

From New Bridge to Peetzburgh, history surrounds us!



Above, a tombstone at the French Cemetery. Revolutionary and Civil War soldiers are buried here. Below, the Campbell-Christie House at its original location at the corner of Henley Avenue and River Road. Notable residents include engineer J. Walter Christie, “the father of the modern tank.”



The story of New Milford began more than 335 years ago when David Demarest, a French Huguenot, sailed up the Hackensack River. In June 1677, Demarest received the deed to the “French Patent,” an area of land just north of present-day Hackensack along the east bank of the river. Demarest, his sons and their families established what became the first permanent settlement in the area, an event that earned New Milford the distinction of being “The Birthplace of Bergen County.” Demarest descendants, as well as members of other prominent families from the founding of Bergen County, are buried in the old French Huguenot-Demarest Cemetery on River Road, located next to Borough Hall.

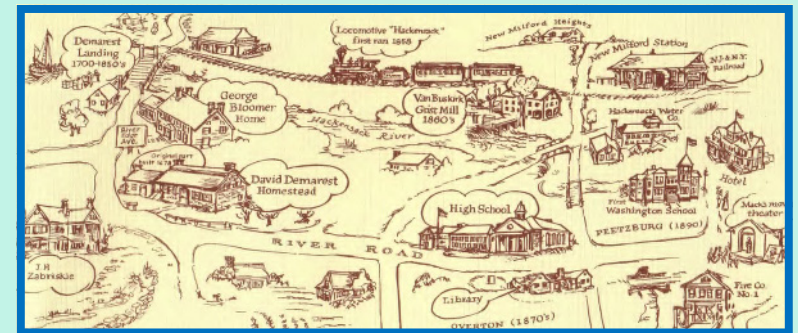
New Milford has three areas of historic interest: New Bridge, Old Bridge and Peetzburgh. New Bridge, in the southern area of town, encompasses part of Historic New Bridge Landing, a strategic river crossing during George Washington’s Retreat of 1776. Now a park, New Bridge Landing is home to three historic homes: the Steuben House, which served as headquarters for Washington and others during the Revolutionary War, as well as two structures originally located in New Milford — the Campbell-Christie House and the Samuel Demarest House. New Bridge was primarily a farming community, and many of its old farm houses still exist. Their special status is indicated with markers placed by the New Milford Historic Preservation Commission.

Old Bridge, in the center of town, was home to Demarest family homestead and their grist mill. Starting before the Revolutionary War, the mills and docks built here helped Old Bridge become an important industrial center.

Two other homes of historic interest — the Zabriskie House and the Hart-Bloomer House — are located in Old Bridge. Built in the 1700s, the Zabriskie House may have been the Half-Moon Tavern, the local public house. An ordinance required every community to



The Demarest House on River Road, also shown on the cover, is the first permanent home of New Milford’s founder. Built circa 1680 in the Old Bridge area, it is the oldest continuously occupied home in Bergen County. The Demarest and Hart-Bloomer houses are included on the National Register of Historic Places.



This map shows the locations of many significant structures located in the Old Bridge and Peetzburgh areas. The Demarest, Zabriskie and Hart-Bloomer houses still exist. The library is now the Senior Center. Innovations in the filtration and delivery of water developed at Hackensack Water Co. were critical to the development of Bergen County.

have a public house where information could be exchanged.

Peetzburgh is known as “The Birthplace of Modern-day New Milford” because it was home to the borough’s first school, fire house and post office as well as many businesses. A developer from New York City, Gustav Peetz, began building his houses in the late 1890s, and the development was named after him. It was one of the first planned housing developments in Palisades Township, which encompassed much of northeast Bergen County.

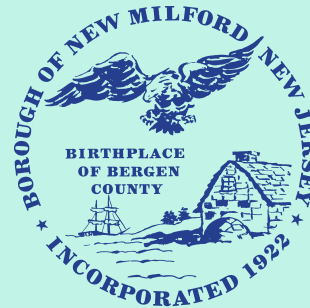
In 1922, the Borough of New Milford was incorporated, and New Bridge, Old Bridge and Peetzburgh lost their identities as separate communities. But the homes built by the Demarests, Gustav Peetz and so many others still stand as a testament to their place in history.



A Peetzburgh house under construction. Each house looked the same and cost about \$800. The house had two stories and a front porch. Several dozen of these houses survive today. Most have been updated with modern comforts, but many have retained their period charm.

New Milford Historic Preservation Commission

This brochure was prepared by the New Milford Historic Preservation Commission. The NMHPC is charged with preserving the integrity of the borough's historic heritage as the birthplace of Bergen County through preservation and archiving of buildings, land, and items of historic value; through research into the people, events, and locations that have formed that history; through public education programs for all ages; and through commendations for borough residents and organizations that have aided this mission.



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Welcome to

HISTORIC NEW MILFORD, NJ



The Birthplace of Bergen County