This Is Washington Township
Morris County, New Jersey
A brief historical record
1730-1976
"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills..."

The Washington Township Historical Society takes pride and pleasure in offering this brief pictorial review of our community of towns and villages as a salute to the national Bicentennial. It will also serve to help familiarize newcomers in our midst, as well as visitors, with a unique heritage dating back to the early 1700's.

THE WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Joseph M. Decker, president; James A. Rudolph, vice president; Ruth Wilson, secretary; June Waders, treasurer; and these trustees: Kenneth Hoffman, Tillman Gressit, Gertrude Olmsted

This historical record of German Valley is warmly dedicated to the memory of Leonard Neighbour, (1897-1976), seventh generation native and a direct descendent of one of the community's founding families.

Proceeds from the sale of this booklet will be used solely for the preservation and maintenance of our proudest landmark, the Old Union Church stonework on Fairview Avenue and its hallowed graveyard.

Booklet price is $2.50

July 4, 1976
A good measure of lore and legend surrounds us, much of it passed on through six and seven local generations. A few old-timers have been sought out and questioned; albums, attics and trunks diligently searched for old clippings and relevant pictures. More recent arrivals, here three or four decades, have contributed from memory to the material therein. While an occasional error may have crept into the story, basic facts and figures were gleaned from numerous publications. The writer is grateful for willing contributions and help in getting it all together.

Recorded history relates that in 1707, a handful of severely persecuted Dutch Reformed families living along the Rhine in Prussia, joined hands to seek religious freedom and the opportunity to sink roots in America. That decision reached, the brave and eager group travelled first to Holland and a seaport, ultimately to set sail for New York and the new world on what was to become an arduous adventure. Their vessel, after weeks under sail and in uncertain waters, was blown off course landing the pilgrims instead at the Port of Philadelphia.

Undaunted, although weak and weary from their hazardous voyage, those stalwart men, women and children were determined to continue toward their goal on foot and horseback, always with the hope of finding other settlers with similar backgrounds. Along the way, they were befriended and guided up the Delaware River by a band of Leni-Lenape Indians who owned and roamed the surrounding eastern hills. Led over familiar trails through the wilderness, plodding forward for days and weeks, the pioneers paused to rest and set camp as they reached the beckoning long valley stretching serenely before them. Resolving to end their long pursuit of happiness and promise here, our township was thus settled, with a small cluster of tents peopled by an unrelenting, purposeful group of Dutchmen who were the original families of German Valley. Many of their descendents remain to this day.

Nova Caesarea, or the Province of Jersey, was split into two parts in 1676 by the British Crown, with an arbitrary line to define the division running roughly from Little Egg Harbor on the Atlantic coast northwest to the source of the Delaware River above the Water Gap. The newly separated areas were briefly known as East and West Jersey, but misunderstanding of boundaries reunited the two parts in 1702 which together became the royal colony of New Jersey.
Life naturally was rugged for the early settlers in America although land was plentiful, comparatively-easy to come by or free for a favored few who served the King of England well or were related to him. In consequence, Charles II in 1664 presented his brother James, Duke of York, with a tremendous tract in the new world encompassing a large part of New England, New York and all of what we know as New Jersey. This was planned as an opening for further colonization by the British and a move to oust Dutch settlers who were gaining a substantial foothold. A year saw them capitulate without argument or gunshot. In that interim, the Duke of York had transferred a good portion of his grant to two loyal friends, Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. To reward Carteret for his brave defense of the Island of Jersey in the Parliamentary Wars, the Province of New Jersey was established with Sir George’s brother, Philip, as first English governor at the capital, now Elizabeth.

West Jersey was sold to The Society of Friends which had become well settled and steadily growing in eastern Pennsylvania. William Penn, a substantial landowner and influential citizen, maintained good relations with Indian tribes along the Delaware River which avoided conflict with the new settlers. Their occupation of the new land had a pronounced influence on its development as an agricultural region while East Jersey, closer a bit to New York and its safe harbor and growing commerce grasped the opportunity to grow in that direction.

