Stratford's History

respectfully submitted by Carole Dadino, Stratford Historian (CaroleD444@gmail.com)

Stratford, NJ, Where and How

By Carole Dadino, Stratford Historian

Stratford has a recorded history dating back to 1695, when early Dutch and Swedish settlers began to occupy land previously farmed by Native Americans. As the area, referred to as West Jersey, increased in population small villages began to expand. On May 26, 1686, Gloucester County was established separate from Burlington County the county seat for the Provence of New Jersey. Gloucester County's boundaries were officially defined on May 17, 1694. On February 21, 1798, Gloucester Township was incorporated as part of Gloucester County followed by Camden County, which was formed on March 13, 1844, from portions of Gloucester County.

The land Stratford sits on became part of Gloucester Township in 1871, and then Clementon Township on February 24, 1903. Clementon Township was formed from portions of Gloucester Township. The Stratford Borough's 1.45 sq. miles was incorporated on February 13, 1925. Clementon Township was dissolved in 1941.

About 1740, a village on Old Egg Harbor Road (currently Berlin Road) sprung up consisting of a Wheelwright, Blacksmith, General Store, and nine houses. There was also an Inn built to accommodate stagecoach travelers, traders, and vacationers leaving the city to spend time at Kirkwood Lake (Later, Lakeside Park.) The Inn was named "White Horse" after the horses belonging to the area's Native Americans. The road that travelers used was White Horse Road (currently, White Horse Pike.) Named after the Inn it was only improved for carriages and stage coaches to the village of White Horse, also named after the Inn.



Stratford sits on the Lippincott, Henchman, and a portion of Kaighn farms. The Inn is under the "O".

In the mid-19th century, Atlantic City became a major seaside vacation destination for the Philadelphia area's wealthy and working class populations. On July 1, 1854, with the convenience of the Philadelphia to Camden Ferry. Passengers boarded the first Camden to Atlantic City Railroad train, arriving in Atlantic City, with a stop at the village of White Horse. On July 7, 1877, the Philadelphia and Atlantic City Railway line was opened. Running along Atlantic Avenue with a stop in the soon to be developed village of Stratford.



A locomotive used on the Philadelphia & Reading Fast Trains, between Camden and Atlantic City.

In 1888, entrepreneurs from Camden realized the potential of development in an area frequented by vacationers and travelers. They purchased at the time Gloucester Township farmlands, and laid out plans for a village they named, "Stratford".

Clementon Lake Park was established in 1907 and during the same year. Public Service trollies ran from Camden to Clementon along Atlantic Avenue.



With a stop in Stratford, visitors could also spend a day at Kirkwood's Lakeside Park. Now with the onset of fast travel, city workers and shoppers could move to rural areas like Stratford. The trolley service ended in 1935.

In 1922, the White Horse Pike paving project was completed extending the road to Atlantic City. Cars and busses could now drive to New Jersey 'parks and shore communities. Businesses sprung up in the village of Stratford and in 1925, the Borough of Stratford was created; incorporating portions of surrounding farm lands and properties. The last farms in Stratford were Rexon's, Dairy Knoll Farm (On the map, the Kaighn Estate) currently the Rowan University School of Medicine, and Jefferson Hospital and Health Systems. Also, the Stafford Farm on Warwick Road, currently Laurel Mills Farms.