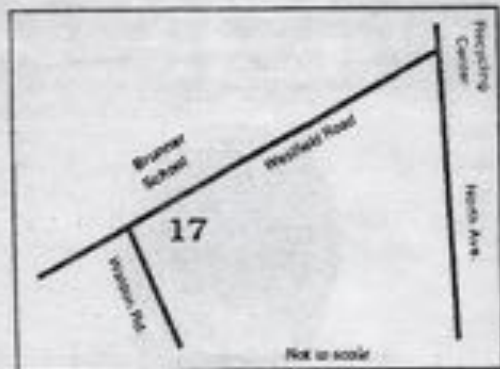


# HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

BOROUGH OF FANWOOD  
HISTORIC BUILDINGS



*Please do not enter private properties.  
View sites from public areas only!*



## FANWOOD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The Historic Preservation Commission was established in 1989 to assist the Borough in the identification of resources (properties, documents, and memorabilia) which are of historic significance, and to advise Borough agencies regarding goals and techniques for the preservation of Fanwood's historic past. The Commission collects and disseminates material on the importance of historical preservation, and advises property owners, citizen's groups and individuals who are interested in establishing landmarks and historic districts. The Commission also endeavors to inform the public of Borough history and historic preservation efforts through the schools, the media, and public meetings.

## HOUSE TOUR

### 17 Historic Fanwood Buildings

#### 1. FANWOOD RAILROAD STATION

(Community House)

*Style: Victorian Gothic*

*Date: 1874*

In 1874 the right of way to the Central Railroad of New Jersey was moved from present day Midway Avenue to its present location. This Victorian Gothic structure was built and used as a railroad station until 1965. It is now used as a community center by Fanwood Borough. This station is an excellent example of frame Victorian Gothic architecture. It is the oldest remaining railroad station in Union County. The building has a fieldstone foundation with exterior clapboard siding. A hipped roof with slate shingles and Gothic arched windows are in the attic level. Wide extending porch eaves with large bracket supports surround the buildings at first floor height.

#### 2. WESCOTT HOUSE

241 North Avenue

*Style: Queen Anne*

With its heavy cornice trim, brackets under the eaves, and gable and hipped roof, this house is a good example of the Queen Anne style prevalent in the late 19th century. Built in 1890, it was the home of Dr. Frank Wescott, the first physician in Fanwood and the only one until 1924. He served as the Borough physician for the annual sum of \$1. Current owners have done much to restore this significant house.

#### 3. OLD FANWOOD POST OFFICE

266 North Avenue

*Style: Richardsonian Romanesque*

*Date: 1890*

This building was constructed to house the Post Office and Library of the newly incorporated Borough of Fanwood in 1895. It has always been privately owned and was only leased to the U.S. Post Office. The first postmistress, Miss Carrie Bettman, also the first borough librarian, lived upstairs. The saying in Fanwood at that time was "The mail comes by female". It is an unusual landmark building and is as much a symbol of Fanwood as the railroad station. The foundation and first floor are stone, the second floor clapboard and shingle with hipped roof. The rounded end of the building with a wide frieze and stairs above larger windows is a distinctive feature of this style.

#### 4. J.P. STEVENS HOUSE

40 Forest Road

*Style: Single - Chateau Eclectic*

*Date: 1896*

This home was built as the home of J.P. Stevens, the owner of the textile mills and a founder of the internationally known company that bears his name. Stevens was an active member of the Fanwood Fire Company in 1894. The large European Turkish red oak on the left of the property is the largest of its species in the State of New Jersey. The foundation is brick with wood shingle exterior walls. The gable roof with kicked eaves and massive brick chimneys are distinctive features of the house.