Abundant, fertile farmland soon proved that more than enough produce could be grown than any family would use. Some bartering was arranged in exchange for dry goods, staples, harness and other needs provided locally. Farms in the valley and atop the mountain started orchards which produced fruit of uncommon variety and flavor. Markets were found and it was not long before baskets were needed to transport peaches and apples. However, earlier discoveries had turned up veins of iron in the granite mountains above German Valley. In 1830, ore taken from the mines was so magnetic it discouraged the use of metal tools. Yet other mines were opened in the area which were to provide General Washington with cannon and rifle shot. After the revolution, the ore was refined and fashioned into wheel rims, plowshares, horse shoes and other implements.

As it was in the beginning, the first white settlers to reach the lush valley set a campsite in the early 1700’s, satisfied that here was everything they had hoped to find in America. The rolling hills, fertile fields broken here and there by dense forests of useful wood suggested crops for food, wood for housing. Moving streams and ponds which fed the nearby river offered ample water and the power to eventually turn mill stones.

The settlers’ first concern was shelter for their families. A small log cabin, built by hand from logs hewn with rustic tools, was the first permanent abode which stood for some years near the site of the old Union Church. Due to the religious persecution they had so recently escaped, their next priority was a place for worship. As more huts and cabins took shape, the small group met in each other’s homes.

In time, more settlers arrived, having heard of the good fortune of those friends who preceded them. The first families to stake claims for farming were these familiar names: Welsh, Schwackhammer, Neighbour, Terribery, Dufford and Schenkle. Half a dozen of the new arrivals had selected sites which soon were discovered to be on the vast Logan tract of more than 1800 acres along what we know as Mill Street. Logan was secretary to William Penn. Surveys made in 1747 permitted six families to continue settlement along the river which coursed through the valley and gradually the semblance of a thriving village took form.

DUTCH VALLEY : GERMAN VALLEY : LONG VALLEY

By the mid-1700’s, Peter Neitzer had opened a general store, William Neitzer a tavern. Both brought in people from neighboring villages. Throughout colonial America religion took a prominent place in every community. In German Valley two growing congregations joined hands to build a church of logs which both shared for Lutheran and Dutch Reformed followers, faiths the settlers had brought from their homelands.

Great impetus to grow appeared when railway service brought passenger and freight cars to and through German Valley. In 1876 the High Bridge branch of the Jersey Central was completed, joining with Lake Hopatcong, long a popular resort. Prior to rail service, travelers traversed the Washington Turnpike between Morris-town and Phillipsburg. Completed in 1810, the pike passed through Mendham, Chester on through German Valley to Pleasant Grove to continue to Easton and the Delaware Water Gap. Stage stops were frequent where passengers were taken on or left.
Through German Valley from the railroad tracks toward Schooley's Mountain which always presented a challenge at the turn of the century. It still is a formidable journey up and over for the novice. The square at the center of town displayed store and garage signs offering various services: close inspection reveals one advertising telephone service which came in from nearby Chester through an antique magneto wall instrument which had to be cranked to reach an operator. She knew everyone in town and most of what was going on; local news travelled over the wires back and forth.

In the early 1900's, this is the way it was. Clusters of well built Victorian homes and sturdier stone houses dotted the landscape to make up German Valley. Nestled comfortably on or near the southern slope of Schooley's Mountain, the small community quickly had become the hub of activity for the township. Dirt roads crossed at the familiar intersection leading up the mountain, to Middle Valley, Fairovs and Chester. Until 1870 a wooden bridge crossed the river to Main Street where picket fences surrounded tidy lawns and homes on both sides.
When the Chester Pike opened, communication opened a bit more with it. As neighboring villages grew, travel, mail and provisions moved in and out of German Valley which boasted in the mid-1800's a hotel, 3 retail stores, 2 schools, 2 blacksmith shops, 4 shoemakers, a tannery and a combination grist and saw mill. The man who owned a mill of any kind was a popular and prominent tradesman, for the fertile valley produced an abundance of wheat, corn, oats and rye for milling.

