

Historical Society News

East Windsor at two hundred and twenty

PART I

Before the 1720s
Searching for the
Beginnings of East
Windsor

Places in East Windsor
A Historical Gazetteer

Before East Windsor
A Brief History of
Windsor

**Hightstown-East Windsor
Historical Society**
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Editor's Column

On February 9, 2017, East Windsor Township will become 220 years old. For more than one-fifth of that time, we have been the Hightstown-**East Windsor** Historical Society. We plan to commemorate East Windsor's milestone by devoting the newsletter to stories about the Township and its people. This is the first of three issues in which we will focus on East Windsor's history.

Many of our readers may not know much about that history, and we've devised this first issue especially for them. In the centerfold, we've placed a map of the township highlighting the places that have helped shape its history. We've further explained the map with a "gazetteer"--a dictionary of the place names--from "Hickory Corner" to "Heckalutz"--and while we may have overlooked a few, I think we've given plenty of information by which even the newest resident can orient him- or herself to the places of our past.

Every place has its beginnings, and before there was East Windsor (and West Windsor) there was ... Windsor. Before Windsor there was, well, read "Before the 1720s."

- Bob



COVER & ABOVE PHOTO
Milford/Etra Cemetery
Photo by: Rick Pratt

President's Message

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

Thank you all for attending the biennial house tour. It was one of our best both in the number of attendees and as an important fundraiser for the Society. Once again its success was a result of the dozens of volunteers who donated their time and money to the event. Special thanks go to Robin and Jay Smith for hosting the "after party" and for feeding the masses. But none of this would have been possible without the homeowners who open their lovely houses to us. They were Bob von Riegen & Linda Earley, Jay & Mairead Thompson, John Hostettler & Beth Morley, Holly & Chris Moraitis, Beth & Keith Jackson and Jeff Bond and his residents Fran Ianacone and Meg & Giuliano Chicco. Thank you!

Our next tour is 2018! Let me know if you would like us to feature your house. Additionally we ask that all members support the local advertisers that funded the "ticket" booklet.

Since the last newsletter the Society has received additional accessions, including a large amount of family and area material from Alice Hageman. Bob Craig, our resident expert, has separated the materials as they await proper categorizing. Maintaining a library of pictures, documents and books of local provenance is, in my opinion, our most important mission. Its success and future is highly dependent on volunteers who are willing to put in a few hours a month. Contact me if you are interested. No experience is required, just interest and desire. It actually is fun and you could get hooked! Bagels are always on me.

Due to last year's success, your officers have agreed to hold the 2017 annual meeting in May 2017. We are trying to lock in the exact date and we have two venues that we believe will excite you. Pencil in 4 pm, May 7th. I will confirm the exact date and location early in 2017.

Enclosed is a dues envelope for 2017. If you are a "life member", please give this to a neighbor, friend or family member and encourage them to join. Also drop me an email with your email address. This allows us to contact you with the most current information about the Society. I would love to hear any of your suggestions and comments as well.

In closing, this newsletter begins our year of commemorating East Windsor's 220th anniversary. Bob Craig has done excellent research, as always, and Rick Pratt performed his usual stellar layout expertise. Enjoy it and I hope to hear from you soon.

WINTER 2016/17



to educate while preserving for future generations, our people and our community's history.

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Before the 1720s: Searching for the Beginnings of East Windsor

BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

Hightstown has long been schooled to look for its founding in the year 1721, due to stories that were passed down through (or were made up in) the 19th century. It is true that East Windsor's beginnings are tied up with Hightstown's, but if you really want to find out when the entire community got started, you must go back still further, even before 1700. The story of East Windsor began in the 17th century, before anyone of European ancestry even settled here.

East Windsor started to take shape in the 1690s, and the story is tied up with the larger story of New Jersey's beginnings. New Jersey had been founded in 1664, and by the 1680s it had passed through its colonial infancy into what I have elsewhere called its "toddlerhood." What had begun as one colony had temporarily become two, and the territory that would become East Windsor was bound up in what in the 1680s was East New Jersey.

East New Jersey had a problem. Although it had secured a favorable boundary, or "province line," with West New Jersey in 1687, land speculators from West Jersey were encroaching upon East Jersey territory, by crossing the province line (today it's in part the line between Hamilton and Robbinsville townships). The East Jersey Proprietors, who controlled land distribution and sales, needed a way to

buy the "Indian title" to the lands on its side of the province line, so it could transfer a clear title to fellow members of the East Jersey proprietors or others who wished to buy land.

In 1687, the East Jersey Proprietors opened talks with the Lenape leaders in the Crosswicks area, sending negotiators there by way of the "Indian path" that extended from the Raritan River in the eastern part of what is today New Brunswick through the modern locations of Dayton, Cranbury, East Windsor, and Allentown, to Crosswicks. That path was joined in the 1680s at Cranbury ("Cranberry Brook") by a new road that the Proprietors themselves created, extending from what is today South Amboy.

The path to Crosswicks was widened into a road in the 1690s after a statute to improve it was passed in East Jersey. The improvements (to at least the northern half) were to be paid for by East Jersey tavernkeepers who would benefit by added traffic on the road. The leader of this group, probably the one most involved in overseeing the improvements, was George Drake, and the road as far as Cranbury became known as "George's Road" (later "Old George's Road"). In 1695 another East Jersey law was enacted, announcing that the new road was a link in a "great thorough fair" across New Jersey. It was quickly made the "Post Road" across New Jersey for the American colonial post office.

An agreement with a man named John Harrison was made about 1698 to improve and maintain the road, and somehow, between the work of Drake and Harrison, by about 1700, bridges had been built across every stream along this road south of the Raritan River. In the area of the future East Windsor, bridges were built where the Old Cranbury Road crosses the Millstone River, at Rocky Brook in Hightstown, and where the Old York Road crosses the Assunpink Creek. It was in this context that settlement began at Cranbury in or about 1697, where the road crossed Cranberry Brook, joined by the road from South Amboy.

Settlement in today's East Windsor, however, was much delayed. Land allocation was not. East Jersey's deputy surveyor general had been advancing southwestward through Monmouth County in the 1680s, laying out large tracts for holders of proprietary shares, and by 1686 had already reached what is today Imlaystown. In 1690 the proprietors reached the province line with their surveys, giving patents for large tracts stretching from there northward to the Assunpink Creek.

