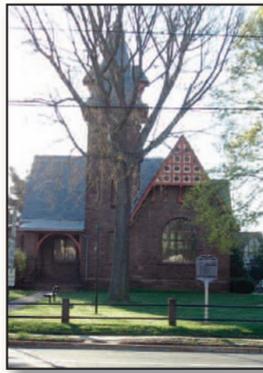


**5** First Presbyterian Church  
600 Rahway Avenue

The First Presbyterian Church, or “Old White Church” as it is affectionately known, is home to the oldest congregation in Middlesex County and the sixth oldest in the state. Its first service was conducted on May 27, 1675, in a small wooden structure, the official Meeting House, which served as both a place of worship and the seat of municipal government until the early 18th century. Non-denominational services were conducted until 1710, when a Presbyterian majority within the congregation declared their intentions to make the Meeting House their Church. Former members of the congregation, who wished to maintain their Anglican ties, went on to establish the neighboring Trinity Episcopal Church. The present structure was built in 1803 by Jonathan Freeman. The building was altered in 1875 and 1972. Notable features include the tall Church steeple, as well as the original wooden timbers of the foundation, which still exist in the structure. Many significant members of the congregation helped to shape Woodbridge history. Reverend Azel Roe, patriot and Church pastor for over 50 years, was an ardent supporter of the American Revolution, who preached against the British and encouraged others to enlist in the military- an act which resulted in his seizure by the British and short imprisonment in the Old Sugar House Prison in New York. The Church held an important place in the establishment of other area Presbyterian churches, including those in Iselin, Rahway, and Metuchen, among many. It was recently placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2008.



**6** Barron Library c. 1877  
582 Rahway Avenue

Perhaps one of the most distinctive buildings in town, the Barron Library was the gift of wealthy merchant and Woodbridge native, Thomas Barron. At his death, Barron bequeathed \$50,000 to establish a free public library, the first of its kind in Middlesex County. Built in the Romanesque Revival style, the library was designed by architect J. Cleveland Cady, famed for his work at Yale University, the Metropolitan Opera House, and the Brooklyn Academy of Design, among many. Among its fine features are its construction of Brown Belleville stone, distinct clock tower, stained glass windows, and imported delft tiles adorning the fireplace mantle, each depicting a scene from the Bible. In 1977, the library’s deed was granted to Woodbridge Township for use by the Cultural Arts Commission. Later that same year, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. At present, it houses the Barron Art Center, which hosts year-round exhibits and events for the public.



**7** Barron House c. 1803  
574 Rahway Avenue

Built in the early nineteenth century, this was the home of the Barron Family for many years. The Barron name was an important one in town, as the family was one of the first to settle in Woodbridge in the late seventeenth century. Well known for their patriotism and philanthropy, the Barrons made many contributions to their country and native town. This was the home of Joseph Barron, a Deacon of the First Presbyterian Church of Woodbridge. Joseph Barron’s sons, Thomas and John, were successful business men who contributed to Woodbridge’s commercial

and educational enterprises. Thomas C. Barron was a wealthy merchant and philanthropist, who held a partnership in a major house engaged in the West India trade. Upon his death, he bequeathed \$50,000 for the establishment of the neighboring Barron Library. His brother John, who became skilled in cabinet-making, established a manufactory in Woodbridge. Later in life, he tended a farm just beyond the heart of Woodbridge, which stood upon the land through which Barron Avenue runs. His son, Dr. John C. Barron, served as a surgeon in the United States Volunteer Army with the Sixty-ninth New York Regiment. Upon the death of his uncle, Thomas C. Barron, he donated land from the Barron Estate, on which the library still stands. In the late nineteenth century, the Barron House was purchased by the Boynton Family, known for their luxurious summer resort on Boynton Beach in Sewaren. The Colonial home, which stands along Rahway Avenue, is today an apartment house.



**8** JJ Bitting Coal and Feed Depot  
33 Main Street

Built in 1910, J.J. Bitting Coal and Feed Depot was one of the chief commercial buildings in Woodbridge. The front portion of the structure served as a feed depot, while the rear of the building was a loading area for trucks. In later years, J. J. Bitting housed an oil company at the rear of the building. The rear lot of the site was used by the local government to provide food and supplies to families in need. In 1977, the building was saved from destruction by its current owners. It is a fine example of adaptive reuse. Today, it is a popular restaurant and microbrewery in Woodbridge.



