widow Bergen's Tavern (described below) and the Dutch Neck Meeting House. Town Hall was constructed here due to Dutch Neck's central location within West Windsor. The structure occupied both the site of the current park as well as the parking spaces for the WWP Board of Education building. It held administrative officials, police officers, and, until 1952, the local volunteer fire company. Unfortunately, it was demolished in 1977 after the present Municipal Building at 277 Clarksville Road was opened in 1975.

A park with a WWII memorial now stands in its place. This memorial was constructed in the middle of the 20th century to honor those who fought. Stars next to individuals' names mark those who died during the conflict. Photographs of town hall show this monument's location directly in front of the now-raised building. Annual services honoring members of the military are held at this spot, and still include veterans of the war as participants.



Site 6: 212-214 South Mill Road: Widow Bergen's Tavern (mid-1700s)

This 2.5 story side-hall house set extremely close to the road is one of West Windsor's most longstanding and historically significant buildings. Various records suggest that it was constructed prior to the American Revolution. For well over a century, until 1883, this edifice served as both a public house and an inn and is likely the first known business in Dutch Neck.

If one desires to pinpoint a site that marks the official founding of West Windsor Township, this is it. On April 8, 1797, the tavern hosted the first ever township meeting. At the time it was owned by Jacob Bergen.

An 1805 reference in the Trenton True American makes mention of "Major Morford's Battalion" meeting on October 10th. This same reference also mentions a "widow Bergen," possibly hinting at Jacob's

death prior to this date and cementing the association of the building with the Bergens.

Originally, the tavern was located across the road from the Neck Meeting House (Later the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church), next to 417 Village Road East. It was doubtless this proximity, as well as a rising temperance movement, that prompted churchgoers to host repeated "temperance meetings" in a grove near the church, in order to quell what they saw as a den of vice. In 1883, this group prevailed; the tavern was consequently relocated to its current location, converted into a private residence, and sold to the Updike

Family, and later the Cook Family. In the house's deed was a clause that it may never again operate as a tavern. And so it has remained a residence.

Site 7: 542 Village Road West: Updike House (c. 1750-1764)

This residence, lying at the outskirts of Dutch Neck, is one of West Windsor's oldest buildings and represents many centuries of architecture and expansion. This clapboard edifice consists of a 2.5 story main block and flush 2-story ell, which likely incorporates an earlier house. Two porches hint at multi-family occupancy at some point during its history, which was not uncommon in centuries past.

The house was moved closer to the road in 1978, when the farm was subdivided for housing (much of the original property is now part of the "Le Parc II" development).



The Dutch Neck School House c. 1910

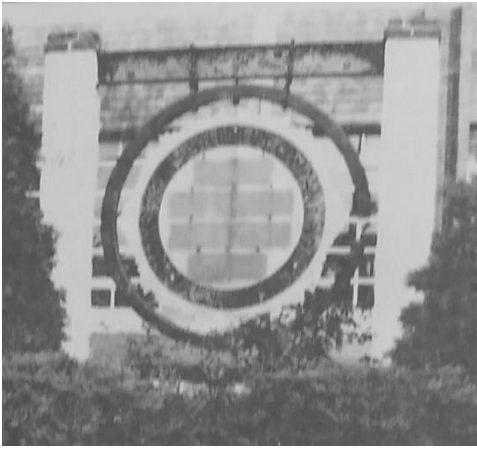
Site 8: 516 Village Road West: Dutch Neck Schoolhouse (1850-1875)

Records show that a log cabin was used as the first schoolhouse in Dutch Neck as early as the mid-1700s. Located at the rear of the cemetery of the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church, it burned down in 1850. Now a private residence, and dramatically altered from its original form (see adjacent image), the edifice at 516 Village Road West was constructed shortly after the fire, on the same site as the log cabin. When the more accommodating Dutch Neck Elementary School was built in 1917, the smaller building was relocated to the present property and converted into a private residence in the same year.

Site 9: 138 South Mill Road – Presbyterian Parsonage (c. 1850)

This Colonial Revival house, according to records, was acquired at an unknown date from the Armstrong family. Maps suggest that it was purchased between 1849 and 1860. It supposedly functioned as a parsonage for members of the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church.





Old Alarm Bell

Site 10: 151-153 South Mill Road - West Windsor Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1 (1921)

Also referred to as Station 43, this was West Windsor's first volunteer fire company. Originally named the Dutch Neck Volunteer Fire Department, it served all of West Windsor until the Princeton Junction Fire Department (more on that later) was organized in 1926. Its first chief, from 1921-1922, was Harvey D. Applegate.

The very first call for the company was a fire at the home of Irving Everett, on what is now Everett Drive in Princeton Junction (next to the current municipal complex). While the farmhouse was destroyed, surrounding buildings were saved. This marked the first call in a long history for the department.

In spring 1924, the first rooftop siren was installed on Town Hall in Dutch Neck. Before this, siren alarms were given by banging on a railroad car wheel, the number of taps indicating the location of the fire.

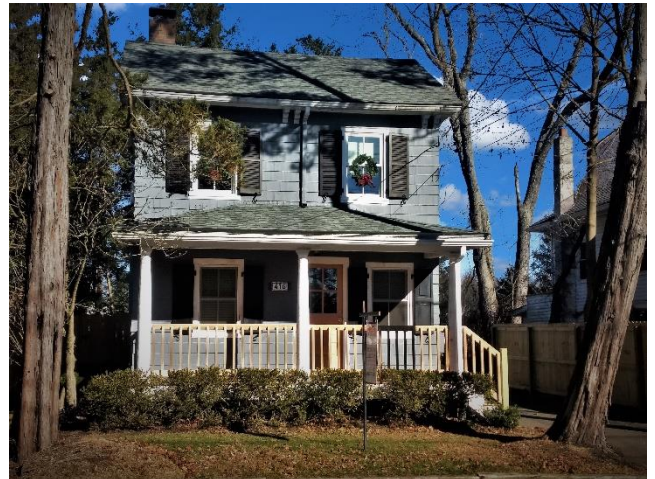
In 1952, the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1 was moved into its current low brick building, purchased from Charles Holman. The majority of the construction labor on the firehouse was by the firemen, many of whom were construction workers. In 1962, the mortgage on the building was paid and the company enjoyed a Mortgage Burning Party.

West Windsor Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1 continues to be an instrumental organization, saving both buildings and lives throughout West Windsor.

Note 3: Other sites along South Mill Road and Village Road West include: Site 11 - 530 Village Road West (1908-1920), Site 12 - 528 Village Road West (1780), Site 13 - 508 Village Road West (1888), Site 14 - 510 Village Road West (1850-1858), Site 15 - 514 Village Road West (1858), Site 16 - 509 Village Road West (1858), Site 17 - 507 Village Road West (1915), Site 18 - 210 South Mill Road (1790-1800), Site 19 - 136 South Mill Road (1907-1922), Site 20 - 140 South Mill Road (1911), Site 21 - 142 South Mill Road (1907), and Site 22 - 131 South Mill Road (1850). When you are done exploring these avenues, start to bike down Village Road East. In addition to Site 23 - 418 Village Road East (1870), Site 24 - 412 Village Road East (1900), Site 25 - 415 Village Road East (pre-1850), Site 26 - 413 Village Road East (1900-1908), Site 27 - 411 Village Road East (pre-1850), and Site 28 - 409 Village Road East (pre-1850), several important sites stand along this avenue, and are integral to understanding the history of Dutch Neck:

Site 30: 416 Village Road East (1700s)

This 2-story house set close to the road features a Colonial Revival porch with Victorian era roof brackets. According to a previous owner, a structure existed on this site in the 1750s. Between 1765 and 1770, the structure was relocated and the roof raised to accommodate a bedroom upstairs. A dining room was added in the mid-late 1800s, and a kitchen built in the 1920s.



Site 31: 414 Village Road East (1870?)

This 2.5 story hip-roof double house's most unique feature is its two identical entrances, hinting dual occupancy during its history. The Mercer County Inventory indicates that there is an 18th-century core - a claim buttressed by the building's proximity to the road. However, the current façade reflects early-mid 20th century changes. Township tax records indicate construction in 1870, but this may refer to renovations, rather than a full replacement of the house.

