

The Westfield Historical Society Continues to Keep Town's Heritage Alive

The Westfield Historical Society, founded in 1969, is pledged to preserve, interpret and encourage community interest in the history of Westfield, its environs and the country.

Led by current President Donald F. Mokrauer, Society members help perpetuate Westfield's rich historical heritage.

The Society's museum and archives are located on the second floor of the Municipal Building. The collection contains thousands of artifacts and other memorabilia, including books, documents, letters, photographs, slides, maps, newspapers, postcards, scrapbooks, architectural drawings, posters, tools and flags, as well as historic uniforms and other attire.

The Society sponsors five to six evening membership meetings during the year in addition to its "First Wednesday" luncheons, which are held monthly. It also sponsors affordable field trips — one in the Spring and one in the Fall to a variety of sites.



Mindowaskin Park Circa 1950's

Instilling a sense of local heritage and roots in Westfield residents, including school children, is a major focus of the Society's educational initiatives. It assists schools in preparing a prospectus on local history for third graders and provides speakers for school classes and civic organizations.

One of the Society's earliest accomplishments was its purchase of the historic Miller-Cory House at 614 Mountain Avenue. This circa 1740 house, which is on both the National Register of Historic Places and the New Jersey Register of Historic Places, operates as a living museum with an appointed Board of Governors and the Miller-Cory House Museum Volunteers.

The Westfield Historical Society supported the town's historic preservation movement, and lobbied both to get an ordinance passed in 1982 and, later, to have

it strengthened. The Society is represented on Westfield's Historic Preservation Commission.

Members receive a quarterly newsletter. In addition to specially researched feature articles on some aspect of town history or personal reminiscences, each issue contains announcements and a calendar of related area events.

Publications sponsored by the Westfield Historical Society and still in print include: *A Guide to the Colonial Cemetery of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, New Jersey* by Herbert A. Halsey; historical maps of Westfield; postcards with scenes of old Westfield and *Westfield in the Golden Age of Postcards*, a 128-page, paperback that documents the growth and development of the town between 1903 and 1928.

Anyone wishing to become a member may telephone (908) 789-4047 or write to: Westfield Historical Society, P. O. Box 613, Westfield, 07091-0613. The Society also has a web site at www.westfieldnj.com/history/index.htm.



Courtesy of The Westfield Historical Society

LOCAL LANDMARK IN 1910... Westfield's "Flatiron Building" at the corner of Elm Street and Quimby, now the site of Rorden Realty, was owned by Walter J. Lee, Sr. in 1910 when he bought *The Westfield Leader* and established the newspaper's offices next door on Elm, where they remain today. Lee was also a realtor and developer as shown by the sign on the then ivy-covered building. E.S.F. Randolph, the developer of Westfield Gardens, also had offices in the building.



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