

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF MOUNTAINSIDE

19-11

master plan program

UNION COUNTY, N.J.

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UNION COUNTY
A BICENTENNIAL COMMUNITY

report number nine

LANDMARK INVENTORY

union county planning board

MOUNTAINSIDE

Formed as a Borough: September 25, 1895
1970 Population: 7,520
Land Area: 4.10 square miles

The history of Mountainside may be traced to a search for mineral deposits during the late 1660's in the Watchung Mountains by miners from Cornwall, England. The site of a late seventeenth century copper mine is believed to be located in the Union County Park Commission's Watchung Reservation within the boundaries of present day Mountainside.

In 1794, the entire area of this borough was included in the newly formed Westfield Township, created from Elizabeth Township in then Essex County. As such, the early history and development of Mountainside is shared much with the neighboring Township of Westfield.

The official formation of the Borough of Mountainside on September 25, 1895 was due in part to those residents dissatisfied with services of the township but wishing to retain the area's country atmosphere. Despite its formation as a borough, its basic rural landscape remained unchanged well into the early decades of this century. A historical reference to this community in 1923 reflects this borough's basic rural flavor: "The business of the borough is confined to the junction of the highway from Westfield with the State Road connecting Newark with Philadelphia, and consists of a general store and garage." Mountainside's growth even up until the 1940's would not seem phenomenal, with barely over 1,000 residents located there according to the 1940 census. However, the years after to World War II saw a building boom in the community with its population nearly doubling in size to over 2,000 by 1950. Today there are no less than a half a dozen Mountainside landmarks which were constructed in the 1700's and reflect the earliest settlement of the western portion of Union County.

WOODLAND AVENUE - NEW PROVIDENCE ROAD HISTORIC SITES

1. **Barrett and Crain Building** - located at 2 New Providence Road. This two story wooden structure is an interesting landmark located at the corner of New Providence and Mountain Avenue. This well preserved structure was erected circa 1818, and may have been the first site of the Children's Country Home (see below No. 4) in the late 1890's.
2. **Crane Hill House** - located at 27 New Providence Road. Local sources report this two story structure may have been erected as early as 1740. Resting on a fieldstone foundation, this structure is located on an elevated bank overlooking New Providence Road (third house west of New Providence Road - Mountain Avenue intersection.) Owners of this home traced the ownership of this structure to the descendants of the original Crane family, who settled in Elizabethtown in the late 1600's. Jonathan Crane, one of the founders of the Presbyterian Church of Westfield is believed to have lived here around 1740.

It is believed the home was constructed in two sections, the right around 1740 and

the left added sometime after 1800. Other interesting features found at this site include wide pine floor boards, plaster walls, wooden ceiling beams (basement beams hand cut) and outdoor cistern (now covered).

3. **The Abraham-Miller-Hamilton House** - located at 590 Woodland Avenue. Resting on a fieldstone foundation, this one and one-half story pre-revolutionary structure was built in 1763.
4. **Children's Specialized Hospital** - located on New Providence Road. This conspicuous New Providence Road landmark dates back to the 1890's when this property was purchased as a summer home for under-privileged children. Known at that time as the Children's Country Home, this facility is called the Children's Specialized Hospital.

THE ECHO LAKE PARK - MILL LANE HISTORIC SITES

Another section of Mountainside which experienced early development was the Echo Lake-Mill Lane Road area, with a number of mills located nearby. The water wheel at Echo Lake Park nearly opposite Park Street - Mill Lane is located near the site of a grist and paste board mill which was built in 1810.

5. **The Old Homestead** - located at 112 Mill Lane. This two story wooden frame dwelling was built in 1800. A review of this home can be found in Hoffman's book, The Olde Towne.
6. **Residence** - located at 102 Mill Lane. This two and one-half story residence was built sometime around 1850. Resting on a stone foundation, the mid nineteenth century home reveals original doorways with glass sidelights and shutters. The westerly, two story portion of this home was at one time located on the southerly side of Mill Lane before being added to the larger two and one half story section.
7. **Residence** - located at 91 Mill Lane. This two and one-half story wooden frame home may pre-date the adjacent 1800 Old Homestead at 112 Mill Lane. Some interesting interior features which may attest to this structure's age include hand hewn basement beams, wooden peg construction, and red brick lined walls. The larger two and one-half story easterly section reveals a central doorway construction with flanking room floor layout. The large brick fireplace (in the present living room) probably served as the kitchen fireplace for this home before the westerly one and one-half story summer kitchen section was added. Resting on a fieldstone foundation this home reveals other authentic eighteenth century building features such as original window glass, doorways, and wide wooden floor boards.