In 1998, the East New Jersey Proprietors finally dissolved themselves as a corporate entity, one of the oldest corporations in the United States. The State of New Jersey bought their remaining assets, including the large body of their historical records and

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Beginnings- continued from page 4

placed them in the State Archives in Trenton. As a result, it is easier today for historians to consult this material than it formerly was, and thus easier to figure out what was happening in specific places. Although the story is too complicated to be fully explored here, some of the most important elements of the story can be told.

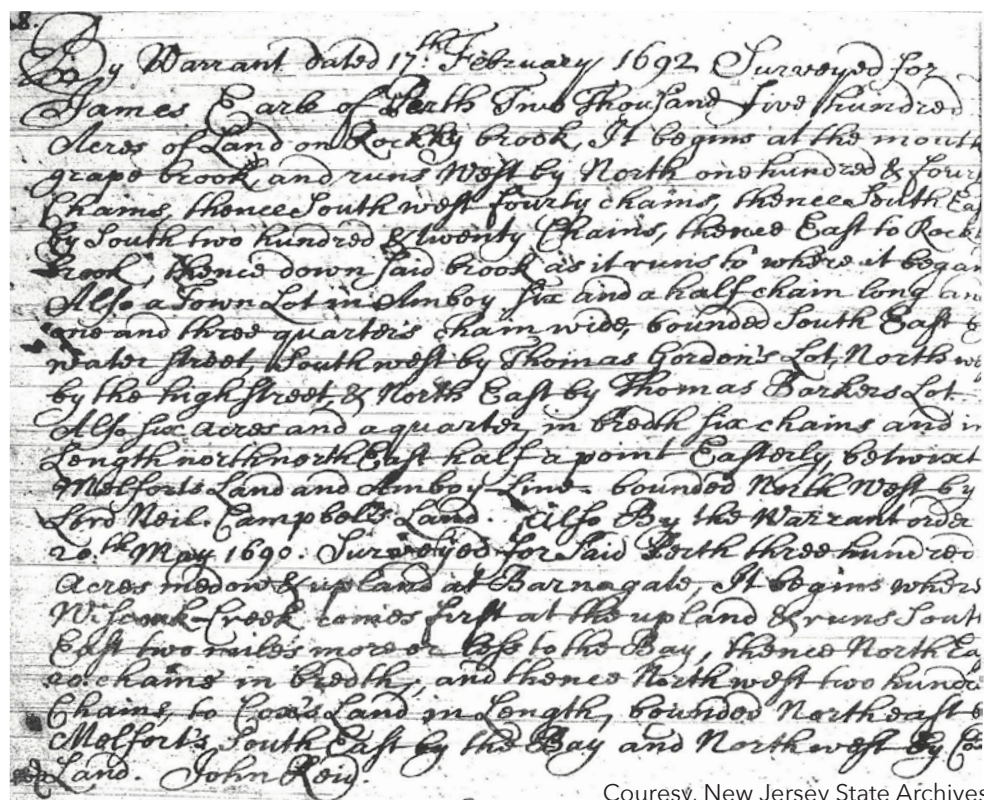
Action in the present territory of East Windsor began in the early 1690s. In 1693, the East Jersey surveyors came to Rocky Brook and found the spot where the small stream known as "Grape Brook" (now Grape Run) emptied into Rocky Brook, a spot about 200 feet west of the Rte. 33 bridge over Rocky Brook in downtown Hightstown. This point became the starting point for the survey of four large tracts that encompassed all of the present Hightstown Borough and the large majority of East Windsor as well.

The first was patented in October 1693 to a Proprietor living on the island of Barbados in the Caribbean, Thomas Foulerton. Stretching along the north side of Rocky Brook it extended to the south side of Millstone River and was known as the Foulerton tract. The second tract lay to the east of the first, and it, too, was patented in 1693. From the same starting point it also extended to the Millstone River and eastward to take in part of the land now occupied by Twin Rivers. By 1700 this was owned by John Molleson from Piscataway Township, and it became known as the "Molleson tract."

The other two tracts extended from the same starting point at Grape Brook along the south side of Rocky Brook. The larger, eastern one was patented in September 1694 to James Drummond, the Scottish earl of Perth, one of the East Jersey Proprietors who never came to America. This tract encompassed a large portion of East Windsor land to the south and east. It was nominally surveyed for 2,500 acres but actually included closer to 4,000 acres. It became known as "Perth's great tract." Hightstown's origin story involves what has been described as a 3,000-acre tract, and Perth's great tract came closest to fitting that description, even though John Hight never owned it, and as far as we know, never occupied it.

The Proprietors waited to patent the fourth tract until October 1701, when it was awarded to William Dockwra, the secretary of the faction of the East Jersey Proprietors who were resident in London. Called the "Dockwra tract," it was somewhat gerrymandered to fit the wedge-shaped space left between Rocky Brook and the northerly line of the Perth tract. That line that the two tracts shared as a common boundary is well known today as the center line of Stockton Street for most of its length in Hightstown, and it extended westerly for nearly two miles out into the western parts of East Windsor before turning northerly to Rocky Brook. This tract extended far enough to the west to include the area of the former RCA Space Center.

These four tracts were all held by absentee owners, and for more than a generation they remained unsettled. No evidence of tenants or other occupants has emerged before the 1720s, and it was the 1730s before the settlement of what would become East Windsor began in earnest.



Courtesy, New Jersey State Archives

1694 survey for Perth

Places in East Windsor History...

...A Historical Gazetteer

17th century - 1830: before the Railroad

1. Old York Road / Old Cranbury Road

The Old Cranbury Road and the Old York Road in East Windsor, together with Main, North Main, and South Main streets in Hightstown, all formed part of the same road toward the end of the 17th century, created from the Indian path that once stretched from the Raritan River in Middlesex County to Crosswicks in Burlington County. Even in its early years it was known by different names in different places. It was the first major road across New Jersey, completed while the road through what is now Princeton was still a path. The road was the original spine from which the other early local roads stemmed. The emergence of East Windsor where is situated today is due in large part to the presence of this road.