At the turn of this century, German Valley was the center of much of the township's activity. The popular hotel, operated by Charlie Messler who had worked as a lad at the famous resorts atop Schooley's Mountain, served good food and drink, welcomed visitors and the local gentry. A bakery down the road, a general store across the street and a garage nearby offered daily service, while a pool parlor at the corner invited male diversion and sundries such as cigars, chewing tobacco and conversation about crops and the weather.
The familiar stone bridge, built to replace a wooden structure in 1870, has carried many thousands over the south branch of the Raritan River. World War I saw lorries filled with troops pass through the village. One well-known citizen attempted a crossing downstream with his team of horses and wagon during construction; the strong current fouled the effort when harness and horses tangled in the wood underpinning. Alongside stands the frame building which housed the first local post office for two terms.

The often recalled two-room schoolhouse stood at the first turn of the road starting up the mountain. In the early 1900's pupils attended classes from nine township districts; those in German Valley using the local, small facility which now, enlarged, houses all Washington Township Municipal offices.

Built in 1830, the first schoolhouse stands alongside the remnants of Old Union Church. Used on and off as a residence, the stone structure now houses the township library and an upstairs room is set aside for records, deeds and old maps or related memorabilia collected and preserved by the Washington Township Historical Society. Below, another outstanding example of stonework fashioned in the 1800's by German stone cutters brought in to work the quarries.
The historic Springtown Tavern, now a handsomely restored home halfway to the mountain top, had been a stage stop enroute to the watering spas at Pleasant Grove Road. A tall tale tells of the friendly roustabout, known to everyone, who lived somewhere on the northern slope. Each fall he would carry an empty cask to the old jug tavern, have it filled as a precaution against frostbite, then roll it to the top, guide it home and stash it away.

Like so many connecting byways, Bartley Road meandered through the countryside passing an occasional pasture of grazing cattle, a well-kept farmhouse, as it found its way to Bartley and the iron works there, a busy factory in the early 1900's. The road continued on toward Budd Lake where families could swim, fish and picnic on a warm summer afternoon.

Conquering Schooley's Mountain by road has always been a test of driving skill, fortitude and a sound vehicle. Tractor-trailers have overturned at the last sharp turn downgrade. Stories tell of the total wreckage of a large truck laden with liquor some years ago; natives celebrated for weeks. Camp Washington Road, veering off the northeast, led past a camp and lake until recently used as a YMCA-YWCA Camp. A few years ago, the Morris County Parks Commission purchased the land, improved and added to facilities to create public recreation for family fun: boating and swimming, summers; skating, toboganning when snow permits and the lake freezes.
Mail delivery in the early 1800's was a torturous, roundabout trip requiring six days. Starting at Trenton, then on through Somerset, Hunterdon and Morris Counties, mail eventually was delivered to several post offices in Washington Township. A vital part of local handling were the Star or rural routes, first run by Ira Sanderson seen here stopping at Skinner's General Store, also the post office for the famous mountain resorts.

Carts, wagons, carriages and drays frequently needed wheels replaced or newly fitted. The Hub Factory on Fairview Avenue ably filled the need, near the through roads and adjacent to the creamery. As the community grew, so other businesses began to flourish. Three quarries provided granite, lush forests produced oak, chestnut and other hard woods for building. Mills for grinding grain, sawing lumber, making flour took advantage of the strong river current for power. Many ponds along the river produced foot-thick ice which was harvested each winter for storage, in sawdust, to cool dairy products.
THE WARREN REPUBLICAN--FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 1888.

The Blizzard.

"It snows again," was the remark of a gentleman as he entered the American House on Sunday night last about half-past ten o'clock. And his clothing bore evidence of that fact. When the scribe poked his head into the night there was about two inches of snow on the ground, but when he opened his eyes Monday morning the blizzard was just getting in its initiatory work, piling up snow banks to a height of five, ten, fifteen and in some places twenty feet, and howling and meaning the tunes that were supposed to be confined to far-off Dakota, and the exclusive property of the people of the far-West. The railroad trains were struggling manfully to get through the banks and the men tried to clear the tracks. The telegraph wires were soon dropped, and then all communication with the outside world was shut off. The wind grew stronger every hour.

