

CROSSROADS

Newsletter – May 2026

ASSOCIATION NEWS

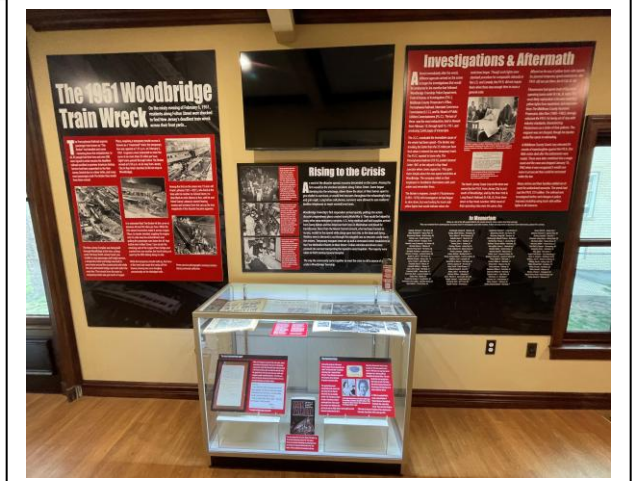
A time of remembrance. February 6, 2026 marked the 75th anniversary of the wreck of the Broker, the Pennsylvania Railroad express passenger train that derailed in Woodbridge, killing 85 and injuring hundreds



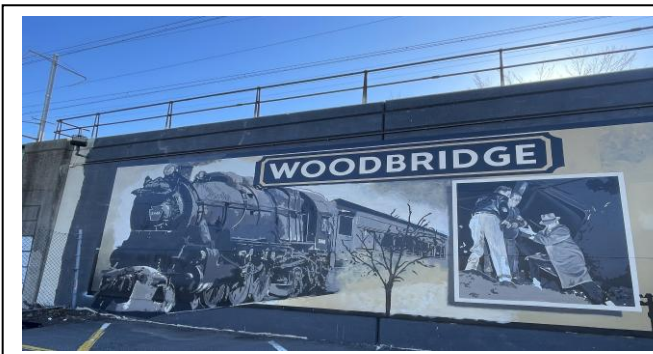
more. Members of the Historical Association of Woodbridge Township, along with representatives from Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission and other attendees, gathered at the corner of Fulton Street and Legion Place, site of the crash, for a wreath laying ceremony to honor the dead, remember the many injured, and to take pride in the efforts of the hundreds of first responders and ordinary citizens who came to render aid.

A new exhibit at Woodbridge History Museum also details the events of that fateful day. Stop by the museum to learn more about this tragic derailment that remains the deadliest railroad accident in postwar American history.

Our February program “**Mud, Blood, and Sandwiches: How Woodbridge Township Rose to the Crisis of the 1951 Train Wreck**” had to be postponed due to unforeseen circumstances; it has been rescheduled for September when author and historian Gordon Bond will share some of the stories of the many volunteers and first responders who rescued the injured and recovered the dead on that long and dreadful night.



Murals near the crash site, commissioned by the Township of Woodbridge, also commemorate the event.



Thank you ... to everyone who attended the annual HAWT membership meeting on March 23, 2026. By unanimous vote, the proposed budget for the next fiscal year from May 1, 2026 to April 30, 2027 was passed and all four incumbent officers were reelected to serve the association for another two-year term.

Artifact Spotlight



Someone recently donated this vintage display case to the museum. We are using it as an opportunity to display our collection of historical documents. The first document to be featured is a 1792 land indenture. The case is on display in our activity room - stop by to see if you can read the hand-written script.

Woodbridge History Museum

is open on Sundays from 1-4pm.
Admission is free...donations are appreciated!



Museum News

Woodbridge Women in World War II is a new exhibit at Woodbridge History Museum. It showcases the service of two local heroes: Daisy Bell Dinkins and Yvonne "Pat" Pateman.



Coinciding with this new exhibit was the first in a new series called SUNDAY SESSIONS AT THE MUSEUM. The March 29th session was a big success with a casual and engaging discussion led by HAWT member Arlene Guellnitz. Arlene's aunt, Yvonne "Pat" Pateman, was a WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots) during World War II.



Would you consider... becoming a docent?

We will train you!

It requires a commitment from 12:30-4:30pm on a Sunday. Sign up for as many or as few Sundays as you'd like – we'll work with your availability. Contact us today at hawt1669@gmail.com or call **732-634-1669** for more information.

Celebrating America's 250th

As Americans across the country celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary this year, Historical Association of Woodbridge Township hosted a special outdoor event on April 25th featuring George Washington on the front porch of Woodbridge History Museum.



New Jersey Fifes and Drums heralded the Commander-in-Chief's arrival. Washington, superbly portrayed by Sam Davis, addressed those in attendance with a passionate speech



about his love of country and hardships endured by his troops in the fight for freedom from British rule. The presentation was largely funded with a grant by the Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners.

And special thanks to Roosevelt's Deli of Fords for providing cherry pie – the perfect complement to the occasion!

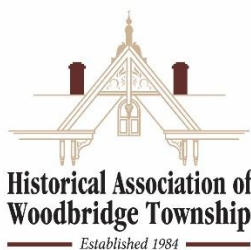


History Tidbits

Dunigan's Plumbing Shop 1906. This picture, taken around 1906, shows the Edgar & Dunigan Plumbing business on Rahway Avenue. The business was actually started in the late 1800s by Edwin Zimmerman. It evolved into Edgar & Dunigan and then around 1910 Owen S. Dunigan became the sole owner. Owen S. Dunigan had begun working for the company in 1887. "In those days the job was seven days a week – Monday to Saturday they worked at the trade – on Sunday the horses had to be fed twice a day." The four people from left to right are Barney Dunigan, Owen Dunigan, John Brown and Harry Mawbey.



~ from the 1997 Historical Calendar



PO Box 83
Woodbridge NJ 07095

Historical Association of Woodbridge Township

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Email: hawt1669@gmail.com

Phone: 732-634-1669

Website:

www.woodbridgetownshiphistory.org



Woodbridge History Museum
86 Green Street, Woodbridge

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 18, 2026 – Monthly Program

“FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM ON RARITAN BAY” presented by John Schneider

Based on his book by the same name, this local story reveals how Patriots, privateers, and civilians fought for independence along the New Jersey shoreline.

Program begins at 7pm

Acacia Youth Center, 95 Port Reading Avenue, Woodbridge NJ

(Note date and location change for May program)

June 22, 2026 – Monthly Program

“AN EARLY ACCOUNT OF WOODBRIDGE TOWNSHIP” presented by Joan McNichol, Ed.D and author of “The Story of Elizabeth Blossom – New Jersey’s Own Pilgrim” Discover early life in Woodbridge as told through the lives of one of its founding families – the FitzRandolphs. Based on documented historical events.

Program begins at 7pm

First Presbyterian Church, 600 Rahway Avenue, Woodbridge NJ

Historical Association of Woodbridge Township is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-exempt charitable organization.