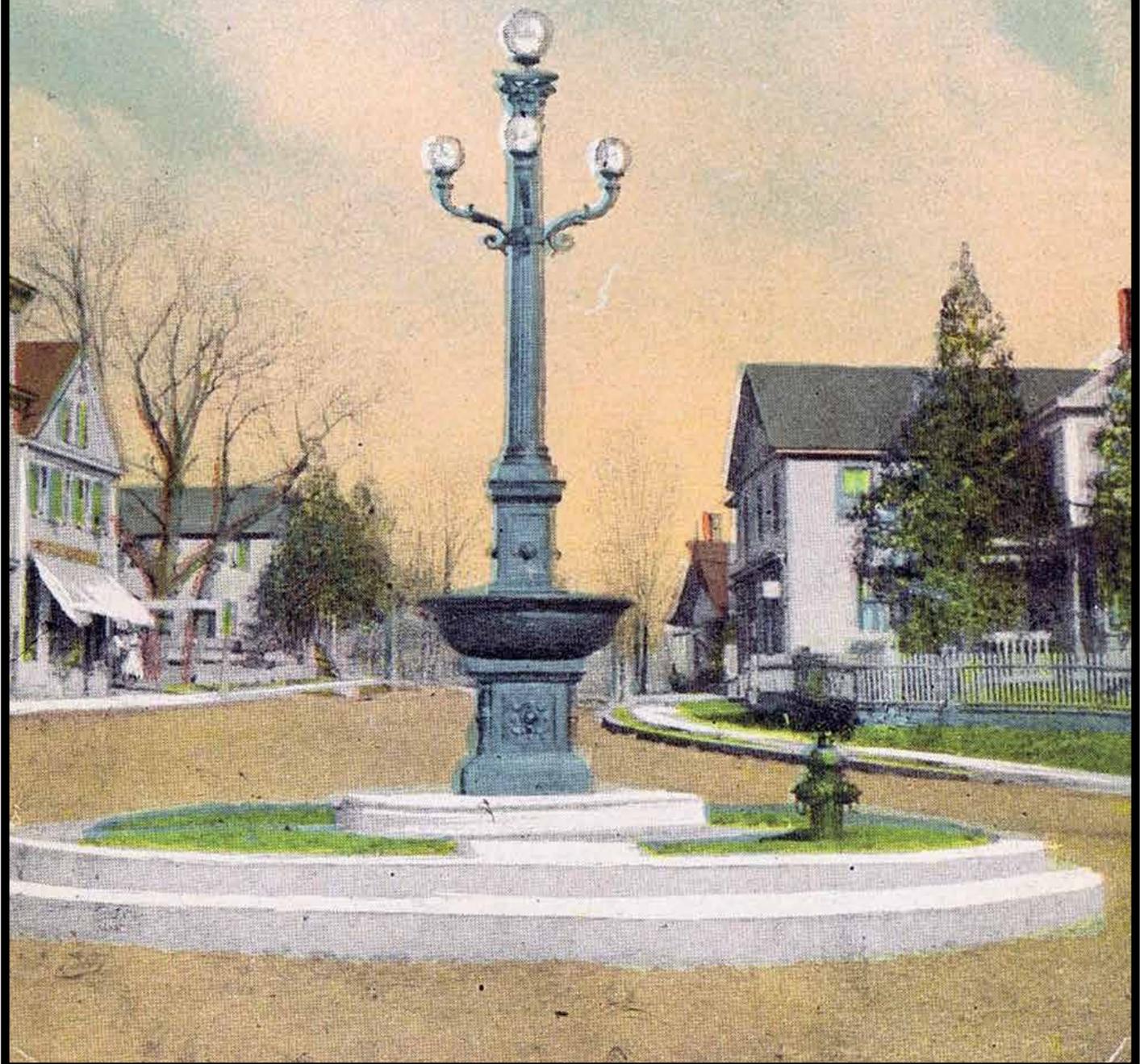


# BERNARDSVILLE, NJ

## HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR



**Presented by the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC)  
&  
Friends of Historic Bernardsville (FHB)**

**2017**

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**Photos and illustrations are from the Bernardsville Public Library  
Local History Collection unless otherwise noted.**

**Many thanks to the wonderful Bernardsville Public Library Local History Room  
volunteers for their tireless efforts to keep Bernardsville history alive!**

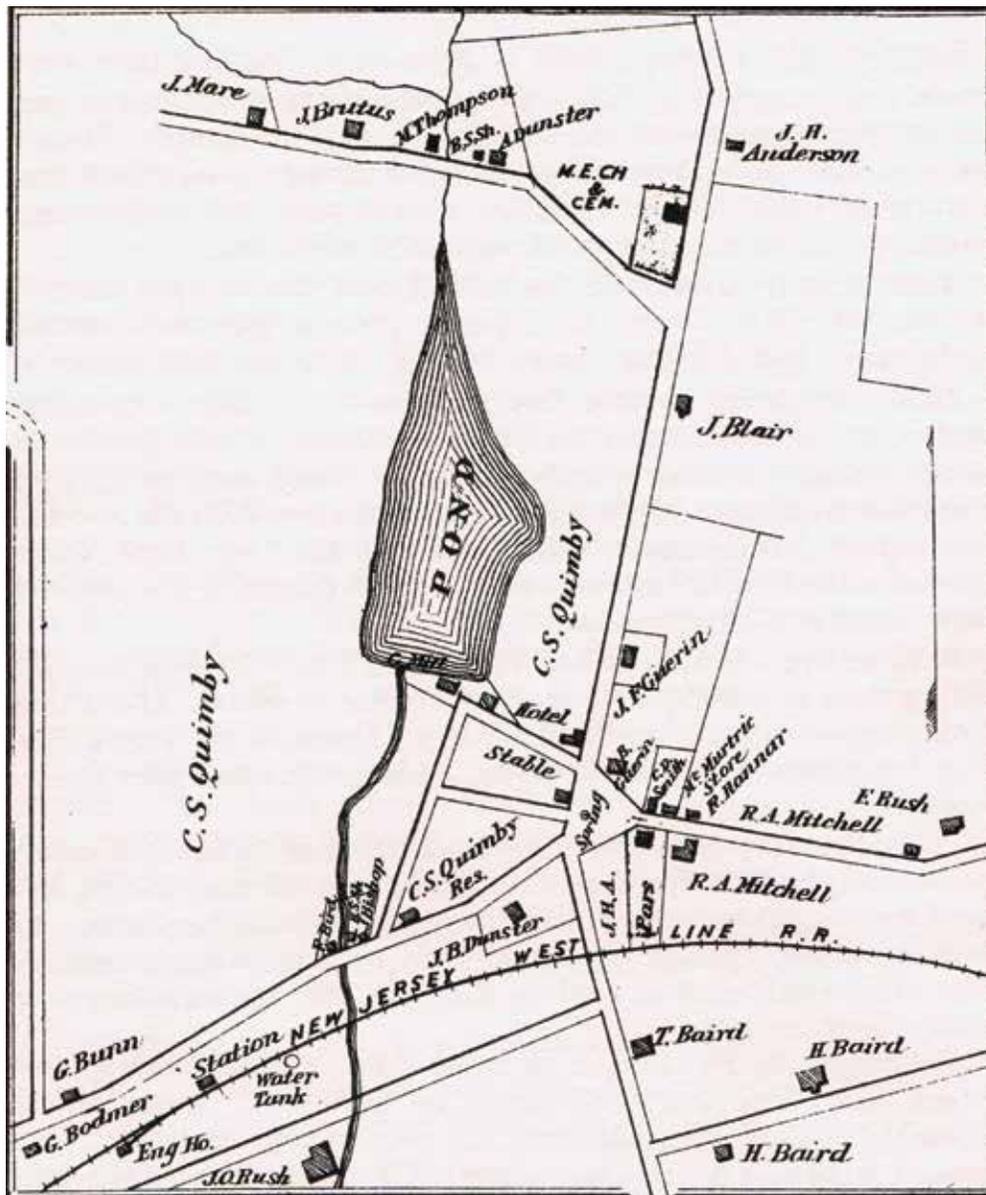
# INTRODUCTION

Today's downtown Bernardsville still fits in the footprint of the town of 100 years ago. This walking tour looks at the origins of Bernardsville, and how trends in architecture, transportation and innovation have shaped the downtown we know today. The area contains structures from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and while some are mostly intact, others have changed significantly. Within each lies a fascinating story of the development of an American town.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### BERNARDSVILLE

