



4 School No. 11

School No. 11, or Ross Street School as it is also known, was completed in 1920. Among the oldest schools still standing in Woodbridge proper, School No. 11 offered a diverse curriculum, including reading, writing, arithmetic, as well as the domestic arts and music. Physical education was made compulsory in 1917 by the Board of Education. By 1926, a summer school program was organized. In 1930, Dr. Love, the first Superintendent of Woodbridge schools, proposed an addition to the school, with plans to house grades one through six. It was rejected due to financial hardships posed by the Great Depression, however. Nevertheless, as the years passed, the school's population grew. By 1964, there were nearly 1000 students enrolled in School No. 11. Among its features include the fine terracotta designs on the façade and rear of the building, as well as separate entrances for boys and girls. This design was typical of school buildings constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was believed to complement seating arrangements, which often segregated boys' and girls' desks within the classroom – a setting which was perhaps intended to secure girls from the supposed rambunctious temperaments of their male peers. Such architectural designs were in place as well, at School No. 1, currently the Board of Education office on School Street, and can still be seen at the present Woodbridge Middle School on Barron Avenue. School No. 11 continues to serve the elementary grades of Woodbridge Proper.



5 Hungarian Reformed Church

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, thousands of Hungarian immigrants came to the United States after a failed revolution in their country. Many of them settled in New Jersey, and before the turn of the century, many came to Woodbridge to work in the clay industry. Without a place of worship, Hungarian language services were conducted in private Woodbridge homes. They were later held in the "Hungarian Hall," the building located adjacent to the first Church prior to its construction. As early as 1903, the need for a parish to serve the needs of Hungarian speaking Calvinists was addressed by Reverend Gabor Dokus, of South Norwalk, Connecticut, who often

traveled to Woodbridge to conduct services. Reverend Dokus called upon his contemporaries to organize a Church with other nearby Hungarian-speaking Protestants in Perth Amboy, Port Reading, Carteret, and South River. By 1904, a substantial Hungarian congregation was organized, and Reverend Alexander Vajo, of Hungary, was called to the United States to be the pastor of the new Church. Foundations for a frame church were laid in 1906, and the first church structure was dedicated on May 30, 1907. By 1949, the congregation voted to build a new church to suit the needs of the growing parish. On January 14, 1962, the present Hungarian Reformed Church was dedicated. For over a hundred years, the Hungarian Reformed Church has served the needs of Hungarian-speaking residents, who were so influential in shaping early industrial Woodbridge. The Church continues to serve the descendants of the early Hungarian families who settled in Woodbridge a century ago.



6 Woodbridge National Bank

On August 11, 1906, the First National Bank and Trust Company opened at the corner of Pearl and Main Streets with a capital of \$25,000. The bank remained open at its first location, the present site of the Woodbridge Chamber of Commerce, until the growth of Woodbridge industry necessitated a larger financial institution. Further up Main Street, the new Woodbridge National Bank was organized in 1920, with capital shares totaling \$100,000. The building was designed by architect A. Stanley Miller, of Brooklyn, and construction was supervised by Michael Reisz, of Fords. It opened for business on March 14, 1927, with John F. Dyan as president. After a series of mergers with the First National Bank and Trust Company, the bank reassumed its original name in 1931. Much to the dismay of its customers, financial problems plagued the new bank, a common occurrence during the Depression Era. It closed just one hour after its opening on November 30, 1931. The bank, however, was resurrected through the efforts of Perth Amboy banker, Frank Van Syckle, who in 1937 announced his plans to open a bank in Woodbridge. After five and a half years of being closed, the Woodbridge National Bank re-opened its doors on July 1, 1937, with Van Syckle serving as president. The institution continued to operate as the Woodbridge National Bank, and in 1956, moved to a new building at the corner of Moore Avenue and Berry Street, the present site of the Central Jersey Federal Credit Union. In 1964, the Woodbridge National Bank merged with its former partner, the First National Bank and Trust Company, again, taking that institution's name. By the 1960s, it was Middlesex County's largest commercial institution. The Woodbridge National Bank building at 108 Main Street still stands as a reminder of Woodbridge's financial and industrial past. Perhaps the finest features of the building are the terracotta embellishments on its façade, which still bear the name of the Wood-

bridge National Bank. Owing to the local industry, this terracotta is believed to have come from one of Woodbridge's own clay companies, or from the Federal Seaboard Terracotta Corporation in Perth Amboy. It has housed the Woodbridge Auto Parts and Sporting Goods store since the late 1960s.