2. Hickory Corner

When the Perth tract was laid out in 1694, its northwesternmost point was a corner that by 1772 was noted as having been marked by a hickory tree. That tree stood not far from where Scott Road today intersects with Dutch Neck Road. It was evidently this tree, now long gone, that gave the name "Hickory Corner" to a schoolhouse that stood here in the middle of the 19th century, and indirectly to the neighborhood. The name of Hickory Corner Road still bears witness to this history. ("Corner" for a long time did not mean an intersection of roads, except incidentally, but rather it meant the point where two lines of a large tract of surveyed property came together.)

3. Locust Corner

The name given to a place a short distance to the west of the intersection of the Princeton-Hightstown Road (Rte. 571) with the Old Trenton Road. In the 18th century it was a prominent survey corner marked by a locust tree. In the 19th century, a neighborhood schoolhouse stood there.

4. Chamberlin's Corner / Eiler's Corner

The corner of the Old York Road and Windsor-Perrineville Road in the southern part of the township. In the 1700s, it was a corner of the farm of John Chamberlin, a Windsor Township officeholder who was important in the affairs of the eastern half of the township. By the 20th century, it had become known as Eiler's Corner.

5. Wyckoff's Mill

In the early 1740s, Isaac FitzRandolph built a sawmill and a gristmill on the Millstone River, near where Probasco Road now crosses it. Through most of the 19th century, it was owned successively by four generations of the Wyckoff family. The road from Hightstown to this road thus became Wyckoff's Mill Road. The gristmill was destroyed by fire in March 1888 and not rebuilt.

6. Hightstown

The village of Hightstown emerged in the middle of what later became

East Windsor after John Hight completed a gristmill on Rocky Brook in 1749, creating Peddie Lake. Thus during the first hundred years of its existence the village of Hightstown was part of the land that became East Windsor in 1797. It was incorporated as a borough in 1853 and set apart as a fully autonomous municipality in 1894. Hightstown grew to its present size at East Windsor's expense when it annexed some township land in 1915 and in 1927.

7. New Hightstown

In 1798, Philadelphia merchant John Shields created a subdivision along the west side of Old York Road south of the present Airport Road and called it "New Hightstown." It featured a string of 75 lots, each with 100 feet of frontage along the road and 300 feet deep. He intended to sell them to tradesmen and mechanics, but there were few takers. A small number of buyers did come forward, but most of the lots were re-absorbed into the farms from which they had been taken. The name didn't catch on.

8. Milford

Today the hamlet of Etra, it began with the millpond now known as Etra Lake, which powered a gristmill completed in 1773. Etra Road was laid out that year, and a small village with a few stores and shops gradually emerged. Cedarville Road and Milford Road were added in 1785. The First Methodist Church of Hightstown had its effective start in Milford when the Hutchinson family built a small meetinghouse about 1790, by the edge of the lake. The cemetery for this church still exists across the road from where the house stood. Milford became Etra by the 1890s, after

Places- continued on page 5

Places- continued from page 6

the post office adopted the name, which was drawn from the initials of the village's most prominent resident, Edward T.R. Applegate.

9. Buzzard's Corner

Buzzard's Corner was the name given to the intersection of Stockton Street and Dutch Neck Road in the 19th century. Old timers back then remembered that a tavern had stood there from about 1800. This is one of the possible places where one might speculate that the Hightstown company of militia trained during the Revolutionary war. In the middle of the 19th century a brickyard was established here that endured for at least a generation. Although this spot is now in the Borough of Hightstown, this location was part of East Windsor until 1915.

10. Milford Cemetery

This graveyard in Etra, on the south side of Route 571, began as the cemetery for the Methodist meetinghouse that stood across the road. The earliest grave dates from 1791. Several members of the Hutchinson family, a prominent family in the area, are buried here. The church moved to Hightstown in 1835, becoming the First Methodist Church of Hightstown.

11. Thos. Hutchinson house

Thomas Hutchinson was one of the earliest and strongest converts to Methodism in the East Windsor area. In the 1780s he opened his house to itinerant Methodist ministers and helped to organize a Methodist church at Milford (Etra), helping to get its first meetinghouse constructed. The most famous of the itinerants was Francis Asbury, who visited "father Hutchinson" repeatedly. Four of Hutchinson's nephews became Methodist ministers, and the graveyard at Milford contains some of their graves. Samson Peters, to whom Hutchinson gave his freedom in 1802, founded the African American churches in Trenton and Princeton. (see also Heckalutz)

12. Ann Hutchinson grave

Ann Hutchinson (1699-1801), a symbolic matriarch of East Windsor, was certainly one of the first generation of Windsor Township settlers, and gave birth to one of its most prolific families. By the time of her death at age 101, she had 375 descendants. Francis Asbury, the "father of American Methodism," visited her grave and wrote about her in his journal. Ann was buried beside her husband William, who died about 1769, in a field to the east of Cedarville Road.

13. Chamberlin's Corner School

The American geographer Jedediah Morse published a guide book of maps of the roads between New York City and Philadelphia in 1789. When he mapped the Old York Road through East Windsor, he reported the presence of a schoolhouse at the corner of the Windsor-Perrineville Road. It's the earliest reference yet found to the location of a school in East Windsor. The school was the forerunner of later one-room schoolhouses in this neighborhood.

14. Schoolhouse north of Hightstown

In 1797, a schoolhouse stood on the west side of North Main Street on a lot near the Hightstown Borough line. It was a schoolhouse remembered in the 19th century for having been where a man known as

"Domine" (Scottish for teacher) Wilson taught in the 1790s. His is the earliest name of a teacher to have come down to us.

15. Cedar Swamp School

In the 1820s, a schoolhouse was built here for the neighborhood children. Because several of the families in this vicinity were Universalists (a liberal Christian faith) who belonged to the Universalist Church in Hightstown, they were sometimes able to secure the services of a teacher who also was a Universalist. It was here that Clara Barton, herself a Universalist who later founded the American Red Cross, taught for a term in 1851-52. The school stood on the east side of Cedarville Road, south of the cedar swamp.

