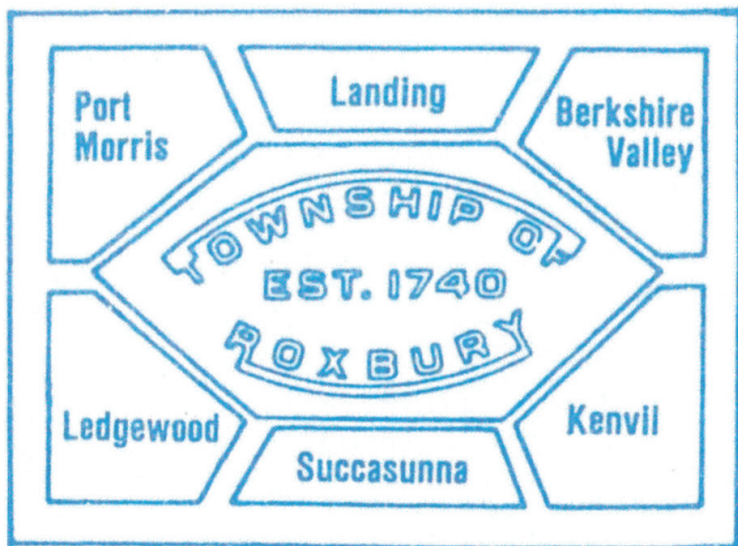


Township of
Roxbury
New Jersey



Officially Designated in 1740
by the NJ State Legislature

A Guide to Historic
LEDGEWOOD
One of the Township's Six Villages

Welcome to Ledgewood, Formerly Drakesville. British entrepreneurs who had been conducting mining and forging operations in Hanover since 1676 traveled west in search of additional sources of iron ore in the early 1700's. The explorers were introduced by Lenape leaders to the abundant magnetite iron ore in the area, which they called "Suckahsinning," the place of the black stone. A deed on file in the Newark Museum of New Jersey History attests to the transfer of a large land mass from the Lenape to the British in 1708. In 1740, the parcel was officially designated one of the first four townships in Morris County by the NJ State Legislature.

Mining flourished in High Ledge Mine in Drakesville, now Ledgewood and in the Succasunna Mine in what is now Mine Hill. Commercial development took place along the centuries old Lenape trail that became Ledgewood's and Succasunna's Main Streets. Farms and orchards dotted the surrounding landscape and villages evolved. Except for the intrusion of Route 10 in 1930, there would be no interruption between Ledgewood's and Succasunna's Main Streets.

To acquaint you with businesses and buildings dating to the 1700's, and the people who established them in Ledgewood, we begin chronologically with three landmarks listed on the National Register of Historic Places, open to the public periodically throughout the year.



1. 213 MAIN STREET.

The Silas Riggs “Saltbox” House, mid-1700’s. Its layout is reflective of early Massachusetts Colony design exemplified by its massive central fireplace in its keeping room with an adjoining borning room. A half story sloped roof addition in 1895 created its “salt-box” configuration, reminiscent of colonial containers for salt. The house is a living history museum and a repository of historic data. Its earliest identified inhabitants were Silas Riggs and his wife Harriet in 1805. Riggs contracted with the Morris Canal Banking Company in 1825 for the initial excavation of the Morris Canal on his 56 acres and owned three canal boats that plied its waters. The time ravaged remnants of Lock 1 East of the canal are accessible in Riggs Canal Park off Route 10 West at Drake Lane where this house and Riggs’ larger house destroyed by fire by stood.

2. 211 MAIN STREET.

The King Canal Store. Built in 1815, this well-preserved general store thrived during the heyday of the Morris Canal, completed in 1831. Silas Riggs’ son Albert Riggs operated the store from the late 1830’s until the 1870’s when his granddaughter Emma Louise married Theodore King who assumed operation of the establishment. Coal was transferred from canal boats and taken to the store for weighing on its 5,000-pound capacity scale adjacent to the building. A general store and post office until Mr. King’s death in 1929, it was closed with contents intact according to his wishes. Its walls echo with stories of New Jersey’s economic development.