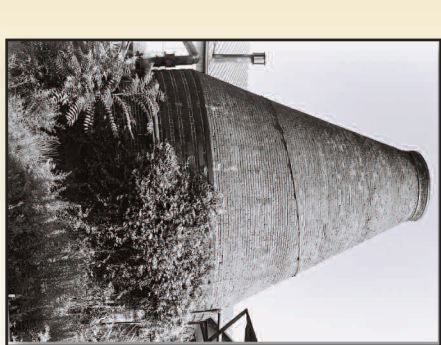


7 The Parish Community of St. James



This kiln, which sits upon the former property of the M.D. Valentine Brick Company, is the last of its kind still standing in New Jersey. It serves as a reminder of Woodbridge's prosperous industrial past.

Photo courtesy of the Woodbridge Public Library



Mayor John E. McCormac

Elizabeth Reeves  
Wenda G. Rottweiler  
Mary R. Morrell  
Bruce Christensen  
George W. Stillman, Sr.

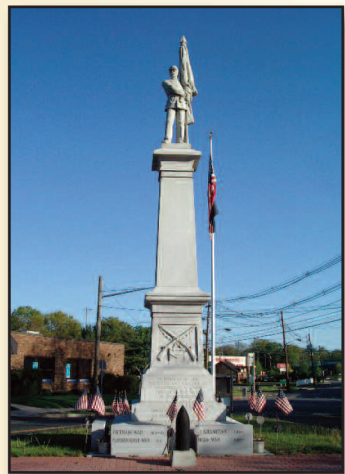
Jeffrey C. Huber,  
Township Historian  
Daniel D'Arcy,  
Liaison, Colonia History Club  
Kathy Jost-Keating, Liaison,  
Historical Association of  
Woodbridge Township

Commission Members  
Dr. Dolores Capraro Gioffre, Chairperson  
Fr. Robert L. Counselman, Vice Chairperson  
Courtney L. Lowry, Secretary

The mission of the Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission is to inform, educate, advise and unite public officials and the community at large as an advocate for the preservation of the rich history of Woodbridge Township.

## Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission

The Upper Main Street section of Woodbridge, just past Route 9, is the site of the early industrial and economic development of Woodbridge. It reveals the place Woodbridge Proper held in the American Industrial Revolution, and the early settlers who contributed to the success of this period. From the late seventeenth century to the early twentieth century, thousands of European immigrants came to the United States and settled in Woodbridge for opportunities in the clay business. Naturally rich in fine white clay deposits, Woodbridge's resources attracted thousands to the town for job opportunities. By the mid-nineteenth century, Woodbridge was among the leading manufacturers and exporters of clay. In the town proper were some of the largest clay industries in the world, including the Salamander Works, Hampton Cutter & Sons, and the M.D. Valentine Brick Company, among many. Remnants of this industrial past can be seen along the Woodbridge River. It can also be seen in the terracotta embellishments on buildings throughout Woodbridge and beyond. The last remaining kiln in New Jersey still stands in Woodbridge, as a reminder of the town's prosperous past. Although the clay industry has waned, the name of Woodbridge is still synonymous with success and many continue to call it home. More than three centuries later, the population of Woodbridge Township has grown to nearly 100,000. It is the oldest original township chartered in New Jersey, and is the fifth largest municipality in the State.