Death and Destruction in a Blizzard.

On Tuesday afternoon last about half-past three o'clock, right in the height of the blizzard, just when it was not fit for man or beast to be abroad, a terrible accident occurred on the D., L. and W. Railroad, two miles above this town, and near what is known as Bilby's Bridge, whereby a faithful engineer, Charles Baker, lost his life and six men were severely injured—three of them seriously. Five locomotives, connected together, and a single caboose, ran into a snow bank, at full speed, four of which left the track, and piled themselves into a heap of rails twelve feet below. A volume of snow flew into the air, a crash of machinery, a cloud of escaping steam, and forty-five men were sent headlong down the embankment into the snow. How so many escaped injury and death will always remain a source of wonderment. The engines were being

By some, who pretend to know, the accident is attributed to spreading rails. Others take no stock in that theory.

All day Wednesday the people came to view the wreck. Men and machinery were set to work and by a united effort, night and day, the West track was sufficiently cleared to permit the passage of trains at three o'clock yesterday afternoon. Work on the East track will not be prosecuted until one line is open all the way through. It will require a great deal of patient labor to remove and transport the entire wreck.

The uninjured men were quartered in this place at the American House, and it is unnecessary to add that their creature comforts were well looked after. They were wet through and through, while fatigue and exposure made them sorry looking fellow creatures, and did not favorably impress one with the business of railroading, with all its hardships and perils.

The notorious Blizzard of '88, most severe and serious in history, hit this area with a vengeance. A newspaper page notes drifted snow 15 and 20 feet deep, five locomotives in tandem derailing and exploding on impact with a gigantic drift.
Disaster struck Washington Township on occasion when caution or communication failed or nature went on a rampage: A routine mail plane flight crashed atop Schooley’s Mountain; a Model T is demolished at the German Valley railroad crossing and a life is lost; heavy snows rip down telephone poles and wires, traffic stands still.
The second annual catalog, 1868, described the boarding school at Schooley's Mountain Springs as a safe harbor for boys and girls away from all demoralizing influences. Religiously oriented, the program offered gentle training in deportment, a basic course in the arts, English, mathematics, classic languages, piano through wax flowers and fruit to crayoning and bookkeeping. All this in a unique atmosphere of spacious rooms, a common dining area in family style under the watchful eye of the Reverend Stoutenburough, founder, with his wife as superintendent. With five instructors or department managers, the cultural curriculum was well rounded; decent restrictions were observed which instilled consideration for others and personal responsibility. The catalog offered accommodations for 120 students in several buildings surrounded by an inviting grove of native trees on three acres, with pleasant walkways. Students enrolled from a widespread area which included German Valley, Mendham, Lebanon, Allamuchy, Bound Brook and Newark. One lad had come from Gratitude, N.J., another from Hope.

Along, slow haul up Schooley's Mountain passed the famed Spring House and its health-giving waters which trickled down a trough from the granite rocks under the mountain. There were several such outlets, not long gone, which had been known by various Indian tribes who kept the secret of the magic waters.