Site 32: 408 Village Road East (c. 1800)

Set back from the road behind a stone retaining wall is this 3-bay, 2-story residence featuring a paired Victorian roof brackets. Like many of the houses of Dutch Neck, it is significantly deeper than its narrow front facade lets on. It features two major entrances: one facing the road and It is one of the best-preserved buildings of the first half of the 19th century.



Site 33: 401 Village Road East – Windsor Chapel (1888)

This building originally functioned as a barn. In 1978, members of Princeton's Westerley Road Church, looking to expand to more capacious accommodations, bought this property from Mr. and Mrs. David Kaplan. Subsequently, in 1979, restoration of the barn began. The first service was held in this building 1980. In 1990, the edifice was greatly expanded.

Inside the building are historic photographs of the building. There is even an wooden support post marked by a small brass plaque that commemorates the erection of the original barn in 1888.

Site 34: 392 Village Road East – Dutch Neck Elementary School (1917)

This school has undergone numerous and significant additions since being opened in 1917. The oldest part of the school, shown in the adjacent photograph, was designed almost identically to the now-disappeared Penns Neck School. When construction of this institution commenced, three graves from a much older African American burial ground were discovered on the property. They were identified as members of the Pompey Updike family.

Ten years after the school's construction, two rooms were added. In 1952, a front wing was built that expanded the school by 6 classrooms, an auditorium/gymnasium and bathrooms, and in 1956 the back wing was added including the East Entrance. In 1962, Dutch Neck became a school for grades 4-6. In 1974, the media center was built, filling the courtyard that had previously existed between the front and back additions. A cafeteria and a three-room kindergarten wing were later constructed. In 1985, a "temporary" 4-room quad was constructed and would eventually gain acceptance as a permanent addition. With the construction of several other elementary, upper-elementary, and middle schools throughout the 1990s/2000s, Dutch Neck Elementary School reduced its student load to grades K-3.



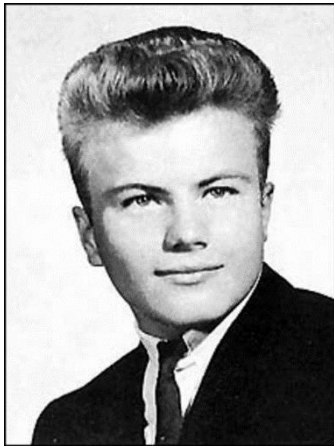
Note 4: Congratulations! You have finally made it out of Dutch Neck! Continue along Village Road East, past Edinburg Road, and you will soon come upon our next site:

Site 35: 348 Village Road East – Grover’s Farm (pre-1850)

This site, owned until 2009 by the Grover family, has produced crops (strawberries, watermelons, corn, tomatoes, etc.) for residents in the area for nearly two centuries. The original part of the house is shown on an 1849 map of the township, which indicates that the owner at the time was J.L. Hooper. In 1912, the Grover family purchased the farm, and operated it until 2009.

Grover’s Farm is a great example of West Windsor’s agrarian past. In 1994, owner Leroy C. Grover sold the farm to the township, and the municipality turned it into the first designated open space in West Windsor. Leroy was a very active member of the community until his passing in 2008, opening his farm to U-pick events, school tours, and barbecues for the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Co. He was also a dedicated advocate for preserved farmland initiatives.

In 2009, Leroy Grover’s widow moved out of the farmhouse and executed a voluntary release of the life estate, fully transferring control of the property to the West Windsor Township. The farmhouse gradually decayed as the years passed, and despite efforts by West Windsor residents to save the farmhouse, it was torn down in 2013.



Site 36: 10 Southfield Road – Thomas R. Grover Middle School (1999)

This school was constructed in 1999 next to longtime resident Leroy Grover's Farm. It was named to commemorate Leroy Grover's son, Thomas R. Grover was only 22 when he died in the line of fire in Vietnam in 1969, after earning two purple hearts and a silver star. The school was named in memory of his service.

Note 5: Turn left onto Southfield Road. You are now approaching one of West Windsor’s most significant sites:

Site 37: 50 Southfield Road – Schenck Farmstead (Mid-1700s)

Founded in 1983, The Historical Society of West Windsor documents the history of the Township of West Windsor and preserves aspects of the agrarian lifestyle that used to dominate the region. It maintains the Schenck Farmstead which dates back to the mid-1700s and is located on Southfield Road opposite the Cranbury Golf course. The house and property was a gift of Max Zaitz to the West Windsor Historical Society in 1991 and functions as a museum exploring both the history of the farmstead and of West Windsor. The museum is generally open a few times each year.



The farmhouse, originally constructed c. 1790, has expanded through a series of additions added over numerous decades. It often housed multiple families at a time and served as the quarters for both owners and servants. Before its donation to the historical society in 1991, the farm had been in the Schenck Family for three generations. John Schenck rented the farm from 1888 to when he purchased it in 1899. When he retired, Schenck sold the farm to his son, Walter. His widow sold the farm to their son, Wilton, in 1963. In 1971, Max Zaitz purchased the farm.

The farmhouse is the main part of the museum. Most of the rooms inside have been decorated to memorialize the interior's design and functionality. In addition to a double parlor, dining room, kitchen, and entrance room on the first floor, as well as a sewing room, 2 bedrooms, lavatory, and research room on the upper floor, there is also an exhibit room that showcases an in-depth analysis of the history of West Windsor.

In 1899, John Schenck purchased the approximately 117 acres now known as the Schenck Farm. The farmstead grew to contain a large barn, carriage house, farmhouse, windmill, smoke house, chicken house, corn crib, and garage. In 1994, an 1800s one-room schoolhouse was moved from Princeton Junction to this property.

Inside the barn, carriage house, farmhouse, and schoolhouse are thousands of artifacts, some hundreds of years old and emblematic of the agrarian lifestyle that dominated West Windsor in centuries past. In addition are multiple exhibits exploring the history of the farmstead, the history of West Windsor and the surrounding region, and environmental/historical preservation. Please visit the Schenck Farmstead to gain a profound understanding of the dynamics of the township from decades and centuries past!

Note 6: As you bike down Southfield Road, you will pass by a few sites. The first will be Site 38 - 75 Southfield Road (pre-1850), nestled in the Cranbury Golf Course on the left. This is shown on an 1849 map of West Windsor as belonging to a "J. Fisher." Next will be Site 39 - 105 Southfield Road, allegedly constructed c. 1758. Its owner in 1849 was an "E. Bergen." After that, just before Princeton-Hightstown Road, is Site 40 - 21 McGendrick Drive (1860), whose owner in 1875 was "Mrs. M. McGettrick," according to a map made that year.

As you pass across Princeton-Hightstown Road, please note: This is the township's oldest road with a certain date of construction (1744). The only roads older than this are Province Line Road and Quakerbridge Roads, both likely established in the mid to late 1600s. You can learn **much** more about West Windsor's transportation history at westwindsorhistory.weebly.com

After crossing Princeton-Hightstown Road, continue along Southfield Road. You will soon come upon Site 41 - 175 Southfield Road (c. 1700-1800), whose owner in 1849 was "E. Dye." Next, is another house of particular note:

Site 41: 221 Southfield Road (1800-1808)

According to town legend, during the middle of the nineteenth century, this building served as part of the Underground Railroad, helping runaway slaves escape to freedom up north. This movement was especially controversial in New Jersey because (believe it or not) until slavery's abolition in New Jersey 1846, this state had the highest population of slaves of any northern state!

Whether or not this bit of gossip is true is up for debate. However, what is known is that slavery was common in New Jersey, and so were Underground Railroad stops in the years surrounding the Civil War. To learn more about West Windsor's involvement in slavery, emancipation, and integration, please visit the aforementioned website.