Bernardsville, originally called Vealtown, was first settled along a stream called Mine Brook in 1736. It was one of several small farming and trading hamlets that formed at crossroads and loosely clustered around the slightly larger town of Basking Ridge. During the American Revolution Continental troops moved throughout the area, and in 1777 General Washington's troops marched through town after the Battle of Princeton, on route to Morristown. Vealtown became Bernardsville in 1840, named for Sir Francis Bernard, the Colonial governor of New Jersey. In the years following the Civil War, and with the arrival of the railroad in 1872, wealthy New Yorkers began purchasing tracts of land upon which to build luxurious summer residences. The hills north of town became a fashionable place for wealthy city families to build magnificent homes. This enclave of summer estates became known as the Mountain Colony, and stretched across the Somerset Hills, through portions of the towns of Bernardsville, Mendham, Peapack-Gladstone, Far Hills, and Bedminster. The grand estates required a large amount of local labor, prompting the arrival of carpenters, masons, farm workers, and servants, many of whom were recent immigrants. As the population of Bernardsville grew, businesses opened and were patronized by families from both the estates and the working classes, paving the way for the emergence of a middle class of merchants and professionals. At the turn of the 20th century Bernardsville was a thriving town. By 1930 the Mountain Colony began to wither and the Great Depression brought a "gritty grimness" to the town. In the coming decades, the rise of the automobile brought changes as automobile showrooms and gas stations became necessities of life in the 20th century. The retail and commercial center eventually expanded after WWII to include two modern shopping centers, each with a supermarket and a variety of specialty stores to serve customer needs. Banks and restaurants proliferated after the bi-centennial. As always, the shops and businesses of downtown reflect changing times and needs of the local community.



This map shows the area after the arrival of the railroad in the 1873. "Hotel" is the Stone Hotel and "Stable" is the Stone Barn. The mill pond on Charles S. Quimby's land was drained in 1905. Note that the "Spring" was located in the center of what is now Olcott Square.

### BERNARDSVILLE DOWNTOWN

Today's Olcott Square sits at the crossroads around which the earliest settlement formed. To the west, Mine Brook Road followed the stream where the mills were built to serve the early residents. The road to Liberty Corner (Mt. Airy Road), the road to Morristown, and the road to Mendham (Anderson Hill Road), were the early routes for settlers, traders, and travelers --and those same farmers, traders, and travelers found the services they needed at the crossroads. Taverns, like the one owned by John Parker during the Revolutionary War, served as waystations for travelers and a place for locals to meet their fellow citizens. By the 1840s the

Old Stone Hotel was established in the center of town and served as an inn and tavern. The Stone Barn, a massive structure of native stone, was built in 1849 near the hotel and housed the animals so essential to travel of the times. A spring in front of the barn was replaced by a water trough, and later a Town Pump, that was a source of water for travelers and locals alike. Transportation continued to have a major influence in the development of the town when in 1873 a railroad service was established in Bernardsville. Just after the coming of the railroad, Bernardsville had two mills, two blacksmith shops, a hotel, a post office, a general store, a church and a school. By 1891, Bernardsville was "an enterprising and growing post-village...in the center of a highly fertile and productive agricultural district." Businessmen such as L. Manker, harness maker, George Casey, tailor, and Calvin D. Smith, general store proprietor, built commercial buildings around the crossroads. By 1905, the Bernardsville downtown had eclipsed those of Basking Ridge and Liberty Corner and would soon attain the basic layout we see today.

## THE TOUR

This tour often refers to the buildings by their original or historic names, when known. Current addresses are shown to help with identification. Images are from the Bernardsville Public Library Local History Room unless otherwise noted.

The distance covered is approximately 1 mile, excluding the Bunn's Mill Optional Tour. The tour will take 1 to 2 hours.

The Historic Downtown Walking Tour starts at the northeast corner of Olcott Square.

**Park your car at the Bernardsville Public Library and walk south down the hill on Anderson Hill Road to view Olcott Square. As the sidewalks begins to curve, pause and look around you. Across from you is...**

### OLCOTT SQUARE

Previously called Fountain Square, Olcott Square was renamed in honor Frederic Olcott (1841-1909) by a town thankful for his many generous gifts to Bernardsville, most importantly the Olcott School, completed in 1906. Site of countless celebrations, parades, dances, fireworks, rallies, ceremonies, and commemorations, the square has been a gathering place since the earliest days of the settlement when local citizens and travellers gathered here for a cool drink of water. Adapting this historic crossroads to modern traffic has always been a challenge

and various traffic patterns have been tried through the years. The first parking ordinance was enacted in 1926 when the mayor noted that 7 of the 12 parking spots were occupied by the same cars all day, inconveniencing shoppers. While this crossroads has always been the heart of Bernardsville, it has more often been a circle or triangle, rarely a square. The current traffic configuration has been in place since about 1983, when the traffic lights were installed, thus freeing the police department from manually directing traffic during busy times of day.



**A busy Olcott Square, as a triangle, in the 1920s or early 1930s; Olcott Square with a view up Anderson Hill Road. This view predates the construction of the Westlecraft Building.**

**Still standing across from Olcott Square, look behind and left. You are standing in front of the former...**

### WESTLECRAFT BLOCK *15-25 Olcott Square*



**The Westlecraft Building, before and after the fire in 1925.**

In the early years of the century the northeast side of Olcott Square was occupied by the Westlecraft Building. Built about 1904 by Westlecraft and Son of Mine Brook, it comprised eleven stores with apartments above. A devastating fire in August 1925 destroyed the entire block containing the Westlecraft Building and

an adjacent two-story frame building. Another fire in the same area in February 1944 destroyed the building which had replaced it. The current brick structures date from that time. The history of the buildings around Olcott Square is one of devastating fires. In fact, each block around the square has experienced a major fire.

**Look back and to the right, diagonally across the street.**

OLD STONE HOTEL  
*1 Mill Street*



**A view of the Old Stone Hotel after additions.**

The Old Stone Hotel opened in 1849 under the ownership of John Beck, who died the following year. Its original footprint was smaller than what exists today, but it is one of the few remaining structures in Bernardsville from the mid-1800s that has retained its historic fabric. The frame addition at the rear was added in the 1890s and the dormers and porch early in the 20th century. Under several names, most notably Doty's, Freddy's and the Bernardsville Hotel, this landmark has continued to operate as a hospitality establishment with little disruption since the mid-1800s. In 1912 Woodrow Wilson stayed at the Old Stone Hotel during a campaign swing through the area and the townspeople turned out to hear him speak.

**In front of you to the right side of the square you'll see what was...**

The former location of the Old Stone Barn, Town Pump and the O'Brien Building  
*7-11 Olcott Square*



**The left photo shows an early view of the Old Stone Hotel and Barn; note the Town Pump in front of the barn. The right photo shows a later view, after the Stone Barn was torn down and replaced by the O'Brien Building, which eventually burned in 1966.**

The Old Stone Barn was built in 1849 as stable for the Old Stone Hotel, and also served as early storage for the Bernardsville Fire Company. As a stop on the stagecoach line that ran from Somerville to Morristown, it was also used by itinerant salesmen who moved their wagons from town to town. Local landowner John Bunn is credited with building the barn, which was torn down between 1903 and 1905 to make way for the services required by a bustling modern railroad town of the time.