1 Soldiers and Sailors Monument

In the late nineteenth century, there was much sentiment towards erecting monuments for the soldiers and sailors who had served in the American Civil War. The "Woodbridge boys" served in the Second and Third Corps of the Union Army, as the 28th New Jersey, Company F and the 5th New Jersey, Company H. Both units served valiantly in the war, particularly the 28th New Jersey, who won distinction in the Battles of Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg. The death of one particular veteran, Lieutenant William C. Berry, who was killed at Williamsburg, Virginia on May 5, 1862, gave the Berry family reason enough to erect a monument honoring veterans of the "War of the Rebellion." The sisters and brothers of Lt. Berry sold certificates to raise the \$2,100 it would cost to purchase the monument. On April 11, 1911, over fifty years after the signing of the surrender of the Confederacy at Appomattox, Virginia, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument was dedicated to the veterans of Woodbridge. The monument, then placed at ground level, was erected at the junction of Main and Berry Streets, so that the Berry family, who lived on this present street, could view it from their front porch. Much symbolism embodies the monument, from the direction it faces, to the man it

represents. The plot was later placed on a triangular piece of land, with three points representing the Third Corp, of which the 5th New Jersey was a part. It is believed that the soldier is carved in the image of a Mr. John M. Sutton, who served in Company H with the 5th New Jersey Volunteers. Sutton was honored for saving the regimental colors at Gettysburg and Chancellorsville, but is believed to have unwaveringly denied honors for his actions, including the "Medal of Honor," which was awarded for such courageous actions. He is portrayed grasping his saber and holding the national colors, and faces south-southwesterly, according to tradition. Although the monument does not bear his name, it is believed that it was placed in this location so that Mr. Sutton, who worked at a local grocery store on Main Street, could view the monument from the porch on his breaks. Within the monument's foundations is a time capsule containing Civil War artifacts, donated by surviving veterans at the time of its dedication. Over the years, the monument suffered moderate damages due to pollution and weather conditions. In 2006, the Historical Association of Woodbridge Township undertook a project to renovate the monument, cleaning and repairing the structure, as well as updating its inscriptions. Three additional stones were placed to honor veterans of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. It remains an honorable tribute to those men who selflessly risked and gave their lives for our country.



2 Methodist Episcopal Church

The history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States can be traced back to April 23, 1740, when British Methodism co-founder, Reverend George Whitefield preached the Protestant sect's first sermon on American soil. Whitefield was a key figure in the spread of Christian revivals, known as the "Great Awakening," throughout England and British North America. British Methodist co-founders Charles and John Wesley continued to spread Methodism in the American colonies, sending missionaries throughout the region. Reverend Joseph Pilmoor, a Methodist missionary from England, was sent to the colonies by John Wesley to spread further the denomination. He was the first to preach to the Woodbridge Methodists. As Methodism in Woodbridge grew, John Wesley heeded the demand for more missionaries. In March 1772, Reverend Francis Asbury preached to Woodbridge Methodists in Perth Amboy while en route to New Brunswick. Reverend Asbury later founded the Methodist Church in America, and was named Bishop by John Wesley. On July 15, 1784, the first Quakers of East Jersey sold their Meeting House and burial ground (presently the site of the Methodist Episcopal Parsonage) to the Woodbridge Methodists. In June 1832, William Gage Insee and his wife, Nancy Insee deeded this property to Methodist trustees. They donated the land at 69 Main Street to be used as a Methodist burial ground. The Meeting House was later dismantled that same year, and a Church was built in its place. By September 8, 1832, the

Church, the first of three structures, was dedicated and served by first pastor, Reverend William Granville. To accommodate the growing congregation, the original wooden frame church was moved to 71 Main Street, while a second, larger Church was built in 1870 at the present Church site. Unfortunately, the original frame church was destroyed by a fire in 1876. Like its predecessor, the Victorian Church was ravaged by a series of fires in 1948 and another in 1954, which all but destroyed it. The building was later reconstructed. The headstones of the Methodist graves surrounding the present church were removed to construct the macadam parking lot. Notable burials upon this site include those of patriot Jennet "Janet" Pike Gage and her Loyalist husband, Philip Gage and their young son. The Methodist Episcopal Church became the United Methodist Church in 1967, after many congregational unions. The Woodbridge United Methodist Church is home to one of the earliest Methodist communities in America.