Note 7: Continue down Southfield Road and turn left onto Bennington Drive. Continue along Bennington Drive until you hit Rabbit Hill Road after roughly a mile. Turn left on Rabbit Hill Road until you come to a set of farmhouses on either side of the road, just before the bridge leading over Bear Brook and the steep hill leading up to Princeton-Hightstown Road. You will soon come upon:



Site 43: 106-108 Rabbit Hill Road (1850)

106-108 Rabbit Hill Road sit on the western side of the road. This complex consists of several large barns and a 5-bay, 2-story house set very close to the road. This once functioned as a 300-acre potato farm, which was owned by the Wilson/Reed family for four generations. According to Gay Reed, an erstwhile owner, the barns were constructed in the early 20th century. The first Reed owner was a general farmer and peddled his produce in Trenton and Princeton. The Reeds may have purchased the property from "D. Campbell," who is listed in the 1875 map at that location. The Reeds have since moved their farming operations to southern New Jersey.

Across the road are Site 44 - 103 Rabbit Hill Road and Site 45 - 1 Rabbit Hill Road, both constructed c. 1900. What was once farmland has since been subdivided and turned into suburbs.

Note 8: Reverse direction and ride along Rabbit Hill Road towards Cranbury Road. Along the way, note Site 46 - 3 Compton Lane, allegedly constructed c. 1870 (although the 1849 map shows a house in that location, owned by an "I. Sleaker." This house sits far back from Rabbit Hill Road, at the end of a driveway opposite the first entrance to Dey Farm Drive. Continue along Rabbit Hill Road, until you reach the PSEG power line, whereupon you may be interested to learn a bit about West Windsor's erstwhile trolley line:

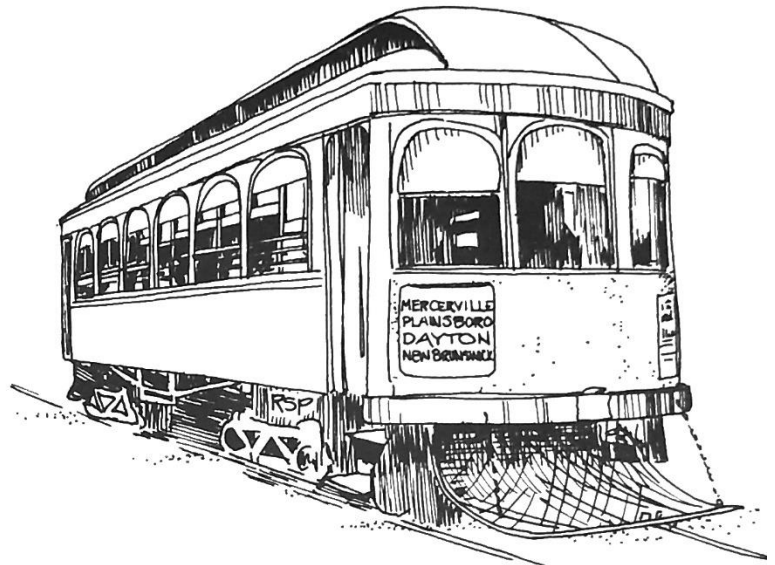
Site 47: Trenton-New Brunswick Railroad (1902-1937)

Eight years before the construction of the tunnels running under the Hudson River in 1910 and the subsequent flourishing of the rail line linking New York and Philadelphia, a smaller trolley line was established, likewise running through West Windsor. Colloquially known as the "Fast Line," this corridor provided convenient inter-town travel along the middle link of the New York-Philadelphia train route for more than thirty years.

At the turn of the century, the era of high-speed electric railway had begun. The Trenton and New Brunswick Railroad Company was established to lead this national movement, and construction began in 1902 on a line from Greenwood Avenue in Trenton to Milltown (directly south of New Brunswick). Linking with the Middlesex and Somerset Traction Company trolley line, the Trenton and New Brunswick Railroad ultimately became part of the larger Newark-Trenton Fast Line, connecting its eponymous cities with numerous towns in between.

The Trenton and New Brunswick Railroad opened on November 3, 1902. Also stopping in Deans, Dayton, Plainsboro, West Windsor, and Mercerville, the rail line ran from New Brunswick to Trenton for 27.5 miles, providing trips that took an hour and fifteen minutes total - barely slower than driving the same length along Route 1 in 2019!

Four stations were established within West Windsor's boundaries: Conover Road (where it met South Post Road), Penn Lyle Road (near Dutch Neck), Princeton-Hightstown Road, and Grovers Mill (albeit far from the village center). The tracks, now long-gone, traveled through what is now Lake Carnegie in Mercer County Park, continuing into Lawrence Township in the South. Two of West Windsor's stations - those near Grovers Mill and Princeton-Hightstown - are of particular note. The Grovers Mill station was configured as a repair and cleaning stop for the railroad. In addition, a power station helped run the line's electric cars. The station in Princeton-Hightstown, in contrast, is notable for where it was established. The land around the station was once known as "Pig Town," (or "Van Hiseville") after a local farmer who owned an unusual amount of swine. This farm, while long gone, is still commemorated in the colloquial name of the footbridge over Bear Brook in the West Windsor Community Park: "Pig Town Bridge!"



Passengers travelling between Trenton and New Brunswick purchased a three-coupon ticket at \$0.45 one-way; \$0.80 round-trip. The first coupon was for the Middlesex and Somerset Traction to Milltown, the second for the Trenton and New Brunswick Railroad to the Interstate Fair Grounds at Trenton, and the third for the Wilbur Line of the Trenton Street Railway Company. This last stint stopped in downtown Trenton.

Passengers could go further south and north, however. With the construction of an additional link culminating in the opening of the Camden-Riverton line of the Camden and Suburban Railway on May 25, 1904, passengers could travel as far north as Jersey City and as far south as Philadelphia via trolley alone.

Service was especially popular among West Windsor students, who used it to commute to many schools and colleges in Lawrenceville, Trenton, and New Brunswick. When a contingent of Trenton-based newspaper reporters travelled from Milltown to Trenton in 44 minutes, trolley use increased dramatically. By 1903, its second year, traffic had increased enough to necessitate hourly service (prior to this, a car travelled every three hours). The line was serviced by six Niles interurban cars, named after cities located along the trolley route.

Between 1904 and 1908, the Trenton and New Brunswick Railroad Company was sold and restructured several times, ultimately resulting in its reorganization as the Elizabeth and Trenton Railroad in May 1910. Two years later, in August 1912, the Elizabeth and

Leave WEST BOUND

	M	I	N	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A
NEWARK TERMINAL	9.0	* 10.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
ELIZABETH—ARCH	3.9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
BAYWAY	7.9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TREKLEY	10.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
POOREVELT JCT.	11.8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
PORT READING—COLWELL AVE.	15.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
SEWARREN	18.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
PERTH AMBOY	14.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
WOODBRIDGE JCT.	18.9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
METCHEN—AMBOY AVE.	23.7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NEW BRUNSWICK	29.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
MILLTOWN JCT.	32.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
PATRICK'S CORNERS	36.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
DAYTON	40.4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
PLAINSBORO	41.9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
GROVER'S MILLS	44.4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
DUTCH NECK	49.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
MERCERVILLE	53.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
FAIR GROUNDS	55.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
PUBLIC SERVICE JCT.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TRENTON—State and Warren Sta.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

* Train does not run Sundays. X No connection east of New Brunswick.

Trenton Railroad and the New Jersey Short Line Railroad were leased to the Trenton Terminal Railroad, which was controlled by Public Service (today known as PSEG). The next year, on October 6, the Elizabeth and Trenton Railroad and the Trenton Terminal Railroad were merged, resulting in the incorporation of the Public Service Railroad, the rail line's final operator. Lighter, more

efficient cars introduced by this company led to the obsolescence of the Grovers Mill power station and its closing in 1926.

The trolley line running through West Windsor continued to operate until the late 1930s, when the automobile began to establish its dominance throughout the nation. In its final years, service on the line was reduced to three trips daily. On December 7, 1930, service to downtown Trenton ended. Gasoline-electric cars replaced the formerly electric-only cars the following year, and were used until the line's last day of operation - May 27, 1937. Following this day, the tracks that once marked the line were dismantled; in the decades since, PSEG, which owns the right-of-way, has built a power line stretching through the township and beyond.