16. Hickory Corner School

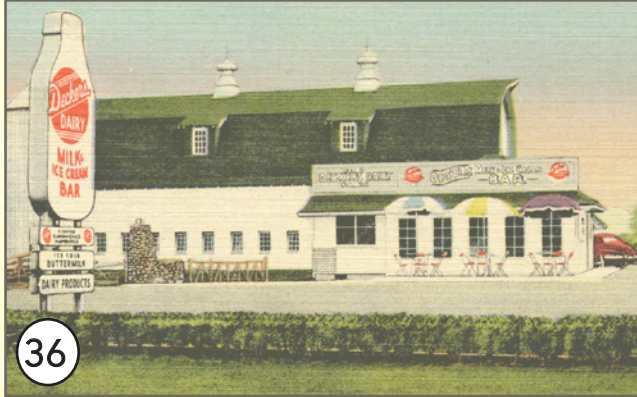
The schoolhouse that served the "Hickory Corner" neighborhood, was built in 1878 across Hickory Corner Road from Lee's Turkey Farm, to replace an earlier schoolhouse that stood elsewhere in the neighborhood (see Hickory Corner).

17. Old Trenton Road

This road cuts across the western portion of East Windsor Township, passing Locust Corner. The name "Old Trenton" is something of a misnomer, because when it was new in 1803 it replaced still older roads as the route between Cranbury and "Sandpink"-- (Edinburg in West Windsor)--then the most direct route to Trenton.

18. Bordentown & South Amboy Turnpike

In 1816, the state legislature authorized construction of a turnpike between Bordentown and South Amboy. In East Windsor in the 20th century, this



36

Deckers Dairy



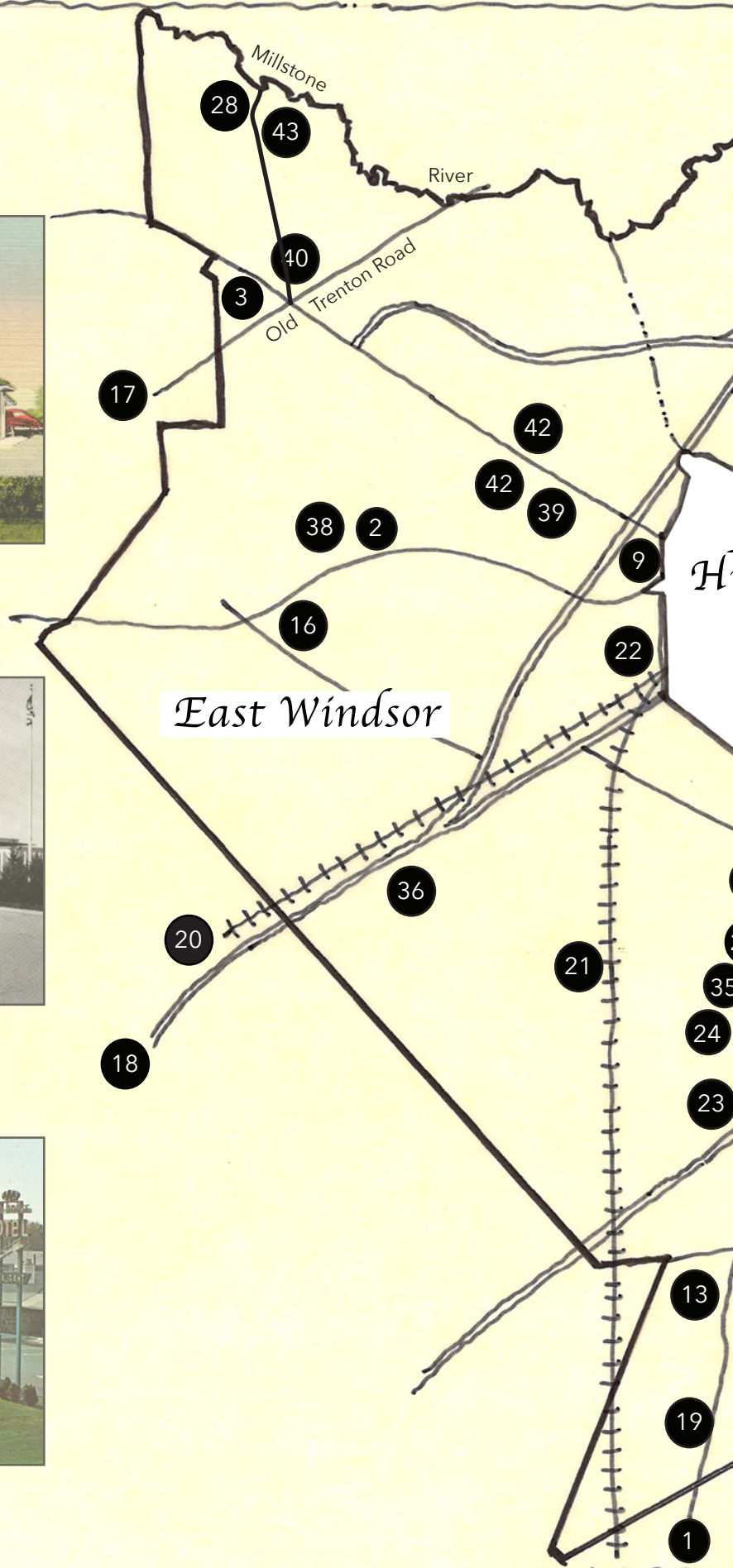
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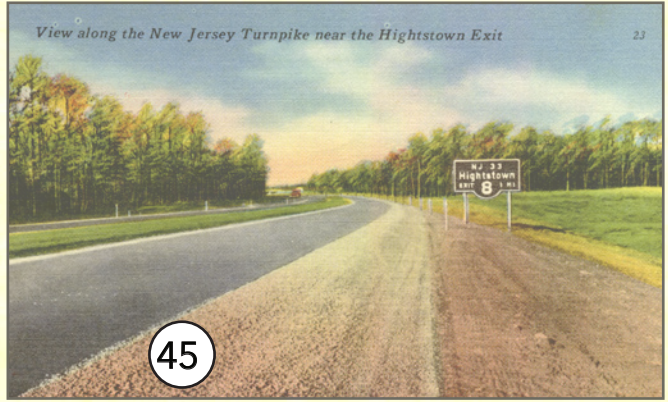
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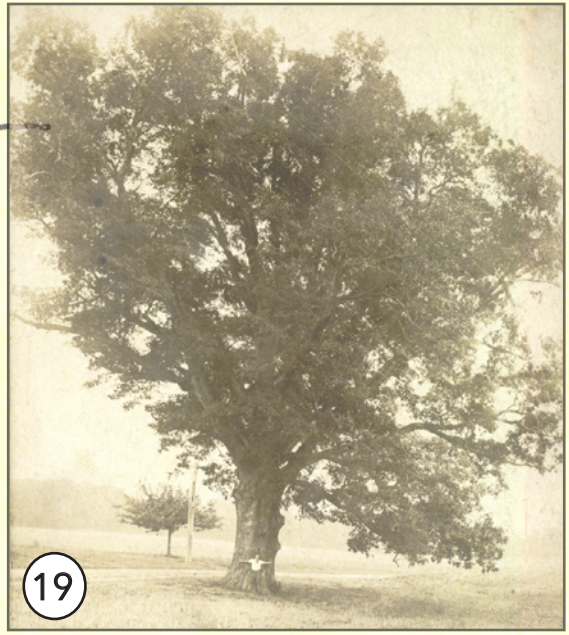
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Townhouse Motel