One of the ancient millstones used by Jonathan Dunham, dating back to the Colonial period, still remains outside of his former home.

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Chartered 1669

# Historic Walking Tour of WOODBRIIDGE Volume I

Compiled by the  
Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission

Second Edition – 2014

Brochure design by Alissa Rothstein Design Studio • www.alissarothstein.com

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Woodbridge’s early history can be traced back to 1664, when Governor of New Jersey, Philip Carteret granted settlers the right to establish a plantation in the State. This area of land, which covered nearly 34 miles between the Passaic and Raritan rivers, was purchased from the Leni Lenape Indians. This purchase included the land upon which Woodbridge was established. In 1666, settlers from Newbury, Massachusetts signed an agreement with Governor Carteret to establish a township. On June 1, 1669, King Charles II of England granted an official Town Charter to the settlers of Woodbridge.

The early settlers of Woodbridge named the town after their pastor, Reverend John Woodbridge. Due to their strong ties to New England, they laid the town out in a fashion similar to that of many towns in New England. The “Kirk Green” served as the town center and the common grounds upon which early settlers worshipped and participated in daily life. It was from this center of Woodbridge, out of which the rest of the township grew. 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 the fifth largest municipality in the State.



**1** Jonathan Dunham House  
c. 1700  
Rahway Avenue

Dating to at least the late seventeenth century, this building was once the home of Jonathan Dunham, one of the early settlers and freeholders of Woodbridge, who operated the first grist-mill in New Jersey. The mill, a tidal mill, was located just south of the home, at the intersection of the Port Reading Road, along the Woodbridge River, then known as Papiack Creek. During the American Revolution, the building was used as a garrison by American soldiers. Originally a two-story, four room home, the building was later acquired by the family of Samuel Barron, prominent early Woodbridge settlers. In 1870, local donor George C. Hance purchased the historic Dunham House from the Barron family. He commissioned the additions made to both stories, more than doubling the size of the original home. Hance assured that renovations would complement the design of the neighboring Trinity Episcopal Church, to which he granted the home’s deed in 1873. Both Colonial and Victorian designs are present in the original and added portions of the house. Among the home’s most distinctive features are its Flemish bond brickwork, a type of checkerboard pattern visible on the first and second floors of the façade, as well as its Gothic Revival replacement windows set in the same place of the building. Perhaps the most significant artifact which still exists on the current

property is an ancient, circular millstone dating to the Colonial period. It is one of the original stones used by Dunham in his grist mill operations. The Jonathan Dunham House has been continually used as the Trinity Episcopal Church Rectory since 1873. It is among the oldest buildings in Woodbridge Township and one of the oldest buildings in Middlesex County.



**2** Trinity Episcopal Churchyard  
Rahway Avenue

This land has been used as a burial site since 1714, just after the establishment of the first Church structure. This parcel of land was included in the original Town Charter of 1669. The oldest tombstone dates to 1750, although many burials predate it. This is the final resting place for many early, noteworthy Woodbridge families, including the Barrons, Dunhams, Bunns, Jacques, and Pikes, to name but a few. Other significant graves belong to veterans of each war, beginning with the American Revolution. One of the oldest in New Jersey, the cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



**3** Trinity Episcopal Church  
Rahway Avenue

The history of Trinity Episcopal Church has its roots in the late seventeenth century. Its first service was conducted in 1698 by Reverend Edward Portlock, a colonial Anglican missionary sent to New Jersey by the Church of England. Prior to the construction of the first church, services were conducted in private Woodbridge homes, including the home of Benjamin Dunham, which later would become the Trinity Rectory. Members of the congregation also attended the First Church of Woodbridge, later established as the First Presbyterian Church. After a congregational schism at First Church, former members built an Episcopal