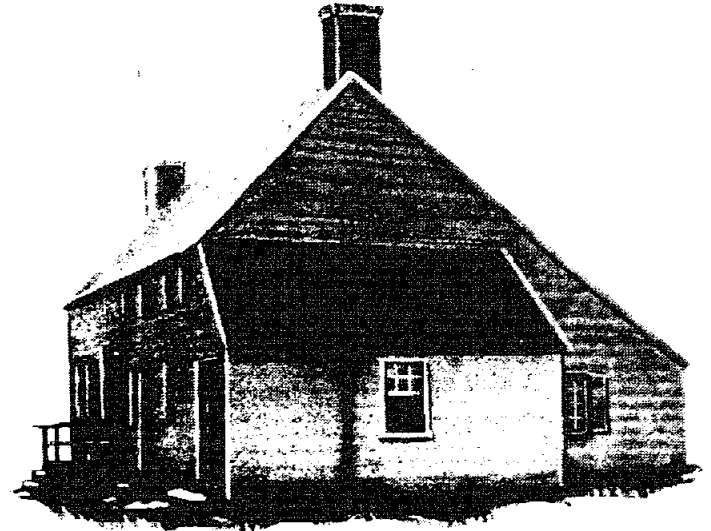
ROUTE 22 HISTORIC SITES

8. **Deacon Andrew Hetfield House - located at 1260 U.S. Route 22 (west).** The westerly section of this two story, wooden frame residence was erected in 1755 by Deacon. Later in 1800, the easterly or larger section of this house was added. This structure reveals many interesting construction features of early American homes which include: sandstone foundation, brick lined walls, hand hewn beams, wide pine floor boards, and original doorways, mantles, and stairways. Robert V. Hoffman's book, *The Olde Towne*, provides a detailed description of this home's early construction features as well as interesting past ownership data.
9. **Residence - located at 1618 U.S. Route 22 (west).** The westerly section of this house was erected in 1722 over an unusual 8 foot deep basement and displays an old kitchen fireplace, beehive oven and wide pine floor boards. The easterly section of this early American home was constructed around 1806. Resting on a stone foundation, this house reveals other early building features such as wooden peg frame construction, original doors and hand made and wire nails.

In addition to those above areas which contain a number of historic structures in Mountainside, there are additional landmarks located throughout this borough worth noting. Some of these include:

10. **The Buck House - located at 737 Hillside Avenue.** The smaller or westerly section of this home was constructed around 1760, and it reveals small "stomach" windows on the upper level as well as low interior ceilings. The larger two and one-half story structure which exhibits a number of varied window sizes and numerous roof gables was reportedly built in 1816. Although remodeled, this home provides an interesting combination of different building periods from pre-revolutionary time to the early nineteenth century.
11. **Badgley House - located off New Providence Road in the Union County Park Commission Watchung Reservation (behind the Trailside Museum).** This structure was constructed by the Badgley family, among the earliest settlers in the western portion of present day Union County. Local sources differ on the exact construction date of this building. However, a detailed historical-architectural survey was conducted by local architect, Charles A. Detwiler, Jr. and his son, who estimate its origin to be some time before 1700.

According to his report, the easterly most "salt box" section of this home is similar to the 17th century homes of Long Island, the area from where the Badgley family migrated. This section may have been constructed some time around 1675 and contains the use of gun posts in the framing. The westerly one and one-half story section erected around 1735 is constructed of hewn timber and contains brick filled walls. Located conveniently near the Park Commission Trailside Museum, this structure possesses unique restoration potential as a possible historical-educational museum in the Watchung reservation.



Badgley House—off New Providence Rd., Mountainside