#### 5. URNER-GIBBS HOUSE

25 Tillotson Road

*Style: Georgian Revival*

*Date: c. 1894*

This house is the only example of Georgian Revival built in the 1890's in Fanwood. It was built by Benjamin Urner, a wealthy resident of Fanwood, as a gift for his daughter. She married William Gibbs, an engineer who

Urner ran unsuccessfully for mayor of Fanwood in 1895. He died the following year. The foundation is brick and the exterior walls are clapboard with dentil cornice. Outstanding features include the palladium window in the center bay over a flat roof porch with fluted Ionic columns.

#### 6. HASSELGREN-HOPE-RAINIER HOUSE

60 North Martine Avenue

*Style: Eastlake Victorian*

*Date: 1885*

This home is a good example of Eastlake style architecture built by the wealthy Hasselgren family in the import-export business in New York City. Mayor James Lambertson, Fanwood's oldest resident in 1976, said it was always known as a "haunted" house and was unoccupied in the early 1900's. The eight children of recent owners experienced the presence of a "good ghost" in the attic stairs, beds mysteriously made, and records that were scattered about, piled neatly in a corner. They believe the spirit was happy that the house was occupied by children. The foundation is brick and cement with an exterior of clapboard on the first floor and wood shingle on the second.



**7. RANDALL-KYTE HOUSE**

100 North Martine Avenue

*Style: Federal*

*Date: 1790*

Undoubtedly a grand house when it was built in the midst of a farming community, this home is the best example of Federal architecture in Fanwood. Little was known of its early history, but an 1862 map shows the owner as W. Randall. In the 1890's it was acquired by the Kyte family and operated as a boarding house by the two Kyte sisters. The foundation is brick and cement with an exterior of clapboard. The house was built as a three bay side hall plan, and a later addition to the north side created a center hall house with symmetrical bays across the facade. Rumor has it that the legendary "Fanny Wood", for whom Fanwood was named, stayed here when vacationing in the area.

**8. DARLINGTON HOUSE**

(Original Railroad Station)

295 Midway Avenue

*Style: Georgian Revival*

*Date: 1838/1874/1920*

In 1838 the original tracks for the Elizabethtown & Somerville Railroad were laid in what is now Midway Avenue. The station was an early farmhouse pressed into service by the railroad. The trains offered special services under the leadership of President John Taylor Johnson, such as special coaches for single ladies, one day round trip tickets, and connecting service to the Pennsylvania Railroad. When the tracks were relocated and the present day station was built in 1874, the Norton family transformed the structure to a private residence. The Darlington family enlarged and remodeled the house to its colonial revival style in the 20th century. The foundation is stucco and the exterior clapboard, with seven bays and 6/6 sash windows. The front door is accented by a fanlight.

**9. HAYES HOUSE**

133 North Martine Avenue

(See description for #127 North Martine)

**10. J.H. THOMPSON HOUSE**

127 North Martine Avenue

*Style: Queen Anne Vernacular*

*Date: 1881 / 1890*

Both of these homes (as well as numerous other structures in Fanwood) were built by the Central Jersey Land Improvement company. Martine Avenue was one of the earliest area roads. Originally an Indian trail, it was developed as a residential street in the late 1800's. Both number 127 and 133 are examples of Victorian architecture which have not been significantly altered over the years. Two separate families have felt the presence of someone in #133 when they resided there. Neither family knew that the other had the same "other worldly" visitor. Both houses have brick foundations, hipped roofs with crossed gables, and porches across the facades.

**11. HOAR HOUSE**

105 North Martine Avenue

*Style: Shingle Type*

*Date: 1890*

This house was the home of an early Fanwood Mayor, A.H. Hoar. It is a good example of Shingle style adapted to local architecture. Diamond pane windows on the second floor with "eyelid" shaped attic windows are distinctive features of this home.

**12. CARRIAGE HOUSE**

On Fanwood Borough Hall Property

*Style: Gothic Revival*

*Date: c. 1882*

The barn or carriage house is the only original building left on the site of The Homestead, a summer resort built in 1874 and visited by many New York City vacationers. Several remaining passenger sleds from the 1890's were recently housed here. They were used to transport guests from the railroad station to the hotel in winter months. They are currently being restored. The foundation is brick and stone with board and batten siding, sliding barn doors and double hinged doors with Italianate paneling.

