

## Township of Stillwater

Stillwater Township is located in Sussex County, eight miles west of Newton. It encompasses an area of 28 square miles. Three small villages: Stillwater, Middleville & Swartswood, together with residents now residing in what was only a few years ago a farming community, complete its population of approximately 4,500.

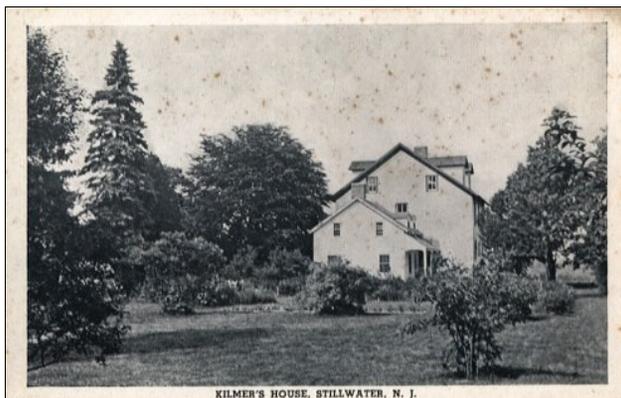
The first settlers of this area were Germans who immigrated to America in the 18th century. The best known of these was Casper Shafer, who with his brother-in-law, John George Wintermute, settled the village of Stillwater in 1741. The stone houses and stone mill still standing are a reminder of this German heritage. Casper Shafer was one of three delegates from Sussex County to serve in NJ's first legislative assemblies from 1776-1779.

In 1824, Stillwater Township separated from Hardwick Township, and was then incorporated, following the separation of Warren County from Sussex County. Then, in 1904 the township was decreased in size by the establishment of Fredon Township. The Susquehanna Railroad track became the line between the two townships.

Until World War II the township remained largely agricultural with dairy farming its most important business. The lake communities, especially those of Swartswood and Paulinskill, brought many visitors and new residents. Today the community, while keeping its rural image, has much more of a residential nature.

A good place to take a "virtual" tour of Historic Stillwater is at <http://abshafer.com/stillwater.html> which was prepared with assistance & research provided by the Historical Society of Stillwater Township & by a direct descendant of Casper Shafer, the late Mr. Arnold B. Shafer.

## Interesting Historic Village Sites:



Whitehall Manor c. 1775: Casper's son, Nathan Armstrong Shafer lived in Whitehall Manor, which he built near what is now the center of the village. Aline Murray Kilmer, the widow of poet Joyce Kilmer, lived the last decade of her life at Whitehall, passing away there on October 1, 1941.



Shafer Gristmill: In 1741, Casper Shafer built the Stillwater gristmill about half a mile from the present mill site. Then, in 1764, the Stillwater gristmill was moved to its present location. It operated there until 1840. In 1844, the gristmill was rebuilt and powered by water from the Paulins Kill. It is one of the longest continually operational water powered grist mills in the state of NJ.



## Historical Society of Stillwater Township

Meetings are held at:  
**The Stillwater Historical Museum**  
900 Main Street, Stillwater, NJ  
2nd Thurs. of the Month at 7:30 p.m.  
[www.HistoricStillwater.org](http://www.HistoricStillwater.org)



**Stillwater Historical Museum, Main St., Stillwater Village—formerly a one-room schoolhouse—**  
Visiting Hours: Sundays 2-4 p.m.  
June~July~August

# Historical Society of Stillwater Township

Since its organization in 1977, the mission of the Society has been to foster and promote an interest in Stillwater area history by maintaining a museum and reference library of historic artifacts and genealogical records of area families, and support preservation efforts of historic structures, sites and events.



## Museum

Through the generous foresight and planning of Mr. Amos F. Dixon and his wife Mary W.

Dixon, the museum associated with the Historical Society of Stillwater Township has been located within the Neighborhood House on Main Street in Stillwater since 1954.

Originally a one-room schoolhouse from 1842 to 1909 and the home of **Mary W. Dixon**

**Library**, within the building are interpretive displays of a restored schoolroom and a general store with a post office. A collection of artifacts depicting the early life of the village and surrounding area is on display as well as a **costume collection, mineral collection, Native American artifacts and military items** dating back to the Revolutionary War. Genealogical records, photographs and newspaper clippings of historic significance to the area and its families are part of the reference library.

**Visiting Hours: Sundays 2-4 p.m.  
June~July~August  
And Group Tours by Appointment**

## Preservation

Along with the continued preservation of the Museum and its artifacts, the Society has supported the concept of an historic district in Stillwater and recently assisted in the historic registry designation of the Shafer Grist Mill in Stillwater village. The Society previously assisted with the preservation of Keen's Mill in the Swartwood Lake area. The VanHorn family burial plot is also preserved and maintained by the Society. The Society supports all efforts to preserve these and other important historic structures and to make them available for public enjoyment and educational purposes.

## Community Events

To support the Museum as well as ongoing projects, the Society holds several community oriented fundraising events throughout the year. The Strawberry Festival in June and the Peach Festival in August are fun community events enjoyed by everyone. Dedicated members serve locally-grown fresh fruit desserts, entertain with music and costume and provide horse-drawn carriage rides through the Village of Stillwater. The Society also conducts educational walking tours of the Village of Stillwater. In December we host our Christmas Open House at the Museum. The children always enjoy their visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

## Genealogy

The Museum collection has grown and flourished throughout the years because of generous donations by the Stillwater community. The Society is always seeking locally-relevant genealogical and physical artifacts that can enhance this important collection. Dedicated members are working to preserve these artifacts and we are always seeking the assistance of those passionate about these preservation efforts. If you have an artifact or document that you believe would be best preserved at the Stillwater Historical Museum please contact any member of the Society for its consideration to be included in the collection.

### HSST Officers

Dennis Pegg, Acting Pres., 973-383-1057  
Bob Grabowsky, Treas., 973-903-3244  
Maureen Block, Rec. Sec. 973-948-5789  
Lynn Rosenkrans Meyer, 973-702-8369

## Membership

**All residents and friends of historic preservation in the Stillwater area are invited to participate in the meetings and events and to become members.**

**Annual: Student—\$10, Family —\$30  
Individual—\$20 or Lifetime—\$300**  
If you would like to become a member, please fill out and mail this portion to:

**Historical Society  
of Stillwater Township  
P.O. Box 238, Stillwater, NJ 07875**

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Interests Are:**

- History**
- Preservation**
- House/Grounds**
- Special Speakers' Program**
- Community Events**
- Library/Artifacts**
- Communications**
- Oral Histories**