Church on this site in 1711. The property upon which it was built was part of the original proprietors’ allotment for places of worship in the Woodbridge Charter of 1669, granted by King Charles II. This small wooden structure was the site of worship for many years to come, however, it remained unfinished and a larger one was built in its place in 1754. During the American Revolution, “Churches of England” in New Jersey were ordered closed, as many members and clergy were loyal British subjects. Despite its connection to the Church of England, it is known that many other members of the congregation fought for and supported the Revolution, including famous New Jersey printer James Parker, who served as a lay reader. The British occupied Woodbridge from December 2, 1776 to June 22, 1777. It is believed that the army was quartered on the Church’s property, with the Church serving as soldiers’ barracks and the rectory, a fort. In 1858, a fire destroyed the Church and another was built in 1860. The present Gothic Revival style Church building was dedicated on May 20, 1861. Designed by Richard Upjohn, and later completed by C. Harrison Condit, it is one of the best preserved, finest examples of Upjohn’s work still standing. Trinity was placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2004. It is one of the oldest Episcopal congregations in New Jersey.



**4** Aaron Dunn/Jost-Keating  
Homestead c. 1685  
12 Freeman Street

Among the oldest buildings in Woodbridge, the Aaron Dunn house was constructed at the turn of the eighteenth century. Although the home bears the name of one of its original owners, it was called home by many before him. It is believed to have been built as a manse for the first minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Archibald Riddell. The home, however, was not completed, as the minister’s wife did not like it much. It was later completed by the town and another minister by the name of Sheppard moved into the home in 1697. Later, a Revolutionary War soldier, Aaron Dunn, called the structure home. Also a one time resident was James Bloodgood, a local tanner who owned thirteen acres of property outside of the “Kirk Green.” It is thought that much of this property consisted of the area between Lewis Street and Ridgedale Avenue. The home contains many original features, including four fire places, and two sets of stairways to the second floor and the attic. Many of the doors are believed to be original to the home, fashioned in “Christian style” with a cross shape between the door panels and fastened with “H” and “L” hinges. It is one of the best examples of early Colonial architecture still standing in Woodbridge. Today, it is a private residence.



**9 Methodist Episcopal Church Parsonage**  
71 Main Street

Built in 1882, this structure served as the residence of church pastors until 1965. Although this property holds a rich Methodist history, its roots can be traced back to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when the first Quaker families of East Jersey came to Woodbridge. In 1707, the Quakers purchased "half an acre" of land from Mr. John Allen, a former minister at the First Presbyterian Church of Woodbridge. This property was intended for use as a burial ground and the site of worship. In 1709, construction began on a Meeting House, which was completed in 1713. Prior to their establishment in town, the Quakers worshipped in homes in Perth Amboy before moving to Woodbridge where they attended the first services in the private home of Mr. Benjamin Griffith on August 17, 1689. The Quakers resided in Woodbridge until the outbreak of the American Revolution. In 1776, soldiers occupied the Woodbridge Meeting House. Although the Quakers were exempt from military duty by the New Jersey Legislature since 1705, they continued to be persecuted for their pacifist values which conflicted with British martial law. They were driven out of Woodbridge and moved their membership to the Rahway Society of Friends (Quaker) Meeting House. On July 15, 1784, the Woodbridge Quakers sold their Meeting House and burial ground to the Methodists, who worshipped in private Woodbridge homes prior to acquiring this property. Many unmarked Quaker graves (as was Quaker custom) remain around the Parsonage and beneath the macadam parking lot behind it. This site is the final resting place for many of the first Quaker families who settled in East Jersey. The parsonage is a fine example of the Victorian homes that once stood along lower Main Street.



**10 Cross Keys Tavern c. 1740**  
142 North James Street

Built in the early half of the 18th century, the Cross

Keys Tavern gets its name from the colonial term "Cross Keys," which was used to name an important intersection in town. The two most important roads in colonial Woodbridge met at the intersection of Main Street and Perth Amboy Avenue. The Tavern assumed this name, and remained at this original location on the northwest corner until the 1920s. It was later moved to its present location on North James Street, to make room for the Knights of Columbus building, which currently stands in its place. One of the Tavern's most famous guests was the first President of the United States, General George Washington, who was welcomed by Innkeeper, and first Postmaster of Woodbridge, John Manning. General Washington spent the night of April 22, 1789 at the Cross Keys Tavern, while en route to New York, to take the oath of office as President of the United States. He was escorted to the Tavern by the Woodbridge Cavalry, commanded by Captain Ichabod Potter, and was greeted by the first Governor of New Jersey, William Livingston. Washington was also given a formal reception by both civilians and military officers. Other important figures who received the President included Brigadier General Nathaniel Heard, Dr. Moses Bloomfield, Reverend Azel Roe, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, and Janet Gage, among many. Gage, sometimes called the "Molly Pitcher of Woodbridge," is believed to have erected a "Liberty Pole" in front of the Cross Keys Tavern, thus flying the first "Stars and Stripes" over Woodbridge. On September 24, 1824, Woodbridge received another important guest at the Cross Keys Tavern. Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette, the famous French general who helped the Americans during the Revolutionary War, stopped here on his way to Philadelphia. The Tavern still stands, although today it is a private apartment building.