The new building, called the O'Brien Building, was completed by 1906 and provided retail and residential apartments in the Olcott Square business district. Newspaper accounts of the time indicate that the barn walls were removed but that the foundation and barn floor boards were used in the new construction. The two-story frame structure that replaced the barn first housed three stores and five apartments. 'Old Doc Burns' Somerset Pharmacy, Liddy Brothers Meats & Grocery and John E. Puff's Clothier and Furnisher were long-remembered by locals, and at the center of action, thanks to the location of the heavily used town pump. By the 1930s the building was owned by Thomas Liddy and called the Liddy Building. It was sold in 1947 to local department store owner Albert Stern. While it remained largely undamaged during a massive fire in the adjacent Allen Building in May of 1935, the original wooden structure eventually succumbed to a later fire on February 11, 1966. The current brick building dates to that time.

**Now continue around the curve to the left and walk east toward Morristown Road. The next buildings were once known as the....**

CASEY and MONACO BUILDINGS  
*27-29 Olcott Square and 30-31 Olcott Square*



**The Casey Building and the Monaco Building are the two buildings to the right in this vintage postcard.**

In 1898, George A. Casey purchased the property now occupied by 27-31 Olcott Square and constructed the Casey Building by 1903. Casey died in 1907 and the Casey Building was eventually acquired by prominent Bernardsville citizen Richard V. Lindabury. Called Lindabury Hall, as the second floor featured a large hall/auditorium, the building was used during WWI by the Women's Aid Society for their war relief work. From 1919-1929 the hall was rented for use as the Masonic Lodge, before the masons acquired the Congregational Church property across the road. In the 1930s the building was owned by G. Thomas Gianquitti and was called the Gianquitti building. His daughters Madeline and Lucille offered dance classes in the hall, which also served as a popular venue for public and private dances -- like the one held in 1936 for Arthur Roper's twenty-first birthday, attended by 150 guests who engaged in games and dancing. Gianquitti sold the building to W. R. Kansteiner in 1946. Kansteiner made improvements that transformed both floors into retail space. He sold a variety of merchandise, from electric appliances and phonograph records to children's clothing. In addition to Kansteiner's retail space, separate upstairs locations housed a Christian Science Reading Room and a photography studio.

Casey's property had been the site of the early (ca 1830) store owned by John S.

Adams, and later a store and residence owned by Calvin Smith. In 1903 George Casey divided his property and sold the site of 30-31 Olcott to Martin Monaco. Accounts at the time claimed that the early residence remained on the site and that Monaco built his store in the front of the house. He ran a confectionary business there for a time but then moved to other ventures. Later in the century, you could buy your electrical appliances or television in this location, just like today.

**Pass the small alleyway at left and the next building is the....**

JOHN PARKER TAVERN  
*2 Morristown Road*



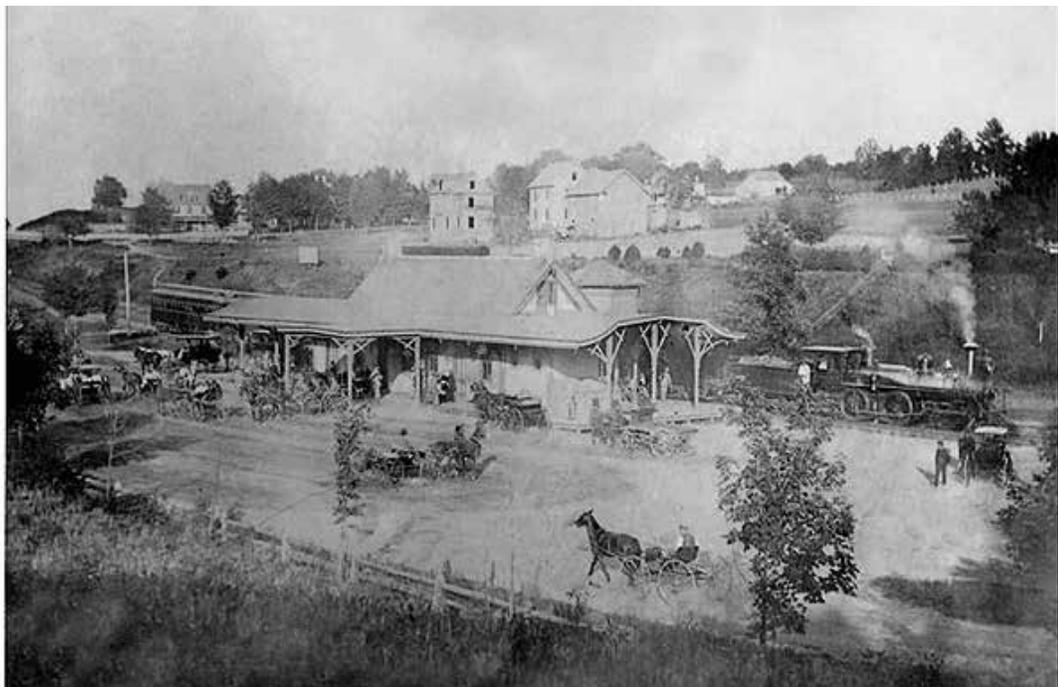
**The John Parker Tavern in 1907, after it became the Bernardsville Public Library.**

Constructed perhaps by 1730 and certainly by 1750, this building was originally called the Vealtown Tavern. The structure is a fine example of a crossroads tavern constructed in the mid-18th century. During the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) it was owned and operated as an inn and tavern by Captain John Parker of the 1st Battalion of Somerset County. Continental troops traveling between Pluckemin and Morristown regularly stopped here during the 1779/1780 Morristown Winter Encampment. Soldiers from the Jockey Hollow Encampment reportedly made so many journeys to the tavern that a road was worn through the woods, hence the name Old Army Road. On January 2, 1781, General "Mad" Anthony Wayne met here with soldiers on their way to Philadelphia to present claims for back pay and supplies. While staying at the tavern Wayne was robbed of valuable dispatches. A Tory spy was hanged for the crime and legend has it that Phyllis, daughter of the innkeeper, was engaged to the man and that she still haunts the building, eternally distressed over the loss of her lover. In 1840, Roderick A.

Mitchell bought the building to use as his home and set up a post office there. He is credited with the name change from Vealtown to Bernardsville. Acquired by the Bernardsville Library Association in 1900, it became Bernardsville Library in 1903 and served that purpose until 1999, when it was sold and adapted to commercial use. During the 20th century, two additions were added at the rear, but the front of the building has remained much the same for 100 years. The John Parker Tavern is on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. In front of the John Parker Tavern is a DAR Washington Route Marker. The ninth in a series of thirteen markers, it traces Washington's January 1977 route to Morristown after victory at the Battle of Princeton.

**Proceed to the crosswalk and look across Morristown Road. Read the next two descriptions first, then cross to get a closer look.**

BERNARDSVILLE RAILROAD DEPOT  
*17-19 Morristown Road*



**The first Bernardsville Railroad Depot, now relocated to Morristown Road  
(photograph courtesy of The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills).**

The first Bernardsville station was inaugurated in 1872 by the West Line Railroad which ran from Bernardsville, the end of the line, to Summit where the line connected with the Morris and Essex Railroad -- thus connecting Bernardsville to Newark and New York City. In the days before the grand estates were fully established, the railroad was crucial to the transport of the peaches and other crops

that local orchards produced. In 1905, the Victorian Stick style building was moved to its current site to make way for a grander stone railroad station that is still standing today. The offices of the *Bernardsville News* (established 1897) were located here for more than a century.

BERNARDSVILLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
*15 Morristown Road*



This vintage postcard shows an early view of the Bernardsville Congregational Church, now Congdon-Overlook Lodge 163.

