

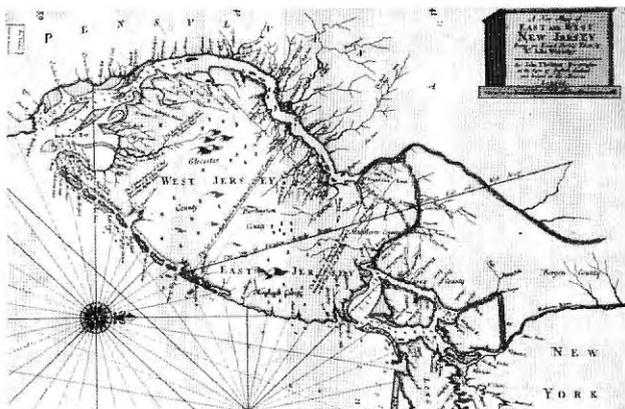
# THE STORY OF PENNINGTON

## Pennytown Appears

*By David Blackwell*

In 1687, the Province Line was surveyed from Egg Harbor to the Raritan River, allowing sales of land in West Jersey above the Assunpink Creek, then the northern boundary of the Quakers in Burlington. In 1688, Dr. Daniel Coxe of London purchased a vast acreage, including present day Hopewell Township, from 11 Indian sachems. The following year he had a survey of his 30,000 acre allotment completed, calling it a name first used in 1686 – Hopewell.

Land sales began in earnest for present day Hopewell Township in 1696, after Coxe had transferred his title to the West Jersey Society, a group of Quaker investors in London. Dr. Roger Parke, also a Quaker, was probably the first European to settle in the woods of upper Hopewell. By virtue of his settlement, the “path to Wissomencey” became Roger’s Road, the same as the present Pennington Road, from Trenton to Marshalls Corner, including Main Street in Pennington. This northward route was crossed on a small eminence by another path leading from the ford on the Millstone River, now Rocky Hill, to a point on the Malayelick Indian path, now Rt. 579 in the western Township.



1706 New Jersey Map

*Photo courtesy of Rutgers University, Special Collections.*

By 1722 there were 105 resident landowners in Hopewell Township and two grist mills. In 1724 and 1725, the citizens of Hopewell Township held their annual meeting at Justice Ringo’s Mill where the Hopewell Valley Golf Course is now located.

In 1719, a devout man named Enoch Armitage arrived directly from England. He soon became Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian Congregation of Maidenhead and Hopewell, which worshipped in the two meeting houses, one in present Lawrenceville and the other in Ewing, which was then part of Hopewell. It was through the leadership and industry of Enoch Armitage that a third meeting house was built along Roger’s Road near the crossing of the Indian paths’ in 1725. The following year, 1726, the citizens of Hopewell Township agreed to hold their town meetings in the new Meeting House, “by John Smith’s, alias Pennytown”. This agreement was the event that began the village. Thus, in the instant of Pennington’s birth in the West Jersey forest, it became the seat of Township government. Annual meetings were held in the church until the end of the American Revolution, and the town grew up around it.

### The 18th Century

Land from the Province Line on the east, to the river on the west was being settled and cleared before Pennytown arose. The 1300 acres on which Pennytown began was purchased for private use in 1697, sold in 1700, the year Hopewell Township was officially created, and sold again in 1708. Of the newest purchasers, Nathaniel Moore arrived in 1709, Thomas Reed soon after, and William Cornell, son of a 1708 purchaser, by 1715. These men were intent on developing profitable wheat farms, as were the many others around them. The 1708 purchase was larger than the buyers needed.

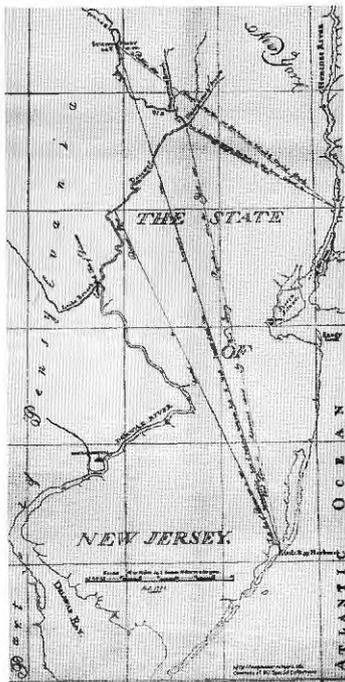
Sometime after 1708, and before 1722, farm-sized lots were sold within the tract to John Smith and Jonathan

Furman. By 1733 Furman was operating the little village's first tavern, opposite the present cemetery. The church and a school house existed on land around the cemetery, sold by John Smith, whose house was probably at the corner of the ancient paths, now Delaware Avenue and Main Street.

