

# Historic Preservation in Allendale... Does Anyone Care?

Part II



Franklin Turnpike in 1906.



## Turnpike Beginnings

Marsha Stoltz

ALLELENDALE — Two of this Borough's oldest structures slated either for demolition or condominium conversion stand along one of its oldest roads — Franklin Turnpike. While the future of the 70 and 475 Franklin Tpk. properties is pending, it may be appropriate to begin a review of Allendale's historic structures along this important roadway.

As explained in the Bergen County Historic Sites Survey for Allendale presented to the Borough last summer, the town was originally part of the New Barbadoes — or Old Hackensack — Township in the late 1600s. The Borough's land was included in the 1709 Ramapo Tract that was later divided into townships. The Borough's land went through a number of name and townline changes: 1716-1767 — Saddle River Township; 1767-1849 — Franklin Township; 1849-1885 — Ho-Ho-Kus Township; and 1886-1894 — Orvil Township.

Around 1850, shortly after the Paterson and Ramapo Railroad began running trains through Franklin Township, local residents built a small railroad station. They named the stop "Allendale" after Colonel Joseph Warner Allen, who stayed in this part of the county while surveying land for the railroads 1846-1848 (incorrectly dated in the first part of this series during the 1700s). The name was officially adopted when Allendale was incorporated as a borough in 1894.

Franklin Turnpike was chartered in 1806 and was known as "The Turnpike" almost from its start. Another road — the Albany Post or Stirling Road — ran almost parallel to and west of the Turnpike from 1750 to some time in the 1800s.

There were fewer than 25 buildings in the Borough before 1850, and among them is a home now slated for demolition to make way for an 11-home subdivision.

The A.C. Ackerman House, 70 Franklin Tpk., has a stone core built around 1778. Because of this stone base — one of the few left in the county and the only one in Allendale — it was included in the county's "Survey of the Early Stone Houses" as well as the thematic nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Little is known about the Ackerman House. County speculation is that it may be the pre-Revolutionary-era Goodbart House because it is not aligned with the Turnpike and because it appears to be the correct distance from other structures shown on early maps. The property at one time included a nursery, and it is in fact located just to the south of the Rohsler Nursery complex. The original structure has been covered with stucco and surrounded by additions. Its state of repair and historic value are now being evaluated by developers of the property.

Moving north, we come to a group of residences that is part of the "Church of the Epiphany District" because of its proximity to what is now Highlands

### HISTORIC ALLENDALE

The following are addresses listed in the two documents that form the basis for information on important structures in Allendale. The varying addresses and dates of construction underline the confusion facing those who are researching the Borough's historic past.

#### County Site Survey

Date Built	Address
1778	70 Franklin Turnpike
1811	232
1861	251
1889	253
1876+	264
1900+	317
1782	475
1861+	509
1807	555
Late 1700	700
1850	913

### Girl Scout Card Catalogue

Date Built	Address
1780	70 Franklin Turnpike
1880	133
1862	215
1861	232
1895	251
1875	253
1895	264
1896	290
1780	475
1890	509
1807	555
1897	597
1890	608
1860	700
1895	703
1878	707
1876	754
1890	790
1850	829
1876	837
1861	913
1781	977
1899	1013

Presbyterian Church at the corner of Franklin Turnpike and East Orchard Street. These homes at 215, 232, 251, 253, 256, and 264 Franklin Tpk. will be included in Part 3 — Ecclesiastical Turnpike, dealing with the three religious complexes in this area.

Still farther north, we come to the Allendale Equipment Co., 317 Franklin Tpk., built by Henry Thurston about 1920 to house an auto repair shop he had originally opened in 1905 across from Archer Hall. Its cobblestone walls and textured surfaces are examples of the Arts and Crafts building style popular in the early 20th century. The Thurston family still maintains a lawn/household equipment repair business in the building. It is one of the few commercial buildings mentioned in the county survey.

