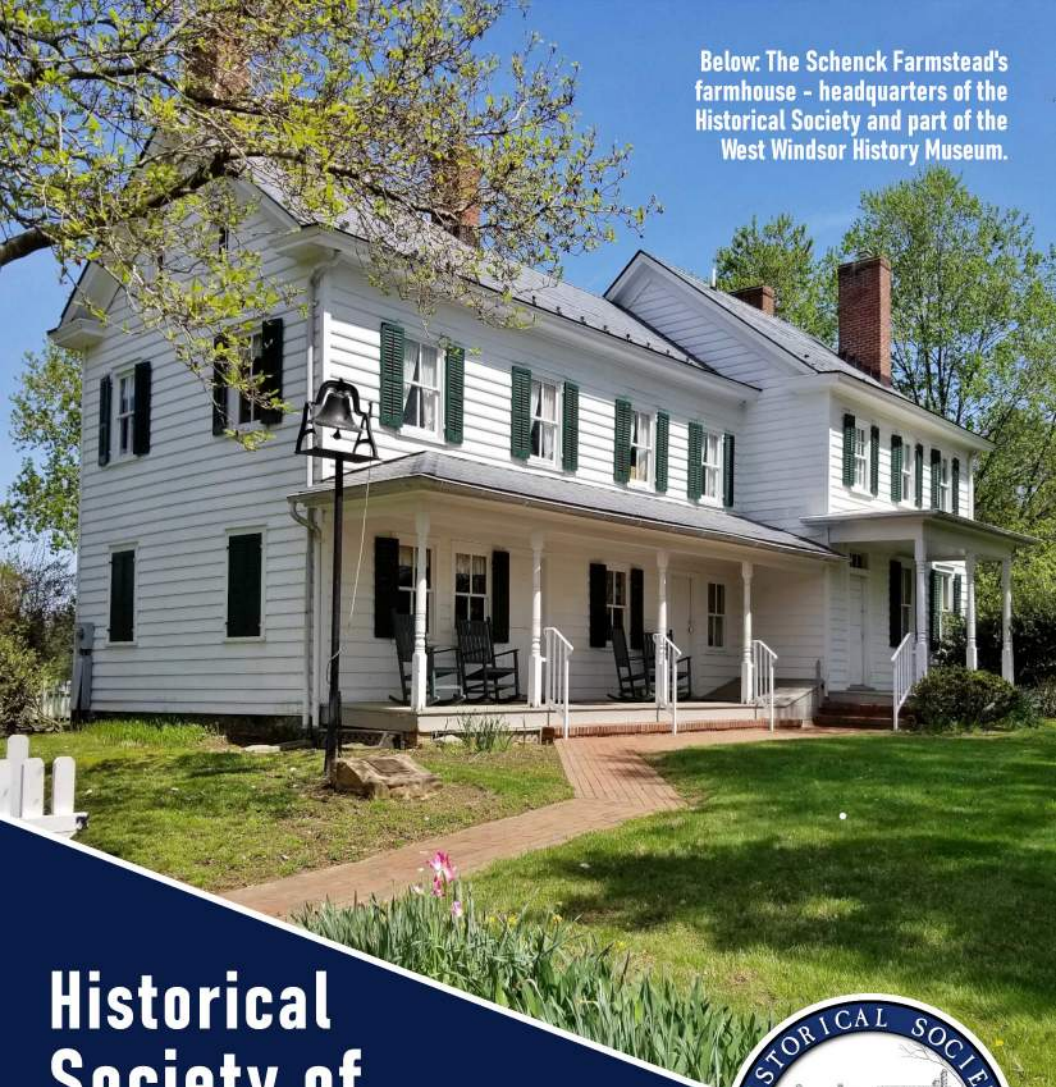


Below: The Schenck Farmstead's  
farmhouse - headquarters of the  
Historical Society and part of the  
West Windsor History Museum.