New Jersey Turnpike - Exit 8



Washington Oak

Places- continued from page 7

route became NJ Route 33 (south of Hightstown where it is also known as Mercer Street) and County Route 539 to the north of the Borough, where it took a straight course northward across the Millstone River toward Cranbury. The turnpike road was completed about 1818, and it quickly replaced the older roads as a traffic artery.

19. The "Washington" Oak

This was a great oak that stood along the west side of Old York Road about midway between Windsor-Perrineville Road and the Assunpink Creek. Its girth made it almost certainly a survivor from the colonial period, and it must have been seen by units of the Continental Army who passed it, but General Washington, himself, was never there. Still, it was a favorite of the neighborhood, and was watched after by the Mercer County Shade Tree Commission. The tree died and was removed by 1960, but is still remembered in historic photographs.

1830 - 1937 The Railroad Era

20. Camden & Amboy Railroad

The Camden & Amboy Railroad was the first railroad to connect major cities in the United States, through its combination of railroad with steamboat connections. Its track through East Windsor and Hightstown was built in 1832 as part of the company's original main line.

Where was this?

In each newsletter we will show you a picture from somewhere in Hightstown or East Windsor. We will identify which town it is.

If you know where it is, send us the address by mail (see page 10 for our address) or by email: cookcummings@yahoo.com, and include your address and phone number.

The first person to get it right will be entered into a drawing to be held at our annual dinner in May. The award will be determined by the membership committee.

You are not allowed to enter if it's your house.

East Windsor



Membership ~Application~

Support us this year at the following rates:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Booster | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life (Individual) | \$200 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life (Family) | \$275 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter ONLY | \$10 |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email 1: _____

Email 2: _____

Where did you hear about membership?

Please mail the completed application along with a check payable to:

HEW Historical Society
Membership Committee
164 North Main Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520

- I would not like to be part of the New Member Spotlight.

Volunteer Opportunities

I would like to volunteer to help out with the following committee(s):

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Property & Grounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity |

21. Hightstown & Pemberton Railroad

Incorporated in 1864, this line was completed in 1868 as a subsidiary of the Camden & Amboy Railroad. When it proved at first to be unprofitable, its operation was turned over to an outfit called the Union Transportation Company, more popularly known as the "U.T." The line stopped operating in East Windsor before the New Jersey Turnpike was built, but its right-of-way can still be seen in the local landscape.

22. Hightstown Junction

Hightstown Junction was the name given to the place along Mercer Street where the track of the Pemberton & Hightstown Railroad met the track of the Camden & Amboy. It featured a turntable and other railroad facilities.

23. Pullen's Nursery

Isaac Pullen, East Windsor's pioneer nurseryman, lived along the west side of Old York Road. He was a leading figure in the township during the pre-Civil War years, and helped organize the first Mercer County Agricultural Society. He also served a term in the New Jersey Assembly.

24. Village Nurseries

Village Nurseries was begun in 1853 just to the north of Pullen's nursery. At its peak in the first half of the 20th century, it occupied several hundred acres with trees and flowering plants, selling wholesale to a national market reached by railroad. Today, although much smaller, is the oldest business in continuous operation in East Windsor.

25. Peppler's Farm Implements

During the heyday of agriculture here, several local companies made farm machinery. East Windsor had Thomas Peppler's

company, which occupied a series of one-story buildings on the west side of Old York Road south of the golf course. Peppler advertised his business for more than fifty years by furnishing "Peppler's Weekly Chats," a column of farming tips to the *Hightstown Gazette*.

26. Hightstown and Perrineville Turnpike

In 1865 the legislature incorporated the Hightstown and Perrineville Turnpike Company, which improved Etra Road along its present alignment southeastwardly beyond the Monmouth County line toward Perrineville.

27. Hightstown and Manalapanville Turnpike

This road, known today as Monmouth Street in Hightstown and which followed Route 33 through Twin Rivers as the road to Freehold, was created in the 1850s as a plank road. In the late 19th century it was macadamized with crushed stone and became a popular venue for bicycle and carriage rides.

28. Taylor's Grove

Beginning in the 1850s, James A. Taylor's grove was a popular picnic spot in the far northwestern corner of the township tucked nearby the Millstone River, a pleasant carriage ride from downtown Hightstown. Until after 1900 when the automobile changed the geography of pleasure-seeking, Taylor's Grove was the venue of choice for countless social gatherings. By the 1930s it had already disappeared.

29. The East Windsor Cemetery and the Norton Tower

The East Windsor Cemetery, along Windsor-Perrineville Road, began as a graveyard for the John Ely family, situated at the western edge of their farm. Phebe Ely, John's first wife, died in 1756 and was the first person buried there. The ground continued to be a graveyard for the Ely and Norton families, who were related by marriage, until the East Windsor Cemetery was incorporated in 1856. The Norton Tower was built in 1884, to serve as both a mausoleum and, with a stair inside, a scenic overlook for viewing the farm landscape, from which one could see for miles in all directions.

30. Norton Family house

Clara Barton lived here with the Norton family at their home on Imlaystown Road for seven months in 1851-52, while teaching at the Cedar Swamp Schoolhouse. In the spring of 1852 she left East Windsor for Bordentown.

1937 - Present The Modern Era

31. U.S. Route 130

Designed as NJ Route 25 in the 1920s, this highway was built in the 1930s as a WPA project, to avoid the local traffic of the numerous towns that it bypassed enroute from the Benjamin Franklin Bridge in Philadelphia to North Brunswick where it ended at Route 1, which extended to the Pulaski Skyway and the Holland Tunnel. In East Windsor, Rte. 25 was the first road of any kind that crossed through the heart of the township without passing through Hightstown. The local portion was opened in 1937 and its construction marks the beginning of the modern era in East Windsor. It was renamed U.S. Route 130 in the 1950s.