3 Middlesex Water Company Bldg.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Woodbridge was a major center of industry, with many businesses opening and operating in town. Despite its growth of industry and infrastructure, Woodbridge was without a water supply system as late as 1893. Water, still obtained from wells at this time, was very important to businesses. Industrial companies used it by the hundreds of thousands of gallons. In 1894, M.D. Valentine came before the Town Committee, representing the Woodbridge Sewer Company. Valentine petitioned the Committee for permission to lay a sewer system beneath the streets just north of Heard's Brook. While the company was granted permission to do so, it was on the condition that the system be constructed and supervised by the Town, with the latter's ability to purchase it at any time. Several years later, the Middlesex Water Company was incorporated on April 17, 1896. The Middlesex Water Company, represented by W.H. Corbin and H.L. Dudley, intended to lay a sewer system as well. Although the Woodbridge Sewer Company had established a sewer system years earlier, the Town Committee found that they failed to meet the State's incorporation specifications, however. In turn, the Committee awarded a contract to the Middlesex Water Company. The company began selling water to industrial customers along the Arthur Kill, many of them located in Carteret. Between 1900 and 1910, Woodbridge's population grew from 7,681 to 8,948. The fast-paced growth of businesses and residences helped the Middlesex Water Company to grow, as well. The Middlesex Water Company purchased the present building from the First National Bank & Trust Company on June 14, 1930. Today, the Middlesex Water Company is one of the largest water companies in the State, providing water to commercial, municipal, and residential clients in three counties. This building has housed the offices of the Woodbridge Chamber of Commerce for over twenty five years.

# Historic Walking Tour of WOODBIDGE Volume II



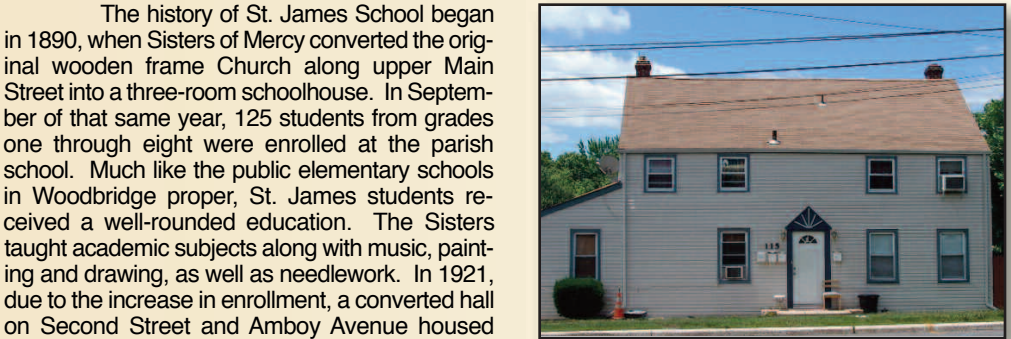
Compiled by the  
Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission

First Edition - 2010

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Brochure design by Alisha Rothstein Design Studio • [www.alisharothstein.com](http://www.alisharothstein.com)





**8 William Cutter House  
& Clay Banks  
Circa 1800**

The history of St. James School began in 1890, when Sisters of Mercy converted the original wooden frame Church along upper Main Street into a three-room schoolhouse. In September of that same year, 125 students from grades one through eight were enrolled at the parish school. Much like the public elementary schools in Woodbridge proper, St. James students received a well-rounded education. The Sisters taught academic subjects along with music, painting and drawing, as well as needlework. In 1921, due to the increase in enrollment, a converted hall on Second Street and Amboy Avenue housed kindergarten through grade three, while grades four through eight were taught at the school on upper Main Street. By 1924, the present St. James School was constructed. The St. James graduating class of 1924 was the School's first students to be admitted to Woodbridge High School—a successful feat, as Woodbridge High School Principal, Dr. John Love, was reluctant to accept them. Subsequent additions to the School in 1954, as well as development of curriculum and daycare centers contributed to the school's growth. As the school expanded, so did the Church. The second Church structure remained here until dedicated pastors Monsignor Griffin and Monsignor Charles G. McCorristin, the longest serving pastor of the parish, made plans for the modern development and construction of a new Church and facilities. Ground was broken for the present church in 1966. Bishop George W. Ahr dedicated the new Church on June 23, 1968, just months after the old Victorian Church was demolished.