In 1741, the Town(ship) Record Book calls the village

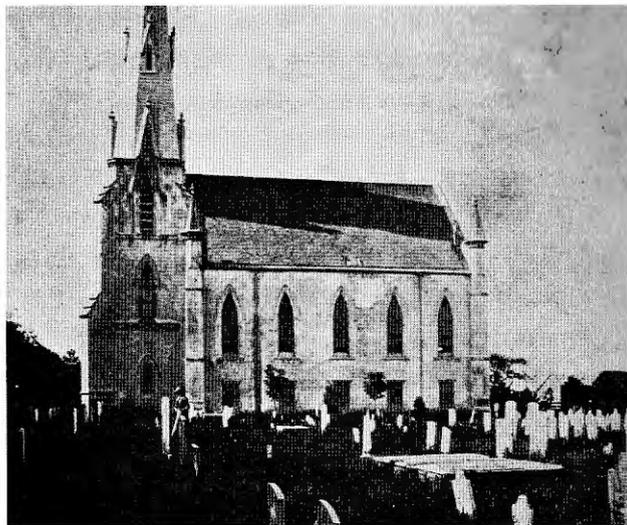
Smithfield, no doubt to honor John Smith, first settler at the crossing of the forest paths. In 1743, a property record calls the village Queenstown for the first time, and another document repeats this in the 1750's. Still the name Penntown persisted, and the more formal Pennington appeared in the late 1750's.

The business of the 18th century was supplying wheat through the Philadelphia market to the wider world. The virgin soil was fertile, and the yields extraordinary. In 1765, the Presbyterians replaced their first church with a grander brick structure, built by wheat profits. By the time of the Revolution the little settlement included three taverns, two stores, a blacksmith, wheelwright, hatter, saddle shop, a visiting doctor, and three or four residences. It was very much a town oriented to the highway over which an ever increasing number of settlers from northern New Jersey traveled back and forth to Trenton.



1784 Boundaries Map

Photo courtesy of Rutgers University, Special Collections.



Presbyterian Church

### Revolutionary Times

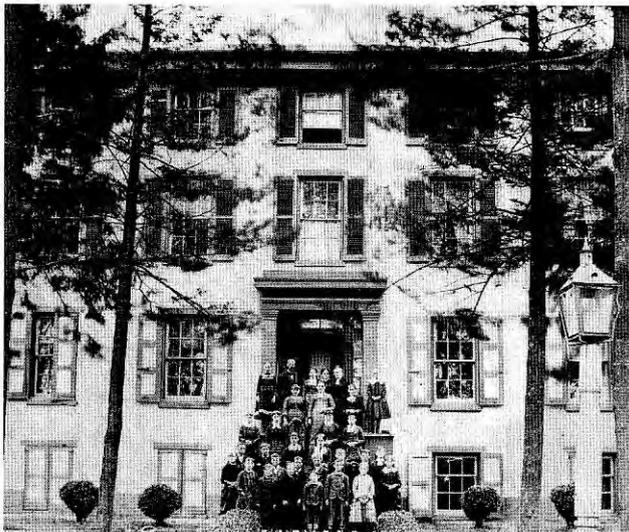
In December of 1776, when Cornwallis's troops occupied the town, his letters refer to Penntown. This brief occupation brought consternation to the village and countryside. In the bitter cold, English soldiers burned fences and stole bedding to try to stay warm while sleeping in area barns. They harassed and harmed the defenseless population. They crowded into the Presbyterian Church where they cracked the Communion table and burned the pews for heat. Local legend says the dragoons exercised their horses by jumping the churchyard wall.

Three Revolutionary militia companies were raised in the Township. The one that included the area of Pennington was led by Capt. John Hunt, and later by Capt. Ely Moore. Militia training, musters and rendezvous were held in the village as well as military courts. In a blow to American fortunes, General Charles Lee was captured at Basking Ridge, and held briefly in Pennington. During the Pennsylvania revolt of 1781, officers of the Pennsylvania Continental Line quartered in Pennington, including Anthony Wayne.

## Post Revolution and the 19th Century

Following the Revolution, area men began to develop businesses, and lots were added southward from the crossroads. The wheat economy had matured, and more services could be sustained. In the 1820's and 30's new construction picked up, creating our streetscape of simple Federal style houses by 1860. In his Historical Discourse of 1876, Rev. George Hale, who had been pastor of the Presbyterian congregation from 1838 to 1869, recalled the addition to the village of a great many houses during his years in residence.

