

Les Grandes Dames

Nowhere in the County Survey of Historic Sites for Allendale are the omissions more apparent than along East Allendale Avenue.

The unverified Girl Scout list of pre-1900 homes in the local public library cites four homes not listed in the survey (see list). Among them is the John Parnell Feeney House at 160 E. Allendale Ave., built in the early 1900's as a summer residence by one of Jersey City's police commissioners. His son, John Parnell Thomas, was mayor of Allendale in the 1920's, a member of the State Assembly in the early 1930's, and was in the House of Representatives from 1936 to 1949 — during which time the home was host to a variety of major political figures including future President Richard M. Nixon. John Thomas's son, Stiles, a local insurance broker, still resides in a house on the rear of the property. Removal of a front porch was apparently its undoing, from a county standpoint.

Neither mentions the home now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Borin at 132 E. Allendale Ave., although tax records show it goes back at least to 1900. The Greek Revival front portico, apparently a late addition, is considered an unusual — although not necessarily fatal — alteration to the home.

"We would lose credibility if we included anything but the best examples," explained Elise Baranowski of the County Office on Cultural and Historic Affairs. "For example, the county has Colonial Revival homes coming out of its ears, so we only mentioned those that were least altered."

Ms. Baranowski concedes that the large homes along East Allendale "were not built by your average local resident" and that some may in fact be worthy of inclusion in the county's list. She encouraged homeowners and local historical groups to submit any information they have on local homes not listed so they can be added, if appropriate.

Marsha Stoltz

ALLELENDALE — The large homes that grace East Allendale Avenue provide the Borough with its most impressive entryway. Many of these "grandes dames" on sprawling acreage are associated with the town's heyday as a summer resort and boarding school center in the late 1800's.

Yet only five of these stately homes are now listed in the Bergen County Survey of Historic Sites. What may well be the Borough's most important architectural district remains uncharted as a result of County survey guidelines, "unsympathetic" alterations and a local presumption that the research has been completed.

ran such an establishment out of a family home on the north corner of Powell Road at Lennox Avenue, which was later renamed East Allendale Avenue, from 1890-1900. According to Pat Wardell of the Allendale Historical Society, that home, parts of which dated back to 1780, was destroyed in the 1930's to make way for newer housing.

Another home was built on Powell Road's south corner in 1900 at 54 E. Allendale Ave., and it is still

importance.

Moving away from the town center to the Cottage Place intersection, we come to the venerable Switzer-Patton House at 100 E. Allendale Ave. Its carefully-maintained Second Empire facade and Italianate addition rates with the Fell-Cable House at 475 Franklin Tpk. as one of the Borough's architectural gems. John Switzer came from Pennsylvania to be pastor of the New Prospect (later Waldwick) Methodist Episcopal Church at 21 Franklin Tpk. about 1865-67, and was later pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Saddle River. His house was built about 1866, with an addition constructed 10 years later. A position with the Lutheran Observer forced Reverend Switzer to move his family to Baltimore in 1885.

At that time, Rev. Switzer leased his house to Florence Zouch Patton. She

operated the "Lennox Seminary" boarding school there until 1893, when she moved the school to Ridgewood. The home was opened to tourists during the summer months. The county's history of the house ends at this point.

Two houses to the north of the Switzer House is the Southwick House at 144 E. Allendale Ave. The Borough's "most handsome and least-altered" Italianate-style residence" was built in 1867 for James Reynolds Southwick, a New York City wholesaler of dairy products. The survey criticizes an "incompatibly tall rubblestone chimney" attached to an early 20th-century addition to the main structure.

Two more houses to the north is the Asten-Linder House at 200 E. Allendale Ave. Built by W. Asten around 1902 with additions by J. Linder about 1913, the home is "a large and handsomely detailed early 20th-century residence that has Colonial Revival and Arts and Crafts features combined in its design." No other history is discussed.