**Historical  
Society of  
West Windsor**

**NONPROFIT  
INFO PAMPHLET**



# MISSION

**"Our vision for the Historical Society of West Windsor is to preserve and promote the rich history of our community, to educate and inspire current and future generations, and to foster a sense of pride and appreciation for the unique heritage of West Windsor."**

# ABOUT

**We are a 100% volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We are not part of the township government, but we do regularly coordinate with them. We run museum open houses and community events, archive and publicize local history, offer student scholarships and service opportunities, and lead preservation initiatives.**



# MUSEUM

**We operate the West Windsor History Museum - part of the 1700s-era "Schenck Farmstead," which is named after the Schenck Family, its last resident owners. The property was donated to the Township by the Zaitz Family in the 1990s.**

**The Farmstead's various buildings and countless artifacts all help visitors discover "old West Windsor." The property also hosts our meetings, archives, open houses, and most of our other community events.**

# ORGANIZATION

*Every volunteer is part of a team that works under the following structure to preserve and promote local history.*

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*Guides the Society's overall direction and compliance with our mission and the law.*



## **OFFICERS**

*Manage day-to-day operations. Includes President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.*



## **COMMITTEE LEADERS & MEMBERS**

*Groups of dedicated volunteers that plan and lead programs/events, raise funds, educate the public, and more. Typically involved to a higher extent than General Volunteers.*



## **GENERAL VOLUNTEERS**

*Help as-needed for open houses (including Docents), community booths, cleanups, other events, maintenance, archiving, promotion, and more.*

# VOLUNTEERING

*Our volunteers are the heart of the Historical Society. They take on various roles, most commonly including (but not limited to)...*



**MUSEUM DOCENTS:** Staff the Museum open houses and help visitors learn about the Schenck Farmstead's history.

**PROGRAMS COMMITTEE:** Leads museum open houses and larger events (examples include reenactments, concerts, cultural festivals, flea markets, and much more).

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** Educates the public about local history via town tours, lectures, and more. Awards scholarships. Works with youth groups, schools, libraries, and others.

**FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE:** Raises funds via grants, sponsors, donations, and more.

**OUTREACH ADVOCATES:** Promote the Society via community booths and more.

**ARCHIVISTS:** Digitize, organize, and catalogue the museum's collections.



## VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

*In addition to knowing that they are helping to preserve and promote our community's rich history, those who volunteer for a certain amount of time may also enjoy: (1) appreciation dinners, (2) free or reduced admission to certain events, (3) merchandise to celebrate Historical Society pride, and more.*

# MEETINGS

The Historical Society convenes regularly via three types of meetings:

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

Open to all volunteers and the public - please attend often! Typically held once every other month, starting in February. We discuss Society business and often enjoy activities like history lectures and snacks.

## BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors, Officers, and Committee leaders typically meet once every other month, starting in January, to ensure the Historical Society is fulfilling its mission and remains well-managed.

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Each committee meets as-needed to organize programs/events, educational initiatives, fundraising campaigns, volunteer management, and more. Please join a committee!



# HSWW HISTORY

**1980s:** West Windsor's suburban growth accelerates, resulting in the loss of many of its old buildings and much of its historical agricultural land.

**1983:** HAC becomes the nonprofit Historical Society of West Windsor (HSWW), which formally incorporates in 1984 and begins holding events, writing newsletters, and more.

**1997:** West Windsor celebrates its 200th birthday with dozens of community events.

**2013:** The West Windsor History Museum is formally dedicated. By this point, the barn, wagon house, and schoolhouse have also opened to the public.

**2022:** West Windsor celebrates its 225th birthday with dozens of community events led by the Historical Society.



**1982:** The Historical Advisory Committee (HAC) forms as part of the municipal government to survey and recommend how to preserve local historic resources.

**1991-93:** The Zaitz family deeds the Schenck Farmstead to the Township. The HSWW works for many years to restore the property as a history museum.

**2002:** The Schenck Farmstead's farmhouse opens to the public for tours.

**2021:** The Historical Society restructures as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, allowing for increased fundraising, projects, events, and other initiatives.

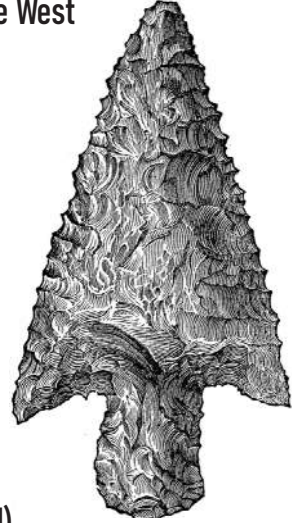
**PRESENT:** We invite you to help us grow into the future - let's preserve and promote our town's rich history!