The present Church and School sit upon land which is believed to be near the site of the original Parker Printing Press. In 1751, James Parker established the first printing press in the colonies in Woodbridge. He printed many public documents, including legislative proceedings, newspaper, and *The New American Magazine*, the first periodical ever to be published in America. Throughout the years, as this land has been cultivated, print type and other materials have been found near the present school site. Some believe that Parker's operations were held in or around the great vicinity of Grove Street and Amboy Avenue. The exact location of Parker's Press remains unknown, however, and is highly questionable.

Today, the Parish Community of St. James holds an important place in the early history of Woodbridge. Over 300 years later, the St. James Parish family continues to serve the community of Woodbridge in the Roman Catholic tradition.

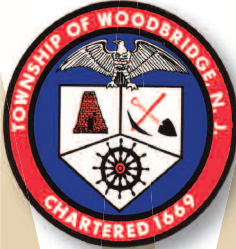
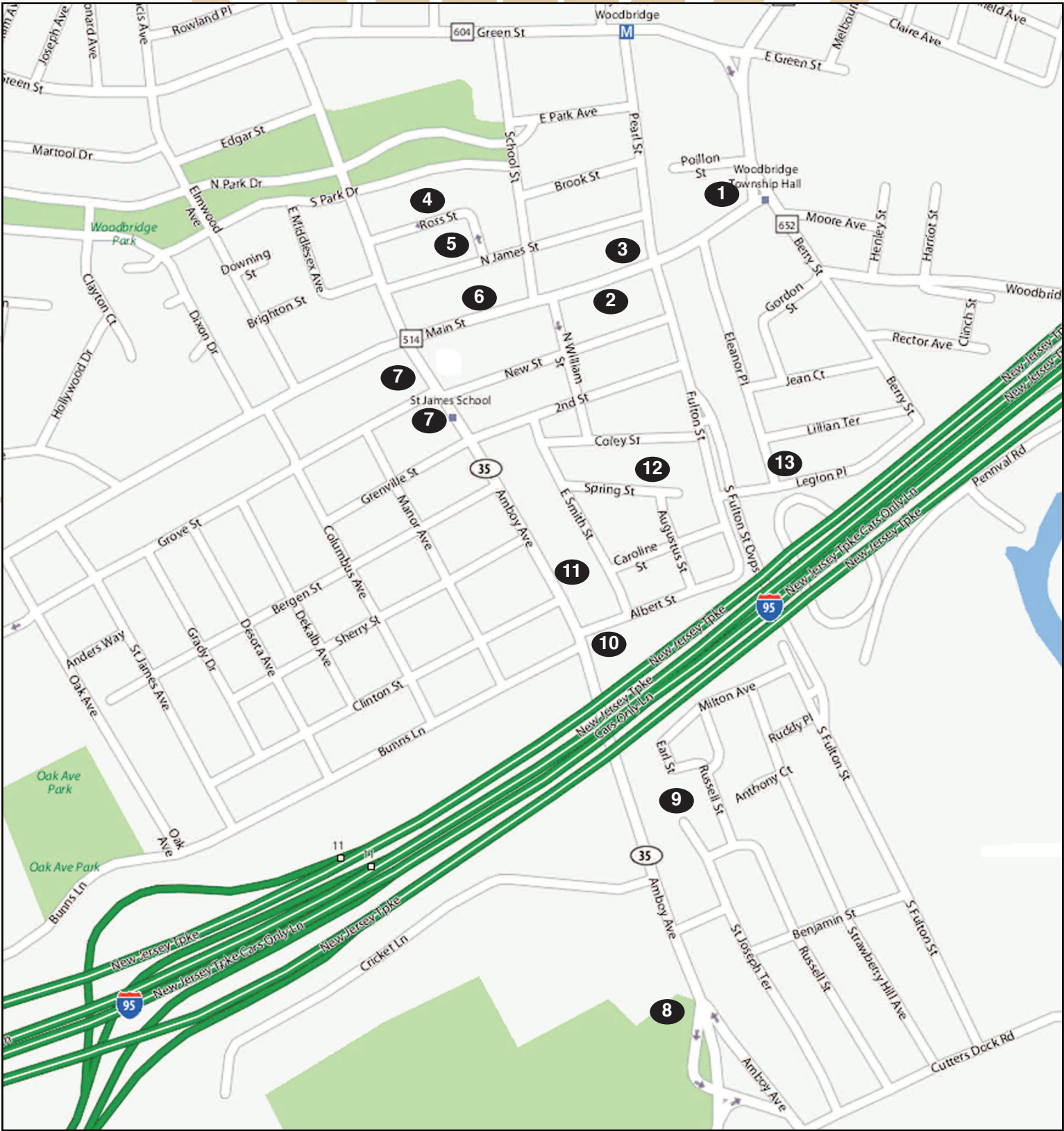
cated behind this home and extended to the present land on which Woodbridge Center stands. To this day, deposits of clay can still be found around this site, as well as in other parts of Woodbridge. In addition to providing hundreds and thousands of tons of clay, this site holds a place in geological history. In 1929, dinosaur tracks were discovered by miners working in the banks behind this home. Rutgers geologists later revealed that the ninety million year old prints from the Cretaceous Period were the only ones from this era ever discovered east of the Mississippi River.