The early years of the 20th century saw rapid growth in Bernardsville. Proud congregations constructed several impressive churches in the area around that time. The Bernardsville Congregational Church was built in 1910 at an estimated cost of \$15,000. Architect James Diehl designed this Norman-style church, built of fieldstone, with a large pointed-arch stained glass window in the central section and towers on either side. The larger left tower holds a cast iron bell. Although the buttresses and arched windows are Gothic characteristics, the structure lacks the soaring verticality of that style. Inside, wood vaults rise from the floor to the ceiling. As membership declined, the congregation merged with another group in the area, and in 1929 the Congregational Church building was sold to the Masons, the non-denominational fraternal philanthropic organization that stills owns it today.

**Look at the buildings to the right of the Congregational Church, then cross the street. You may wish to take a closer look at the First Railroad Station and the Congregational Church, then proceed to the right, back toward Olcott Square. On your left is...**

MANKER'S HALL/BOCCHINO BUILDING  
*1-7 Morristown Road*



**Taken in 1904 or 1905, the photo shows Mr. Pepper and the Misses Petty in front of Manker's Hall.**

The site of an earlier store owned by R. A. Mitchell, the current buildings were built by Prussian-born Leibrik Manker, a harness maker, in about 1895. His house and barn were located to the left of the main building housing his harness shop. Perhaps from the beginning, but certainly a few years later, the building housed multiple shops rented to merchant tenants on the ground floor. The upper floor of the building was a large hall with a stage that served as a dance hall and performance venue. In April 1903 the Bernardsville Fire Company's Bucket Brigade doused a "lively" fire at Manker's Hall. Later that year Manker completed renovations to the upstairs hall, removing the stage and making it a more fit venue for lodge meetings. Manker died in December 1903 and his widow sold the harness business to George Pepper. In 1904 the building was occupied by The Misses Petty dress shop and Mr. Puff's store as well as the harness shop. By 1923, Italian immigrants Joseph and Concetta Bocchino owned the property. They lived with their 13 children in the house next door, beside the Masonic Lodge, and ran a successful tailor shop in the commercial space and later a dry cleaner in the basement. The upper floor hall was rented out for lodge meetings and wedding receptions. Reputedly a speakeasy during Prohibition, in September 1934 gangsters smashed their way inside, lined up 20-25 gamblers along the wall and robbed them at gunpoint, disarmed the responding police officer and made their escape in a getaway car parked outside. The Bocchinos celebrated their 25th anniversary with a musical program in the Hall in 1935, and continued running the business until they passed away in 1964. The building was purchased by Peter S. Palmer in 1967. Today, the beams that support the vaulted ceiling of the Hall are still visible in the Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery.

**Next you'll see the...**

**BOYLAN HOUSE**  
*35 Olcott Square*

Local history sources date this house from the colonial period, circa 1770. It was reputedly the house of Dr. Boylan, a Vealtown physician who owned 135 acres of land in the area. By 1777, he also owned a house and mill nearby. Recent examination confirms that the original building was a one-story structure dating to the late 1700s. Between 1820 and 1840 the building was remodeled and enlarged. The building served as the Methodist parsonage from 1865 until 1902. It was owned by the Liddy family from 1911 until 1948 when Arthur A. Palmer bought a partial ownership in the building to house his law practice. In 1953 he purchased the remaining shares and practiced law here until his death in 1982. That year, 35 Olcott Square became the property of Peter S. Palmer. It continues to house a law practice and various commercial entities.

**At the corner is...**

**THE PALMER BUILDING**  
*37-39 Olcott Square*



**The Calvin Smith Store, now called The Palmer Building,  
1905 (photograph courtesy of the Palmer Collection).**

Calvin Day Smith was a dry goods and grocery merchant in Bernardsville in the late-19th and early 20th century. In 1872, Smith purchased the former Adams store on nearby property across the road and he and his family lived in a resi-

dence next door. The store was successful and well-known in the area. Customers reportedly travelled from far and wide to buy his goods. In 1878/1879 he purchased property on the future Olcott Square from Susan O. Anderson and built a new store in the latest Victorian style. In 1903, Smith remodeled the building, replacing the front and adding more windows. After Smith died in 1913, the building was purchased by Thomas G. Mayberry, who did some additional renovations, removed outbuildings from the property and opened his grocery and general store in 1917. Mayberry, as was typical of local merchants of that era, lived with his family on Olcott Avenue and was active in local affairs, being at times President of the Board of Education, Superintendent of the Congregational Church Sunday School, and President of the Bernardsville Fire Company. The property was purchased by Louis Blumenson in 1940. The Blumenson Building housed a variety of retail and commercial tenants, including an appliance store for many years. In 1979 Peter S. Palmer purchased the building and in 1987, while Palmer was mayor of Bernardsville, a fire badly damaged the building. A complete restoration of the building was finished in 1992, which kept the building's Victorian style and added a Palladian window overlooking Olcott Square and a new 7-foot tall octagonal cupola, reminiscent of the original four-sided one. It was renamed the Palmer Building at that time.

**After you pass the Palmer Building, look diagonally across the road to view the Allen Building.**

ALLEN BUILDING  
*1-5 Olcott Square*



This vintage postcard shows a view of Olcott Square around 1900. The view down Mine Brook Road shows the pond, now drained, that is the current location of a parking lot. The Allen Building is on the right.

A two-story frame store and apartment building on this site was one of the earliest commercial buildings in Bernardsville, likely dating to the mid-1800s. Originally occupied by R.A. Mitchell's Barber Shop and Morris Butcher Shop, the building was enlarged in the late 1890s. The building remained mostly intact until a fire ripped through in May 1935. It was owned at that time by Dr. Anna Allen, descendant of the developer of the Olcott Avenue neighborhood and Historic District. The Allen Block was rebuilt as the low slung, one story brick building that exists today. Although the brick is painted now, early photos show a geometrically patterned red brick facade with decorative vertical projections, typical of the Art Deco style.

The small lane north of the Allen building stopped the 1935 fire from spreading to the adjacent building. While the lane is not a public thoroughfare, it is blocked with cones from time to time as stipulated by the deed to maintain its' status as private. Note the 1936 bronze placard at the entry to the lane describing exclusive rights to Anna S. Allen.

**Cross Mt. Airy Road at the traffic light. You are standing in front of the...**

LEWIS BALLENTINE/ALFRED STERN BUILDING  
*Corner Mine Brook and Mt. Airy Roads*  
2-4 Mine Brook Road



**In this photo taken between 1913 and 1915, we see that a customer could outfit himself in style, or get his shoes shined while he waited to play pool.**

In 1911, John K. Nevius announced in the *Bernardsville News* that he was moving to "new and attractive quarters" in the Lewis Ballentine Building at the corner of Mt. Airy and Mine Brook road, "near the bridge." In 1913 William D. Acken

opened his adjoining store in the building, offering “well-selected stock of cigars and tobacco, as well as pool tables, everything being of the first quality.” In 1915, Nevius moved on to bigger things in Plainfield and sold his clothing business to Joseph Goldsmith, haberdasher, who sold the business about twenty years later to Charles Rauscher. Rauscher made renovations and reopened in 1938 as The Olcott Haberdashery.

The building itself was owned by members of the Ballentine family until 1925, when it was sold to Alfred Stern. By then, the condition of the building was poor and renovations were undertaken. A two-story addition, consisting of four stores on the ground floor and three apartments upstairs, was constructed at the rear of the building. The entire building received a veneer of brick, giving it a consistent look. A 1935 fire caused considerable damage to the building, both the stores and the apartments upstairs. By the 1940s, the Mine Brook Road facing building housed Stern’s Department Store. Throughout the downtown’s history, tenants in downtown businesses changed and moved with regularity, as they do today.