# TOWN HISTORY

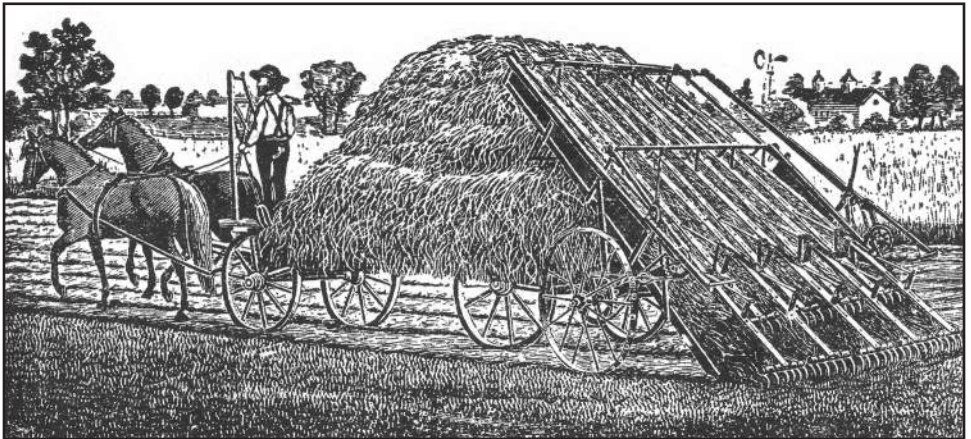
**NOTE:** You can learn much more history by buying the West Windsor History Book at the museum or at [westwindsorhistory.com/book](http://westwindsorhistory.com/book)

**PRE-HISTORY:** The area's first inhabitants were members of an indigenous society called the "Leni Lenape." Populating all of New Jersey and much of the surrounding states, they were peacekeepers and came into contact with Europeans starting in the 1520s. The Lenape that lived in present-day West Windsor were called the "Assanpinks."

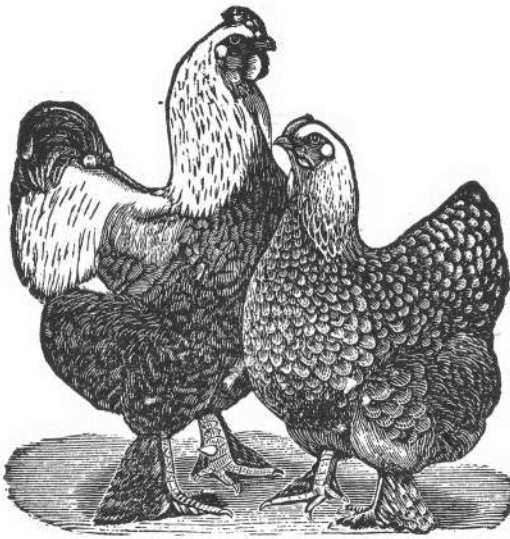
Although colonial pressures forced most (but not all!) of them out of New Jersey by the early 1800s, their legacy persists in old documents, artifacts, and the local topography – notably the Assunpink Creek in southern West Windsor.



**EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT:** In the 1690s, absentee colonial landowners began to purchase vast tracts in the area. However, it was not until the late 1730s







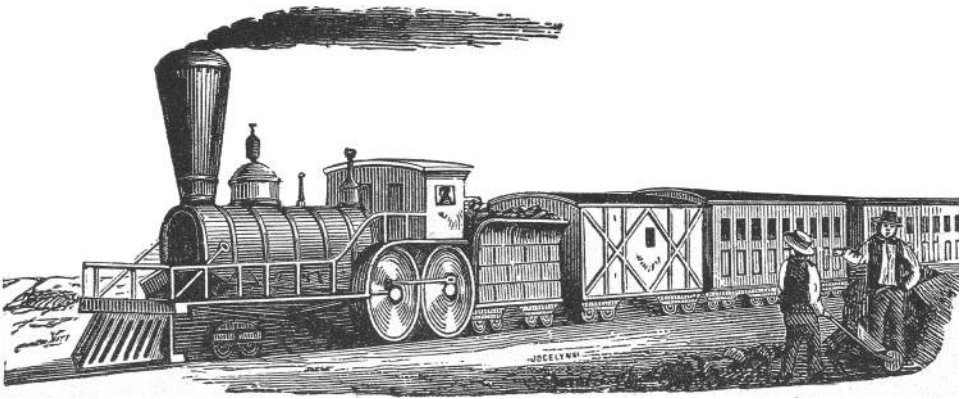
that the first large wave of settlers (primarily Dutch and English) began to live within what is now West Windsor. They transformed meadows and woodland into a vast agricultural landscape (regrettably, often relying on slavery), with fields of crops stretching as far as the eye could see. A colonial road system connected several villages: Clarksville, Dutch Neck, Edinburg, Grovers Mill,

