



CROSSROADS

Newsletter – January 2026

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Our 2025-2026 program season kicked off with three special presentations. **“Colonia Hospital #3”** by HAWT President Daniel D’Arcy and Vice President Debbie Cocco in September told the story of Dr. Fred Albee and the World War I orthopedic hospital once located in Colonia. October’s program **“Killing Shore: The True Story of Hitler’s U-boats off the New Jersey Coast”** was an engaging talk by author K. A. Nelson of U-boat activity off the NJ shore during WWII. And **“A Parade of Mayors, Volume 1”** by Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission, based on their newest brochure in the Historic Tour of Woodbridge series, rounded out the fall programs in November. General membership meetings follow each program. Come out and join us!



On Sunday, October 5th Tara Dubay received the 2025 Mayor’s Volunteer Appreciation Award during a ceremony at Acacia Youth Center. A 30-year member of our association, Tara currently serves on HAWT’s Board of Directors. She is also a dedicated volunteer at Woodbridge History Museum. Congratulations, Tara!



Several members of the Historical Association of Woodbridge Township joined representatives of the Independent Club of Colonia to place flowers at the memorial of Patrolman Alvin Williams, commemorating 46 years since he tragically drowned attempting to rescue 2 children. The flowers were donated by Drew Florist of Colonia.

Artifact Spotlight



ANTIQUE HUMIDOR. The purpose of a humidor is to keep cigars fresh for extended periods of time.

This one is copper lined. Copper is non-reactive and has anti-microbial properties to inhibit the growth of mold and mildew. There is a small tray inside which would have held a moistened sponge to help maintain the humidity level inside the humidor. Cigars would have been stored inside. There is wood carving on the front, possibly of cattails. It is estimated that this is from the 1920s or 1930s. The humidor is on display at the museum.

Woodbridge History Museum

Is open on Sundays from 1-4pm

Admission is free...donations are appreciated!

Inclement weather concerns? Call us first at 732-634-1669 to make sure the museum is open.



Museum News

A celebration of the ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY of the Woodbridge History Museum was held on September 14, 2025. It featured the unveiling of a new outdoor interpretive sign describing the carriage stone and horse trough displayed on the front lawn of the museum. Stop by anytime to learn the history of these local artifacts.



Plan to visit during 2026 and see the new exhibits now being designed for the museum.



Woodbridge History Museum was beautifully decorated for the holiday season.

We also hosted a Holiday Sing-a-long in December around our 100+ year old player piano.



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.

More Association News

Laura Bradshaw recently stepped down from the HAWT Board of Directors. We sincerely appreciate Laura's contributions to the board over the years – including oversight of the museum committee and grant writing. Our very best wishes to Laura in her personal pursuits and endeavors.

Our membership holiday party in early December was a wonderful time of great food, music, and conversation. Thanks to all the helping hands that made this annual event a success – and special thanks to Woodbridge High School Jazz Choir for providing delightful holiday music.