**13. BURTON HALL HOUSE**

215 North Avenue

*Style: Queen Anne*

*Date: 1885*

This house is a good example of Queen Anne architecture. It was the home of Burton Hall in 1895. Hall was a member of the first Board of Health in Fanwood. The original foundation is covered with cement and the exterior is clapboard wood shingle. The gable roof has square and hexagonal slate shingles with a copper ridge. There is a double front door and porch around the first floor with turned column supports.

#### 14. SHEELEN'S GENERAL STORE

193 South Avenue

*Style: Commercial Vernacular*

*Date: 1893*

This building was the first store in Fanwood, the grocery and butcher shop of Baker and Mead. Augustus Sheelen was a clerk in the store and eventually bought the business with his brother Charles. The well known business was a social center for the Borough and at one time also served as a court room when the need arose. The railroad bridge beside the building is known as Sheelen's Crossing. In 1995 the Borough of Fanwood dedicated a plaque on the bridge in honor of the many years of community service given to Fanwood by members of the Sheelen family. An outstanding feature of the building is the projecting third floor pediment with palladin window.

#### 15. DARBY / HETFIELD HOUSE

61 Woodland Avenue

*Style: Colonial Farmhouse*

*Date: c. 1830*

This small farmhouse was originally built by Hannah Darby. In 1902 another woman named Sarah Hetfield purchased the house. Hetfield was a member of a prominent family that traced its roots back to the Revolutionary War. When purchased in 1937 by a Mr. and Mrs. Mayer at a tax sale for a mere \$265, the lawyer's fee for the transaction was only \$5.00. The structure was in serious disrepair. It was later completely restored and enlarged by the Mayers.

#### 16. THE YOUNG / REILLY HOUSE

66 Woodland Avenue

*Style: Vernacular Farmhouse*

*Date: c. 1850*

This recently restored home was built by the daughter of Fanwood's first Mayor Thomas Young. Mayor Young lived nearby at the corner of Midway and Forest Road. Young's son-in-law was Jim Reilly, who worked as groundskeeper for wealthy Fanwood resident Benjamin Urner in the late 1800's. The house has a rectangular gable and facade with a fieldstone foundation and German or shiplap siding. Other features are a 2x2 bay window, gabled roof with a central brick chimney covered with stucco, and a simple front porch with turn column supports.

#### 17. PATIENCE CLARK FARM HOUSE

365 Westfield Road

*Style: Colonial Farmhouse*

*Date: 1790*

The property was originally part of the Issac Halsey estate and was sold in about 1790 to John Baldwin Osborn. Osborn actually lived elsewhere on Westfield Road, but built the small house for a relative or possibly the farm's manager. It was located next to a cider mill operated by the Osborn family. The Osborns owned most of the land on both sides of Westfield Road from present day Westfield Avenue down to a point near North Ave. In 1848 Patience Clark, Osborn's daughter and widow of Timothy Clark, inherited the house and outbuildings along with 25 acres. Patience Clark made numerous additions to the structure and resided there until her death in 1857. Many of the home's original features have been preserved including original pine flooring, hardware, several 3-board pine doors, and many original glass panes.

#### SPECIAL HISTORIC NOTE:

We have only been able to list a few of Fanwood's many fine old historic homes. To learn more about Fanwood's interesting history, we suggest that you read, Fanwood Fire Company, a Pictorial History, 1890 - 1990. The book is no longer in print but is available at the Fanwood Public Library.

We also suggest that you see "This Old Fanwood House", a 21 minute video tour of historic Fanwood homes when it is shown on Fanwood's Municipal Access Cable Television Channel 35.



For more information about  
historic preservation call  
(908) 322-8236