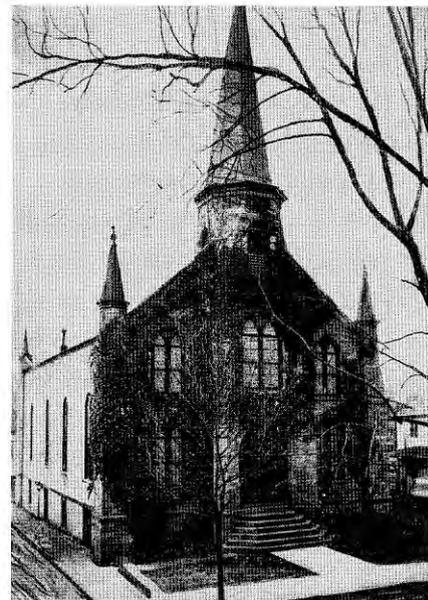
About 1817, interested citizens in and around Pennington built the Pennington Academy, now 124 South Main Street. This subscription school was followed in 1836 by the erection of what became known as Evergreen Hall, a seminary for girls. The Methodist Male Seminary (now the Pennington School) was opened in 1839, and two more schools were later built: Albert Lasher's Academy, and another female Seminary. By 1850, three boarding schools had a total of 82 students and 25 teachers and staff, one fifth of the village's population of 500.



*Evergreen Hall*

Pennington had become a place of opportunity. The 1850 census shows an influx of people from other states, primarily Pennsylvania, as well as a number of young Irish men and women who served in households, and labored on farms. With all the students in town, the number of tailors, shoemakers, and dressmakers grew apace. The Frisbie family came from Connecticut to open a fourth dry goods and grocery store, contesting with Muirhead and Wynkoop, Blackwell, and Hart. To serve the townsfolk, the rural areas, and the traveler, there were three blacksmiths, three wheelwrights, and two harness makers. Many of these tradesmen had employees. A coach service to Trenton was operated.

In 1826, the area Methodist Congregation built a brick church on South Main Street, then still known as Roger's Road. They soon purchased a house to use as a parsonage. In 1845, they built a larger church nearer the center of town. In 1850,



*The Methodist Church*

three African American trustees bought a lot for the purpose of building an AME church, which was accomplished shortly after. A neighborhood of black families grew up near this church on South Main Street.

By 1861, with the firing on Fort Sumter, national politics had absorbed the village. Groups of men heeded

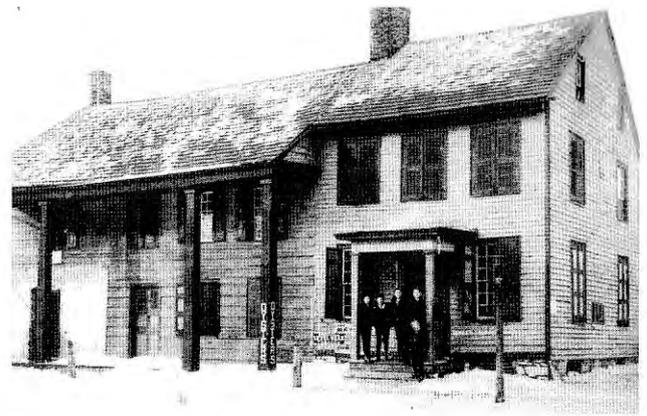
Lincoln's call and enlisted in the militia for 90 days of service, then joined the nine New Jersey regiments that were called up for three years of service. Welling, Woolsey, and Curlis became leaders. Reverend Hale visited the battle front. Following the war, dozens of men molded in that crucible returned to Pennington to quietly fill the ranks of its leaders and artisans. In 1890 over fifty veterans got their mail at the Pennington Post Office. Nine black veterans of the Civil War are interred in Pennington's African Cemetery.

### **From Rural Village to Suburb**

In 1876 the Delaware and Bound Brook Railroad finished its track and built a magnificent station at Pennington. The effort was strategically timed to generate ridership by providing access to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. For Penningtonians, it provided a whole new sense of place and initiated the suburban era. People could work, shop, and enjoy events away from town, then return home. Goods could be manufactured or packaged here and sent out. New products could be ordered for delivery. The interests of the townsfolk began to separate from those of the farming community. A water company was founded in 1886 to protect the town from the problem of drought, as experienced in 1881 and 1886.



*The Pennington Train Station*



*The Swan Hotel 1890*

### **The Borough is Formed**

Concern mounted over the poor quality of the streets, sidewalks, and street lighting. The farmers of the Township held two thirds of the real property value, and influenced Township finances. It was difficult for townspeople to get expenditures directed toward the improvements needed in the villages. Accordingly, under the 1882 law that allowed the creation of boroughs, a referendum was held in Pennington in January of 1890. By a vote of 115 to 9, it was agreed to form a Borough with the power to tax and manage town affairs. On April 1, 1890, the first town government was installed. A tax of \$1 per thousand was levied for street lights. By June, new street lights were installed. Taxes previously paid to the Township for roads were retained to be used for Borough streets.