Today, the William Cutter House is a private apartment house, while the clay banks behind it remain a hidden part of Woodbridge's history.



**9 Hampton Cutter Mansion**

One of the most distinctive buildings seen from the New Jersey Turnpike and Route 35 sits upon Strawberry Hill. This landmark Italianate-style mansion was the home of Hampton Cutter, Esq., famous clay magnate of Woodbridge. Years after the discovery of kaolin on his farm in 1845, Cutter built this home where he resided until his death in 1882. The home is also known as the Cutter-Prall mansion, as Cutter's daughter Emily resided here with her husband, James Palmer Prall after their marriage in 1883. Hampton Cutter bequeathed the home to Emily upon his death in 1882. The Cutter-Prall family resided here until the 1920s. In 1926, the home was sold to The Little Servant Sisters, a Polish order of religious established in the United States in the 1920s. In 1931, the Sisters acquired the building for use as an orphanage for Polish-speaking children. The orphanage was under the direction of governess, Sister Mary Louise, who was a former resident at the orphanage before joining the Little Servant Sisters. In its prime, the orphanage housed up to fifty children. Due to financial circumstances, however, it closed its doors in 1948. The sisters remained in the home, which also served as a first-aid center for the victims of the Fulton Street train wreck of 1951. The mansion is located near the site of many significant Revolutionary War skirmishes which took place near Strawberry Hill in 1777. The home's notable features include fine red brick construction with wood trimmings and a gilded cupola. It has remained nearly unchanged since its completion in 1873. It presently serves as the convent of The Little Servant Sisters, who administer the adjacent St. Joseph's Care Center.



## Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission Walking Tour Map of Historic Sites



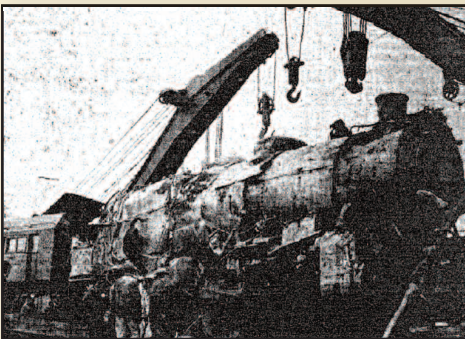
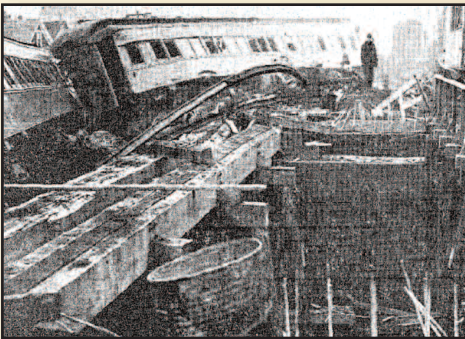
**10 Captain Isaac Inslee House  
Circa 1859**