If Allendale architecture and history could be summed up in any one structure, it would probably be the Fell-Thompson House, 475 Franklin Tpk. Its southern wing was built in the mid-1700s, with an eastern block added 1782-1810 and a north wing added in 1912. As mentioned in the Nov. 21 **Town Journal**, its builder, John Fell, was involved in local, state and national government affairs during the formative days of our nation. The house passed from Mr. Fell to John Thompson and then to John G. Ackerman — the host of Colonel Allen during his surveying days (not Mr. Fell as reported in Part I). Stephen Cable was listed as the next owner. He was ferry master for the Erie Railway Co. on the Pavonia Ferry. During his ownership, Mrs. Cable ran Sunday school classes for a growing group of interested residents, first in the home and later in the barn still standing to the north of the house. This religious group eventually built the "Chapel in the Willows" across the street from the house, and moved the chapel in 1894 to the northeast corner of East Orchard Street and Franklin Turnpike where at present it houses the Highlands

Presbyterian congregation.

The current owner, Jean Pfister, and his father have owned the Fell House a total of 34 years. Mr. Pfister is presently pursuing plans to turn the home into a condominium complex.

"A handsome and picturesque example of residential Italianate architecture" was built by James A. Reading around 1861 at 509 Franklin Tpk. He worked for the U.S. Treasury in New York City, and married the daughter of Stephen Cable who lived at 475 Franklin Tpk. Although some "unsympathetic screen doors" have been added and trim possibly removed, the county survey notes it still retains many features of the Italianate style such as bracketed cornices, paneled frieze, tall first-story windows and projecting window bay.

A Federal residence begun in 1807, 555 Franklin Tpk. is one of the homes built by the Quackenbush family along the Turnpike. A south wing was added in 1840, and a north wing in 1870.

Another Quackenbush family home at 700 Franklin Tpk. was begun in the late 1700s, with changes during the late 1800s and early 1900s. It was purchased by A.E. Ivers in 1889; he was justice of the peace in 1892. "The late 19th century alterations have removed all exterior traces of the earlier style," the county survey notes. "Currently the house's south facade is obscured by excessive foliage" which "can lead to moisture retention and deterioration of the exterior fabric."

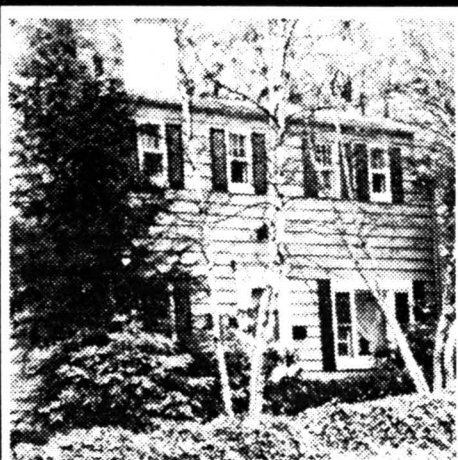
Started in 1850, the William Wilson House, 913 Franklin Tpk., is the only known building with mid-1800 gravel walls still standing in northwest Bergen County, and one of only three in Bergen County. The building material was rarely used here at that time, and additional research is needed to find out why it was chosen. Its south wing, added around 1870, is now covered with aluminum siding, as is the north gable of its north block. Next: Part III — Ecclesiastical Turnpike

### Not Included? Errors?

*If you think your home, business or other structure should be included in a survey of Allendale's historic structures, or if you find errors in information about those places which are included, let us know. Write: Allendale Survey, c/o Town Journal, P.O. Box 335, Saddle River, N.J. 07458.*

### Included?

*If your address is included in any part of this series, it is because the address is mentioned in the County's Historic Site Survey of Allendale. The survey is "an attempt to identify buildings, streetscapes, districts and sites of historical and architectural interest in the county." It is not a "register" with attending restrictions and protections. It merely identifies a structure as having historic or architectural importance.*



This home at 977 Franklin Tpk. — incorrectly identified as 70 Franklin Tpk. in Part I of this series — is not included in the county survey of Allendale's historic sites. Owners believe the core was built around 1750, and that it may be another stone house in the Borough.