Today, nothing remains of the original Trenton and New Brunswick Railroad - not the railroad tracks, nor the power station in Grovers Mill, nor the four stations which once called the township home. In the mid-2000s, a bike/jogging path, the "Trolley Line Trail," was established to follow the former route of the railroad, running from Penn-Lyle Road to Rabbit Hill Road. At Pig Town, in what is now the West Windsor Community Park, a bridge spans Bear Brook, and a series of signs detailing the trolley line's history marks the physical manifestation of David Lee's (Troop 40) 2008 Boy Scout Eagle Project, established to commemorate this historic route. Take a day off to explore this path when the weather is nice; perhaps, when the large trains rushing along the Northeast Corridor pass through Princeton Junction, you can hear the echoes of a much more leisurely route that former residents cherished for thirty years.

Note 9: If you wish to continue along the Red Trail, ignore the rest of this note. Else, for the Green Trail, make a left and bike along the asphalt bike path – the Trolley Line Trail. Along the way, you will pass over a metal truss bridge – the “Pig Town” bridge. Just after this, to your left, will be a small informational kiosk highlighting some main aspects of the trolley line’s history. Soon, you will hit Bernt Midland Boulevard, running through the West Windsor Community Park. Make a left and follow this road until you hit Princeton-Hightstown Road. After crossing this street, make a right, following the sidewalk, until you come upon the power line route again. Turn left and follow the path, passing by Site 48 – 23 South Mill Road (c. 1875) and Site 49 – 38 South Mill Road (c. 1850) until you hit Penn-Lyle Road. Turn right and proceed to Site 99 (described on the last page).

Note 10: Instructions for the Red Trail: Continue along Rabbit Hill Road until it hits Cranbury Road. To your right is Site 50 - 304 Cranbury Road (c. 1878). Make a left on Cranbury Road, keeping in mind that you are now biking along this route’s most dangerous strip. Please watch for passing cars as you pass Site 51 - 249 Cranbury Road (c. 1800, owned by a “Dr. Wilson” in 1849). When you reach Van Nest Park on the left, pull into the parking lot and explore this site:

Site 52: Van Nest Park (1962)

Established 1962, the land upon which this park was built was donated to the township by the Van Nest family. In the middle of the park, you should see a 3D relief of Orson Welles’ infamous Halloween Eve 1938 “War of the Worlds” broadcast. This plaque, made on the 50th anniversary of the radio play, shows the tension that millions of families felt on that night, as they heard of the touching down of aliens in the little-known community of Grovers Mill.

That evening, Welles gave a broadcast that shook the country. Twelve million tuned in to hear his American rendition of H.G. Wells’ novel “The War of the Worlds,” in which Martians attack the planet. While Welles was no stranger to drama, he could never have predicted the mass hysteria that ensued. So realistic was his “live news” dramatization that thousands believed the broadcast to be real. A water tower behind the Grover Family house at 175 Cranbury Road stands as a testament to this event, its water tank having been replaced after being shot by a drunken farmer who thought it an extraterrestrial!

Perhaps the broadcast would have not touched so many were it not for the dynamics of the era. In 1938, the Great Depression, which had brought the nation to its knees, was almost a decade old. Across the sea, fascism was spreading, and the scepter of war was on the minds of many.



Now, in a more optimistic era, the township still occasionally celebrates that broadcast; it is undoubtedly West Windsor's most infamous piece of history.

At the edge of the park, abutting the pond, is a dock that is used for both fishing and boat launching. Along a nearby trail is a Boy Scout Eagle Project completed in the mid-2010s commemorating the War of the Worlds broadcast and educating residents about that infamous event.

Note 11: Exit the park, turn left, and continue along Cranbury Road. Note Site 53 - 198 Cranbury Road to your left, constructed c. 1892. You are now entering the heart of Grovers Mill:



Grovers Mill – Mid-1600s

Groves Mill is a relatively intact hamlet centered around its eponymous mill that is serviced by Bear Brook. Dominating the village center, at the intersection of Clarksville and Cranbury roads, is a series of 18th and 19th century buildings, the largest and most infamous of them being the mill after which the village was named. Groves Mill is unique in West Windsor for two reasons: it is possibly the earliest area in the township settled by Europeans and, predominantly due to Orson Welles' 1938 "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast, is by far the most famous of West Windsor's villages.

The first families to settle in the hamlet were Van Nests and Bergens, arriving from Holland in the middle of the 1600s. The Van Nests, descendants of Pieter Pieteron Van Nest (who settled in "New Netherlands" in 1646), bought much of the area from a Lenni Lenape woman

named "Idah." Since then, the family has settled throughout the hamlet and the township, entrenched in West Windsor's history throughout the centuries.

The mill after which the village was named was first operated by Daniel Wosley, and was reputedly constructed in 1759, along with the barn that faces it across Cranbury Road. It was one of the township's first two grist mills (only Scudder's Mill in Aqueduct Mills was older; it is now gone).

The mill has witnessed many transformations to the hamlet throughout the centuries. In 1859, the village became officially known as "Grover's Mill," after Joseph H. Grover took ownership of the mill. In 1904, Walter Grover, friend of presidents Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson, who both often visited the hamlet to experience its tranquil atmosphere, assumed ownership. In 1929, ownership of the mill transferred to Charles L. Day, and electricity was added soon afterwards. After the mill discontinued operation in the 1940s, it was been used as an artist's studio, apartments, and most recently, a chiropractor's office. It is now being reconverted into apartments, with pains being taken to preserve the edifice's historical integrity.

During the American Revolution, Walter S. Grover's grandmother, Sara Schwenger, was forced to house and feed Hessian soldiers at her expense. Half a century later, she imparted this tale to her grandson, and so it has remained in town legend, passed down through the years.

The pond was a favorite haunt for locals, whether they were ice skating, fishing, or boating. Undoubtedly the most prominent people to frequent the pond were Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson. Both Cleveland and Wilson were friends of Walter S. Grover and enjoyed the tranquility of the hamlet's setting. Wilson, erstwhile president of Princeton University, could often be found bicycling five miles to Grover's Mill.

Unlike West Windsor's other towns, no, school, church, general store, or post office existed within the village. As a result, villagers likely traveled nearby hamlets to satisfy their need for food, goods, education, and worship.

In 2012, the red barn at 163 Cranbury Road was converted into apartments and office space, its exterior largely kept preserved, safeguarding the building's, and hamlet's historical integrity. As of 2019, the mill at Groves Mill is also being renovated. The design of the exterior has been largely preserved, and the interior is being turned into apartments. The largest change has been the removal of the mill's wheel mechanism on the south side of the mill due to its deteriorating condition. Throughout the 20th century, the area surrounding the hamlet, once farmland, increasingly gave way to suburban development. However, the heart of Groves Mill has been largely preserved. One can still amble along Cranbury and Clarksville Roads, entrenched in a village evoking centuries of memories.

Site 54: 175 Cranbury Road – Grover House **(Late 1700s)**

Facing the intersection of Cranbury and Clarksville Roads is this 2-story house, whose front portion was constructed in 1852. A large Colonial Revival porch was added c. 1890. At the rear of the building is a 2-story ell; it is supposedly the oldest part of the house, dating from the late 1700s. This part of the building still has its original fireplace and chimney crane.

The building likely begun as a mill office upon its erection. It was also reputedly used by the village millwright, who was in charge of building, disassembling, moving, and maintaining the moving parts of the nearby mill.

Behind the house is a tall, weathered water tower, similar in shape and size to the one at the Schenck Farmstead. Town legend says that during Orson Welle's "War of the Worlds" broadcast in 1938, a local farmer, drunk and terrified, shot at the tower, mistakenly believing that the construct was an alien come to wreak havoc. The water tank had to be replaced, but otherwise the tower is the same as it was on that fateful night.



Site 55: 429 Clarksville Road – “Ladyfaire” **(Late 1600s)**

This 5-bay, 2-story house with a 1.5-story Dutch wing was first constructed prior to 1758 (the earliest year that tax records exist for the edifice). According to various owners, including David O. Wright (who owned and restored the house in 1984-1985), the building - nicknamed "Ladyfaire" - is the township's oldest structure by several decades, dating back to around 1690.

Legend says that this house has hosted both Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, and Aaron Burr, who carved his initials into a cabinet. The 1849 J.W. Otley & J. Keily map of West Windsor shows ownership by "J.B.B. Van Nest." the Everts & Stuart map of 1875 shows that "J.C. Van Nest" lived in the house. The original owners of the building were reputedly the Schwenger family.