### **Look across the road to the...**

LIBERTY THEATER  
*7 Mine Brook Road*



**A view down bustling Mine Brook Road in 1954. The Liberty Theater is on the right.**

Built in 1910 by Frank Allen, Bernardsville’s only cinema was renamed the Columbus Theater in 1913 by Joseph DeBelloni. Silent films were shown with dramatic piano accompaniment to enhance the experience. The venue was sold in 1918

to Harry Miller and was patriotically renamed the Liberty Theater. Talkies came in 1929. In 1933, the theater was given permission to show motion pictures on Sundays. It has continued to operate as a cinema since its opening and has changed little on the exterior. The grand, 400 seat theater with a balcony was converted to a triplex theater in the late 1980s.

**Now you may wish to cross to the other side of Mine Brook Road in order to better see the next buildings, starting with....**

### *8 Mine Brook Road*



**In this early photograph the Palmer Building, with its cupola, stands at the top of the hill. The distinctive finials of 8 Mine Brook help pinpoint its location. The current 12 Mine Brook building is still two structures. The last building is at the site of 20 Mine Brook.**

Dating from the late 1880s, the 8 Mine Brook Road building strongly retains the feel of a late-Victorian structure. The upper cornice, side brackets and moldings reflect the original late 19th century features. The two existing finials to the left and right on top of the cornice are from the original façade. In 1898 William R. Bromfield purchased the property from Frederick Ballentine and opened the town's first hardware, plumbing and tinning business. From 1923, Nardone's Liberty Bakery provided hot breads, fresh pastries and rolls -- and even delivery service. In 1933 the bakery expanded into a general store, and when Prohibition ended, liquor was sold. The original building had clapboard siding, but was remodeled in 1935 when the *Bernardsville News* noted the building's fine

appearance with its new front, stuccoed sides and fresh paint. The building was converted from Charlie's Deli and Package Store to the Bernard's Cafe in 2001.

### *12 Mine Brook Road*

This late 19th century structure was originally two buildings that were later joined behind a single facade. There is a sloped gable roof behind the flat front cornice. The very attractive eclectic exterior has had many different looks over the years and was most recently renovated in 2009. Otto Hemmendinger's Pharmacy was here for many years, until 1937. The store's telephone number was Bernardsville 78 and daily messenger service to its main headquarters in Newark assured patrons of efficient service. In 1948 Sidney Fox remodeled the store and moved his Fox's Hardware Store here, where it remained until his retirement in 1980.



**A view with the new structure at 20 Mine Brook Road.**

### *20 Mine Brook Road*

The original buildings at this site were destroyed by fire on December 26, 1912 and replaced by the current structure. Its brick pattern with terra cotta details reflects Art Deco inspiration. Michael Florio's Confectionery was here from 1912 to 1932, selling ice cream, soda and cigars as well as providing telephone service. Mable and Harvey Rosenkrans' Russ's Soda Shop, here from 1935 to 1964, was the popular gathering place for ice cream and fountain soda after school and after the movies. Open 7 days a week, their chocolate sodas were a favorite with customers of all ages. In 1952, Mastro Shoes began professionally fitting children's shoes here and has since been owned and operated by two shoe families.

Through its history multiple businesses were housed here at the same time, but the current store has undergone several expansions and occupies the entire first floor.

**Take the crosswalk back to the garden at other side of Mine Brook Road and find...**

### *THE HONORABLE MILLICENT FENWICK BRONZE STATUE*

Millicent Vernon Hammond Fenwick (1910-1992) was an American editor, politician and diplomat who lived much of her life in Bernardsville. She was born to renowned politician Ogden Haggerty Hammond and his first wife Mary Picton Stevens, who perished in the sinking of the Lusitania. Millicent Fenwick entered politics late in life and was known for her integrity, progressive politics and strong work ethic. She was an outspoken supporter of civil rights, women's rights, consumer interests, prison reform and ecological conservation. Beginning in 1938, she served on the Bernardsville Board of Education and then the Bernardsville Borough Council. In 1975, after serving as New Jersey State Assemblywoman and Director of Consumer Affairs, she was elected to the United States House of Representatives at the age of 64. She was one of only 16 congresswomen out of 432 members and served four terms. President Reagan appointed her as United States Ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture in Rome from 1983-1987 and she thereafter retired from public life. She lived her life with courage and conviction and wanted to be remembered as one who was useful. She said "where there is no vision, people will perish. There must be a balance of common sense, humility and vision."

Millicent Fenwick was identified closely with cartoonist Garry Trudeau's Doonesbury character Lacey Davenport, an elderly female member of Congress who was represented as the last honest member of Congress. Known nationally as the pipe-smoking grandmother, Millicent Fenwick commanded attention. At nearly six feet tall, she carried herself regally and with striking good looks, trademark pearls and sharp wit, she cut a glamorous figure in the political world and was a media darling and popular public figure. She died at her home in Bernardsville in 1992. The Millicent Fenwick Monument Association raised \$80,000 to commission Dana Toomey, a former Bernardsville resident, to create a near life-size bronze statue, capturing Mrs. Fenwick's spirit by sculpting her with her arms reaching out ready to embrace the world of those in need. Notice the slight bulge of a pipe in her left pocket, cleverly present but out of view. Unveiled in October 1995, the statue was the first outdoor sculpture in New Jersey of a woman and one of the first in the country.

**Continue on to the...**

**BERNARDSVILLE RAILROAD STATION**  
*26-46 Mine Brook Road*



**This 1907 photo shows carriages awaiting the arrival of businessmen returning from city offices. Recollections from the time note that horses and carriages of all descriptions came on a summer afternoon and that women met their husbands with their phaetons, fringed canopies shading their flowered hats and bright gowns, a groom standing at the heads of the horses.**

By 1900 the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad recognized the growing importance of Bernardsville and its need for a larger station. They hired Bradford Lee Gilbert (1853-1911), a nationally-recognized architect based in New York City, who specialized in the design of railroad stations. Mr. Gilbert's design for the Bernardsville Railroad Station was a one-story, hipped-roof structure with distinctive eyebrow window, constructed in 1901-1902. It is a fine example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style with its massive stone walls, curved bays and sweeping roofs. The interior classical detailing includes Corinthian pilasters carved in oak, wood-paneled wainscot and wood trim. A fireplace has a marble-and-brick surround with a cast-iron border and a holly-patterned tile hearth. An attached wood frame canopy extends out to cover a good portion of the station's low-level side platform.

In the early days of the railroad, wealthy commuters from the Somerset Hills enjoyed a very special railroad car called the Millionaire's Express or the Club Car. Club Car passengers were invited by an existing member and had to be voted into the group. The new parlor car had comfortable oversized individual chairs lining each side of the aisle. The gentlemen's section where smoking was permitted had 28 chairs and the smaller, non-smoking ladies' section had 17 chairs. Every other seat had a small white ivory button on the wall between the window that when pushed summoned the white-jacketed attendant to take their order. Inlaid mahogany walls divided the gentlemen's and ladies' sections. When the train pulled into the station the porter would jump down and place a step stool on the platform to assist club car passengers. The car was retired in August, 1984 when the line was modernized and the electric power supply was changed. The Bernardsville Railroad Station was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

**Continue west past the Railroad Station.  
Ahead of you see the...**

SOMERSET GRAIN & FEED BUILDING  
*74 Mine Brook Road*

Animal feed and related products have been sold from this building for more than 100 years. Opened as White Feeds, a mill that later became Barker & Higgins, feed was manufactured from grains brought in on railroad cars and stored in buildings on the site. Somerset Grain and Feed was formed in 1945.

**Tucked behind Somerset Grain & Feed is...**

THE M. J. NEILL BUILDING  
*Depot Place*

In 2017, M. J. Neill celebrated 100 years in the home heating oil business. Back when Mine Brook Road was a dirt lane, the business was known as the Bernardsville Supply Company and sold coal, hay, grain, feed and fertilizer. According to David A. Neill, the fourth generation of his family to own and operate the business from this location, the building dates to about 1870 and was originally an ice plant.