32. Bogatz Bungalows

In the 1930s, this was a small colony of summer bungalows on the west side of Cedarville Road, across from where the Cedar Swamp school-house had stood a century before.

33. Heckalutz

In the 1930s, the Heckalutz Israel Farm Institute was founded here on the east side of Etra Road as a collective farm on the kibbutz model, to support Zionist efforts in Palestine. This farm, one of several kibbutzim spread across the United States, was one of the most enduring, and operated into the 1960s. Albert Einstein visited here during the 1930s. Benjamin Brown, a founder of Jersey Homesteads (today Roosevelt Borough), was also involved in organizing this farm.

34. Peddie Golf Course

Situated on the east side of Old York Road just south of the Hightstown Borough line, the Peddie Golf course remains today where it has been for nearly the past 100 years.

35. Conover's Dairy

Long a fixture in the township landscape, Conover's Dairy was located at Old York Road and Conover Road. Operating through most of the 20th century, it closed in the 1970s and the land became part of the "Centex" development of houses.

36. Decker's Dairy Farm

In the 1920s, Conrad Decker Sr. bought an existing dairy and operated it for about the next fifty years. Although his milk-processing plant was located on Monmouth Street in Hightstown, his dairy farm and cow herd were located on a farm on the east side of Rte. 130, south of the junction with Rte. 33.

37. Old York Estates

Bounded both by Old York Road and the Windsor-Perrineville Road, this was a small subdivision of about fifty half-acre lots developed in the early 1960s. Most of the houses were not built on speculation, rather they were custom-tailored for individual buyers, but it was a septic-tank development that otherwise fit the pattern of the crabgrass frontier. Its location south of the Turnpike helped shield it from further development pressure.

38. Brooktree

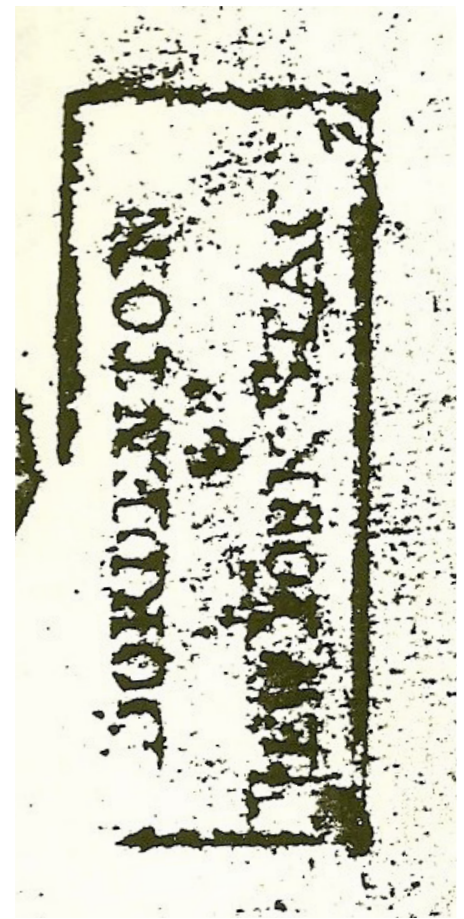
After Old York Estates, the same builders opened Brooktree, along Dutch Neck Road, the development that showed the direction that residential development in East Windsor would take in the 1960s.

39. Mettler Instruments

This was the first of the corporate arrivals in East Windsor, opening in 1954. It was the first international subsidiary of a Swiss laboratory precision balance maker, and it took up a relatively small tract on the south side of the Princeton-Hightstown Road (Route 571).

40. RCA Space Center

For its Astro-Electronics Division, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) built a facility in 1958 to produce space satellites on a large piece of former farmland along Old Trenton Road just off of the Princeton-Hightstown Road. It was the most high-tech and arguably the most



This impression was made from a hand-stamp used in 1786 on letters carried from Philadelphia by stage boat on the Delaware, then by the Bordentown-to-New York stage, through Hightstown and East Windsor. (from the Society's collections)

Monthly Meetings

Anyone is welcome to attend our meetings. We discuss progress of each committee and welcome your input for new ideas and offers to assist with our upcoming programs.

Meetings are held:

The first Monday of the month at 7:00 pm in Ely House. 164 North Main Street, Hightstown.

prestigious of the corporate R&D campuses that were built in East Windsor in the 1960s, and that provided the private-sector employment that fueled the township's suburban growth. More than 40 space satellites were produced and tested here. The Space Center was closed in 1998, however, following a series of corporate mergers.

41. National Lead (NL Industries)

Opened in 1962, the Hightstown Laboratories of the National Lead Company was the corporate R&D center of this New York-headquartered corporation. The difficulty with this company was that lead, the metal, was an ingredient in nearly all of its hundreds of products. And this was the decade in which lead, a toxic substance, ran headlong into the environmental movement. The company's fortunes nosedived during the latter part of the 1970s, taking the Hightstown Labs down with it, and the facility closed in 1980.