### **Incorporation Releases Drive for Improvements**

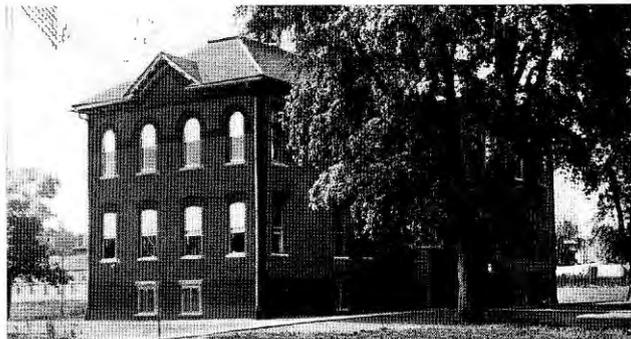
A fire company was organized in 1891, and in 1892 it took delivery of its first engine. Also in 1891 the Odd Fellows built a three story brick structure. In 1894, Col. John Kunkel arrived from New York, and galvanized an already energized core of town boosters. Kunkel purchased the Ketcham farm and built his grand home, Stony Brook Lodge on East Delaware Avenue. Immediately he had lots for sale. Kunkel led in the

formation of the Pennington Improvement Association in 1898, and many modern improvements followed, as the Borough entered the twentieth century.

The rural village still had board fences that enclosed yards where chickens roosted and perhaps a cow was tethered. Kunkel worked for the removal of these old fences, and caused the demolition of the town's oldest building, the original tavern, opposite the Presbyterian Church's cemetery. The pace of change quickened as the century drew to a close. In 1897, telephone service was brought to the Borough through the efforts of George Scarborough.

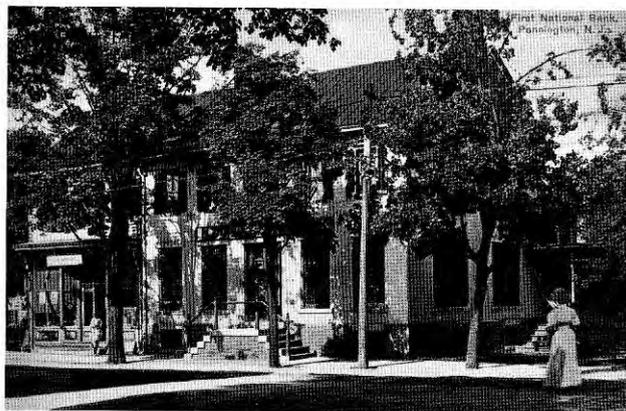
The Improvement Association immediately founded "The Pennington Post", and began negotiations to bring electricity to town. Within a year, it supported the formation of the vegetable canning company. A foundry company was induced to build within the Borough.

In 1899, the small Catholic population, brought here by the railroad, raised sufficient funds to erect their chapel on Kunkel's newly opened Eglantine Avenue. At the same time, a new public school was built, now known as Academy Court. The small frame building this school had previously used was moved across the street, and in 1904, this building was rededicated to the use of the First Baptist Congregation of Pennington, the fifth religious group in town.



*Pennington Public School*

In 1902, the Trenton Street Railway Company extended its trolley line to south Pennington, leaving the present double roadway in front of Tollgate School. Getting to Trenton became more convenient, whether for visiting, work, or shopping. The First National Bank of Pennington was incorporated in 1901 by area farmers. It took space in the Irving House, another of Pennington's early taverns, which even then remained a boarding house. In 1901, The Seminary, now the Pennington School built what was later called O'Hanlon Hall.



*The First National Bank of Pennington*

### **William P. Howe, Sr. Arrives and Borough Expands**

Much like Kunkel, William Howe adopted Pennington upon his arrival in 1910. Looking for a place more suited to his health, he no doubt found a town being operated by a group of energetic citizens. He first bought the small Fish farm which fronted into the village, and began growing evergreens on a wholesale basis. Seeing development potential, he soon purchased two Sked farms on the west side of South Main Street. In 1912, both Howe and Kunkel were advertising lots for sale. After buying the new land, Howe became Mayor, also in 1912. With the help of Walter Frisbie, his successor as Mayor, the Borough was expanded to include his land, and also more land on the east side of South Main, which Howe also bought in 1921.

In 1914 the Seminary celebrated its 75th Anniversary. William Jennings Bryan was the speaker. That year was also notable for the great blizzard that dropped 12" of snow driven by 75-mile-per-hour winds.

War began in Europe, and its shadow reached to Pennington. Townspeople were very active in donating clothing and medical supplies to the victims in Europe. Nevertheless 1915 was a joyous year that marked the 25th Anniversary of Pennington Borough, and the welcome of new residents from Howe's tract into the fold. A celebration was held at the Pennington School that drew 300 people. The 1890 incorporation was close enough in memory for everyone to feel a sense of accomplishment. Pennington was neither a dense city, nor an unorganized country town. It was a collection of homes owned by citizens of like mind, all pulling together for the common good.

