

## Westfield Historical Society: Preserving Town's Heritage

The Westfield Historical Society, chartered in 1969, was founded to help maintain Westfield's unique qualities and preserve its rich heritage.



Westfield Town Bell

those who contributed to Westfield's proud heritage.

Through its museum and archives collection the Society is continuously adding to the town's repository of Westfield lore.

The collection, now available on the second floor of the Municipal Building, contains thousands of artifacts and other memorabilia. These include books, documents, letters, photographs and slides, maps and newspapers, postcards, scrapbooks, architectural drawings, posters, flags, historic uniforms and other attire and tools.

The Society sponsors five to six speakers annually as well as its Dutch Treat, First Wednesday speaker-luncheons that are held monthly throughout the year. It also sponsors affordable field trips—one in the spring and one in the fall—to a variety of interest-

ing historic sites. 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. The circa 1740 house is operated as a living museum by an appointed Board of Governors and the Miller-Cory House Museum Volunteers.

The 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 of the Society receive the Westfield Historical Society Newsletter. In addition to historical photographs and activity announcements, each issue contains a calendar of related area events. A feature article in each issue focuses on some aspect of town history or personal reminiscences.

Publications sponsored by the society 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.

**First United Methodist Church of Westfield**  
One East Broad Street  
(across from the monument, parking lot accessible from Ferris Place off Prospect St.)

**Celebrating our 150th Anniversary of worship, service and fellowship.**  
(1849 - 1999)

[www.fumcwestfield.org](http://www.fumcwestfield.org)



**Come and worship with us!**

**Sunday Schedule**

9:00 - Seekers Service, an informal contemporary style of worship.  
9:45 - Education Hour  
11:00 - Morning Worship.

### Early Westfield Chronology

**1664:** English Long Islanders purchase Elizabethtown tract from Leni Lenape chiefs.

**1675-1683:** Essex County, including Elizabethtown and Newark tracts, loosely organized.

**1684:** West fields of Elizabethtown surveyed by John Baker and party at request of Governor Gawen Lawrie.

**1693:** Elizabethtown officially becomes Elizabeth Township.

**1699-1700:** "Clinker Lot" Division: West fields divided into 171 hundred-acre lots.

**1720:** Westfield has become a distinct settlement.

**1727-1730:** Presbyterian congregation organized; temporary log church built on Elizabethtown Road (Benson Place).

**1734:** 40 acres acquired for church and parsonage land for the price of 20 pounds; church on Mountain Avenue built in 1735 soon after.

**1740:** Nathaniel Baker establishes tannery on stream presently site of Mindowaskin Pond.

**1741:** Elizabeth chartered as Borough, maintaining co-terminous township until 1855. Westfield becomes voting ward of borough.

**1776:** Livestock evacuated to mountains as British Army passes nearby in December; British attack Springfield in same month, with one column passing through Westfield.

**1776-77:** Westfield is a command post for much of this period; village occupied and looted by main British Army June 26-27, 1777.

**1780:** Westfielders participate in victorious Battle of Springfield.

**1794:** Westfield Township becomes separate municipality on January 27, including most of Clinker Lot survey area. The following municipalities separated from Township on dates noted:

- Part of Rahway, including what later became Clark (1804);
- Plainfield (1847); part of Cranford (1871);
- Fanwood Township, including Scotch Plains (1878);
- Mountainside (1895) and half of Garwood (1903);
- Westfield adopts Town form of government-March 4, 1903.

(Courtesy of the Westfield Historical Society)

[history@westfieldnj.com](mailto:history@westfieldnj.com)

## Westfield Oral Surgery Associates, P.C.

Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons

Philip R. Geron, D.M.D., F.A.A.O.M.S.

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320 Lenox Avenue  
Westfield

(908)  
233-8088

## Genealogical Society Offers Something For Researchers

For those who are interested in genealogy and family history, the Genealogical Society of the West Fields offers a variety of activities which are focused on one of the most popular hobbies in this country.

