

A Place Called Whippany

The history and contemporary times of Hanover Township, by: Leonardo A. Fariello

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Villages of Hanover, NJ

Whippany *circa 1676*

*The following Whippany village description is an abridged narrative from— A Place Called Whippany, 2nd Edition—
Chapter 4— Villages of Hanover Township:*

Whippany was first recorded in 1676 and settled circa 1685. The first settlers arrived from New England, Elizabeth Town and Newark. They traversed westward over the Minisink Trail where they forded the Whippanong River and walked along its shore. There upon the gentle landscape above the river's edge they established the first settlement. The first dwellings were built between the Whippanong River and the Minisink Trail in the vicinity of what is now known as the colonial Whippany graveyard on Route 10. Whippany is said to be the earliest settlement of what is now Morris, Sussex, and Warren Counties. "Whippenny" has the distinguished honor of being the original name of all the land now known as Morris County.

Not long ago Whippany was a sparsely populated community with an industrial heritage dating back to colonial times. The first industry in Whippany was an iron forge built in 1715 on Whippanong River, now known as the old iron works. For over two centuries Whippany boasted of many mills along its river and it was considered a "mill town." It's most prominent industries of the last century were the Whippany Paper Board Company that ran three paper mills in town, The Hanover Brick Company that mined clay and made bricks, and Bell Labs, a research and development laboratory that aired the first television broadcast in the world—televised from Whippany to New York City, pioneered radar, and invented new forms of telephone technology, the transistor, and solid state electronic circuitry.

Whippany is now known as a suburban, bedroom community with a mix of office parks, recreational parks, highly rated schools, homes, and safe streets. Whippany has a fire department, three schools, five churches, seven parks, and a scenic river.

Currently Whippany is without a post office since it was damaged by three feet of flood waters during Hurricane Irene, August 28, 2011. Residents of Whippany still have a mailing address and zip code, but unless and until other arraignments are made, Whippany's mail is sorted and delivered out of Morristown.

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Monroe circa 1715

The first homesteads in what became known as Monroe were settled circa 1710. The first significant land transaction was in 1715 when John Ford and John Hayward purchased one square mile of land from West Jersey Proprietors. John Ford built a homestead at the base of what is now Ford Hill Road. The Ford family descendants eventually named the Ford settlement “Fordville.”

The nearly forgotten village of Fordville spread out along what is now Whippany Road. In 1820 the area that included and surrounded Fordville was delineated as School District 10 and named Monroe. Some years later the Monroe District 10 was delineated School District 84.

The Monroe School was first built in 1828 and was rebuilt in 1876. The school was located on Whippany Road next to where Monroe Chapel is now located.

Monroe was named in honor of James Monroe who was president in 1820 when the District of Monroe was established. James Monroe may have had some affiliation to Fordville while residing in Morristown in 1778. Monroe was a colonel in the Continental Army when he lived in Morris County, but eventually became a captain, a major, a Continental Congressman, Senator, Governor of Virginia, and the fifth president of the United States of America (1817–1825).

At the turn of the twentieth century a train station was designated along the Morristown and Erie Railroad line serving the village of Monroe and eventually the first inhabitants of Cedar Knolls.

The district of Monroe has long since lost its identity with the passing of time. Only Monroe Chapel and the neighborhood of Monroe Gardens carry the name of a place that was once located in the south section of Hanover, all the way from Horse Hill to the Black Meadow swamp.

Monroe is now obscured by the communities of Cedar Knolls, Trailwood, and certain neighborhoods in Whippany.

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Malapardis *circa 1735*

Malapardis was settled circa 1735. Its name is derived from the Lenape word “Malapahus” which is said to mean “place of the poor flint.” The first settlement in Malapardis was located along Stony Brook.

Malapardis was the next natural attraction westward from Whippany on the Minisink Trail. A large impound of water funneling down into a rushing brook made it a perfect site for an industrial settlement. Its proximity to the Minisink Trail, half-way between the natural resources to the west and the markets to the east also made it an ideal location to produce commercial products for trade.

The first industry in Malapardis was an iron forge built on Stony Brook, below Stony Brook Pond, now known as Lee Meadows (in the vicinity of what is now the Hanover Community Center).

In 1820 a school district was set up in Malapardis. It was first established as Hanover Township District 9, later delineated as state School District 86. A school house was built and later replaced by another school house in 1860. In 1955 the Malapardis School became the Hanover Township Hall. Through the years it expanded and fully enclosed the old school. In 2002 the town hall and the old school were razed and replaced by a new municipal building.

The district of Malapardis extends from Mountain Avenue, Elm Place, and Eden Lane, to upper Parsippamy Road. It includes upper and lower Countrywood, Lee Meadows, and centers around the intersection of Route 10 and Jefferson Road, and extends all the way to the northern limits of the township.

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Cedar Knolls *established 1913* **A Subdivision of Monroe**

Cedar Knolls was established in 1913, two centuries after Whippany, Monroe, and Malapardis were settled. Cedar Knolls was created when land within the districts of Monroe was subdivided and offered for sale. It originated when Menko H. Wolfe purchased and subdivided a 114-acre tract of land known as the Charles W. Ford Estate. A subdivision map was filed with the Morris County Clerk on December 16, 1913. The subdivision was laid out on the north side of Ridgedale Avenue which was then called Morristown Road. It ran from Fairview Avenue to Mountain Avenue and from Morristown Road to North Belair. The Cedar Knolls subdivision consists of three roads, six avenues, and 374 housing lots.

In 1914 the subdivision was sold to Bertha Wolfe who established the W-B Camp and Bungalow Company and opened a Cedar Knolls sales office at the Baldwin Real Estate Agency in Morristown to market the land. The company offered summer homes, camps, and bungalow plots of quarter-, half-, and one-acre lots starting at \$100. By 1916 the bungalow company had built and sold over 50 bungalows; 300 people were staying in Cedar Knolls during the summer, and 100 remained as permanent residents.

At that time the railroad was the most popular and efficient access to Cedar Knolls. Between 1914 and 1916 the W-B Camp and Bungalow Company urged the Morristown and Erie Railroad Company to change the name of the Monroe train stop to Cedar Knolls. In 1915 a passenger train station was built in Monroe. In 1918 the name of the Monroe Station was changed to Monroe-Cedar Knolls. In 1919 the Cedar Knolls Fire Department, Inc. was established and in 1923 the Cedar Knolls post office was established.

Prior to becoming Cedar Knolls, the Charles W. Ford homestead was informally known as “The Knolls.” In an effort to glamorize the subdivision, Menko H. Wolfe named it “Cedar Knolls,” presumably in observance of the abundance of cedar trees that had grown up on the fallow fields of the Ford farm. The W-B Camp and Bungalow Company advertised the area as “Cedar Knolls in the Mountains.”

Cedar Knolls is the highest and quietest community in Hanover Township. It is convenient to its own shopping center, post office, firehouse, first aid squad, beautiful churches, and highway access. It is primarily residential with attractive housing on small fertile lots.

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