Ladyfaire's 1.5-story wing (closest to Clarksville Road) is the house's oldest, possibly dating to 1690, and reveals the building's Dutch origins. On the side of this wing is a large section composed of rubble, rebuilt in a mid-20th century renovation from the remnants of an old chimney. The middle section of the building is reputedly from the mid-1700s, and until the late 2010s, showcased a large screened porch protecting its front entrance. The third section is from the early to mid-1800s.

Ladyfaire abuts Rogers Preserve (AKA Millstone River Preserve) to the south and Bear Brook to the North. Rogers Preserve contains several walking trails that traverse scenic terrain.

Site 56: 164 Cranbury Road – Grovers Mill **(c. 1759)**

This large, multi-level building set on a stone foundation was constructed in several sections over numerous years, resulting in an unusual roof profile that varies from 1 to 3 stories tall. Numerous windows dot the north and south facades erratically.

The mill was first operated by Daniel Wosley, and was reputedly constructed in 1759, along with the barn that faces it across Cranbury Road. It was one of the township's first two grist mills (only Scudder's Mill in Aqueduct Mills was older; it is now gone). In the same year as the mill's construction, the establishment of roads linking the hamlet to the rest of West Windsor were constructed, demonstrating its importance. However, unlike



Scudder's mill, the edifice at the village of Grover's Mill did little to spur the growth of its surrounding community.

Mahlon Wright bought the mill in the 1760s. In 1771, he advertised it for sale in the newspaper: *"This is to give public notice that there is to be exposed to sale, by way of public venue, on the sixteenth day of April next, a Grist mill, with two water-wheels, two pair of stones, and bolts by water; it is situated on a very pleasant stream called Upper Barebrook (sic), in the township of Windsor, and County of Middlesex in New Jersey; also a tract of land, nearly adjoining the same, containing 174 acres, with a dwelling-house, kitchen and barn, and a young orchard of near two hundred trees. Mahlon Wright."*

Jacob Bergen, son of a local farmer, became intrigued and bought the mill. Jacob's son George inherited the mill from his father and operated it during revolution, at which time it was known as the "Message Mill." Subsequently, the building was sold to Richard Thomas, around which point it took on a new name - Bear Mill! On March 18, 1837, Thomas sold 24 acres, including the mill, to his cousin, Gottlieb Schwenger, for \$3,000.

On March 31, 1868, Joseph H. Grover took over ownership of the mill. It was in this year that the town became officially known as "Grover's Mill," after Joseph's namesake. Grover managed the mill until 1904, when his son Walter took over management. Three years later, Walter oversaw a lavish reunion of nearly 70 family members at the Grover House at 175 Cranbury Road. Walter operated the mill until his passing in 1929. Both Walter and his father are buried in the cemetery at Dutch Neck.

Upon Walter's death, the property passed to Charles L. Dey. Dey streamlined operations by adding electricity to the mill. Sadly, this did not prevent the mill from shutting down in the 1940s. Since then, it was bought by William Dennison, transferred to his son (also named William), and over the years, has been used as an artist's studio (in the 1970s), apartments (1990s), and most recently, a chiropractor's office, until 2015. It is now being converted into apartments, with pains being taken to preserve the edifice's historical integrity.

Site 57: Grovers Mill Pond (c. 1759)

The pond around which Grovers Mill is centered is historic in its own right. Excavated in the eighteenth century to power the grist mill, it provided both a source of livelihood and recreation. From swimming to fishing to ice skating to boating, the pond was frequented by locals and out-of-towners alike. The most famous of these recreationists were Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson, both friends of Walter S. Grover. Over the centuries, the pond has experienced several name changes: From Bergen's Pond in 1776, to Bear Pond, then Schwenger's Mill Pond, and finally Grover's Mill Pond.

In 1931, the bridge spanning Bear Brook was constructed. In the late 20th century, the pond was donated to the township by members of the Dey family.

In 2008, the pond was dredged to remove a dangerous build-up of algae. The result was more pristine water that could support a greater diversity of flora and fauna (including the majestic - and threatened - great blue heron, as well as painted turtles), a new boat ramp at the docks at Van Nest park, the restocking of the pond's fish. In fact, it is not unusual to see multiple people at a time fishing from Clarksville or Cranbury Roads, or Van Nest Park, hoping to catch their next big story!



Site 58: Grovers Mill Co. Barn (c. 1759)

This large, long building is located diagonally across Cranbury Road from the mill and was constructed around the same year as the mill. Over the years, it has functioned as a warehouse for the storage of grist produced in the mill, a power equipment store, and, now, office and apartment space. The mill underwent a major renovation in 2012 to convert it to its latest usage, but fortunately, its historic integrity has been largely preserved.

Note 12: Before continuing down Cranbury Road, you may want to venture down Millstone Road. However, be careful – there is no sidewalk and only a small shoulder. Two houses are of note: Site 59 - 11 Millstone Road (c. 1883) and Site 60 - 22 Millstone Road (late 1800s). The 1875 map displays a house in the location of 22 Millstone Road, under ownership of J.C. Van Nest. After exploring this road, continue along Cranbury Road, making note of the following houses:

Site 61: 160 Cranbury Road (1758-1762)

This 2-story side hall plan house has a mid-20th century "colonial" appearance, a 1.5-story addition (with a garage), and a brick facade due to a 1960's renovation. However, don't let these "modern" modifications fool you - along with the mill, barn, Ladyfaire, and, potentially, the Grover House, it is one of the township's oldest structures! Historical photos show a porch attached to the house.

According to Vivian and Ron MacPherson (owners in 1986), the house (or really, a now-disappeared carriage house behind it) was one of several structures in the area that quartered Hessian soldiers. In addition, Walter S. Grover was born in this house decades later.

In the 1960s, the MacPhersons had the old porch removed and a local mason, Charles Aversano, added the brick facade. roughly 3 decades earlier, Charles Dey stuccoes the house.



Site 63: 148 Cranbury Road (1860)

The first mentions of this building, directly adjacent to Site 62 - 152 Cranbury Road (mid-1800s) are from 1879 tax records. It is said that this house was originally built as a tenant house for mill workers. From the 1920s to the 1970s, it was owned by the Snedeker family, and has since been given the name the "Old Snedeker Place."

This 2-story house showcases an enclosed front porch, part of a 1930 replacement of the building's former Victorian-style porch. This porch was originally of a spindle-work style common on "Stick" and Gothic houses of the 1860s-1880s. Another Victorian-style element of this house are the exposed rafter ends and prominent corner boards.

In 1945, the wing on the right was added to the house; it originally included an open porch on the first floor; this was later enclosed. Earlier in the 20th century, a one-story shed-roof addition was made to the rear of the house and was extended to the second floor in 1993.

The small garage to the left of the house is actually older than the house itself - likely dating to the early 1800s, in fact. A 1995 description of this element in the Historical Society of West Windsor's "Broadside" depicts "wide plank floor and interior walls of vertical bead boards, some of which are still filled with sawdust, lending credence to the tradition that this building was originally located closer to the pond and served as an ice house at the mill."

Note 13: Continue along Cranbury Road, passing by Site 64 - 144 Cranbury Road (c. 1900), Site 65 - 85 Cranbury Road (allegedly c. 1910, although the 1875 map displays a building in that location under ownership of "Heirs of W. Berrian") and Site 65 - 51 Cranbury Road (c. 1900). You will soon arrive at the intersection of Cranbury, Wallace, and Princeton-Hightstown Roads. You are now in Princeton Junction:

Princeton Junction – 1865

Princeton Junction, perhaps West Windsor's best-known historic cluster (outside of Grovers Mill), was the most recent of West Windsor's historic villages to develop. With the construction of what is now the Northeast Corridor rail line in 1865, after its relocation from the original 1839 Camden/Amboy Railroad route along the Delaware & Raritan Canal, this area underwent a major transformation from dispersed farmsteads and swamp to concentrated suburbia.

