



HOUSES THAT TELL SUMMIT'S HISTORY

The houses included in this map tour of Summit cover three periods of the city's growth over the years from about 1740 to about 1911. They are listed in the order of their probable age, and are keyed numerically, to the street map shown.

By following this map and studying the notes about the houses and the people who lived in them, one gets some understanding of Summit and its history.

Although it wasn't until March 23, 1869 that the Township of Summit won its independence from Springfield and New Providence, scattered families had been moving into the area from as far back as the 1740's.

The Brians from Springfield settled in the eastern section, and Isaac Sayre had a large farm on the First Watchung Mountain. However, when the boundary line separating the new community from the rest of Springfield was drawn in 1869, the Sayre house remained on the Springfield side, while the accompanying farm land became part of Summit. "Deantown" (so shown of early maps) was a section under the brow of Overlook Hill where the Dean family had settled in the 1700's. The Doty family of New Providence had spread along the erstwhile Stoney Hill Road (Mountain Ave. and Ashland Rd.), while other New Providence families settled along Springfield Avenue. And Summit's north corner was once part of Chatham, which had originally developed along the King's Highway (Morris & Essex Turnpike/Route 24) on both sides of the Passaic River. The Carters, Bonnells, and Sayres settled in the part of this area that was later included in Summit.

Then an entrepreneur with a sawmill on the Passaic River, about opposite the end of Stanley Avenue, put the Summit area on the map by persuading the proposed Newark-to-Morristown railroad to cross the Second Watchung Mountain by routing its tracks over and around "the Summit of the Short Hills"—and past his mill—in 1837. And in those days, all trains had to stop at "The Summit" in order to fill their boilers after the long climb, at a well near the present Maple Street.

Bonnel then gave the embryo community the impetus to grow by building the first resort hotel, the "Summit House", about where the Presbyterian Church parish hall is now, in 1858. Other hotels followed, bringing well-to-do professional people here from the city to enjoy Summit's "salubrious summer air", first as hotel guests, then as summer occupants of fine estates (called "cottages") and finally as year-round residents. And with this trend, numerous private schools were established and churches of all denominations were erected. Thus the Summit area grew to become a separate Township on March 23, 1869, and to be incorporated as a city on March 8, 1899.

So, whether you walk or ride, we hope you will enjoy glimpsing the history of Summit by looking at the old houses listed and using this map as your guide. . . .

FARMERS OF THE YOUNG LAND CIRCA 1740 - 1840

1. **92 River Road.** When Benjamin Carter received a grant of land from the East Jersey Associates in about 1740, he built this 1½-story, wide-eaved house with corner fireplaces. It is Summit's oldest house, and here his descendent, John E. Sayre, Jr., one of Summit's first councilmen, was born, as well as William A. Sayre, father of former (1952-1972) Police Chief John B. Sayre. *MOVED IN 1986 TO 90 BUTLER PKWY.*
2. **146 Passaic Avenue.** The "eyebrow" or "lie-on-your-belly" (to see out) windows date this house as late 18th century, and the two tiny windows flanking the chimney are typical of the period. Early records of the house's early owners have been lost.
3. **114 Morris Avenue.** Solomon Dean, son of John Dean, an early settler, was born here in 1793. Because of the many Deans living there, the section of East Summit under the brow of Overlook Hill was called "Deantown" until early in this century.
4. **315 Ashland Road.** This was the home of Josiah C. Doty, a descendent of Joseph Doty, who bought 300 acres on Stoney Hill Road (now Mountain Ave. and Ashland Rd.) in the early 1700's and built the house in about 1790. Of interest is the slanting window in the attic.

THE RAILROAD AND THE RESORTS CIRCA 1840 - 1870

5. **785 Springfield Avenue.** The Samuel Clark home, now Burgdorff Real Estate, was more elegant than most of the simple neighboring farm houses. Additions were made when William L. Windsor had "paying guests" around 1906. The matching coach house is now a residence reached from 795 Springfield Avenue. Note the long windows and the classic doorway, and the characteristic front gable with round-top windows.
6. **50 Passaic Avenue.** An 1868 map shows this house as Patrick Hanlon's "cottage". His son-in-law, James Ahern, made additions when he lived there later.
7. **21 Oakley Avenue.** This house was originally located at 677 Springfield Avenue, and was the home of Rev. Thomas Cook, who was instrumental in building Summit's first church, Calvary Episcopal, in 1854. R. Cade Wilson moved the house to its present location in about 1928. Note the molded cornice and gable.
8. **107 Passaic Avenue.** The southern part of this house was the Charles Spinning home, which was moved there from the path of Kent Place Boulevard when Nicholas D.C. Moller (See #10) opened that street in 1868. It has since been added to several times.
9. **15 Briant Parkway.** This was the 15-room farm home of William H. Briant (See #13), an active participant in Summit's early government, and his brother, Isaac, descendents of the early settlers of the East Summit section of town. During the Revolutionary War period, Jacob Bryant (early spelling), a distant relative, owned a tavern which was the headquarters of our troops for a short time in 1780. This tavern was located about where the present Broad Street crosses Route #24, near Summit's eastern boundary with Springfield. When Union County bought most of the former 30-acre Briant farm in 1930

to create Briant Park, the name of the pond was changed from "Spring Lake" to "Briant Pond".