This Antebellum structure was the home of prominent citizen and Woodbridge native, Captain Isaac Inslee. The Inslee family first came to Massachusetts from Scotland and later settled in New Jersey. His great-grandfather, George Inslee, fought in the American Revolution against the British. Captain Inslee's father, William, was born in Woodbridge and was a member of the Whig Party, and later became a leading figure in the Republican Party. Isaac Inslee was born in Rahway on February 6, 1835. He grew up in Woodbridge and received his education from the Town's schools. Like his father and great-grandfather, Captain Inslee worked as an apprentice in the carriage-making business before taking work in Woodbridge's prosperous clay industry. He enlisted in the United States Volunteer Army during the Civil War, with the New Jersey Volunteers, 28th Regiment, Company F. Inslee was promoted to Captain for his command of many men on the front, and saw action at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. He was noted for his heroic actions at Fredericksburg, where he led the 28th Regiment through heavy Rebel fire after their Colonel was killed in action. After the war, Inslee married Sarah M. Ayers, of New Brunswick, and returned to the clay business until his retirement. Captain Inslee was a prominent Republican and Freeholder. He was once a Supervisor of Roads and sat on the Board of Education. He was also a member of several other fraternal organizations, notably the William C. Berry Post, G.A.R., where he served as Commander. After his retirement, he built a second home in the early 1890s, which presently stands on the corner of Barron Avenue and Freeman Street. He is buried in the Alpine Cemetery in Perth Amboy. Today, this home is a private residence.



**11 Our Lady of  
Mount Carmel Church**

At the end of the nineteenth century, thousands of Hungarians immigrated to the United States.



**13 Fulton Street Train Wreck**

Despite Woodbridge's rich, prosperous history, the town was not without tragedy. On February 6th, 1951, a crowded steam locomotive carried over thousand passengers heading along the Pennsylvania Railroad Jersey Central rail line, which departed from Exchange Place in Jersey City en route to Bayhead in South Jersey. Many of the passengers were Wall Street employees, which gave that particular express train its nickname, "The Broker." The rail lines between Woodbridge and Perth Amboy were undergoing construction, and many temporary trestles and tracks were constructed alongside the permanent tracks to allow trains to keep running without disrupting work. One week before the disaster, a directive was issued by the Pennsylvania Railroad, stating that a speed of 25 miles per hour was not to be exceeded for trains traveling from Woodbridge to Perth Amboy. On the following Tuesday evening, "The Broker" was traveling over 50 miles per hour, filled to capacity with commuters. As it approached a sharp turn at the temporary trestle just north of the train bridge at Legion Place, the locomotive and several train cars derailed, plummeting down the embankment, killing 86 people and injuring hundreds more. The horrific sound was reportedly heard from miles away, and the crash shook many homes and shattered the windows of other residences in downtown Woodbridge. Hundreds from all over New Jersey, as well as Woodbridge's own residents came to the aid of the victims of the disaster. In 2002, a monument was erected under the train pass, dedicated to those who died in the train wreck. It remains one of the worst train wrecks ever recorded in American history.



**12 Fulton Street Neighborhood**

The neighborhood of Fulton, Second, Albert and Caroline Streets, as well as the streets they border were first surveyed and mapped in 1840 by Ichabod Potter. This historic section of town was home to the working class residents of Woodbridge. Many living within these homes worked in the illustrious clay industries in town, notably the Salamander Works, M.D. Valentine & Brick Company, and Hampton Cutter & Sons, among others. In the earlier half of the nineteenth century, this section of Woodbridge received many Irish and German immigrants who came to town for job opportunities. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the influx of many Hungarian immigrants, who worked in the clay mines and factories within the town proper and contributed to Woodbridge's industrial growth and prosperity. The train tracks along Fulton Street, originally constructed at grade level, were later elevated in the late 1940s. Many of the historic homes still standing date from the 1870s to the early 1900s. Residences at 263 and 281 Fulton Street, 60 Caroline Street, 340 North William Street, and 85 Second Street are among the oldest houses in this neighborhood.

Print courtesy of the Woodbridge Public Library

Photos courtesy of the  
Woodbridge Public Library Archives



The second St. James Church structure is prepared for its move by tractor in 1924. It stood on the site of the present Church structure until it was razed in 1968.

Photo courtesy of St. James Church Archives:  
Enhanced by Steven Prior