Princeton Junction's first businesses were located around the intersection of Washington Road and Station Drive, southeast of Bear Swamp. Taking advantage of the railroad, a series of farms,



Princeton Junction, 1963

commodities businesses, and even a hotel appeared to cater to rail workers and train passengers alike. One exception to this concentration was a gravel pit owned by Liscomb B. Reed, who also operated a sand pit off Bear Brook road. It has since been converted into a township dump, a compost center, and finally, the Vaughn Parking Lot of the train station.

In 1924, the construction of West Windsor's first dedicated residential development began, with the formation of Berrien City. Located adjacent to the train station, this area was a microcosm of the nation in which it was located: From 1924-1929, it experienced a golden age of construction and community; in 1929, after the Great Depression hit, the neighborhood's expansion slowed down significantly, and after World War II, the "city" rebounded. The neighborhood still stands and showcases a wide variety of architectural styles.

Princeton Junction's second wave of commerce began around 1932, when the first concrete Washington Road railroad bridge that could accommodate cars was constructed (a new one replaced it c. 1940). Shortly afterwards, a local farmer - C. Lawrence Dey - sold off much of his property, which was converted into multiple businesses, including two service stations, a strip mall, a shopping center, and medical offices. A lumber company also occupied much of the area.

In the middle of the 20th century, two schools were constructed around the same time as the formation of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Board of Education's inception. Both schools, one built on a former farmstead, still stand today.

Several plans to redevelop Princeton Junction into a "downtown" area for West Windsor have never come to fruition. Currently, the area is best known for Berrien City, the train station, and the series of strip malls and banks along Princeton Hightstown Road. As of 2019, a plan to redevelop a large portion of the current Station Drive area conceptualizes a "transit village" that takes advantage of its proximity to the train station and anticipates the beginning of the Princeton Junction's revitalization.

Note 14: We will now explore Station Drive. Please cross Princeton-Hightstown Road until you end up at the corner where the "Princeton Junction Station at West Windsor" sign is displayed. You will need to be here to cross the bridge over the railroad tracks; only the left sidewalk is functional; the right (northern) sidewalk is overgrown. After crossing the bridge, you will come upon Washington Road. Make a left until the intersection of Washington Road and Station Drive, a small subsection of Princeton Junction:



Station Drive, c. 1950: General store, Dewey's Upholstery Shop, and brick building once used to house Princeton Junction Fire Company's first fire engine in background. In foreground: L.C. Bowers property.

Station Drive – c. 1865

With the construction of what is now the Northeast Corridor and Dinkey train lines in 1865, a small cluster of houses adjacent to the tracks manifested at the intersection of Station Drive and Washington Road, west of Bear Swamp and north of the tracks. At this time, Washington Road simply crossed over the railroad tracks at grade and ended at the intersection of Princeton-Hightstown and Cranbury Roads. The bridge at the intersection of Cranbury, Wallace, and Princeton-

Hightstown Roads was to be built many decades later, effectively cutting off foot traffic to this cluster of buildings within Princeton Junction.

A mixture of farmland and industrial structures servicing the railroad, this small historic cluster, while largely erased, still evinces itself through several structures, among them a number of houses, a former feed mill, general store, warehouse, train signal tower, and (now disappeared) hotel. This center functioned as Princeton Junction's first "business district," inhabited by vendors such as Jacob R. Wyckoff, Issac Hey, David Vorhees, and Edward W. Mahan.

In the early 1900s, a bridge of steel and wood was built over the tracks to accommodate horse-and-buggy and foot travel, and Washington Road's at-grade crossing was eliminated (it once ran through where the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District's school buses now park). However, the advent of car travel soon necessitated the construction of a permanent concrete bridge over the tracks, c. 1932, which was replaced c. 1940. Station Drive has remained physically isolated from the rest of Princeton Junction ever since.

As of 2019, several buildings near the intersection still exist, evoking memories of a small village steadily doing business before the turn of the 20th century:

Site 69: 11 Washington Road: Jacob R. Wyckoff's Commodities Business (c. 1865)

At the end of Washington Road, where a garage/repair shop now stands, Jacob R. Wyckoff operated a commodities business, dealing in crops such as grain, potatoes, coal, and hay. This enterprise had previously called Princeton Basin its home. However, in 1865, Wyckoff moved his business to Princeton Junction in order to take advantage of the recently-relocated railroad. A hay scale was located in the yard to allow local farmers to weigh their loads of hay without unloading it from their trucks. Subsequently, the hay would be compressed by a hay press, baled, and unloaded.



Site 69: 12 Washington Road – Hey Family House (1854-1868)

Local farmer David S. Voorhees first purchased this property, then a farm, in 1836. It remained an agrarian setting until 1864, when construction of a new railroad route to replace the 1839 Camden/Amboy route began. Vorhees took out an insurance policy on the property in 1861, covering a small house, two sheds, a blacksmith shop, and two barns. An additional policy four years later shows a larger barn, a cow house, a wagon house, and stables. The next year, a third insurance policy showed a significantly larger house than the original policy (34x51 feet versus 16x25 feet). Finally, a fourth policy in 1868 shows the first definitive documentation associated with the present house (earlier records do not necessarily indicate this specific structure existed).

Future insurance policies show more expansions of the property's buildings. In 1883, Vorhees, then mayor of West Windsor, took out one last insurance property. The property remained in Vorhees family ownership until 1927, when the Hey family, owners of the general store at 33 Station Drive, bought the property. The house was converted to offices in the late 1900s. As of 2019, a proposal for a "transit village" threatens the structure's existence.

Site 70: 31 Station Drive: Issac Hey General Store (c. 1888)

The Princeton Junction general store, located at the corner of Washington Road and Station Drive, was the go-to convenience shop of Princeton Junction. From food to clothing to tools of every trade, a myriad of products was available for purchase. Woodward's "History of Burlington & Mercer Counties" of 1883 lists the owner of the general store from 1870-1883 as Owen Sheridan, D.B. Applegate, and Baker Hutchinson.

In 1884, the property was purchased and a new store constructed and operated by Issac Hey (pronounced "Hi"), who also operated as the village's postmaster, as his predecessors had before him. The property was later inherited by his sons Jacob and I. Vorhees Hey. It is said that because one was Republican and the other Democrat, whichever party was in power, that brother was postmaster. The family lived in 12 Washington Road across the street.



In 1943, the post office that had been located in the general store was moved to the store next to the firehouse in Berrien City (948 Alexander Rd), before bouncing around locations until its permanent location at the current municipal center. The general store continued operations until Jacob's death in 1947. The building was then sold to Louis Tamaro, who ran a barber shop in the front and rented the rest of the edifice as apartments. Beginning in the 1970s, when "Peking Express" moved in, the building has operated as a series of restaurants. As of 2019, it is "Asian Fusion," whose owners bought the building from the owners of the "Good Friends" restaurant.



Site 71: 33 Station Drive: Issac Hey Warehouse (1880s/1890s)

Although it may not look it today, this edifice functioned as a warehouse for the adjacent Issac Hey General Store at 31 Station Drive. Hey, a retired jeweler from Newark, bought both properties from the heirs of Princeton Junction farmer David Vorhees in 1884, and shortly afterwards likely constructed both edifices.

The parcel was later granted to I. Vorhees Hey and Margarethe Hey, and after them, sold as part of a significantly larger parcel to Jacob Hey in 1927. Philip L Gilmer of Princeton Borough bought the property in 1947, and later sold it to Charles J Weingart, Jr. and Dorothy R. Weingart in 1955 and 1958 (in 2 separate transactions), who turned it into Dewey's Upholstery Shop in the 1950s. Today, the store is still occupied by Dewey's Upholstery Shop. Throughout

its existence, this wood-framed building has undergone numerous facade renovations and expansions, although the original volumetrics can still be identified.

Site 72: 37 Station Drive: Jacob Wyckoff Feed Mill (mid-1800s)

This unassuming building seems to be a post-war edifice from the front, facing Station Drive. However, the back of the building (facing the tracks) evokes a different story. This building, also owned by Jacob Wyckoff, functioned as a feed mill. It was eventually sold to the Swinger Company, who still had the hay press, bought and graded potatoes, and bought hay and straw.

The edifice was long ago stuccoed over, but its volumetrics still hearken back to its original form.