Penns Neck, Scudders Mills, and Princeton.

Yes - Princeton! Until 1797, the West Windsor area was part of a larger township called "Windsor Township." It included all of present-day West Windsor, East Windsor, Robbinsville, and Hightstown, as well as all of Princeton southeast of Nassau Street and small bits of Millstone and Monroe Townships.

**REVOLUTIONARY TIMES:** Amid the American Revolution, dozens of Windsor Township residents enlisted. The conflict hit home in late 1776/early 1777 - including a consequential capture of British troops off Clarksville Road in West Windsor after the Battle of Trenton that may have helped George Washington win the Battles of Assunpink and Princeton. These victories helped provide a lifeline for the American cause during the darkest hours of the war.

After the war, Windsor resumed its quiet existence - except for a movement to split the township. On February 9, 1797, Windsor Township officially divided into East Windsor and West Windsor (then still including all land in Princeton up to Nassau Street).



**19TH CENTURY:** In 1804, the Trenton-New Brunswick Turnpike (Route 1) was chartered. The Delaware & Raritan Canal opened for statewide commercial trade in 1834. In 1839, the Camden & Amboy Railroad laid tracks along the canal bank. Canal and rail traffic led to the rise of two more communities – Princeton Basin and Port Mercer.

Between 1838 and 1853, Princeton split from West Windsor and annexed all land east of the Delaware & Raritan Canal. In 1863, the Camden & Amboy Railroad realigned eastward to the present-day Northeast Corridor, spurring the growth of another West Windsor community - Princeton Junction, surrounding the train station.

**20TH CENTURY:** In 1917, Dutch Neck and Penns Neck Schools replaced the small wooden schoolhouses that had collectively served local youth since the 1700s. Berrien City, our town's first planned development, rose in Princeton Junction south of the train station in the 1920s - the same decades our two volunteer fire companies formed.



In 1938, West Windsor was thrust into the national spotlight during Orson Welles' "The War of the

Worlds” radio play, which pinpointed the community of Grovers Mill as the site of a Martian landing. While the purported national panic that followed was exaggerated, it remains one of our town’s most infamous events.



Following World War II, suburban developments began to replace farmland as our town’s population grew. In 1969, West Windsor and Plainsboro consolidated their school districts, Maurice Hawk and High School South opened in 1964 and 1973 (respectively), and in 1977, the current Municipal Center fully opened.

But the most dramatic change was yet to come. Between 1980 and 2000, West Windsor’s population surged from 8,500 to 22,000 residents. Many more schools and roads were built, replacing centuries-old farmland and houses. And West Windsor rapidly diversified into a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-cultural community.

**21ST CENTURY:** West Windsor today is a bustling suburban municipality with

tens of thousands of residents. However, there are still hundreds of historic sites and centuries of history to celebrate. Our community heritage belongs to all of us - whether our families have lived here for two weeks or two hundred years. Help the Historical Society preserve and promote West Windsor’s past present, and future!





Above: The Schenck Farmstead's barn, wagon house, and corn crib. Explore them during museum open houses and other events!

# HSWW CONTACT INFO

**Phone: (609) 903-9013**

**Web: [westwindsorhistory.com](http://westwindsorhistory.com)**

**Museum Address: 50 Southfield Road**

**Mailing Address: 220 Meadow Brook Road**

**Email: [westwindsorhistory@gmail.com](mailto:westwindsorhistory@gmail.com)**

**Facebook: [Facebook.com/SchenckFarmstead](https://www.facebook.com/SchenckFarmstead)**

**Instagram: [Instagram.com/SchenckFarmstead](https://www.instagram.com/SchenckFarmstead)**