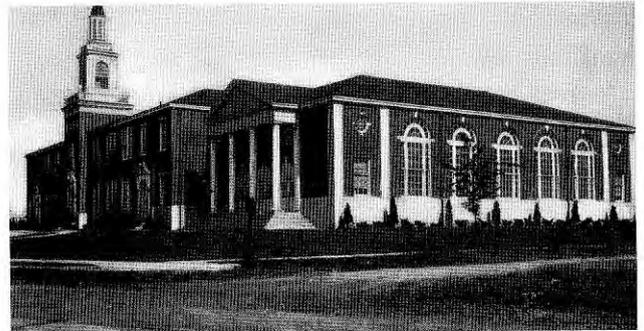


*The Pennington School*

1917 brought the entrance of the United States into the European War. About 80 local people served. With many of the wage-earners gone, existence became more disciplined and self-rationed. Donations of clothing, food and medical supplies for Europeans and American Troops continued. Fortunately the war was short lived for America, and our local population soon returned to normal living.

## **From World War I to the Great Depression**

The period from 1918 to 1929 was another time of expansion in population, improvements, and satisfying living. A large parade was held to give thanks for Victory in Europe. A few years later, William Howe donated land for the construction of St. Matthews Episcopal Church as well as a new grammar school, now Tollgate Grammar School, built in 1926. The Matthews Hotel was replaced by the Alsop Building on North Main, thus destroying the last of Pennington's taverns. Main Street was paved in 1925, and a new bank building was erected on the corner of Main and East Delaware in 1927. The Presbyterian Church added Titus Hall. In 1929, just before the Stock Market crash, the new Central High School on South Main Street was built (now school administration building).



*Central High School*

## **Depression and World War II**

The Pennington Building and Loan and the Bank did not fail as a result of the Crash of 1929. The New Deal came to town when the Emergency Relief Administration established an office in Pennington to serve the region. The WPA constructed about 16 projects in Pennington to generate employment. One of those projects was The Pennington Dam on Stony Brook. The highway bypass, now known as Route 31, was built in 1934 – over the objections of Mayor Howe, who feared loss of town business and new costs to maintain Main Street.



*Bank with WW11 Board*

Pennington celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1940 with an expanded Memorial Day parade. A pageant called "Pennington's Heritage" with 16 episodes was held behind the grammar school. In the same year, the Draft Board established an office in Pennington, and young men began signing up.

With the coming of World War II, Pennington's residents got used to rationing. Many foods were placed under price controls and allocated by coupons. Tires and gasoline were rationed, causing the near disappearance of automobiles from the road. Victory Gardens were encouraged as patriotic work. Tin and grease were collected for the manufacture of ammunition. Salaries of teachers and professional employees were reduced. Principal Metzger, at Central High School initiated Thanksgiving Dinners for students to provide what they might not get at home. The Borough lowered its tax rate.

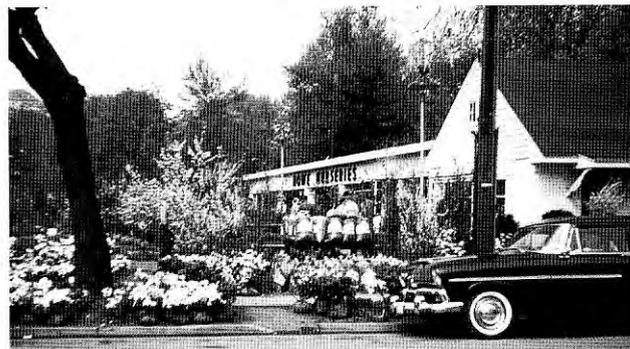
Men patrolled the unlit streets at night listening for enemy aircraft. A newsletter was started to send hometown news to all those serving abroad. When the war ended in 1945, 7 of the 250 Penningtonians who had served had lost their lives.

The French distiller of Triple Sec, Cointreau, had been induced to occupy the old foundry building in the Borough's northwest quadrant before the end of the War. The company proved to be a benefactor of the town by helping the First Aid Squad finance a new ambulance and contributing to the Library.

### **New Exuberance Follows the War**

Although noticeable inflation followed the war, business expansion provided employment that led to better times. Service Veterans were ready to return to school or college, take jobs, and start families.

The children of the ensuing baby boom found a wonderful place to grow up. William Howe's efforts had made the southern Borough a comfortable and pleasant environment. Paved sidewalks were shaded by Norway Maples and led past his colorful plant shop and office at Main Street and Curlis Avenue. His greenhouses between Burd and Sked Streets were places to explore, and Howe's Pond at the east end of Curlis Avenue was the scene of all-day hockey games on winter days. In the summer, youngsters explored the remote reaches of the Borough on their bicycles, visiting the town's four candy shops, the drug store to look at toys and models, and the Grammar School playground to play baseball and find their friends. In 1957, a group of families formed the Penn Brook Swim Club.



*Howe's Plant Market in 1960.*

The schools were soon overflowing. In 1958, a new High School was built across Rt. 31 away from the Borough. The old High School, now the Administration Building, then became home to the 7th and 8th grades.

The Borough recognized 1958 as the 250th year since local settlement with the approval of a special seal and an ambitious Memorial Day parade. The Kleio Club produced a town history, noting the founding, events of the Revolutionary War, and the histories of the churches and other organizations. The High School presented a historical pageant marking the milestone, and photographic exhibits continued through the year.



