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There is no doubt that Woodbridge is one of the oldest townships in America! Well actually, it's older than America itself! 1669 was the year that Woodbridge was founded and 1776 was the year that America was officially founded! Isn't it crazy to think that a town that we currently live in, can be older than the whole country? The Founders were very proud when they officially declared America to be theirs but, to make their new democracy successful, they would need most of the population to be educated. Now this makes no sense but, the Founding Fathers actually helped us because this would ensure our freedom. So, during a town meeting a proposal to send their children to actual schools was discussed instead of sending their kids into the town hall. This proposal was brought to life and that's how the first schools were built! That's what brings us to today (Vol. XIV, School Days in Woodbridge). From the days of the 1900s' to 2024, there are so many differences then and now! They have even completely removed some things. In my essay you will find things that are about: locker system, archery club, and Alumni association.

It's the morning! You hurry out of your bed and scramble to get ready. *Beep Beep!* Your brain is telling you to hurry up and gather all your stuff because the bus is here! You barely made it in time to the bus. You run to your locker immediately after you get off the bus and... you lost your key! You hurry to find the person who keeps the locker keys. You have to pay a 25¢ fee! It's so aggravating! The students 100 years ago had to pay 25¢ for a locker key and, if they lost that key they would lose their 25¢ and have to pay an additional 25¢ to get another key (Woodbridge Independent 09-04-1925). Right now, in 2024, New Jersey doesn't have any laws concerning a fee on lockers and nor do we have keys. However, we do have a fee on our Chromebooks. Not for getting them but for breaking them. If you break your Chromebook you have to pay \$250 to get a new one. Teachers do have loaners but you can't keep a loaner forever and have to give it back at the end of the day. Lockers were and still are essential to middle schoolers because they store our stuff for us and, they do end up being more reliable than carrying a backpack around.

Well, lockers are actually pretty useful! If we're going to be honest, lockers can store a lot of things! Like archery equipment, archery is a class that was allowed to be taken 100 years ago. Archery is a very complicated sport as you have to aim while holding a

very heavy bow. You can't do all those things without the gear so, in 1933, Friday 19th, the Senior Archery club held a dance (Woodbridge Independent - 5/19/1933) This dance was to raise money for their equipment. Fast forward to 100 years later, and we don't have an archery club anymore! The club was disbanded because of safety reasons and many kids might have injured themselves. I am a little disappointed in this because I myself wanted to take archery. I find it quite challenging and it takes effort to become good! Archery, to me, seems like a fun sport that I'd want to take but, if it was taken away for health reasons, then I cannot complain. The recoil of the bow may have shown health concerns and problems. Overall archery is a very complicated sport that involves many factors coming into play. Honestly, I would love to stay after school and do archery.

Who helps organize these events? Well, you can thank the Alumni Association for that! The Alumni Association is made up of graduates of the school. So if you graduated from a school a few years ago, you could become an Alumni at that school! The Alumni Association is different from the Parents and Teachers club because the Alumni Association is only made up of students that have graduated from the school. The Alumni would decide on school events, giving out scholarships, hosting festivals, pep rallies, and so much more! (Woodbridge Independent - 1/9/1925) The Alumni was helping out the clubs and the principal and vice principal! They were so helpful as they did almost everything after school to help the clubs and others out but, they weren't perfect. They did have their squabbles and minor arguments but, it was usually between the younger graduates and the older ones that argued. Still, you can't deny the Alumni Associations achievements and how much they cared for the school. Let's fast forward again and turn our time machine back on! Now we're in the present! Right now in 2024, we do have Alumni Associations but they are only for the high schools which is a bummer. In Fords, we have a PTO. PTO stands for Parent's Teachers Organization. The PTO does similar things to the Alumni Association but they do set the bar lower as we have so much more to experience. Fords wouldn't have all these astounding and extraordinary events without the PTO! For example, the PTO hosts an annual dance for the graduating 8th graders. We also have so many more fun events and to top it all off, we have our fall and spring festivals! They are the most fun I have ever had here at Fords Middle School! The events we have here at FMS would not be possible without the amazing teachers and parents that serve in the Fords Community and here at the school!

We sure have come a long way from 100 years ago and what's certain is that during all those years, Woodbridge has enhanced the students' abilities with their amazing schools. I have been a resident of Woodbridge for half of my life as I used to

live in another state before I moved but, I can say with a smile that Woodbridge has given me the most of my abilities to learn and the most opportunities to enhance my knowledge. Woodbridge has one of the best education systems. I have no doubt about it! I actually got a letter asking me to speak with our diversity council at Woodbridge High School! The schools are giving me an opportunity to grow! There are so many good things about Woodbridge that it makes it seem like we have no flaws but, like any other district, we have many flaws. A few of those flaws are our lack of accepting diversity and weight sizes. It's not even a Woodbridge problem but something that's a nationwide problem. Overall I believe that Woodbridge is one of the best if not the best district to send your kids too!