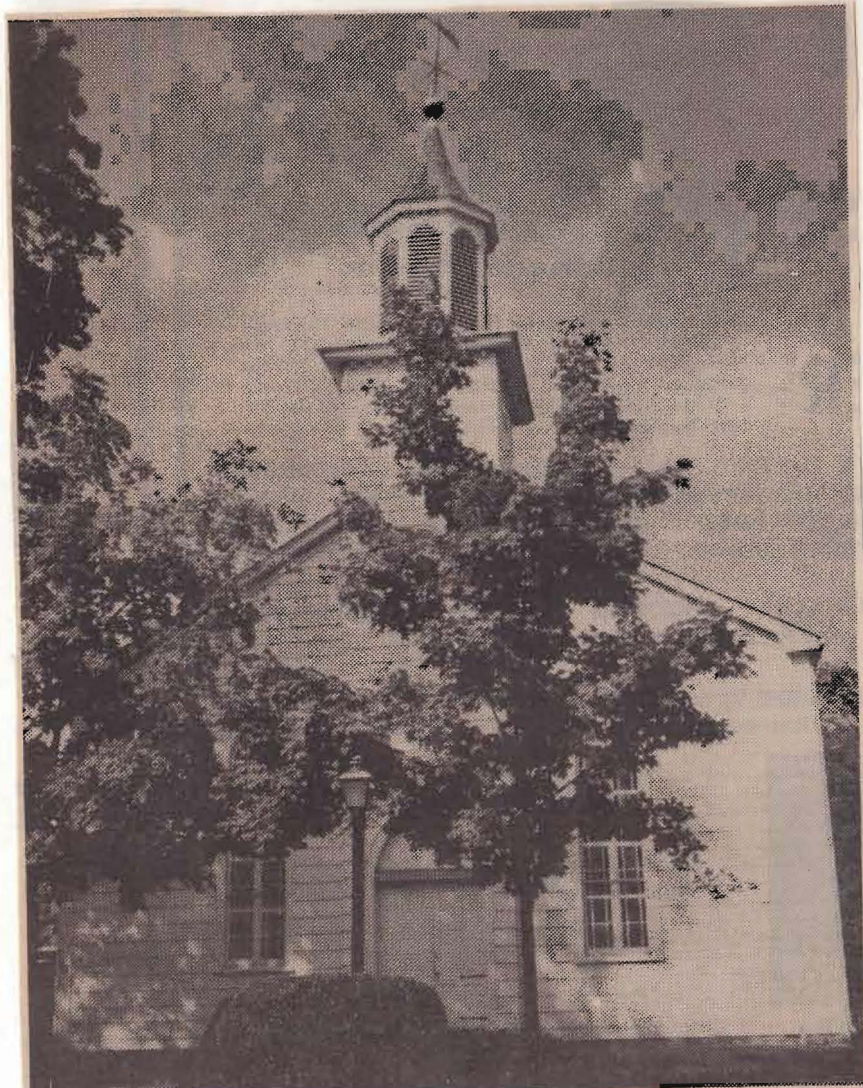


# MEET US IN MAHWAH



RAMAPO REFORMED CHURCH



ALONG THE RAMAPO RIVER



OLD STATION MUSEUM

### Beautiful Mahwah

The township of Mahwah is rich in history. Its natural scenic beauty abounds; not the pure wilderness of yesterday, but one can still be awed by the breathtaking sights of the Ramapo Mountains and the Ramapo River. Campgaw Mountain County Reservation, with its 1,351 acre wooded park has hiking trails, campsites and a ski area. Ramapo Reservation can be explored and you can enjoy its waterfalls and mountain fishing pond. Darlington County Park, contains three lakes, two for swimming and the third for fishing. They have beaches, picnic groves, tennis and handball courts. There are numerous nooks and crannies of nature at its best, weaving through the whole of Mahwah.

### Blandina Bayard

The first person to settle in Mahwah was Blandina Bayard. Widowed at 48 years of age with five children, she purchased 42,555 acres of the "Ramapo Tract" in 1709 for 195 pounds from the Hackensack Indians. She established a trading post on the site of her newly built house. Her dead husband was the nephew of Peter Styvestant.

### The German Palatines

These German Lutherans came from the Rhine Valley. Discouraged at home by religious strife and invading armies, they immigrated to America. Eleven couples and 22 children came to Mahwah and leased land to farm. The beginnings of the agricultural community started and flourished until the mid 1800's when industry appeared. The fertile valley and the rich piedmont soil was not always nature's favor. Floods, droughts, disease, lightning and the bitter winter cold

were hard on the settler's. Houses were built of wood and were susceptible to fires. A hailstorm with hail measuring 9 inches in diameter was recorded in the 1800's.

### The Revolution

Route 202 or Ramapo Valley Rd. was the main route for the Continental Army during the war. Taverns were built at this time to facilitate the increase in traffic of the army and other tradesmen. George Washington slept at the Hopper House on Valley Rd. Bandits and the like were rampant at this time and added to the grief of the settlers.

### The Entrepreneurs

In 1861 only 150 residences were known. This changed during the 18th and 19th centuries. Large country estates were built by some of the wealthiest business leaders in the world. They were the Emanuels, MacMillins, the Millers, Darling, Prices, and the Havemeyers and Crockers, among the many coming to Mahwah.