*Memorial Day Parade*

The Borough grew and improved its infrastructure during the late Fifties and early Sixties. The West Delaware Avenue bridge over the railroad line was replaced with a new, wider crossing that provided sidewalks, no doubt prompted by the new location of the High School. Water mains were improved. A radio alarm replaced the clanging of the old fire bell.

A new Post Office was built on the corner of South Main Street and West Delaware Avenue after the demolition of the historic building that had stood there since about 1840. The Pennington Quality Market, which had been on North Main Street since 1945, moved to the new shopping center on Rt. 31 at West Delaware Avenue.

In 1962, the Methodist congregation added its Clarkson Building to provide much needed classrooms. The First Aid Squad built its new building on Broemel Place. And, in 1964, an era passed: after nearly a century of use, the railroad station ceased to provide passenger service.



*Downtown Pennington in 1962*

1964 also marked New Jersey's Tercentenary. Once again Borough pride called out its historians to celebrate the town's past. The Memorial Day parade was expanded, a commemorative plate depicting the town's six churches was produced, and a day-long fair in September portrayed the "Good Old Days" with booths, food, and demonstrations.

Outside the boundaries of Pennington, the Scudders Falls Bridge was chosen in 1964 as the point of crossing for the new highway, Interstate 95. It was intended that the next part of the route would cut through Hopewell Township, near enough to Pennington to generate unwanted development. The local opposition organized quickly and effectively. By the early 70s the route had been changed, leaving Pennington with its traditional "village in the country" context.

In the 70s, the Stony Brook Sewer Authority was created embracing much of northern Mercer County. Pennington still relied on septic tanks. A policy battle ensued, with the result that individual sewer plants were provided for Hopewell Borough and Pennington. The capacity of the systems for the two Boroughs was restricted to preserve the character of the region.

1980 brought a tragic fire that destroyed O'Hanlon Hall at the Pennington School. Recognizing the century and a half relationship of the School and the town, local citizens organized "Pennington Day" as a benefit for the School. Fortunately, the School rebounded quickly, and built Stainton Hall the following year. Pennington Day has continued as a delightful annual event funding various needs, and is now in its 35th year.

Preservation and development have been the Yin and Yang of the area in recent decades. The area around the railroad station, which was taken out of service in 1964, was developed into the Railroad Place condominiums in the late 80's. A few years later, a consortium led by the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, purchased and preserved Curlis Lake Woods. Now managed by Mercer County, this tract simultaneously protects the eastern side of the Borough from development and provides an exceptional natural recreation area.

In 1994, the Pennington Point age-restricted condominium project was built. In 1995, Pennington completed its new Municipal Building on the site where the Grange had once stood. The library was located within this building, after negotiations for a joint library with Hopewell Township, but located within the Borough, had failed.

The old Odd Fellows Building, which had served the town as fire house, library and town hall for a century, was sold for private business use. Pennington also



*Odd Fellows Building*



completed a new Public Works facility on North Main Street in this period.

About 2005, Pennington saw its largest "uptown" development project come to fruition. The three story, mixed used "Pennington Court" brought new retail and residential space to the center of town.

While Pennington has lost its three largest historic taverns and a few of its 19th Century commercial buildings, it retains a remarkable streetscape of 120 19th Century residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. For this reason, Pennington is one of the exceptional small towns of central New Jersey. Accordingly, the Borough created an Historic District and Preservation Commission in 2010, which has already saved four buildings that might have been torn down.

The student of local history who delves more deeply into the history of our town will find a long list of people who have given their energies to maintain and improve the quality of life here, so many that they cannot be fully listed. These women and men, many of them volunteers, cared about the community. The quality of this place derives from their talents and passions. Honor them, and Celebrate our Hometown Heritage!

*Photos Courtesy of Hopewell Valley Historical Society,  
Margaret J. O'Connell Collection, St James Church.*

## Pennington Declares Independence

By Jack Davis

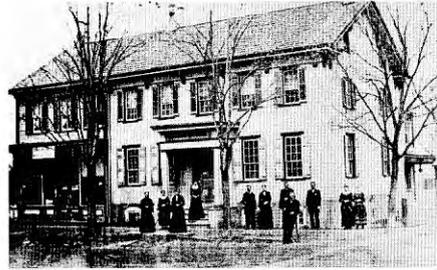
The village of Pennington separated from Hopewell Township in 1890. Prior to that time, Pennington was an important community within the Township, but had no separate legal identity and no definite boundaries. However, the residents of the growing village had interests in modernization that were rather different from those who lived in the surrounding farm community. In 1882, the New Jersey Legislature passed "An Act for the Formation of Borough Commissions." It allowed boroughs (of less than 2 square miles and fewer than 3,000 people) to be incorporated by a referendum process. Pennington's residents in 1890 took advantage of that act to "secede" from the township.