**Look across Mine Brook Road at...**

## *67-69 Mine Brook Road*

The old Chrysler dealership building at 67 Mine Brook Road has been adapted to many uses throughout the years and is thought to have been originally constructed to build and repair horse-drawn carriages. The earliest stone construction is still visible from the street, while the polychrome brickwork facade was a feature added in the 20th century.



**67-69 Mine Brook Road is left front and the Allsheskey Building with its Buick sign at right.**

**Retrace your steps back toward the crosswalk, looking across the road at the....**

### **ALLSHESKEY BUILDING** *59-63 Mine Brook Road*

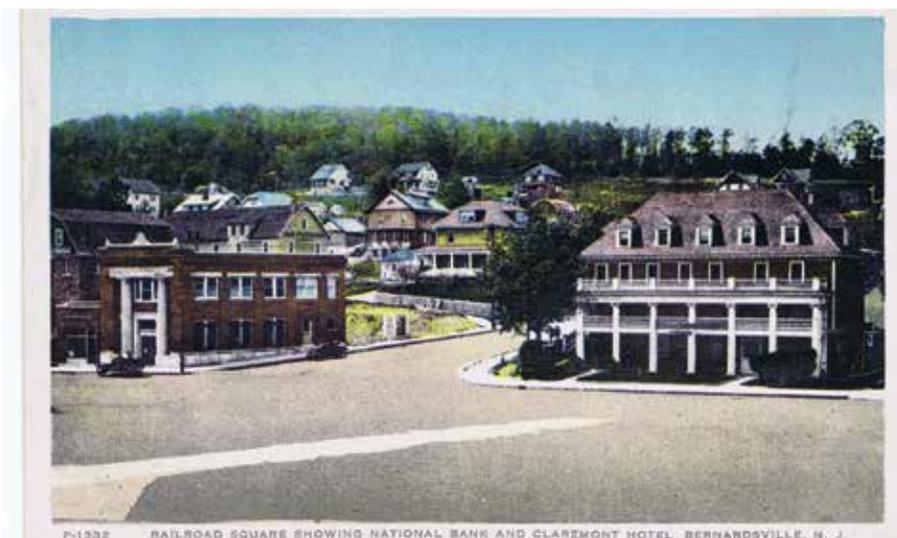
The three-story, three-bay, brick and stone Allsheskey Building was constructed in about 1903 by brothers Charles and Frank Allsheskey to house their highly regarded harness making business. It was the first three-story building in town. During the building boom of the early 20th century its ground floor space was occupied by a variety of insurance and real estate firms. As development slowed and transportation evolved, the entire block of buildings catered to the auto industry with car sales, car repair and gas stations.

**At the crosswalk, take a look and then cross Mine Brook Road for a closer view of the...**

BERNARDSVILLE NATIONAL BANK  
*47 Mine Brook Road*

The Bernardsville National Bank was chartered in September 1903 in a room on the north side of 33 Claremont Road, known then as the Buist Building. Within a decade, the bank outgrew this location and purchased land for a new building in 1912. The brick, fireproof Neo-classical two-story bank at the corner of Claremont and Mine Brook Roads was completed and opened for business on April 28, 1913. Considered a modern bank for the period, it contained a ladies' rest room, a director's room and a burglar-proof safe deposit vault. By 1927, the bank was too small to meet the needs the growing community and the building was enlarged and renovated to double the floor space. Note the change of brick material on Claremont Road where the building was expanded. The safe was broken from its foundation, moved back thirty feet and placed on an entirely new foundation while the interior was completely upgraded. On May 12, 1928, 500 members of the public were invited to a formal reception to view the changes.

The building retains its original Greek architectural and decorative elements, such as a 'distyle-in-antis' entryway and Doric-style ornaments on the top of the front façade parapet. Prior to the bank's construction, this corner location was an open field occupied by a shed where it is believed the New Jersey Bell Telephone Co. located its first phones. A placard at the granite entryway indicates the building served as a marker for the NJ Geological Survey, "374.52 Feet above sea level at Sandy Hook."



**This vintage postcard shows the view from the Bernardsville Railroad Station toward Claremont Road with the Bernardsville National Bank to the left, and the Claremont Hotel to the right.**

## **Cross Claremont Road at the crosswalk to see....**

### THE CLAREMONT HOTEL *45 Mine Brook Road*

The stucco Colonial Revival Claremont Hotel was constructed in 1878 directly across from the railroad station to accommodate the increase in visitors arriving by train. Built primarily as a commercial hotel, it offered rooms to traveling salesmen who preferred not to stay at the Old Stone Hotel, which catered primarily to farmers, but couldn't afford to stay at the fashionable Bernards Inn or more exclusive Somerset Inn, with its glittering social life and golf, tennis and other amenities. Originally a 20-room hotel, the Claremont Hotel had a bar and office on the first floor. Dining rooms and guest rooms were on the second and third floors. Though the top floor was converted to apartments in 1922, it remained a commercial hotel until the 1930s, when shops and showrooms were installed on the ground floor. Today the building operates as a restaurant with six apartments on the upper floors. A three alarm fire caused significant damage to those apartments on January 8, 2016, but the building looks much as it did in 1906 and still retains a two-story classical porch with Ionic columns, hipped roof and hipped dormer windows. Given downtown's history of fires, it is interesting to note that in October of 1897, the hotel hosted the inaugural meeting of the Bernardsville Bucket Brigade. With only a dozen buckets and a long ladder, the first all volunteer fire company of Bernardsville was formed.

## **At the corner of Quimby Lane, stop and look at...**

### THE BERNARDS INN *27 Mine Brook Road*



**Bernards Inn, 1905, before the fire.**

The Bernards Inn was the inspiration of local developers Fred and Frank Ballentine. The elegant, 40 room, 3 1/2 story hotel was built on land purchased from the Spinning family, prominently located near the center of the borough, and across from the new train station. As the downtown's first upscale establishment, the Bernards Inn guest rooms were filled with fine furniture from New York's old Plaza Hotel, purchased at auction when that hotel was razed.

Originally, the hotel was quite large. The structure extended east towards Anderson Hill Road and occupied what is now 17-27 Mine Brook Road. In 1909, the auditorium at the Bernards Inn showed the first motion picture show in Bernardsville, and by 1913 was featuring Saturday night movies. The east end of the building also included Borough Hall and a jail, a grocer, a butcher, a pharmacy and a post office. This eastern portion of the original hotel was destroyed by a massive fire in 1930. It is rumored that the fire was started by someone smoking in their jail cell. Falling into a period of decline that was accelerated by Prohibition, the Bernards Inn has had its share of ups and downs, but today carries on its tradition of fine food and elegant lodging.