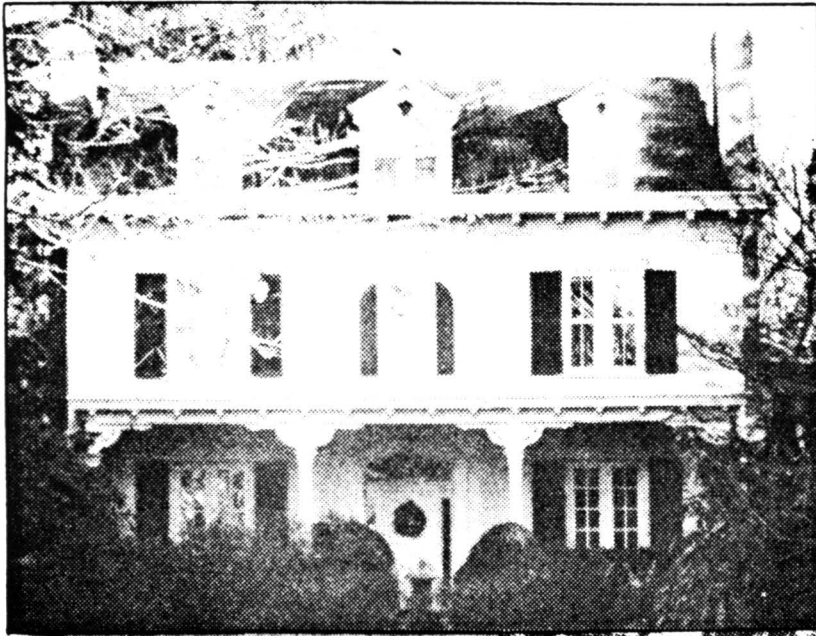
Near the Allendale/Saddle River border is the J. Osborn House at 316 E. Allendale Ave. Built in a vernacular style with Queen Anne elements, the home was begun in 1876, "a modest but nicely detailed late 19th-century farmhouse" with early 20th-century features such as the cobblestone piers at the walkway and driveway entrances. "Currently, the house is in need of repairs to its wood exterior," the report states.

(Next: West Allendale Avenue)



144 E. Allendale Ave.

County List		Girl Scout List		(Among the homes along East Allendale Avenue whose histories may make them locally significant are those at 53, 132, 171, 195, and 303 E. Allendale Ave. None are listed in the County survey. Four of only five homes along E. Allendale Avenue cited by the County for their architectural significance — a district overlooked?)
Date Built	Address	Address	Date Built	
1900	54 E. Allendale Ave.	53 E. Allendale Ave.	1899	
1866	100 E. Allendale Ave.	100 E. Allendale Ave.	1876	
1867	144 E. Allendale Ave.	144 E. Allendale Ave.	1850	
		160 E. Allendale Ave.	1899	
		171 E. Allendale Ave.	1875	
		195 E. Allendale Ave.	1890	
1902	200 E. Allendale Ave.	200 E. Allendale Ave.	1900	
1876	316 E. Allendale Ave.	316 E. Allendale Ave.	1890	



100 E. Allendale Ave.

The railroad station that would eventually lend its name to the Borough was completed around 1850. Produce, especially strawberries, that once had to be shipped by barges to New York could now be transported more quickly to a broader range of markets. Farmhouses began springing up in greater numbers. And word of this fresh air life brought vacationers on those trains to Allendale.

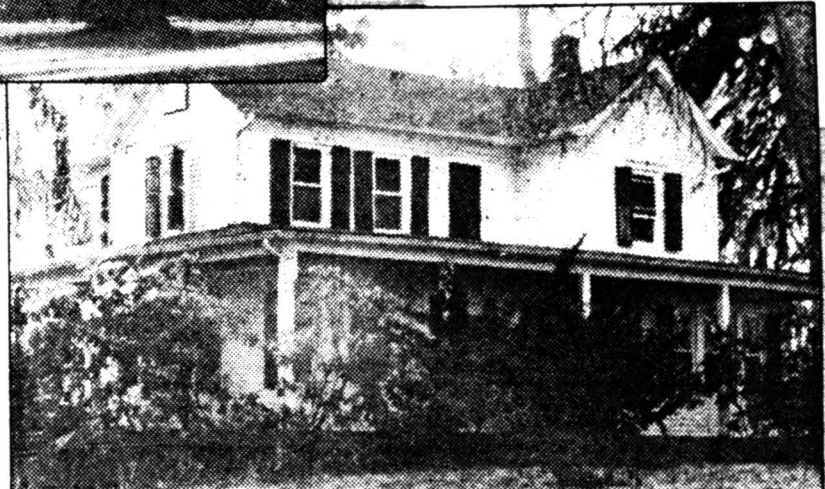
The Allendale Hotel was completed in 1870 to house the increasing number of people transported here by train. But tourists also enjoyed staying in the large homes along major thoroughfares that opened their doors to paying guests each summer. Such traffic helped make Allendale the "Newport of Bergen County" most popular with city-weary residents between the 1880's and 1890's. Some, such as O.H.P. Archer, came as summer visitors and eventually purchased their own properties in town, later to make major civic contributions to the area.

The Powell Family was associated with this summertime hospitality, especially Peter's daughter, Elizabeth. This descendant of millwrights and farmers



200 E. Allendale Ave.

associated with the Powell Family which lived and farmed in that area. The county survey cites this Colonial Revival/Dutch Colonial, Arts and Crafts structure for its "handsome blend of popular early 20th-century styles." The report notes that "the cobblestone well with pyramidal roof northeast of the house is a picturesque early 20th-century feature extant on numerous older Allendale properties." Frustratingly, this and two other East Allendale Avenue residences are discussed without much reference to their local historical



316 E. Allendale Ave.