All that remains of the glory and glamour of the famous spas are two forlorn gateposts and a half dozen stone steps leading nowhere. Until a few years ago, remnants of those plush resort hotels and the unique amenities they provided guests were seen smothered by vines, buried in heaps of rocks and rubble. There had been mahogany bowling alleys, carpeted hardwood floors, billiard rooms handsomely paneled in rare woods. Even in those days, when service was a watchword, quarters comfortably situated apart from the hotels offered children and nursemaids special fare and lodging. Horses, liveries, drivers, received similar attention. The corner of Pleasant Grove Road and the Washington Turnpike was a busy stage stop in that long-gone era.
First there was the Alpha, naturally, although Hager's Inn had been advertised as early as 1801 as ready to accommodate visitors interested in the tonic water flowing from beneath the surface of Schooley's Mountain. However, Joseph Heath owned land near the corner of Pleasant Grove Road and The Washington Turnpike where he erected the first of several buildings for guests, changed the name of Alpha to Heath House and the resort was on its way to becoming a renowned spa, summering place for the elite who desired escape from the cities' heat. In the meantime, Conover Bowne had leased a seventeen-room boarding house in the vicinity, opened it for business during the summer of 1811. Recognizing the great potential the area held, ten years later Bowne built a substantial three story stone hotel which offered all the amenities his prominent guest list expected. Accommodations for 350 included a bounty of food, nicely appointed rooms which were carpeted, mahogany paneled game rooms for cards and billiards, bowling alleys and outdoors, tennis courts and a baseball diamond. Groves of shade trees in variety and pleasant, landscaped walkways provided the peace and quiet his noted guests sought. The hotel register gathered such names as the Goulds, Vanderbilts, Astors and Roosevelt. Teddy's father visited Belmont Hall as did Presidents Grant and Harrison. Grand balls were held in the lavish ballroom almost weekly, with the gentlemen formally attired and their ladies bejewelled in the height of fashion.

The resort prospered with the opening of the Washington Turnpike in 1810, connecting Morristown and Easton. Trains also served German Valley and Hacketts town where carriages could be hired for transportation to and from the hotels. When the railroad started excursions to nearby lakes and other resorts, the once popular Springs began declining. Belmont Hall closed its doors for several years until it was reopened with a new name in 1902. Dorincourt also became widely known and is remembered today as one of the finest resort hotels in the country. People came to the mountain from far and near to enjoy the fresh, clean air at an altitude of nearly two thousand feet; that combined with rest, relaxation and the tonic waters knitted up the ravelled sleeve of care for many. The resort was razed in 1938.

There were fun and games even in the good old days, when pleasures seemed simpler. An auto rally gathers at the popular German Valley Hotel for a run in the sun, tops down and goggles at the ready. Excursion trains took hundreds away for a holiday at Lake Hopatcong and a summer outing while other groups or families arrived for vacations at the mountain resorts nearby. Regular passenger and freight service on a daily basis continued until the 1930's.
One of the oldest landmarks, dating to 1776, is referred to by many as The Fort. A somet ime residence, this sturdy stone structure stands idle today, like a sentry at the entrance to Long Valley on Route 24 from the east. It was actually built of thick granite from local quarries as a protection against Indian or militia marauders. Rebuilt a century later by Richard Schoenheit, it represents one of the original tracts from the vast Logan Tract around which Washington Township was built.

The Gate House, almost directly across from the Fort on the Chester Pike controlled what traffic there was entering German Valley. A toll was taken from each vehicle, the gate was raised allowing it to pass.

The purpose of this booklet is two-fold; first, the story of Long Valley is presented in a series of old, rare photographs dating back to the turn of this century. Related captions and text trace our unique heritage from the very beginning as a Dutch settlement. Second, the sale of the booklet will permit the Washington Township Historical Society to continue its work of maintaining what remains of the Old Union Church and grounds, our proudest historical site.

For years, German Valley was an outpost for itinerant preachers who made the rounds from village to village on an uncertain schedule. Families here who desired to worship in church frequently walked to Oldwick, then New Germantown, many carrying their shoes the nine miles until the spire was sighted.