42. McGraw-Hill Publications

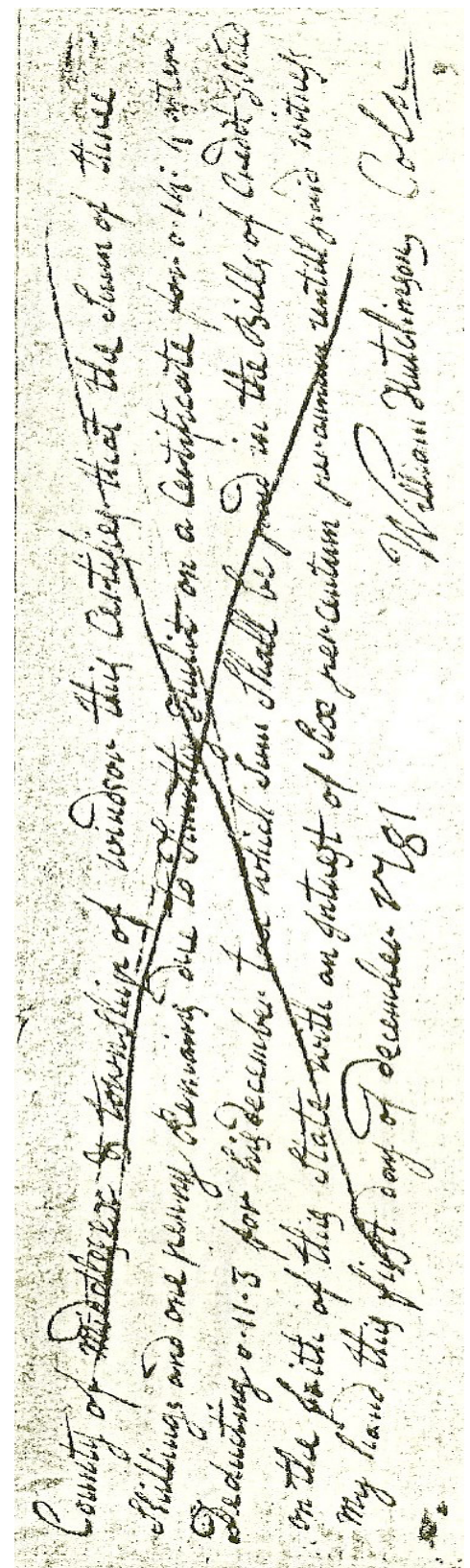
The McGraw-Hill Company was one of the nation's leading publishers of technical magazines and books. Headquartered in New York City, McGraw-Hill opened its East Windsor corporate campus in 1963, on the north side of the Princeton-Hightstown Road (Route 571). This was the company's book and magazine publishing hub. As a piece of architecture, the McGraw Hill facility for years seemed to point to the role that the Hightstown-Princeton Road should play: as a corporate research boulevard leading from Route 130 to the Washington Road gateway to Princeton University. East Windsor did its part, with Mettler Instruments, the RCA Space Center, and even the Hightstown Rug Company (Shiseido), and later PA Technology. McGraw-Hill spread to embrace both sides of Route 571, and for years operated its own bookstore--one of the finest technical bookstores in the country. Open to the public but never widely advertised, it was one of East Windsor's best-kept secrets in the 1960s and '70s.

43. EWMUA

In 1966, when the East Windsor Municipal Utilities Authority was established, it marked the transformation of the township from an agricultural into a suburban community. It built its principal wastewater treatment facility on Millstone Road, south of the Millstone River.

44. Twin Rivers

The first "planned-unit" development in New Jersey. Begun in the late 1960s, this was the development that broke the mold of the 1/2-acre-lot suburban housing that was engulfing East Windsor during that decade. Twin Rivers combined heightened density and integrated residential, commercial, and industrial uses in a combination meant to more effectively mimic a small town than a housing development. It also included the Ethel McKnight School. Four "quads" together straddled Route 33 and became home to nearly ten thousand people. Overnight it brought to East Windsor something it had never had: excellent bus service to New York City. Planners took notice of Twin Rivers, and it became the only real estate project in the township to become the subject of a professional literature.



This is a record of tax collection in Windsor Township during the Revolutionary War. William Hutchinson, Windsor's tax collector, lived in the southeastern part of what is today East Windsor.

Before East Windsor: A Brief History of Windsor Township¹

The first mention of Windsor Township in the historical record occurred in April 1731, when “New Winsor” appeared in the Middlesex County court minutes. The Township of New Brunswick, created in 1724, had included all of the territory of the present New Brunswick, North, South, and East Brunswick, and East Windsor, West Windsor, and Robbinsville townships, but in December 1730 a charter for a “city” of New Brunswick was issued by the New Jersey governor, to replace New Brunswick Township, but when that charter described the bounds of that new municipality, its southern edge stopped at the Millstone River, leaving the entire portion of Middlesex County² land south to the province line without a local government. New Windsor--the “New” was soon dropped by most people--was then created to fill the void. Windsor stretched from where Nassau Street in Princeton is today to just east of the land now occupied by Twin Rivers. From the Millstone River south to the outskirts of Allentown. It included the sites where Lake Carnegie, the RCA Sarnoff Research Center, Princeton Junction, and the fake Martian landing at Grovers Mill would all later appear.

Windsor was hardly settled in 1730. What population there was at that time was in the west, where the small Stony Brook settlement was located and where Princeton was about to emerge, and also in the south near where Allentown had been started. Altogether, Windsor occupied an area of more than 65 square miles, yet according to an estimate by one who lived through those years, there were no more than 40 farms in 1733.³ The area of East Windsor was largely unsettled, as was most of what is West Windsor today. The proprietary land grants that had been awarded before 1700 were still intact in 1730, still in the hands of descendants of the patentees who had received them. Those owners were all absentees. If there were settlers on these lands, perhaps even John and Mary Hight in 1721, they were either tenants or squatters. Their presence has not been proven.

Matters changed permanently after 1731. The Molleson tract was divided that year, encompassing much of the northeastern quadrant of East Windsor, and nine farms were made from it. These were divided among Molleson’s children and their spouses, mostly families from Piscataway, an indication that families who lived in the northern part of the county would continue to push southward to occupy at least part of Windsor Township. This trend would continue when Perth’s great tract was broken up in the 1740s, but the Fullerton tract and the Dockwra tract were not broken up until 1760. (They were probably tenanted after 1730.)

To understand how settlement increased throughout Windsor in the generation after 1730, consider how the number of mills grew. At first gristmills and sawmills had existed only in the earlier-settled areas of Windsor, or just outside it. Each one served a neighborhood. Stony Brook built a mill (1714), followed by the Allentown mill (ca.1716) and a mill at what soon would become called Kingston (1717). After 1730, mills were added on the Millstone River at the location later known as Aqueduct Mills (1735) and Wyckoff Mills (ca.1742); on Rocky Brook

at Hightstown (1749); on the Millstone River near Kingston (ca.1755); on Big Bear Brook at what would become Grovers Mill (1759); on Rocky Brook at what became Etra (1773); on the Assunpink Creek at what later became Windsor (ca.1787); and on Cattail Creek at what would become New Sharon (before 1800). In response to the settlement of the township, the New Jersey governor issued a charter of incorporation to the “Township of Windsor” in March 1751.