3. 209 MAIN STREET.

The Theodore F. King Homestead. Theodore King and his wife Emma Louise, daughter of Albert Riggs and Nancy Stanbrough, after their marriage lived above the Canal Store prior to construction of the King Homestead where their daughter, also named Emma Louise, was born in 1883. She maintained the closed-up store and lived in the well-cared for house until her death at ninety-two in 1975. Both the Homestead and the Canal Store were acquired by

the township with Green Acres funding in 1984. Entrusted by the township to The Roxbury Historic Trust, Inc., founded in 2000 by Roxbury Rotary and the Roxbury Township Historical Society for their continued restoration and maintenance, the buildings are meticulously curated. The Homestead, with exhibit space as well as rooms decorated to the period, is the perfect venue for communicating the King family’s contributions to the township.

4. 214 MAIN STREET. Tony’s Silver Spark, built in 1870. No commercial use of the house is evident until 1927 when Tony and Dan Maniero from Connecticut opened an Italian restaurant here. Into the mid-1900’s the house was a “convenience store” of its time where teenagers gathered in the evening enjoying ice cream sodas and listening to Tony’s tales of his service in the Italian army during World War I. During the latter part of the 1900’s the house became the headquarters of 1 Unique Studios where Roxbury High School graduates went to be photographed for their yearbook photos. In 2020 it reverted to use as a private residence

5. 217 MAIN STREET.

Jackson’s Store. A blacksmith shop on this site provided services to Morris Canal workers in the 1800’s. The building’s first floor was a store specializing in specialty cheeses and food stuffs shipped on the canal including penny candy, with living quarters upstairs.

6. 219 MAIN STREET.

The Dr. Ebenezer Woodruff house. Born in 1772 in Mendham, Dr. Ebenezer was one of several horse and buggy doctors in the township during the early 1800’s into 1900 and was President of the Morris County Medical Society in 1820. In 1805, he married Colonel Drake’s daughter Clarissa.

7. 233 MAIN STREET.

The Ledgewood Baptist Church was organized as the Drakesville Baptist Church in 1874, with its first building erected at 261 Main Street, still standing although much altered. Theodore and William

King donated the land on which the present artful stone building was built in 1917. Pews came from a church in New York, and the stained-glass windows shine magnificently when the interior is lighted as darkness falls. The church was known for years for its Ledgewood Gala Day that included a decorated baby carriage parade and a Peach Festival, with the Peach Festival continuing into recent years.

8. 228 MAIN STREET.

Devoid now of its original Victorian architectural embellishments, this building was originally an inn for tourists for the Lake Hopatcong clientele in the 1890's and later became lodging for Kenvil's Hercules Powder Works employees. It now is a boarding house.

9. 247 MAIN STREET.

The Ralph Carey House was built in 1866. Carey was a farmer and owned the grist mill and the sawmill across the way previously owned by Abijah Young. See site 10. The flat-roofed addition was added when Jeremiah Baker bought the property in 1887, with Carey moving to 252 Main Street and living there until 1911.

10. 248 MAIN STREET.

The Abijah Young House over the wooden bridge. Built by Mr. Young circa 1850, this house was situated just east of Colonel Drake's gristmill and sawmill, both of which utilized the water from the nearby brook as a source of power for their operations. The land for the home's construction was purchased by Mr. Young in 1819 at a sheriff's sale in settlement of Colonel Drake's debts.

Turn onto Emmans Road and proceed to:

11. 6 - 8 EMMANS ROAD.

The Colonel Drake House, Inn, and Tavern. Jacob Drake was one of the area's first settlers and served in the Revolutionary War. Built circa 1750, the building is similar in construction to the Silas

Riggs House and the Silas Jennings House at 59 Main Street in Succasunna, all displaying similar features, including almost identical open hearth fireplaces, suggesting that Silas Jennings, a major landowner and carpenter, had a hand in their construction. It is currently a two-family rental unit.