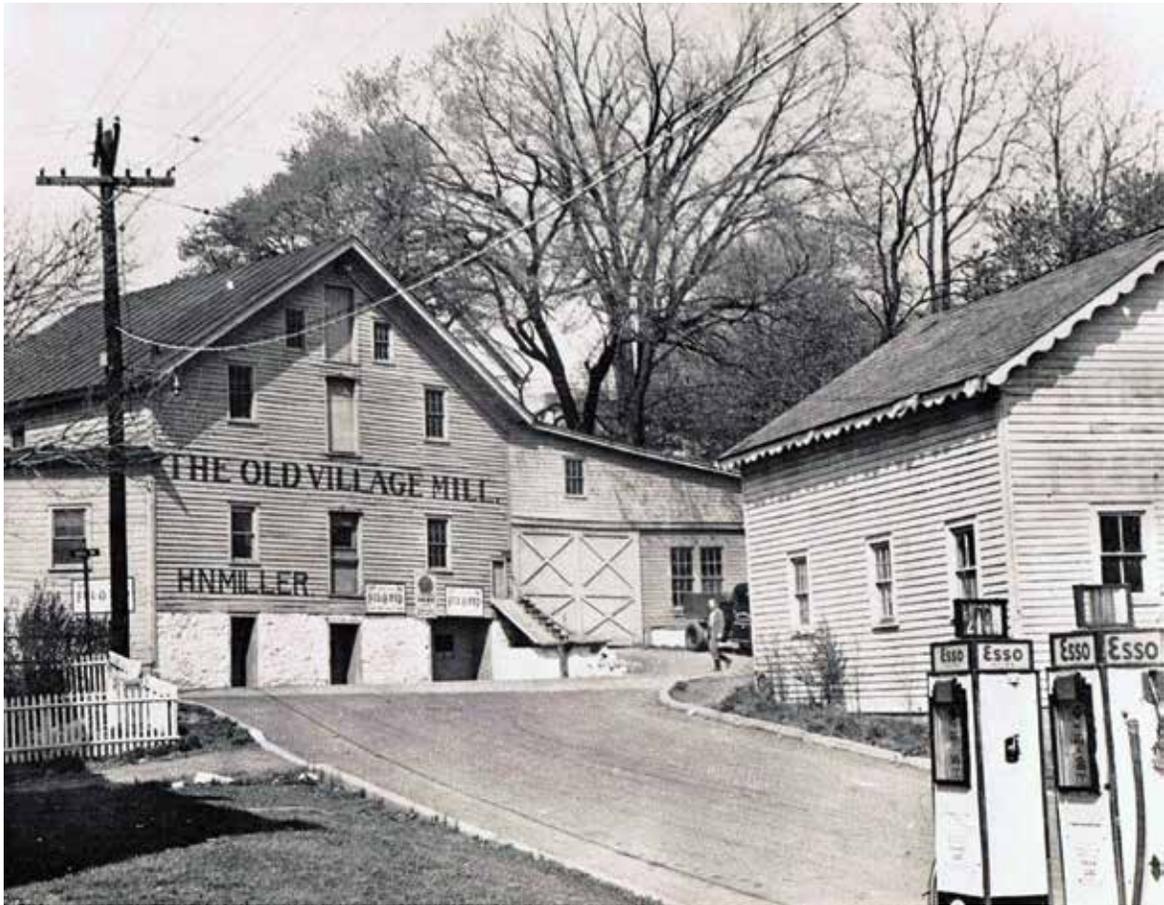
The Mission-style stucco structure features a hip roof, curvilinear dormers and widely overhanging eaves. The concrete balustrade at the south facing patio were added at a later date along with mahogany doors, however the original interior staircase salvaged from the old Plaza Hotel remains. The original foundation was constructed of salvaged stone from the Old Stone Barn. The current east facade of the building is the fire wall that stopped the 1930 fire from destroying what remains of the Bernards Inn.

**After you've looked at The Bernards Inn, walk north on Quimby Lane, toward Mill Street.**

#### QUIMBY LANE TO MILL STREET

Quimby Lane was a commercial street in the 20th century. Automobile dealerships, auto repair shops and appliance stores were long-term tenants on the street. The simplified Art Deco building at 40 Quimby Lane, built in 1928, was an automobile sales and showroom. Allen's Automobile Showroom and Garage was here for many years and the large windows once showcased the latest line of Studebakers, DeSotos and later Plymouths and Fords. The street is named for the Quimby family, who originally owned the mostly meadowed area in the 19th century. Local historian Jean Hill recalls the day in around 1930 when on route to greet her father at the train, she happened upon the C. S. Quimby House being moved. The home, built in the early 1800s, was relocated from the corner of Mine Brook Road to its current location at 12 Quimby Lane.

## OLD VILLAGE MILL

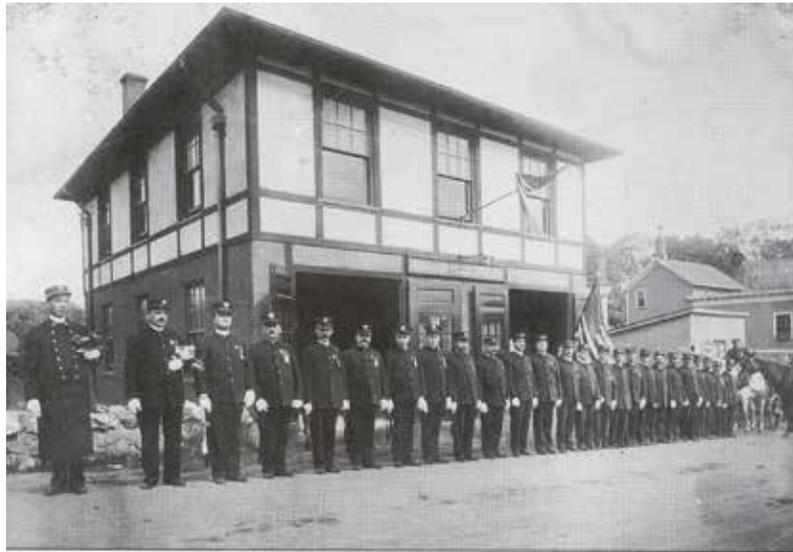


Mills were important in the early development of the area, grinding grain for food and providing lumber necessary for buildings. The present Mill Street Condominium building at the intersection of Mill Street and Quimby Lane is the approximate site of the Old Village Mill and mill house, which no longer remain. Known through most of our Borough's history as the Old Village Mill, it was originally referred to as the Vealtown Mill. This grist (grain) mill was one of the Borough's first and longest operating mills, gracing the lane until the 1930s. It was originally owned by James Boylan.

Mine Brook was essential to the operation of the town's primary mill. Sometime in the late 1700s the brook was dammed with boulders to support the Old Village Mill, creating a mill pond at the current location of the Claremont baseball field. Mill Lane, as it was named at the time, ended at the mill but was later extended to connect to the newly created Claremont Road around 1905, at which time the pond was drained and filled as well.

**Look up the hill to the left (and perhaps go for a closer look) to see the....**

BERNARDSVILLE FIRE COMPANY NO. 1  
*35 Mill Street*



**Bernardsville Fire Company #1 stands at proud attention in front of their station in 1909.**

When the Bernardsville Bucket Brigade was established in 1897, its equipment consisted of a dozen water buckets and a long ladder. A few years later a horse-drawn hook and ladder truck was acquired and, in 1906, a horse-drawn chemical engine. By that time the company was called Bernardsville Fire Company #1 and was headquartered here after Frederic P. Olcott, a local financier and philanthropist, donated \$3,000 to the volunteer organization to purchase this 50'x50' lot on Mill Street. The fire company remained at this location until 1958. The building was later occupied by Triangle Ink, and then Somerset Hills YMCA until 1983. The original building remains largely intact and still showcases its large doors, tin ceiling and barred basement windows that reflect its brief service as the town jail.

**Turn back to the right toward Anderson Hill Road. At the corner, turn right onto Anderson Hill Road and take the crosswalk to the center of Olcott Square.** The garden here is created and maintained by The Bernardsville Garden Club, established 1930. **Take the crosswalk to Anderson Hill Road and return up the hill to the Library.**

OPTIONAL TOUR

**Walk or drive to Borough Hall complex at 166 Mine Brook Road. You can park your car at the Borough Hall or the public lot across the street.**

BUNN'S MILL COMPLEX  
*166 Mine Brook Road*



John Bunn (1795-1866) was an early settler to the area who accumulated significant land holdings. In the early years of the century he built a mill along Mine Brook. By mid-century this was a large enterprise composed of several buildings housing a grist mill, sawmill, cider mill and distillery. The 45'x55' stone and stucco mill building is four and a half stories high and has two-foot thick stone walls and heavy beams throughout. In the main building, operations were divided between lumber milling and the grinding of flour, feed, cornmeal and buckwheat. For lumber milling there was both a circular and up-and-down saw, and for the gristmill operation there were millstones on both the first and second floors. Power came from a very large wooden wheel driven by water from the nearby stream. The cider mill was driven by a steel cable from the main building. Cider was sold at 10 cents a gallon. There were large tanks of apple mash from which applejack was distilled. The building near the road was most likely the granary for the mill and another stone structure on the property was probably stables for housing horses of farmers bringing their grain to the mill. The apple cider distillery was in what is now the Borough Garage. The scallop rake board trim on the barn located closest to the road is a local design.