The society has about 150 members, 40 percent of whom live outside Union County. The group's experience levels cover a wide range, from beginners to professional genealogical researchers. Dues are modest and anyone curious about family history is invited to join.

Objectives of the organization are threefold:

- Research in the fields of local history, family history and genealogy.
- Promotion of general interest in these subjects.
- Addition of resource material to the Westfield Memorial Library.
- Members are involved in library research projects which include the gathering and printing of unpublished source material in the Westfield area, indexing useful publications to make research easier and answering genealogical queries submitted by members and other researchers who have an interest in families from the local area.

The society publishes a bimonthly newsletter, *Gleanings From the West Fields*, in an effort to disseminate results of the Society's research efforts and keep members informed of activities.

Donations of resource material to the Westfield library come from a variety of sources. Members and friends often make gifts of some of their own holdings or references that would be of interest to the local area. The Society, as a whole, includes in its annual budget funds for the donation of special interest material.

To further foster interest in genealogy, the Society holds monthly meetings, except in the summer, which feature programs about genealogy and history.

These are held either Thursday afternoons or Saturday mornings at the library and are open to the public. The group also sponsors field trips to important local genealogical resource centers.

Also, volunteers from the Society staff the library's Local History Room each weekday from 1 to 4 p.m., September through May, to assist patrons of the library in locating items of personal interests in the extensive genealogical collection.

Last year the Society offered a biennial workshop entitled, "New Routes to Old Roots." The program was well attended by an enthusiastic audience. The next workshop is slated for May, 2000.

**How to Get Involved:**  
Genealogical Society of the West Fields  
(908) 232-6419  
[gswf@westfieldnj.com](mailto:gswf@westfieldnj.com)

## Restoration of Victorian Home

Continued from Page 21

possible structurally, but the needs of a family today are different then they were during the era in which this home was built," stated Mrs. Pascal.



Vintage 1871

The Pascals have re-plastered as opposed to sheet-rocking in order to follow the curves and details of the staircase and interior walls.

The home needed more than two miles of cable to rewire and bring the electricity up to code. The radiators have all been stripped of nearly 10 coats of paint to reveal beautifully decorative ironwork designs.

There were traces of wallpaper in the master bathroom that Mr. and Mrs. Pascal wished to replace. In order to do this they found a dealer in New York who strictly worked with antique wallpaper

found in shut down warehouses and hardware stores. Once they found what they were looking for, the Pascals had bathroom tiles custom made to match the paper.

The fence that will surround the property has historical significance as well.



Under Construction

Roy Pascal saw the Berry Biscuit Factory in Elizabeth being demolished and asked the crew if he could purchase the wrought iron fence - and that is what he did. The fence is now being restored and will be put up shortly.

Once the overwhelming project was completed, Mr. and Mrs. Pascal and their three children moved into their new-old Victorian dream house in January.

**First Congregational Church**  
is a friendly, active congregation offering:

- Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.
- Christian Education & Child Care
- Middle & Senior High Fellowship
- Vocal & Bell Choirs for All Ages
- Adult Education & Bible Study
- Fellowship Groups for Men & Women
- Hands-On Service Opportunities

**Visitors are Always Welcome!**

The sanctuary is air conditioned, handicapped accessible and equipped with an infrared audio system for the hearing impaired.

Rev. Dr. Harry Taylor Interim Pastor  
Dr. Barbara Thomson Organist & Music Director  
Rev. Pamela Gilchrist Pastoral Associate

## First Congregational Church

An inclusive fellowship of people who, in diversity of faith, agree to walk together faithfully in God's ways.

125 Elmer Street, Westfield  
(Member, United Church of Christ)

For further information on membership and activities, please call (908) 233-2494 or visit our Web site at [www.westfieldnj.com/fcc](http://www.westfieldnj.com/fcc)