The first regular pastor to serve German Valley was Reverend Caspar Stapel who preached in the Log Church. Reverend Frederick Dalliker followed him in 1768. In 1774, two congregations joined hands to build a union church on or near the site of the log hut which had been donated by the Weise family. Pastors and officers representing both the Lutheran and Dutch Reformed congregations drew an article of agreement, written in German and dated February 4, 1774. It included these observations: The old log church was still standing after 100 years, with a heavy gallery on one side and across each end. The entrance was below the side gallery. The pulpit was suspended on the opposite wall with a large sounding-board above it. For heat in winter, an 8-foot square pit with a dirt bottom burned huge piles of charcoal. Almost beneath the pulpit, a preacher occupying it had to withstand noxious fumes; it was commonplace to see parishioners carried from the confined service feet first, for air. The women attending church then wore the plainest homespun garments; the men, often bare-footed, wore no coats.
During the Revolutionary War, one of the country's leading ministers, Rev. Henry Muhlenberg Jr., in a furious diatribe aimed at the British finished his sermon in German Valley with this much-quoted admonition: "There is a time for preaching and a time for fighting!" Forthwith, he threw off his clerical robe to reveal a Continental uniform, left the congregation to join the troops. In 1782, Reverend Caspar Wack was called to minister the Old Stone Church parish; he also served churches in Rockaway, Fox Hill, Sussex County Court House, Stillwater and Knowlton. Following the war, the common German tongue gave way to English. A number of pastors filled the local pulpit until 1873 when the two prevailing denominations decided to build separate churches. All that remains of the Old Stone Church is an appropriately marked jumble of crumbling rock, the outline of an edifice, and its surrounding graveyard with ancient markers.

AN HISTORIC AGREEMENT

Whereas, we the members of the Evangelic Reformed congregation, and we the members of the Evangelic Lutheran congregation, who by reason of the preachers which we have with Germantown, and by reason of the money expended for the church and parsonage house are members of Zions Lutheran Church living in the Dutch Valley, Roxbury Township, Morris County, are willing to build a meeting house jointly;

Be it hereby known to all men that the following conditions were agreed to by the subscribers, representing both congregations, viz:

I. Both parties have agreed to build the meeting house at their united expenses, so that none of the parties may throw up anything to the other.

II. As the church is built jointly, so it shall be kept up by our posterity jointly, the friendship of both congregations giving us hope that in case of the necessary repairs of the meetinghouse, the weaker party will be supported by the stronger.

III. Both parties, with respect to Public Worship, shall have an equal right; in case both preachers should meet together, then alternately, the one must wait till twelve o'clock upon the service of the other.

IV. For the good of both congregations, none shall be admitted to preach but such as are under a regular church government.

V. Whereas, we do not only concern ourselves for ourselves, but for our posterity also, it is our will and opinion that none of the parties shall or can sell their right in any way or manner.

Acted this 4th day of February 1774, which is testified.

Frederick Dellicker, V. D. M. Henry Muhlenberg, Jr.
Deputy Rector of Zions Corporation

Wilhelm Welsh, Diedrie Strubel, Conrad Rohrlic, Caspar Eick, Anthony Waldorf, Adam Lorentz, Philip Weise, Christoph Karr, Leonard Neighbour, Roulot Roulofson, John (X his mark), Schwachhammer, Andrew Flacky.

One of the few basic businesses in Long Valley, Welsh Farms has been well-known and respected for seventy-five years for two simple reasons: it has employed generations of local folks and the products it sells are reliable day-in, day-out. Its founder, Jacob W. Welsh, began in business as a farmer, harness dealer and feed mill operator. That nice, convenient combination worked so well and conveniently that Welsh had time to take an interest in politics. In due course, he became a power locally and that success saw him become a political boss in Morris County, then to the State Senate. Busy in Trenton, he found time to meet many influential persons, one with an interest in the old Astor Hotel in New York which had difficulty in obtaining fresh milk. Meanwhile, farmers in the Elizabeth area, realizing the cost of dairy production compared with rising land values, had seen 40-quart cans of raw milk pass on railroad cars to New York with tags which identified the shipper as Jacob W. Welsh, German Valley, N.J. Soon Welsh was shipping to the farmers who had decided to sell off their pastures. Pasteurization was introduced in the 1920's, soon followed by glass containers which were shipped overland in totally iced railway cars. That led to present refrigerated cars and tank trucks. In 1915, Jake and son, John, leased land from the Central Railroad where Welsh Farms' modern offices and plant stand today, on Fairview Avenue. An old ice house at the rear and at the side of a large pond which no longer exists, was filled every winter with a year-round supply of foot-thick ice. Incorporated in 1934, the business today is directed by Robert E. Cleary. Widely broadened in recent years, it includes milk, ice cream, several retail outlets and a restaurant at Panther Valley. Started up with perhaps 35 men and women, Welsh Farms today employs 250 in four plants. Old Jake was a direct descendent of one of the township's proud founding families. His antecedents, Johannes Wilhelm Welsh arrived on the vessel "Samuel" in 1737.
AT YOUR SERVICE TODAY