### Churches

The Ramapo Reformed Church on Island Rd. was constructed in 1795. This church's long and loving history and the effect on the community in its growth, is appreciated by historians. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church and The Holy Spirit Church served the newly arrived Poles, Ukrainians, and other Slavic nationalities in the area. Visiting Priests would give the service in the foreign languages to help the feelings of isolation felt by the immigrants.

### The Trains

The trains opened the west, and they also opened Mahwah. The official station was built in 1871 in Mahwah. Prior to it becoming a station, people had to flag the train down. With the trains came the "summer people." They came to swim, to hike, to picnic. They stayed at "Millers Inn", and visited "Mountain Side Farms." They liked the fresh air and beauty and they started migrating here.

**THEODORE HAVE-MEYER** became a partner in his father's firm (a sugar refinery) in 1861, married Emily DeLoosey, daughter of the Austrian Consul General in N.Y.C. He succeeded his father in law in that position and held it for 25 years. He was made Baron by the Emperor Franz Josep. The Havemeyers also had nine children. They had a large home in N.Y.C. and once had the Boston Symphony Orchestra play there for 225 guests, with room to spare. They had a mansion in Newport, RI. He was 39 years old when he purchased his Mahwah property for \$16,000 and called it Mountain Side Farms. He experimented with sanitation and breeding techniques, and the farm was a showcase for quality cattle, sheep and horse breeding. They even had a deer farm. He employed many workers, local and immigrants. People came from all over to visit his farm. The architect Stanford White built the first school house with funds from Havemeyer in 1892 on Valley Road. He was 57 years old when he died and left an estimated estate worth four million dollars.

**GEORGE CROCKER** was born in California and was the son of Charles Crocker railroad pioneer. He was left six million dollars but according to the New York Times as "one of the most reckless young men about town" he could not have the money until he "abstained from the use of spir-

its, vinous and malt liquors for 5 years." This did come about, after going to a sanatorium he successfully turned a ranch in Utah to profit. He and his wife Emma bought a villa in Newport, a townhouse in N.Y.C. and the Darling estate in Mahwah for a country seat. The mansion had 75 rooms, elevators, a switchboard, balconies, 13 outbuildings, greenhouses with exotic plants, 11 acre lake, and he imported 4,000 trout for his pond. He drove a French automobile and had his own private railroad car. It took him six years to complete this 1,100 acre estate at the cost of about two million dollars. He died of cancer in 1909 and proceeds of his estate went to Columbia University for cancer research. One of the items found in the mansion was a large humidior with 60,000 custom made and monogrammed cigars worth between

\$20,000-\$30,000. Emerson McMillin purchased the estate in 1920 for one million. His children at his death sold his estate to the Darlington Developers for \$685,000. The mansion was turned into a country club with a private airfield, two eighteen holes of golf, a restaurant, hotel and swimming pool. Soon after its opening, it had to close its doors because it could not pay the bills. The Roman Catholic Newark Diocese bought the property in 1926 for a theological seminary for \$478,000. This is now the site of the Rio Vista Estates, million dollar homes, each on approximately two acres.

## Cragmere

George Dunlop was the principal owner of some 200 acres on the hillside east of the train station, which he purchased in 1908 for \$50,100. His intention was to

develop a suburban community and to make a profit. Leo Bugg, his sales manager and marketing genius, sold the idea of Cragmere to New Yorkers from his office in Manhattan. The early buyers built summer places, but by 1913 permanent homes appeared. There were certain restrictions to building and approval of the Association was needed. The first home built there is still in use today. Cragmere was designed to attract the yuppie of today. It was referred to by some antagonists as "the poor man's Tuxedo Park", "Mortgage Hill" or "Snob Hill." The Cragmerite's viewed themselves as an "intellectually social elite who sprouted cultural life" in Mahwah. Mrs. Bugg, a resident, created the first library in Mahwah and it opened in 1913. Indeed, Joyce Kilmer the famed poet of "Trees" wrote that poem while living in Cragmere. With the trains, the trolleys, the automobiles, Cragmere started the suburban lifestyle as we know it in Mahwah today.

## Industry

Industry grew in the early 19th century. John Hahley began a charcoal business which accompanied the growth of furnace and forge industries in N.Y.C. In 1902, the American Brakeshoe Co. came to Mahwah and employed 500 workers. It built small houses on small lots and rented to the workers in West Mahwah. It is now called the Abex Co. Many Europeans came to work in the factories. The Ford Motor plant also brought in a large growth along the Route 17 and the sale and renting of houses increased. The Sheridan Hotel complex and Sharp Electronics occupy that site now. Retail businesses and light manufacturing have grown with the town.

## Today in Mahwah

The outstanding asset of Mahwah today is still its natural scenic beauty. Within its 25.7 square miles is a combination of business, industry and residential homes. The homes range from small to mansions and yes, there still are a couple of farms to buy your fresh fruits and vegetables. Mayor William H. Raquet presides over the council in taking care of business for its 17,000 residents. The Mahwah Fire Department has 200 volunteers and five companies. The Police Department has a staff of 42 officers and 12 vehicles. The Mahwah Chamber of Commerce has 85 members and has been active for 25 years.

Many thanks to Janet Brown, Carol Green, The Mahwah Chamber of Commerce and a special thanks to Henry Bischoff and Mitchell Kahn who wrote the wonderful history of Mahwah, "From Pioneer Settlement to Suburb." This book may be purchased at the Mahwah Municipal Building for \$6.00.

**JO BOSAKOWSKI**