1887 Bird's Eye

In December 1889, a Trenton Times story reported that "a canvass has been made of the residents of Pennington, and over eighty percent of the population are in favor of incorporating the village." The writer continued, "Before long the charming little suburban settlement will have taken one step toward future greatness." As specified by the 1882 law, the petition results were presented to Hopewell Township's chosen Freeholder, Asa H. Drake, who then called for a special referendum on the matter.

The referendum occurred on January 21, 1890 at the Irving House hotel at North Main and East Delaware. The results: 115 in favor of incorporation as a borough, only 9 opposed. By law, the Borough's incorporation was official upon filing of these election results with the County Clerk, which occurred on January 31.



Irving House.  
Location of the  
1890 referendum.

Seven Borough Commissioners were nominated by a vote of Pennington's residents on March 21, and their election was formalized on April 1. The Commissioners were Daniel A. Clarkson (R), James R. Bergen (D), John G. Muirheid (R), William B. Muirheid (R), Joseph C. Bunn (R), Elwood Mathews, and Edward C. Young (D). These were all prominent businessmen. By the same election, a property tax of 0.1% was decided on, to cover the costs of "lamps and other necessary expenses." At its first meeting, the Commission elected Clarkson as President, Bergen as Treasurer, and Bunn as Secretary.

The Borough Commission Act (and its amendments) authorized Pennington's new Commission to manage public streets and sidewalks, perform road repair and improvements, provide for lighting of streets, and supply water for fighting fires. The Commission was also empowered to maintain and enforce ordinances relating to issuing licenses, preventing damage to trees on public streets, protecting street lamps and other public property, and preventing pasturing of animals on streets and sidewalks. The new government was further authorized to appoint policemen and adopt

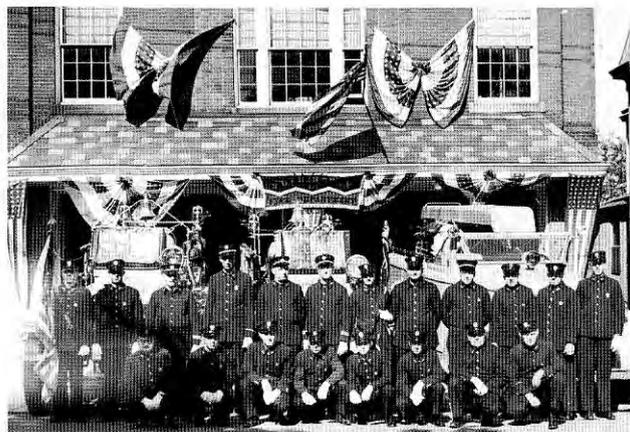
ordinances to maintain public order. The President of the Commission had judicial powers equivalent to a Justice of the Peace.



*The Streets of Pennington*

Road-related improvements were the first order of business. The Borough Commission had plenty to work on, and had some funds available (\$1,118). Pennington's roads were deplorable, with deep mud, streams of water, and protruding stones creating obstacles to travel. Sidewalks were rough or non-existent. Poor lighting made night-time travel (and walking) dangerous. These conditions could be expected on country roads, but seemed unreasonable in a village which could afford better. Road improvements and street lighting projects began immediately. By June 1, it was reported that street lamps were in regular service. Charles Hendrickson, long a familiar figure in Pennington, became the Borough's lamp-lighter around this time.

Pennington's initial status as a "borough commission" government was changed by the 1896 repeal of the 1882 act. The repeal caused Pennington to be given a "full borough" status, which meant the town gained a Mayor and Council. Under both of these forms of borough government, the town was enabled to fund modernization and embrace new technologies over the coming decades.



*1940 Pennington Fire Department*

Just a few of the many achievements of the Borough included establishment of a volunteer fire company (1891), initiation of telephone service (1897), and opening of trolley service to Trenton (1903), and to Hopewell (1904). The Borough government also facilitated the suburban developments of Colonel John Kunkel (starting in the 1890's) and William P. Howe (starting in the 1910's). In the 125 years since incorporation, Pennington has retained its pleasant small-town atmosphere.

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*The Trolley comes to town.*