**11 School No. 1**  
421 School Street

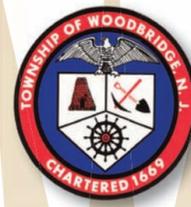
Built in 1876, School No. 1 was the first free school in Woodbridge, designed by architects C. Graham & Son of Elizabeth. It was dedicated by the Board of Education on January 20, 1877. A special ceremony was held, in which the keys of the building were presented by Mr. Howard Valentine to the school's first principal, Mr. Henry Anderson. Valentine was the son of James Valentine, and the brother of the founders of M.D. Valentine and Brothers Co. of Woodbridge. Mr. James Valentine sold the property upon which the school stands for \$2,000.00. Unfortunately, some of the most distinctive features of the old school building can no longer be seen in their former glory, as the building was later altered. The structure was originally constructed with a tall tower which housed a clock and bell. Its clock was purchased from E. Howard & Company of Broadway, New York City for \$600.00. The bell,

which rang daily to call students to class, was purchased at a rate of \$0.50 per pound from Meneley & Limberley. It weighed approximately 1500 pounds. This same bell currently stands in front of the Parker Press Memorial Park monument along Rahway Avenue. Its inscription of #24 pertains to School District #24, of which School No. 1 was a part. For over a decade, the school accommodated 400 students from kindergarten to twelfth grades. High school courses were added to the curriculum in 1887 and were taught at the school from 1888-1910. Among the many subjects taught at the school were Chemistry, History, Geography, Rhetoric, Mathematics, English, Literature and Composition. Classes were held at School No. 1 until 1961. Today, it houses the Woodbridge Township Board of Education Administrative Offices, thus continuing the building's legacy as a place of education.