Adjacent to the Colonel Drake House and Tavern at the base of the High Ledge Mine is the entrance to Ledgewood Canal Park where one of the best-preserved planes of the Morris Canal, Plane 2 East, is located. The original canal tender's home on Plane 3 East, currently a private residence, is visible uphill.

12. 152 EMMANS ROAD.

Hidden Springs Farm. Originally a barn built in 1868 on the property of the Cyrus G. Force family who farmed 365 acres in the area, it was converted to a residence in 1976 by Carmen Lombardi, his boyhood dream realized. Its original character remained uncompromised.

13. 186 EMMANS ROAD.

Daniel Carey (1791 - 1864), a descendant of Daniel Carey of Stone House Farm at 208 Emmans Road, built the small portion of this house circa 1810, added onto at an undocumented time. Prominent citizens in the township through the 1920's, Careys were well-educated at institutions of higher education including Princeton, and were major contributors to the development of the township.

14. 208 EMMANS ROAD.

The Daniel Carey House, a National Registry Landmark. Daniel and Martha Carey, builders of this historic home came to Roxbury Township from Massachusetts in 1742. Their stone house remained in the Carey family until 1939 when its first addition was made. The stone portion built into the rocky hillside that forms the back wall for the keeping room's walk-in hearth displays its original door and hinges. Washington's smallpox-stricken troops were quartered here during Washington's winter encampments in Morristown and those who succumbed to the disease are buried on the hillside. A soldier's tomb-

stone discovered in the 1950's during nearby home construction is on display at the Silas Riggs Saltbox House.

Proceed to:

15. 239 EMMANS ROAD.

The Carey Station House. Lewis Carey, son of the second Daniel Carey (see site 13), built the first portion of this home in 1790. In 1870, Lewis' grandson, William Carey, contracted with the Central Railroad for the sale of a portion of this land for the laying of railroad track and negotiated with the railroad for a flag stop behind his house. It enabled him to ship kaolin dug from sandpits on his extensive property to Trenton, used in the production of Lennox china.

Turn around and go back to the juncture of Emmans Road and Mountain Road where a sharp turn to your left onto Mountain Road will bring you to Mountain, Conkling and Mooney Roads. Conkling Pond will be to your right and Meadow Lake Farm Homestead is to the left.

16. 3 CONKLING ROAD.

Meadow Lake Farm Homestead. Circa 1800, this house was originally owned by Silas King and was bought by Calvin Conkling of Southampton, Long Island in 1853. The surrounding 300 acres were farmed until 1964 when the property was sold and subdivided. Kathryn Conkling, a local teacher whose husband Cook Conkling was Roxbury Tax Collector in the 1960's, resided in this family homestead into the 1980's. Across the road is Conkling Pond, now a township park.

17. 107 MOONEY ROAD.

The Squire Samuel Hilts House. Built around 1830 on 195 acres of pasture and woodland, Hilts' property passed to Hiram King and then to the Mooney family who established the Mooney Brothers Dairy here in 1919. It remained in operation until 1961.

Go back down Mountain Road to Emmans Road. Return to Main Street and go right. Before you reach Route 10 turn right onto Canal Street and follow the canal towpath with water flowing in the canal bed. Take time to read the historic marker on the recently restored bridge.

18. 7 CANAL STREET.

This house was built by William Spencer and lived in by Allen Roberts who operated a store at the base of Canal Plane 3 East as shown in the 1899 Canal Survey.

Be aware that because some Ledgewood property owners receive their mail from the Flanders Post Office, their mailing addresses may be Flanders, but they live in Ledgewood, Roxbury Township.



To learn more about local history, read
The History of Roxbury Township, Volumes I and II
by Harriet Meeker and Annie Hosking.
Also visit www.roxburynewjersey.com

A downloadable PDF version of this guide is available
online at: www.roxburynj.us/LW



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