POLICE
Organized in 1964, the Washington Township Police Department operates in and from a modern communications center and headquarters building on Rte 24 across from Scott Farms. Serving the community around the clock, seven days a week, the department counts its chief, a lieutenant, two sergeants, one detective sergeant, a detective and eight patrolmen, working a rotating schedule of duty; five civilian dispatchers and a full-time secretary fill the roster. The department has six patrol cars with an annual combined mileage in excess of 200,000 for the 45-square-mile township. Of particular interest is the visual monitoring desk and its precision control of police activity throughout Morris County. Local headquarters is the center for the Morris-Hunterdon Communications System which monitors and controls emergency dispatching for eight surrounding police departments; our dispatchers also handle all fire and first aid calls for Mansfield Township. Police training is a continuous program of modern techniques gained through regular attendance at special schools and state colleges. The department recently installed two radar units which are used for speed surveys, control and enforcement. Under police direction, traffic is watchfully controlled at highway crossings for the protection of school children.

FIRE PROTECTION
Seventeen men started the first fire company in 1913, as a bucket brigade, to protect local property. Their alarm was a hand bell held by a volunteer who ran up and down the main thoroughfare clanging an alarm. The Long Valley Women's Club presented the brigade with its first moving equipment, a hand-drawn chemical wagon, in 1915. In 1924, they donated an alarm system. Without a fire house, those first volunteers met in members' homes or in the village stores. In the early Twenties, the company acquired its first rolling equipment, a Reo fire truck with a capacity of six men. In 1924, the first fire house was built on Mill Road but it soon was too small to hold three pieces of equipment and a number of men on duty. When the Schwackhammer garage on Fairview Avenue was sold, the fire company took over and has its headquarters there today. Equipment has been added to, more men give their time, fire protection is adequate for this growing community. It is backed up, when needed, by similar companies at Fairmount, Middle Valley, and Schooley's Mountain.

FIRST AID
Five highly trained emergency crews stand ready to respond to a call for help around the clock. The siren atop the familiar squad headquarters on Rte 24 at Old Farmers Road sounds an alert which is heard by all residents in the Valley.
In turn, each participating family of volunteers gets the message promptly as it is relayed from Police Headquarters over an intercommunications system which pinpoint benchmarks an emergency, describes the need. Working in concert with township police and the volunteer fire company, two fully equipped and expertly manned ambulances can race to the scene with totally up-to-date life-saving equipment. If hospitalization is indicated, either or both emergency crews and ambulances can quickly transport to Hackettstown, Morristown or Somerville; meanwhile the skill and training of each squad member is brought into play to serve his community and every family in it. The first aid squad, all voluntary, is supported by contributions and various fund raising activities throughout the year, so that it can ably serve more than 4,000 township homes.

NEITHER SNOW NOR RAIN NOR HEAT NOR GLOOM OF NIGHT...
Postal service, a barometer of community growth, has seen five expansions in this century for Long Valley alone. The most recent, in May of this year, triples floor space and parking, increases lock boxes which are a new feature, from 279 to 430 to accommodate a volume of well over 2 million pieces of mail annually. Families served through the new facility on Old Farmers Road at Rte 24 number over 2,000 with 100 being added each year. More households are installing mail boxes for the three rural routes which serve the 45-square-mile township daily, averaging over 35 miles each.