## TIMELINE OF PENNINGTON

- 1708 Mott, Cornell, Moore and Reed buy future site of Pennington
- 1719 Enoch Armitage arrives from England
- 1725 Armitage leads construction of new Meeting House along Roger's Road, Pennington begins
- 1726 Pennytown becomes site of annual Township meeting
- 1733 Jonathan Furman's tavern at Pennytown first mentioned
- 1743 Land transaction calls village Queenstown
- 1755 Name Pennington used, Pennytown also persists
- 1765 New and larger Presbyterian Church built
- 1776 British soldiers occupy village during week of December 8th. Citizens are plundered.
- 1826 Methodists build church in Pennington
- 1836 Female Seminary, later known as Evergreen Hall, is built on South Main Street
- 1839 Methodist Male Seminary opened
- 1846 Methodists build a larger church
- 1848 Presbyterians build new church on existing site, following revival of 1846
- 1850 African Methodists build a church on South Main Village population reaches 500
- 1857 New public school built on Academy Street
- 1863 Black Trustees purchase cemetery near Toll gate House
- 1865 Civil War ends. 150 veterans return to Pennington
- 1874 Presbyterian Church destroyed by fire
- 1875 New Presbyterian Church completed
- 1876 Delaware and Bound Brook Railroad with Second Empire Station is built close to Pennington
- 1886 Private citizens create water company for village
- 1890 Borough is created and first Borough government installed on April 1. Borough installs new street lights, begins working on streets
- 1891 Fire Company is founded, Odd Fellows Hall built.
- 1894 Col. John A. Kunkel from New York City, buys Ketcham farm, and builds Stony Brook Lodge
- 1897 George W. Scarborough brings in telephone service
- 1899 St. James Roman Catholic Church is built  
New public school is built on Academy Street
- 1900 First National Bank of Pennington is chartered
- 1902 Trolley service is extended from Trenton
- 1904 First Baptist Church of Pennington acquires building  
Banquet given for successful town Baseball team  
Population reaches 1,000
- 1910 William Howe arrives in Pennington, purchases the Fish Farm, then the Sked Farms. He becomes Mayor  
Old Swan Hotel torn down, was colonial tavern
- 1915 Borough is expanded to include Howe Farms and Curlis Farm. Celebration is held for 300 for 25th Anniversary of Borough and expansion.
- 1922 St. Matthews Church is built on land donated by Howe
- 1926 New Grammar School is built on Howe land
- 1927 New bank is built, replaces last colonial tavern
- 1929 New Central High School is built on Main Street
- 1934 Pennington Circle and bypass (Rt. 31) are built
- 1935-1940 16 WPA projects including Pennington Dam completed by 1940
- 1940 Pennington Celebrates 50th Anniversary
- 1958 New Regional High School is completed outside Pennington Borough
- 1960 New Post Office is built in place of 19th Century building
- 1976 Pennington gets sewers
- 1980 O'Hanlon Hall at Pennington School burns, Borough starts Pennington Day as fund raiser
- 1993 Curlis Lake Woods preserve is purchased
- 1994 Pennington Point, an age-restricted condominium project was built, partly within the Borough
- 1995 New Borough Hall and Library are built
- 2005 Pennington Court mixed use development is built
- 2010 Historic District and Preservation Commission are established

## Pennington Trivia

Did you know that Hessian soldiers were quartered here during the American Revolution and exercised their horses by jumping them over the Church cemetery wall?

Did you know that Pennington is the home of an African American cemetery with graves dating back to the Civil War?

Did you know that two of the older churches in Pennington serve African American congregations? They are Pennington's third oldest, Bethel AME Church founded in 1816, and First Baptist Church organized in 1902.

Did you know that the congregation of the United Methodist Church raised \$5,000 in 1838 to bring a Methodist Seminary to Pennington? It is now The Pennington School.

Did you know Pennington has two parks? One is Kunkel Park on King George Road and the other is the Sked Street Park.

Did you know that Pennington Day, our annual street fair, began in 1980 to raise money to help restore The Pennington School's O'Hanlon Hall which was destroyed by fire that year?

Did you know that Pennington was without a sanitary sewer system until 1976 when sewers were built, the water lines were upgraded, and a new water tower was built?

Did you know that the Pennington Methodist Church traces its origin back to the 1766 - 1771 era?

Did you know that both St. James Roman Catholic Church and St. Matthew's Episcopal Church both began in Pennington as missions of their Dioceses in Trenton; St. James in 1898 and St. Matthew's in 1926?

Did you know that the site of the Stony Brook dam on Titus Mill Road in Hopewell Township is actually owned by Pennington Borough? The dam was built as a WPA project in the 1930's.

Did you know that, Peter Benchley, the author of "Jaws" lived in Pennington and called the now defunct Dykes Dutch Treat his favorite restaurant.

Did you know that Pennington is the home of former and present state legislators? Bill Schluter served on Pennington Borough Council, in the State Assembly and as State Senator. His wife, Nancy, served on Borough Council with Weed Tucker in the mid 1970's. Elizabeth (Liz) Maher Muoio has just been appointed to the New Jersey Assembly.

Did you know that the Pennington Public Library began with the organization of the Ladies Library Association of Pennington in 1876 and was open for 1 hour each week? Established as a free public library in 1918, the PPL has occupied several buildings in town and today shares space in Borough Hall.

Did you know that Svetlana Peters, daughter of Soviet Premier Josef Stalin lived in Pennington briefly? And that Bev Tucker gave piano lessons to Svetlana's daughter Olga Peters.

PENNINGTON NJ



CELEBRATING OUR  
HOMETOWN  
HERITAGE FOR

*125 Years!*

A commemorative program  
celebrating the incorporation  
of the Borough of  
Pennington in 1890.