In 1772, New Jersey conducted a census of population, and the census return for Windsor Township has survived, thanks to governor William Franklin having it published verbatim in the newspaper as a salutary example to other townships. From it we learn that Windsor had reached a population of just above 1,900 souls, including nearly 100 African Americans. Since the average density across the township was a little less than 30 persons per square mile, the area of East Windsor today would have had a population of about 500 people in 1772, and a few more by 1776 when the American Revolution arrived on Windsor’s doorstep.

Windsor Township during the Revolutionary War included most notably the battle of Princeton, and some of the troop movements both after the battle of Trenton and before the battle of Monmouth, but it was largely insulated from fighting that went on around it. Windsor men who were not serving in the Continental Army were members of the third regiment of the Middlesex County militia, and the men of the East Windsor area belonged to a company headed by Capt. Jonathan Combs, a farmer who appears to have

lived somewhere along the road to Trenton (Dutch Neck Road today). His company, when not called out on duty, trained somewhere in Hightstown at a location that has not been identified. East Windsor men took part in battles from Long Island to Brandywine, Trenton to Monmouth, and in local actions of guarding strategic locations, transporting prisoners, finding forage for horses, transporting supplies from Trenton to the army at Morristown, and other routine actions. Some local men belonged to a troop of light horse organized at Cranbury.

Only fourteen years elapsed between the end of the Revolutionary war and 1797. These were years of peace and political tension. To help figure out how to spread the burdens of paying off New Jersey's Revolutionary War debt, the state undertook another census of population in 1784, one that has largely been forgotten. In that counting, Windsor Township was found to have 2,428 people, up by about 500 in the 12 years since 1772. The sizes of farms shrank considerably after the war, but more people were able to buy some land and a smaller portion of the people were landless. Just six years after that, after the Constitution had been ratified, the first Federal census was taken in 1790. Windsor had by then 2,838 people, probably about 750 people in the East Windsor area.

In the 1790s, New York City overtook Philadelphia as the nation's largest city. George Washington served two terms as President. In the middle 1790s, a series of political disputes locally split public opinion along geographic lines. The western part of Windsor, which looked to Princeton for its commerce, expressed resentment about actions taken by the eastern part of the township, centered at Hightstown, and in 1795 agitation to split the township began to be felt. Although Windsor was once thought to be a small township, by the 1790s it was considered to be too large. Legislative action was stalled for a year while petitioning grew, but in the winter of 1797, in the midst of a wave of township-making covering many parts of New Jersey, the legislature adopted and the governor signed a bill that gave the twin townships of East and West Windsor the same birthday, in the final weeks of Washington's second term.

¹ This article is based on Robert W. Craig's unpublished 1996 study, "Windsor Township and the Founding of Central New Jersey, 1680-1797."

² Mercer County was not created until 1838.

³ The estimate was made in 1772 by Windsor's tax assessor, Joseph Skelton, who lived in a part of the township near Penns Neck.

<i>September 9, 1772.</i>			
<i>An ABSTRACT of the Return made by JOSEPH SKELTON, Esq; Assessor of the Township of Windsor, in the County of Middlesex, which was laid before the House with the foregoing Message.</i>			
			Total.
Dwelling-houses in the Township,	-	-	300
WHITE PERSONS,			
Of all Ages; Males 877, Females 946,	-	-	1823
More Females than Males, 69.			
Married; Males 270, Females 270,	-	540	1823
Unmarried; Males 607, Females 676,	-	1283	
Under 16 Years old; Males 448, Females 450,	-	898	
More Females than Males, 2.			
From 16 to 50; Males 360, Females 438,	-	798	
More Females than Males, 78.			
From 50 to 80; Males 66, Females 52,	-	118	
More Males than Females, 14.			
Eighty, and upwards; Males 3, Females 6,	-	9	
More Females than Males, 3.			
			1823
Marriages within the last Year, viz.			
From July, 1771 to July, 1772,	-	-	4
Births in the said Year; Males 14, Females 14,	-	-	28
Burials in the said Year, viz.			
Under 16 Years old; Males 3, Female 1,	-	4	
From 16 to 50; Male 1, Females 2,	-	3	9
Fifty, and upwards; Male 1, Female 1,	-	2	
Families moved out of the Province from this Township, within the said Year,	-	-	2
Consisting of Males 12, Females 3,	-	-	15
Moved into the Province, and settled in this Township, within the said Year,	-	-	0
NEGROES,			
Under 16 Years old; Males 18, Females 31,	-	49	95
Sixteen, and upwards; Males 33, Females 13,	-	46	
Births within the said Year, Male	-	-	1
Burials within the said Year,	-	-	0

Windsor Township's abstract from the New Jersey census of 1772. Remarkably, it shows a very young population--half the people were 16 years of age or younger. It also shows a surprising surplus of women over men. African Americans, mostly enslaved, represented about 5 percent of the population, which was less than the average for New Jersey as a whole. The territory of today's East Windsor held about one-quarter of the township's population.

finishingtouch

LASTING INSPIRATION



A loo fit for Doctor Who



Flush rush. A gauge mounted below the water tank adds another whimsical element to this steampunk bath.

Architect Andre Rothblatt's clients wanted to incorporate some "steampunk" style into their whole-house remodel. Not quite sure what they meant, Rothblatt nevertheless enthusiastically agreed. He discovered that steampunk refers to a fusion of science fiction and fantasy, often set in the 19th century, that reimagines modern technology as intricately designed, steam-powered machinery. The powder room would be the steampunk stage. Its closed door would reveal nothing of the surprise behind. Inspired by his

research and his fascination with the illustrations of Rube Goldberg, Rothblatt began to sketch. His design included a Victorian high-tank toilet and marble-topped console vanity with a copper sink and faucet. He embellished the toilet and vanity with functional but exaggerated piping, and he designed custom wall sconces with vintage-looking Edison lightbulbs. Black subway tiles and black, medallion-embellished wallpaper create a dark background that contrasts with the bright copper. According to Rothblatt,

the design phase was rather fun and easy, but creating the intricate custom plumbing proved to be more difficult. Fortunately, the plumbing consultant, the lighting specialist, and the contractor viewed the project as an exciting challenge. When asked if the elaborate plumbing made for a louder-than-usual flush, Rothblatt said that it wasn't necessarily noisier, just different. The water rushing through the pipes creates more of a whooshing sound, which adds to the total steampunk experience. —Maureen Friedman

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