John Bunn operated the mill until his death, when it was taken over by two of his sons, Thomas and John, who continued to operate parts of the enterprise until John died in 1913. After John's death, the property was acquired by Richard V. Lindabury, owner of the adjoining Meadowbrook Farm. In 1932, the Borough

bought the property and, under the leadership of Mayor Edwin M. Faulkner, the historic Bunn Mill industrial complex was converted into Bernardsville Borough Municipal Hall. From initial concept to completion took 26 years. The architect was E. Ellsworth Giles. The cost to renovate and convert the structure to offices, including furnishings, was \$100,000 or \$12.50 per square foot. A considerable savings was realized by having the street department employees do most of the work and the cost of the project did not leave the Borough indebted, nor was it necessary to raise taxes. Three of the four stories in the 8,000 square-foot building were restored for municipal use. The top floor was set aside for future expansion. A guest at the dedication ceremonies was Edwin S. Spinning, 84, a local historian who offered his recollections. The mill pond where he and his childhood friends used to swim was wider in those days and extended to where the firehouse is now. Mr. Spinning recalled grabbing the mill rope and riding down from the upper floors and stoking the still furnace with wood from the slab pile from the time school was out until late in the evening.

An addition to the building in 1988 provided more room for the Police Department and more office space for the Borough Administrator and Borough Clerk. The Road Department and Animal Warden facilities were also enlarged. In 1992, a new sewer plant was completed, providing more capacity, more technical and modern machinery and larger holding tanks. The project provides an outstanding example of historic preservation in action.

#### MICHAEL J. NERVINE MEMORIAL PARK AT LINDABURY POND

In 1916 Richard V. Lindabury (1850-1925) acquired a neglected piece of property near his Meadowbrook Farm for use as a public park. For more than a year, workmen and teams of horses cleared out the site, cutting down old trees and planting young trees and shrubbery. Lindabury maintained the park for the public until his death in 1925, after which it passed to the Borough. By the middle of the last century the pond had become a polluted eyesore in need of restoration. Today the attractive 12.5 acre park, adjacent to Bernardsville Borough Municipal Hall, includes Lindabury Pond (also known as the Borough Pond), and features a stone bridge, a Stick style gazebo and a walkway along the west side of the pond. In early spring the blooming Japanese cherry trees provide a background of beauty and tranquility.

In 1988 the park was renamed in honor of Michael J. Nervine (1905-1987) in recognition of 50 years of service to his beloved community. The local businessman was a long-time school board member, and in 1949 he was appointed to fill the unexpired term of former State Senator Malcolm Forbes on the Bernardsville Bor-

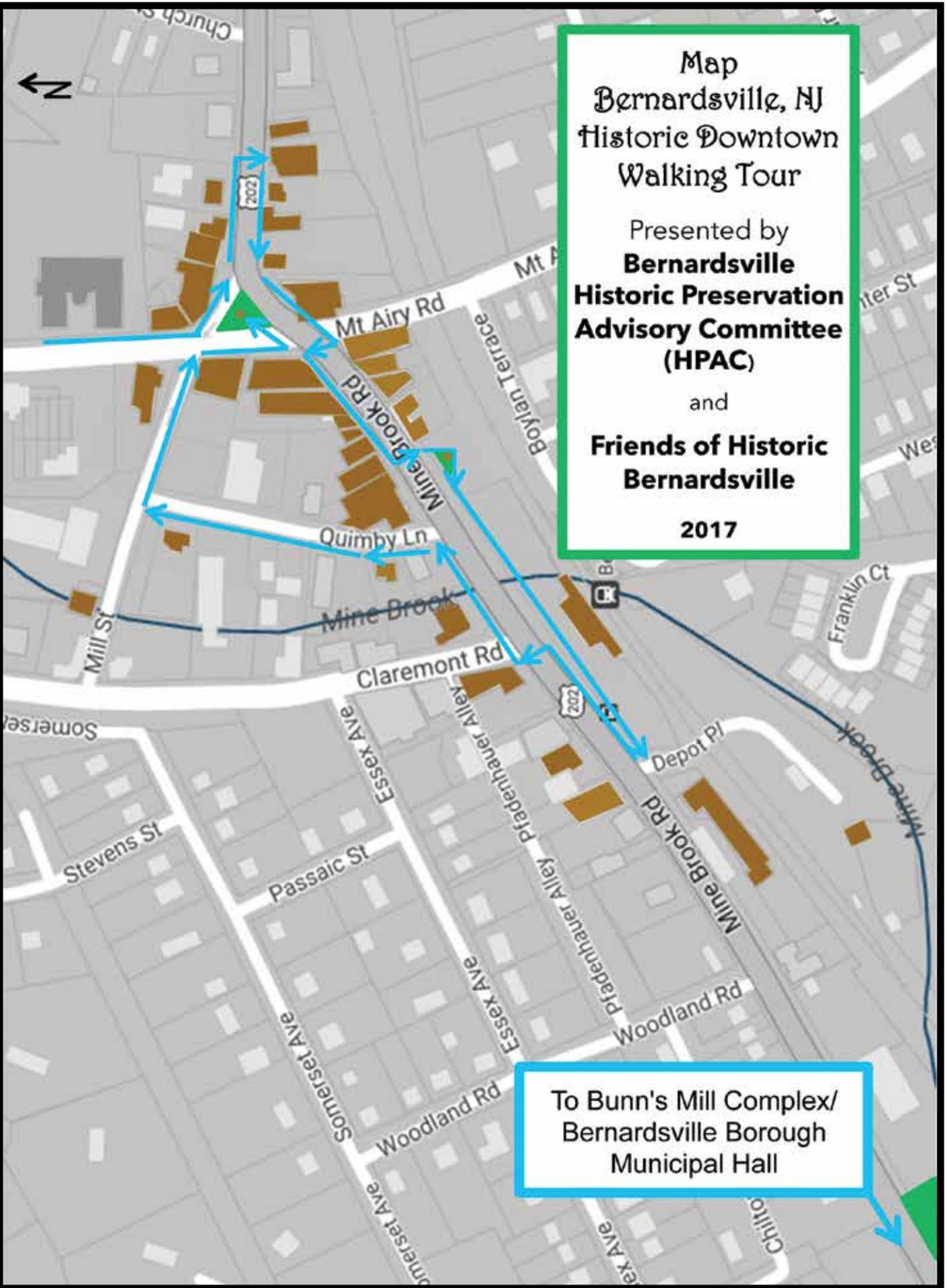
ough Council. He served 10 years as a councilman and 20 years as mayor. Mr. Nervine offered this sage advice: "Don't ever do anything you wouldn't be happy seeing on the front page of the *Bernardsville News*."

A new memorial of stone honoring local veterans was unveiled during Memorial Day services in 2016. Nearby, two older memorials pay tribute to those who served in World War I, 1917-1919, and those who served their nation in World War II, 1941-1945.



This vintage postcard presents the view across Bunn's Mill Pond toward the mill building and the Bunn Homestead visible across the road.

**Your tour is complete! The Bernardsville Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) and Friends of Historic Bernardsville (FHB) hope you've enjoyed your walk around historic Downtown Bernardsville.**



Map  
Bernardsville, NJ  
Historic Downtown  
Walking Tour

Presented by  
**Bernardsville  
Historic Preservation  
Advisory Committee  
(HPAC)**  
and  
**Friends of Historic  
Bernardsville**

**2017**

To Bunn's Mill Complex/  
Bernardsville Borough  
Municipal Hall