Site 73: 45 Station Drive: Mahan's Tavern

At one point, a building known as the Princeton Junction Hotel (AKA Mahan's Tavern) stood on this site. A 2-story, wood-framed edifice, it experienced numerous renovations and additions during its existence. The hotel was operated by Edward W. Mahan, and during the 1930s, was rented by the Cox family. Members of this family sold sandwiches, soup, and beverages to railway works during the construction that took place as part of the transition from steam to electric trains along the train line. Doubtless, the hotel enjoyed booming business due to its convenient location!

Issac Hey (also the proprietor of the nearby general store and its associated warehouse) purchased the land from David Vorhees in 1884 (the same man who sold him the land on which the general store and warehouse were alter built). Possession later passed to Jacob C. Hey in 1927, Philip L. Gilmer in 1947, James H. and Olga J. Hall in 1953, and finally to New Jersey Transit in 1998.



Princeton Junction Hotel around the turn of the 20th century

As of 2019, the site of the former store has been paved over with parking for the Princeton side of the train station near the Vaughn Parking Lot. Unfortunately, this building was torn down in the mid-2000s due to its deteriorating condition.

Site 74: Nassau Interlocking Tower (c. 1930)

Although not culturally a part of Station Drive, you are now at the optimal location in which to view this edifice. Located behind the power station and along the railroad tracks, this 2-story brick building with a proportionately large ceramic hip roof was constructed circa 1930 and served to monitor traffic on the Nassau interlocking -the junction of the Pennsylvania Railroad, New York-Philadelphia Main Line, and Princeton Branch (Dinkey). Although it no longer retains its signals, its architectural character is still largely preserved. The Tercentenary lists John Ward as having been in charge at some point before 1964. The National Register eligibility of this building was assessed as part of a larger Pennsylvania Railroad Historic District.



Note 15: Backtrack to the intersection of Princeton-Hightstown, Cranbury, and Wallace Roads, noting Site 75 - 29 Washington Road (c. 1900) on your right before you turn onto the bridge. Make another right onto Wallace Road until you hit the entrance to the Princeton Junction Train Station drop-off & pick-up loop. Enter this loop and pause as you look at:



Site 76: Princeton Junction Train Station (1865)

In 1839, the Camden & Amboy Railroad Transportation Company ran tracks through West Windsor, as part of a decades-long construction of one of North America's earliest railroad lines. This railroad, running parallel to the Delaware & Raritan Canal, serviced two of West Windsor's villages - Princeton Basin and Port Mercer - until its relocation in 1864, and the subsequent construction of the Princeton Junction Train Station. At the same time, the "Dinkey" line was established, servicing passengers wishing to travel to Princeton.

In 1865, the Princeton Junction train station opened, heralding a new era of transportation for the township. At first, the station was mainly used by Princeton residents and Princeton University students, hence

Princeton Junction's etymology. However, over the centuries, this trend has shifted, and as of 2019, the station primarily services trains travelling along the Northeast Corridor - one of North America's most heavily trafficked rail lines.

Throughout the decades, the station building itself has undergone several transformations. In the 1870s, a one-story building with a large gabled roof stood on the north side of the tracks. In the 1890s, a second building was constructed, and included a waiting room, a ticket office, an express office, and a six-room apartment on the second floor in which the ticket agent lived. At this time, there was a platform on the south side of the tracks but no ticket agent. After this building burned in 1953, a more utilitarian waiting room was constructed, and still stands today on the north side of the tracks. In 1984, the current station building was constructed, finally placing an edifice on the south side of the tracks.

Several ticket agents' names are known: Thomas Perrine (1897), W.H. Smith (1902), and Thomas Carlon (1906). From 1913 to 1915, Walter Conover, Sr. was the ticket master and resided in the apartments above the ticket booth. Nellie L. Cox (aka "Mom Cox") operated the newsstand and made the apartment her home from 1935 until her passing in 1944.

Several legends have left their mark on the station. Renowned physicist and Princeton Resident Albert Einstein often sat next to the tracks and watched trains pass by, often using them to explain part of his General Theory of Relativity. John D. Rockefeller, Sr., President Grover Cleveland and his wife, and Henry VanDyke all passed through the station. The township's 1964 tercentenary noted that "old timers remember President "Teddy" Roosevelt attending an Army-Navy football game.

Since its construction, the railroad and station have brought much commerce, population growth, and life to both Princeton Junction and West Windsor. The station continues to be one of the busiest transportation hubs in the state, centuries after its establishment.

Note 16: Exit the loop (it is a one-way road) and enter Scott Avenue (across Wallace Road). You are now in Berrien City:

Berrien City – 1924

Berrien City, located primarily around Alexander Road, Scott Avenue, and Berrien Avenue, was West Windsor's first major residential development. It is emblematic of the township's rapid and transformative post-World War I growth. Constructed primarily in the mid-1920s next to the Northeast Corridor train line, it was the brainchild of Alexander Lawrence Berrien (known to friends as "Judge"), cousin of Scott Berrien, who managed the general store in Princeton Basin.

By 1924, Berrien had bought enough property south of the station to build 114 uniform lots, each with 50-foot wide frontages. Berrien offered each lot directly to a buyer who would decide on the type and size of house to be constructed. This "city" grew rapidly and exhibited a variety of architectural styles. Many of the brick houses were built by Charles Aversano (resident of Scott Avenue); the cement block & stucco houses were constructed by the Hall Family.

Oftentimes, due to the scarcity of certain building components, leftover materials from the Pennsylvania Railroad, such as packing crates were used in the houses' construction. These elements can still be seen in some of the existing houses.

Such development necessitated the formation of a fire brigade in 1926 and construction of a fire house in 1931 - now headquarters of the West Windsor Arts Council. It is the neighborhood's most prominent structure.

In addition, Berrien City operated its own water infrastructure under the Princeton Junction Water Company (later sold to the Elizabethtown Water Company in January 1968). In March 1955, residents of Princeton Junction joined together to provide capital to drill a well on the Pennsylvania Railroad property at the foot of Scott Avenue. This well was a counterpart to another well (with its own water tower) at the corner of Scott Avenue and Montgomery Streets. This tower often overflowed, resulting in beautiful ice sculptures in the winter. While the water tower is long gone, a small spigot on the southwest corner of the intersection of Scott Avenue and Montgomery Street marks where it once stood.

Many members of the Berrien family have been memorialized through the names of the streets in the development: Montgomery Street, Emil Street, Harris Road, Wallace Road, Lillie Street, and, naturally, Alexander Road and Berrien Avenue.

After WWII, the community rebounded and expanded beyond its original borders. Sears Roebuck & Co. and the Weyerhaeuser Company offered inexpensive "modular" home kits, helping to reignite this residential boom, primarily between the late 1940s and early 1950s. Neighbors and friends from the railroad construction crews helped with the actual construction, demonstrating a level of community engagement common in the neighborhood.

Although future developments (along Bedford Drive and Emil Street) were built over older Berrien City structures, most of the original 1920's "city" remains.

Note 17: Ride around and explore the city, noting the variety of architectural styles on display. You will stumble upon a few houses that are older than the rest of the development: Site 77 - 930 Alexander Road (1900), Site 78 - 932 Alexander Road (c. 1897), Site 79 - 940 Alexander Road (1900-1916), Site 80 - 942 Alexander Road (1895), Site 81 - 3 Berrien Avenue (1910), Site 82 - 960 Alexander Road (1912), Site 83 - 32 Berrien Avenue (1917), and Site 84 - 40 Montgomery Street (1912).



Alexander Lawrence Berrien



Site 85: Berrien City Firehouse (1931)

Soon after the incorporation of West Windsor's first fire company in 1921, it was evident that the township would need a more expansive effort to cover its rapidly-growing population. On June 3, 1926, the Berrien City Fire Company was formed to supplement the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1.

The company's first equipment reflected the resources of the locales in which they fought fires. Lacking fire hydrants, they owned a pumped and a brush truck to handle field fires. In 1927, the first fire truck - a 1928 Foamite Chemical truck - was purchased for \$3900. Until 1931, the truck was housed in a variety of locations, including a private garage on Berrien Avenue and a brick building on Station Drive.

In 1930, the company reorganized as the Princeton Junction Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1. Construction of a dedicated firehouse along Alexander Road between Berrien and Scott Avenues soon followed in 1931. Over the decades, the roof was raised and the building lengthened to accommodate ever-larger equipment.