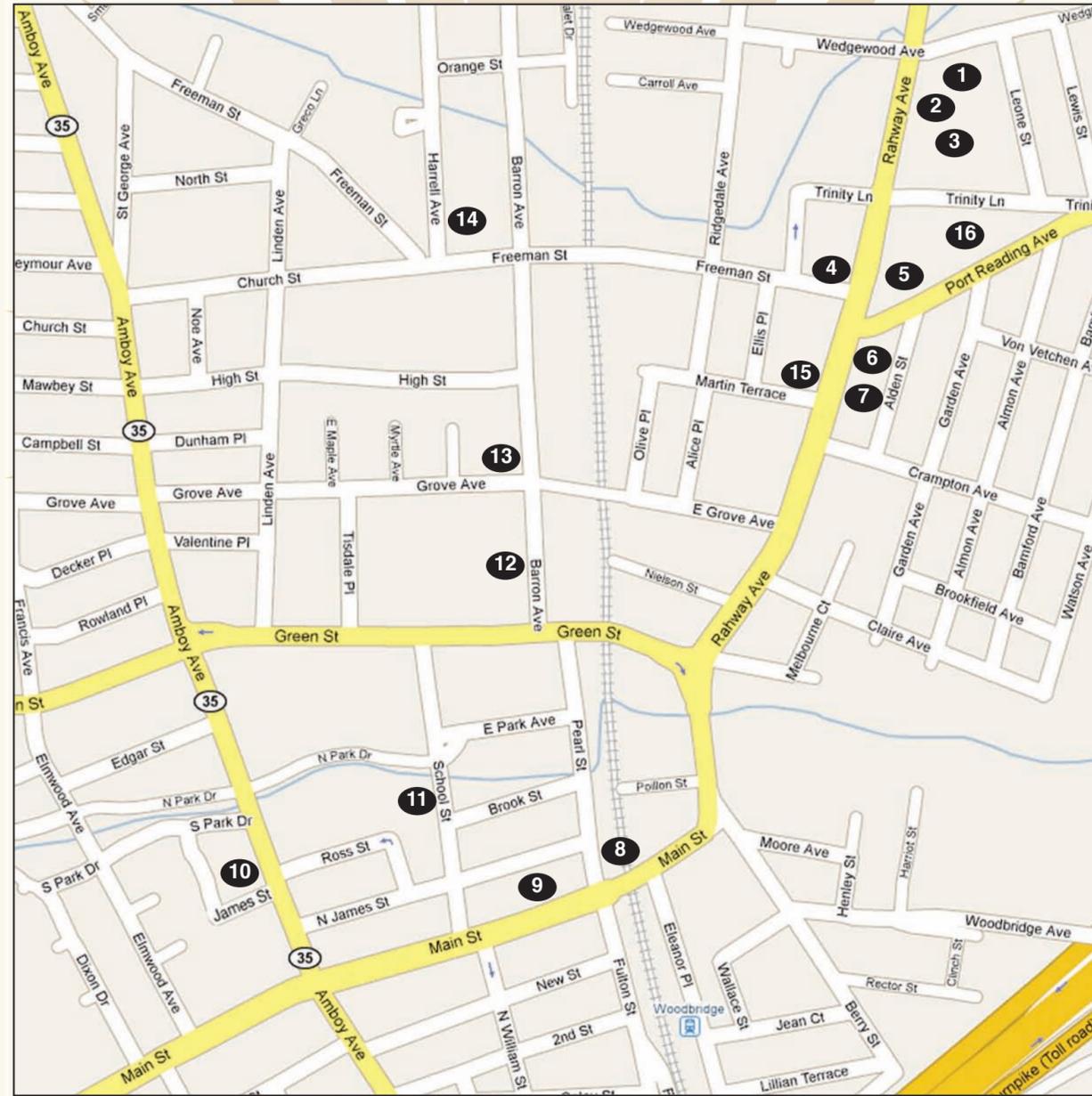


**12 Woodbridge High School**  
527 Barron Avenue

Woodbridge Senior High School was completed and first opened to students on September 11, 1911. Prior to 1911, high school classes were held at School No. 1. With the introduction of a four year high school in 1897, a larger building was necessary to accommodate the increase in enrollment. Thus, the building was designed and constructed by architects John Pierson and Son, of Perth Amboy. The cornerstone for Woodbridge Senior High School was laid on October 6, 1910 by Governor of New Jersey, J. Franklin Fort. Dr. John J. Love served as the first Principal of the school. The building was altered in 1925, and again in 1932, when additions were necessary to accommodate an increase of the student body. New classrooms were housed in the Annex. It is believed that school enrollment increased due to the Great Depression, as many people could not find jobs and therefore, returned to school. The school also received permission from the Woodbridge Speedway Company to use their property as an athletic field. The high school football team used this land for their season in 1932. In 1956, the current Woodbridge High School was built. In 1957 and 1959 respectively, eighth and ninth grades were transferred to the former Woodbridge High School on Barron Avenue. Among the most significant features of the school are its WPA (Works Progress Administration) murals adorning both sides of the school's auditorium stage, painted by Carl C. Lella, a resident of the Colonia section of Woodbridge. The murals portray images of slavery, Abraham Lincoln, and freedom symbolized by broken chains. The murals are significant pieces, which show Woodbridge's connection to this period in American History. Today, the building is the home of Woodbridge Middle School.



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



**13 First Congregational Church**  
545-551 Barron Avenue

The history of the First Congregational Church of Woodbridge goes back to the late nineteenth century. The parish was first organized on September 30, 1874, at a meeting in the private home of Woodbridge resident Mr. John White. The founding families of the Church are the Boyntons, Coddingtons, In-slees, Harneds, Johnsons, and Noes, among many. In 1875, the Church was incorporated by trustees of the County Clerk, and the first cornerstone was laid in September of that same year. Prior to its completion in 1876, the first Church services were held at the Masonic Temple. The first pastor was Reverend S. Lee Hillyer, invested in 1875. The first sermon was given by Reverend George Hepworth of New York City. Many members of the early congregation included the Dailys, Cutters, Edgars, Campbells, Freemans, Demarests, Melicks, and Osborns. In 1897, the rear portion of the Church was enlarged to house a Sunday school and other conference rooms for various parish organizations. In the 1930s, the Church interior was decorated by J. & R. Lamb of New York, church artists. The Church is constructed of brick from the Valentine Brick Company of Woodbridge. Among its fine features include its tall 90 foot high steeple, a prominent Good Shepherd stained glass window, and ginger breading on the Church façade.