The first postal service for the township was established in 1749 in a part of Peter Neiter's store at the crossroad in German Valley. Always centrally located, the local post office at one time was situated directly at the intersection where a parking area now stands next to the General Store. When the corner building was razed, a post office was established alternately in the frame building directly along the north side of the river, at the bridge, where it returned after being located in half of the store housing the lumber business on Main Street. It then moved to a new building designed to function only as a post office in 1938, in the center of Long Valley next to the railroad tracks on the main thoroughfare.
Fortunately, for the record, the Postmaster in the early 1920's was Ernest Zepplin, also an inveterate photographer. Many of his pictures and post cards illustrate his era in this booklet. As communities in the valley grew, postal service expanded to meet an increasing demand. Offices were established for Middle Valley, Parker, Naugrighht, Stephensburg and Pleasant Grove. In 1830, the Schooley's Mountain post office, with Joseph Heath as first postmaster, opened for business.

An office was opened in the early 1800's at Springtown to serve the popular Springs, with William Dellicker as first postmaster. Around 1830, Joseph Heath established another post office in his general store on Schooley's Mountain which sold dry goods, groceries and other provisions, hardware, boots and shoes, drugs and medicines. Heath, first postmaster, was also a notary public and telegrapher.
OF FOREMOST CONCERN: THE THREE R’s

The major portion of every tax dollar is earmarked for education. This accounts for the rapid development, during the last decade, of a substantial school system within Washington Township: a regional high school based at West Morris in Bartley with two modern high school facilities serving Mount Olive and Mendham; The Middle School in Long Valley and two elementary schools on Old Farmers Road and Flocktown Road. A far cry from the old 2-room schoolhouse of the Twenties, education has become one of our first responsibilities. West Morris Regional High School graduated its first class of 135 students in June 1960; today’s student body in three separate areas totals 1280. Elementary and Middle School pupils currently total 1850 with an anticipated increase of 50 to 75 a year.

As far back as the early 1700’s, education played a vital role in the lives of the first settlers. Lacking schools, tutors went from house to house teaching the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic. They received some money for the effort but usually bartered their time for firewood, farm produce, fresh poultry, eggs. Records show 15 school districts in the township in 1718 although not all had adequate facilities. In 1830, a two-story stone school house was erected next to the old Union Church grounds on Fairview Avenue. Today the building accommodates the Washington Township Library, after periods as a private residence. A room upstairs contains old records and memorabilia gathered by the Historical Society.

In the early 1900’s, nine school districts were counted at German Valley, Flocktown, Stephensburg, Schooley's Mountain, Parker, Philhower, Pleasant Grove, Fairmount, and Middle Valley. During this period, the German Valley school removed to a two-room building, now enlarged to contain Municipal Offices. There, in addition to grammar school, three years of high school were offered. Students desiring to complete their courses for graduation transferred to Dover, Roxbury or High Bridge which meant a 12-hour day for many. In time, several outlying districts closed down and the high school discontinued in the two-room schoolhouse. That required remaining students to complete the last year of High School in Hacketstown. The new West Morris Regional High School at Bartley was completed in 1958, graduating its first class two years later.

THE WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established in 1960 by a small group of concerned residents of the area, the Historical Society set certain goals centering around the history of the township. First attention was given to the preservation of a truly historic site: what remains of The Old Stone Church on Fairview Avenue, Long Valley, and its surrounding grave yard and the weathered stone markers. Many of the headstones are inscribed in German, the oldest is dated 1765 although the church was not built and dedicated until 1774 which would indicate the original Log Church stood on or near this site.

Over the years, The Historical Society has continued its effort to stimulate an interest in the community and its several historic sites. Volunteers have devoted time and energy to maintain the old church grounds. Always in need financially, the Society sponsors this booklet which will be sold to carry on the dedicated work it has chosen to follow.

The precepts of The Washington Township Historical Society are: Understanding the community, Discovering the past, Collecting relevant material, Preserving memorabilia, Circulating historic information.

Our colorful and timely cover was designed by William Galbreath of Pompton Plains, N. J. who won first prize, among many entries statewide, with his original rendering of the Bicentennial Seal which appears on the front and back covers of this booklet. We are grateful for his contribution. Permission for its use has been granted by The Bicentennial Commission in Trenton.

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