When space was needed for expansion of the fire house, a separate house - originally located at the intersection of Scott Avenue and Alexander Road - was moved to North Post Road, where it stands two houses east of the bridge over the Northeast Corridor railroad.

During the Great Depression, Bingo games were a popular fundraiser for the company. This practice continued until the 1980s. During World War II, both the firehouse in Dutch Neck and the one in Berrien City served as Civil Defense stations, equipped for war-time emergencies. 4 decades later, between 1980 and 1989, it also served as a Senior Citizens Center.

In the 1970s, the company brought in the Hoxie Brothers circus, which was held on the Coward farm (now High School South). In the same decade, women began to increasingly volunteer for the company, driving fire engines and assisting at fires. This contingent included Ann "Nancy" Blaney, Shirley LaBeur, Sandy Radclidd, and Anneta Zinetti.

In 2002, the fire company moved most of its operations to a new facility at 245 Clarksville Road, retaining the old building in Berrien City for truck and equipment storage. In 2010, the West Windsor Arts Council took out a lease on the building and now hosts events and exhibitions in and around the former firehouse, occupying the eastern half of the building.

Note 18: Once you are done exploring Berrien City, exit out of Monterey Drive onto North Post Road and turn left. Along the way, note Site 86 – 408 North Post Road (1895), Site 87 - 397 North Post Road (1808) and Site 88 - 377 North Post Road (1907-1918). You will soon come upon the West Windsor Municipal Complex to your right:

Site 89: West Windsor Municipal Complex (1975)

Opened in 1975 when the administrative center of the township was moved from the now-demolished town hall in Dutch Neck, the municipal complex is home to the town hall, police and court facilities, the Princeton Junction/West Windsor Post Office, Twin-W First Aid Squad headquarters, and a Senior Center. Also part of the municipal complex is the headquarters for the Princeton Junction Fire Co. No. 1, which relocated there from the firehouse in Berrien City in 2002.



Note 19: Observe Site 90 – 245 Clarksville Road (1913) on the left before turning onto Clarksville Road, heading away from the Municipal Complex. You will soon pass by:



Site 91: 297 Clarksville Road – Princeton Junction Parsonage (late 1800s)

Records indicate that this building was constructed in the mid-19th century at 297 Clarksville Road. Because Grovers Mill contained no school, it is likely that this institution served students from both this village and Princeton Junction. Like other early schools, this building consisted of one room and served students of a variety of ages. In 1994, when the property owner constructed a larger residence, it was relocated to the Schenck Farmstead at 50 Southfield Road and serves as a living memorial to the township's earliest educational efforts.

Site 92: 297 Clarksville Road – Maurice Hawk Elementary School (1964)

Opened in 1964, this school dwarfed the parsonage school right next door. Built at the end of the baby boom, Maurice Hawk was a response to a rapid growth in the township's youth population. The school featured unique architectural features including a partial open space plan and dedicated library.



Note 20: Continue along Clarksville Road, passing by Site 93 - 315 Clarksville Road (1800), Site 94 - 325 Clarksville Road (1888), Site 95 - 332 Clarksville Road (1892), and Site 96 - 1 Penn-Lyle Road (1800). At the intersection of Clarksville Road and Penn-Lyle Road is the split between the Green Trail and the Red Trail. If you wish to continue along the Green Trail, ignore the rest of this note. Else, for the Red Trail, skip ahead to the description of High School South at the bottom of this page.

Note 21: For the Green Trail: Proceed along Clarksville Road until you come to its intersection with Princeton-Hightstown Road. Navigate the intersection until you are at the corner of the large field (with the flagpoles) across the road from High School South:



Site 97: Rogers Arboretum & 9/11 Memorial (2001 & 2002)

Dedicated in April 2001, this field facing High School South containing preserved woodland and hiking trails therein commemorates township resident Ron Rogers, a life-long conservationist and founding Friends of West Windsor Open Space (FOWWOS) trustee. His efforts led to a township-wide farmland/environmental conservation movement that still operates as one of the core drives of West Windsor's land use allocation to this day.

The Arboretum showcases oak trees (Ron's favorite trees) along with groves of various other species of native trees. A walking path circumnavigates the field and contains both pavers commemorating residents of the township and bluestones

identifying various trees throughout the Arboretum. At the northeast corner of the field, where the woodland trails begin, is a granite obelisk topped by a bronze replica of Ron's favorite hat.

Following the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, a 9/11 memorial was constructed in the arboretum. The memorial was dedicated in April 2002. Donations from West Windsor residents and local developers made the project possible. These same developers offered labor for the memorial's construction, and the bridge spanning the reflecting pools was designed by local resident Richard Snedeker, member of the FOWWOS. Harley Pickens, also a member of FOWWOS, contributed to the overall design and construction of the memorial. Township Landscape Architect Dan Dobromilsky helped integrate the memorial into the overall plan of the Arboretum. Please take time to visit the memorial to reflect on one of the 21st century's most influential events and see how it touched the lives of residents of our own township.

Note 22: Proceed along the sidewalk that runs parallel to Princeton-Hightstown Road. Continue along Hendrickson Drive, passing by:

Site 98: 219 Hendrickson Drive (1750)

This house was originally a two-room house on an apple orchard. According to town legend, it, like 221 Southfield Road, was another "safe house" that participated in the Underground Railroad of the 1800s. It also may have served as a stagecoach stop for weary travelers between Princeton and Hightstown.



Note 23: Continue along Hendrickson Drive until you hit North Mill Road. Note a few houses at this location: Site 99 - 255 Hendrickson Drive (pre-1850), Site 100 - 6 North Mill Road (1900), and Site 101 - 3 South Mill Road (across the street; c. 1895). You are now in the historic pseudo-village of "Van Hiseville," named after a family – the VanHisevilles – that lived nearby. The area is also colloquially called "Pig Town," so named after a trolley line conductor derisively made a comment about the multiplicity of pigs on a nearby farm (where the community park now exists). Now backtrack until you are again at the intersection of Penn-Lyle and Clarksville Roads. Proceed left, onto Penn-Lyle Road, passing by:

Proceed left, onto Penn-Lyle Road, passing by:



Sites 102 & 103: Coward Farmstead (Date Unknown) & 346 Clarksville Road – High School South (1973)

Formerly named "West Windsor-Plainsboro High School," this institution was built in 1973 and features a unique open-space floor plan. Prior to that year, The Coward family farmstead was partially located on the property (more farmland extended past Rt. 571 and into present-day Rogers Arboretum). The adjacent c. 1917 photo shows the Coward House and its residents. Left to right, they are: Estella Vorhees Coward, Major and Sarah Bergen Vorhees (parents of Estella), and Herbert Coward. Their house was burned down in 1973 to make way for the school and to provide practice for

the local fire squads.

Before West Windsor-Plainsboro High School's construction, students attended Princeton High School. For 24 years, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School functioned as the only high school in the West Windsor-Plainsboro school district, until High School North was built in 1997. Thus, the older institution appended its name by adding "South." Today, both institutions proudly hold titles as two of New Jersey's best-ranking schools.

Note 24: Continue along Penn-Lyle Road. You will pass by Site 104 - 13 Penn-Lyle Road (1860-1875) and Site 105 – 55 Penn-Lyle Road (c. 1799), travelling for a while until you come upon the PSEG power lines again. At this very spot, to your left and just south of the power lines, is where Site 106 - the Penn-Lyle station for the Trenton-New Brunswick Railroad (c. 1902) used to sit. It was demolished in the mid-1900s. Continue further until you come upon Village Road West. At this intersection stands Site 107 - 574 Village Road West (c. 1850, listed under ownership by an "E. V. Perrine" in 1875). Make a left, and continue along Village Road West, passing by Site 108 - 557 Village Road West (c. 1916). Soon, you will arrive back in Dutch Neck.

Congratulations! Regardless of which trail you chose I hope you have gained a significant understanding of numerous sites within West Windsor and the historical dynamics and development of our township. Additionally, if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, do not hesitate to contact me at westwindsorhistory@gmail.com. I hope you enjoyed biking through time!

-Paul Ligeti