



CROSSROADS

Newsletter – Spring 2025

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Historical Association of Woodbridge Township's monthly programs continue to support our mission to preserve and promote the history and heritage of Woodbridge Township. The March program titled **"A W.A.S.P. Takes Wing: Women Air Force Service Pilots of World War II"** by living history presenter Carol



Simon Levin told the story of New Jersey native Ann Baumgartner Carl, who trained as a WASP and became the first American woman to fly a jet airplane. And thanks to HAWT member Arlene Guellnitz, we were able to display items and memorabilia from her aunt – Yvonne "Pat" Pateman. Pat grew up in Woodbridge and was the only woman selected to join W.A.S.P. from Middlesex County, New Jersey. Almost 100 people, including a troop of local Girl Scouts, attended this wonderful presentation.

You will notice a few new options when you receive your next membership renewal form. In addition to the regular one-year renewal, we are now offering a three-year membership renewal (with a \$5 savings!) and for those who never want to worry about paying dues again, there's even an option for lifetime membership.



HAWT will be participating in the township-wide yard sale on Saturday, May 17th. We'll be selling a variety of donated items on the front lawn of the museum and feature the always popular Christmas table filled with holiday gifts and decorations. Stop by and make us an offer.

And lastly, a surprise visit...

Frank Crowe, gift shop committee member, stopped by the museum on March 9th after participating in Woodbridge's 51st St. Patrick's Day parade. The event is organized by the American Irish Association of Woodbridge. After the parade, which follows a route down Main Street, Frank popped over to Green Street sporting a kilt that belonged to his uncle, Frank Darcy, former Grand Marshall 2014.

Artifact Spotlight

Our museum is fortunate to have received the donation or loan of several historical garments. These antique clothes are susceptible to damage from light, temperature fluctuations, and damage from handling. Good preservation practice says that these garments should be on display for around six months or less.



This month four garments were replaced which had been on display since the museum's opening. It is quite a task to properly remove the existing garments from display and pack them in archival boxes and then fit the new garments onto the mannequins. There are now two new uniforms from World War II, a fireman's jacket, and a "beer" jacket on display. (If you don't know what a "beer" jacket is, you will need to visit the museum to find out!)



Museum News

On April 7th fifth graders from Robert Mascenik School in Iselin visited Woodbridge History Museum. At the conclusion of their visit, the students were asked to draw pictures of their favorite artifacts or exhibits. These talented future historians did a great job capturing many of the items on display at the museum.

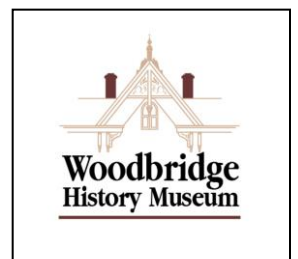


A small group of volunteers have produced a set of reels for Woodbridge History Museum that are now posted on Instagram. These dedicated volunteers also actively contribute in many other ways at the museum. To check out these unique reels, look under **woodbridge-history-museum**.



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

The museum's player piano, built in 1914, needed some work and has been refurbished. Come for a visit and one of our docents will be happy to play it for you.



In Memoriam: Irv Hyatt

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Board Member Irv Hyatt on April 14, 2025.

Irv was a tremendous supporter of our organization and a driving force behind many programs and key elements of the Woodbridge History Museum - from the home movies he helped save that you see playing throughout the building, to recently tracking down someone to repair the player piano.

Irv generously shared his time, technical skill, and extensive knowledge of vintage films, movie theaters, and local Woodbridge history.

Our sympathies to his wife Mary. We will deeply miss our friend and museum visitors will miss his vibrant personality and interesting stories.



History Tidbits

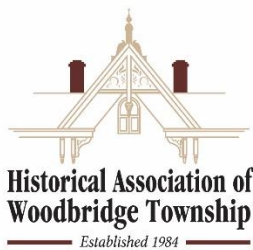
Chartered with 30,000 acres on June 1, 1669 by East Jersey Governor Phillip Carteret, Woodbridge has had many historic firsts – from the first drinking of tea to being the site of the first permanent printing press in New Jersey established by James Parker in 1751. Woodbridge was also the site of what is believed to have been the first anti-slavery meeting in the United States on July 4, 1783. This meeting was held on the farm of Dr. Moses Bloomfield, who had been a surgeon with the Continental Army, at which time he freed his fourteen slaves. His son, Joseph Bloomfield, born in Woodbridge, became the fourth Governor of New Jersey (1801-02 and 1803-12). The town of Bloomfield, New Jersey is named in his honor. Their residence, Bloomfield House, still stands on Harrell Avenue.

~ Contributed by Donald Johnstone Peck

This is a scene on Main Street looking toward Amboy Avenue, probably taken sometime shortly after 1906. The building on the right is the newly constructed First National Bank Building on the corner of Main Street and Pearl Street. This building, when it was constructed, was the most ornate building on Main Street. • No utility poles are visible in this picture which indicates that it was just completed. Later photographs of the area show a utility pole on the corner. Main Street remained unpaved until 1925. • Notice the vacant lot adjoining the building. In 1912 a post office was erected on this site. It remained in use until 1951 when a new post office was built on Pearl Street. In 1969, the three frame buildings to the left of the old bank building were demolished and this became the site of the present Woodbridge Post Office.

~ from the 1999 Historical Calendar





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Woodbridge History Museum
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MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 19, 2025 – Monthly Program

“1913 PATERSON SILK STRIKE” presented by Evelyn M. Hershey, Education Director at American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark

In the winter of 1913 more than 24,000 men, women, and children marched out of Paterson, New Jersey's silk mills calling for decent working conditions, an end to child labor, and an 8-hour work day. Pietro & Maria Botto offered their home as a meeting place for strikers. Upton Sinclair, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and other champions of labor spoke to workers of many nationalities. This presentation explores an historic labor action which led to reforms in the workplace broadly enjoyed by Americans today.

7pm at Acacia Youth Center, 95 Port Reading Avenue, Woodbridge NJ

June 23, 2025 – Monthly Program

“A PARADE OF MAYORS, Vol. 1” presented by Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission

Based on the new brochure in the Historic Tour of Woodbridge series, members of the Historic Preservation Commission will share the history of mayors in Woodbridge Township and present a “parade of mayors” from 1911 to 1967. Join us as we learn about their roles and accomplishments in navigating the early progress of Woodbridge.

7pm at First Presbyterian Church, 600 Rahway Avenue, Woodbridge NJ

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