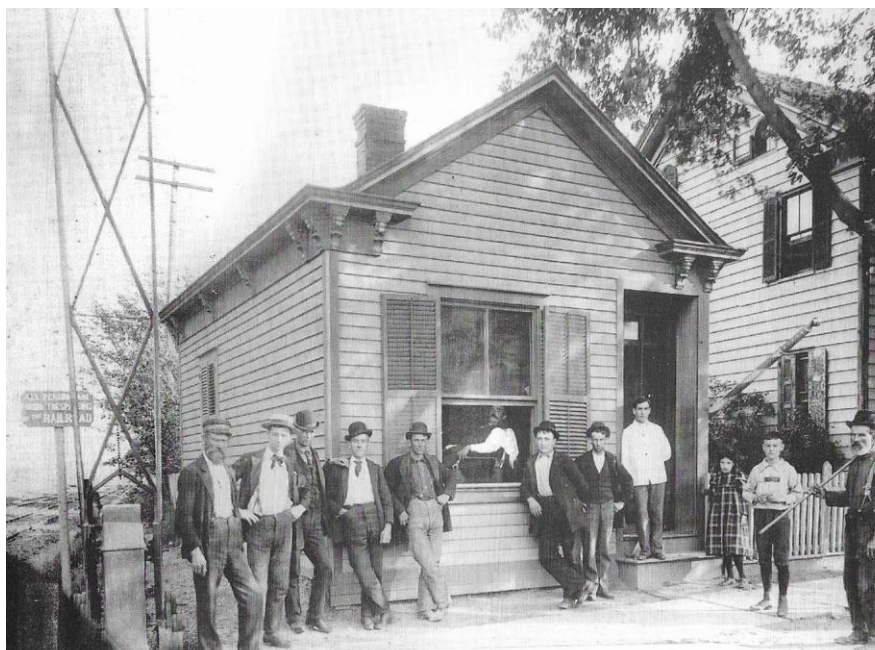


HAWT's year-end appeal is our biggest fundraiser and we are grateful for the donations of HAWT members and local business owners that amounted to almost \$3000 this year. Every donation, large or small, is appreciated and will be used to support our mission to 'preserve and promote the history of Woodbridge Township' – especially in our operation of Woodbridge History Museum. Please consider supporting these local businesses that have contributed to our mission: Maglione's Italian Ice, Neves Jewelers, Nolan and Associates, Owen S. Dunigan and Co., and T. Nulty American Legion.

Reminder: The annual HAWT membership meeting will take place on March 23, 2026 in Fellowship Hall at First Presbyterian Church of Woodbridge immediately following the monthly program. This year's agenda includes voting on the executive board (officers serve for a two-year term) and the budget for the next fiscal year. Members who have attended at least two meetings during the past year are eligible to vote.

History Tidbits

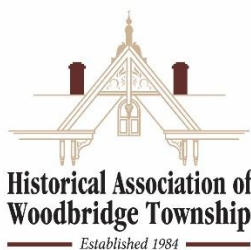
Otto Hirner's Barbershop was located on Main Street adjoining the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, which were at ground level and can be seen at the left. The sign states: "All Persons Are Forbid Trespassing On The Railroad." In this photo a variety of individuals – Otto the barber, young men about town, children and working men – are shown in front of the shop. Note the unusual barber pole by the door. On the back of the picture was the following information: *Otto A. Hirner in the picture was a barber. At that time barbers pulled teeth, took blood from veins to "bleed" those who appeared to have too much blood, and applied leeches to those having black eyes from fighting, etc. Mr. Hirner lived next to me at 175 Green Street and told me that one day a train hit a horse and wagon at the railroad crossing, killing many people. He assisted the mortician in a barn next door to the shop and received \$5 for the day. As this was triple the daily income of a barber, he decided that he would become a mortician. Later, Mayor August Greiner learned the mortician trade from Mr. Hirner and eventually started the Greiner Funeral Home which is still in business as the Greiner-Costello Funeral Home.*



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(Photo donated to the Historical Association of Woodbridge Township by Chris Quinn, son of Arthur V. Quinn of Green Street, from his father's collection.)

~ From the 2000 Woodbridge Historical Calendar



PO Box 83
Woodbridge NJ 07095

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Historical Association of Woodbridge Township
Board of Directors

Daniel D'Arcy, *President*
Debbie Cocco, *Vice President*
Howard Weber, *Treasurer*
Tracy Billings, *Recording Secretary*

Donald J. Peck, Tara Dubay,
Michelle O'Rourke, Jessica Florek,
Mitzi Hozjan

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Phone: 732-634-1669

Website:

www.woodbridgetownshiphistory.org



Woodbridge History Museum
86 Green Street, Woodbridge

January 26, 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”** Based on documented historical events, discover early life in Woodbridge as told through the lives of one of its founding families – the FitzRandolphs.

February 23, 2026 – Monthly Program

“MUD, BLOOD, AND SANDWICHES: How Woodbridge Township Rose to the Crisis of the 1951 Train Wreck” presented by author and historian Gordon Bond Author 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.

March 23, 2026 – Monthly Program

“NEW JERSEY GREENWICH TEA PARTY” presented by Judith Krall-Russo – **Lecturer, Historian, and Tea Specialist** The Boston Tea Party is a well known rebellious act in the American fight for freedom. But did you know one occurred in 1774 in the southern New Jersey village of Greenwich? Learn about this tea party and the importance this area of the state has played in industry, agriculture, and manufacturing from colonial times.

Programs begin 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.