**14 Bloomfield House c. 1750**  
115/117 Harrell Avenue

Built in the latter half of the eighteenth century, this was the home of Dr. Moses Bloomfield, a noted surgeon and physician in Washington's Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. Dr. Bloomfield,



**15 FitzRandolph-Csaki House**  
c. 1890  
569 Rahway Avenue

Built in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the FitzRandolph House sits upon the site of one of the earliest special learning institutions of Woodbridge. From 1793 to 1880, this was the site of the Woodbridge Academy. The building was later demolished and the current structure was completed in its place. Between 1915 and 1920, this was the site of Woman's Suffrage Movement meetings. The building was purchased by Asher FitzRandolph in 1923. FitzRandolph was a descendant of Nathaniel FitzRandolph, who came to Woodbridge in 1670. The FitzRandolph family was among the early, prominent settlers of Woodbridge in the late seventeenth century. In 1958, the Csaki family purchased the house from the widow of Mr. Fitz



**16 First Presbyterian Cemetery**  
600 Rahway Avenue

Since the early establishment of the First Town Meeting House on this site in 1675, this land has been used as a graveyard, with the oldest legible tombstone dating to 1690. The land is part of the original Woodbridge Charter granted by King Charles II. This is the final resting place for many early, prominent Woodbridge founders, including the Cutters, Freemans, Pralls, Barrons and Bloomfields, to name but a few. Some notable burials include those of a freed slave, Jack, as well as Mary Compton Campbell, the first white child born in Woodbridge in 1668. Other noteworthy graves include those of Woodbridge native, James Parker, who established the first permanent printing press in New Jersey, as well as American patriot and First Presbyterian Church Pastor, Reverend Azel Roe, and Civil War Brigadier General William Barton, of the 48 New York Volunteers. Also buried here are at least 125 veterans from every conflict of our nation. Among the 75 American Revolutionary soldiers interred here, one of the most famous graves belongs to General Nathaniel Heard, who led the Middlesex County Militia to arrest the last Royal Governor of New Jersey, William Franklin, at his Perth Amboy residence on June 19, 1776. The cemetery is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. It is also listed on the American Presbyterian/Reformed Historical Sites Registry. The cemetery contains some of the best preserved examples of eighteenth century Puritan funerary art in New Jersey. With nearly 3,000 graves, it is one of the oldest cemeteries in the United States.

a Woodbridge native, was an original member of the New Jersey Medical Society. He was also a Middlesex County delegate, during which time the Convention of New Jersey adopted its first State Constitution in 1776. Bloomfield was a descendent of Thomas Bloomfield, who served in Oliver Cromwell's army in the English Civil War, and was one of the early settlers of Woodbridge in the late seventeenth century. Dr. Moses Bloomfield was the father of Joseph Bloomfield, who was born in this home in 1753. Joseph Bloomfield served in Third New Jersey Regiment in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He became a New Jersey Attorney General and later served as Governor of New Jersey in 1801 and 1803-1812, being the first New Jersey native to become Governor. He was also a representative for the New Jersey Assembly from 1817-1821. The town of Bloomfield, New Jersey was named in honor of the former Governor. The Bloomfield House holds a significant place in New Jersey history. The structure suffered damages during the American Revolution in 1777, and the family fled from their home for a short while, returning in the latter years of the war. It is believed that the first anti-slavery meeting in Middlesex County occurred on this site. On July 4, 1783, Dr. Moses Bloomfield reportedly freed his slaves in a public declaration. Dr. Bloomfield is interred in the First Presbyterian Church Cemetery. Originally located on Freeman Street, the home was moved in later years to its present location. Today, it is a private residence.

Randolph. Today, it is known as the Csaki Building, which houses professional offices, including those of State Senator Joseph Vitale.