10. **383 Morris Avenue.** The gatehouse of the Nicholas D.C. Moller estate (site of Kent Place School) was razed since (in 1976) the first publication of this map tour.
11. **666 Springfield Avenue.** In about 1857, Rev. Thomas Cook (See #7) built this Italianate house as a girls' school, using "new-fangled" cement instead of brick or wood. It was called "Cook's Folly" because everyone expected it to collapse. The original wood cupola, fencing, gates and fountain are long since gone.
12. **9 Irving Place.** George H. LeHuray's homestead, "Mount Prospect", was started by Dr. Samuel Parmley, then bought and finished by LeHuray in about 1850. It originally faced 306 Springfield Avenue and was at the center of a sizable estate going through to Franklin Place and the railroad. When Irving Place (O'Rourke Place for a while) was opened by David O'Rourke in 1903, the then front porch was removed and the one on the west side was made the front entrance facing the new street. LeHuray was a New York banker and a member of the New York Stock Exchange.
13. **175 Springfield Avenue.** William Briant lived in this house when he was overseer of the extensive Oliver J. Hayes estate (See #9), so possibly the original house was much smaller, then enlarged to its present style sometime after 1905. It has been known variously as the Hayes or Briant Farm House, "The Cement House" and "Crow's Nest".
14. **131 Morris Avenue.** This was the home of Benjamin Spinning Dean, a descendent of John Dean (See #3), who operated one of Summit's first industries—the making of wagon wheels and hubs at 111 Morris Avenue in "Deantown". Typical are the prominent front gable and the two round-top windows.
15. **105 Morris Avenue.** This house, now known for its beautiful wisteria, was built by Sylvester Dean, a descendent of John Dean (See #3) and grandfather of the late C. Philip Dean, who was born in the house and served as Summit's mayor in 1956-57. Sylvester Dean also manufactured wagon hubs.
16. **8 and 14 Franklin Place.** These look-alike Gothic Revival cottages were built by George LeHuray (See #12) for his mother and his maiden sisters. (The adjacent house at No. 6 is a converted carriage house.)
17. **48 and 50 DeForest Avenue.** Jayme Riera, one of Summit's early developers, and the son-in-law of Nicholas D.C. Moller (See #10), built these two Victorian houses, both of which originally faced Springfield Avenue, one on each side of the entrance (now Woodland Ave.) to "Riera Park". No. 48 (also 20 Woodland Ave.), now the Marie Staedler Dress Shop, and previously (1958-80) the Lillian O'Grady Bridal Shop, was moved to that site from 6 Woodland Avenue (then facing 447 Springfield Ave.) in 1925 to make way for the Strand Theater. No. 50, headquarters of SAGE since 1950, was originally located at 427 Springfield Avenue, and was known as "The Doctors' House", because it was, in turn, the home and office of Dr. William H. Risk, his brother, Dr. J. Boyd Risk, and Dr. C. Benson Keeny, before it was moved in 1919, and of Dr. Walter A. Reiter after (1920-50) the move.
18. **31 Hobart Avenue.** Still standing in front of George LeHuray's (See #12) "Larch Cottage" are the larch trees which gave this Gothic Revival cottage its name. Some feel that this and the other LeHuray houses at 49 Hobart Avenue (See #19) and 8 and 14 Franklin Place (See #16) constitute the

vestige of an early residential neighborhood which should be preserved as such.

19. **49 Hobart Avenue.** For many years, this fine mid-18th-Century Italinata Villa with its campanile (bell tower) was the home of Goerge LeHuray's son, Bowley (See #12, #16 and #18). From 1919-27 the Hood Sisters' school was located in this house, followed by the Red Cross from 1942-49.
20. **152 Passaic Avenue.** Originally built by Abraham Kent, Jr., in the late 1850's as a one-room wide, two-story home, this house is replete with legends of bootlegging days, utilizing the Passaic River.
21. **76 Division Avenue.** Dr. David M. Smythe, an early editor (1885-89) of the Summit Record and the first editor (1889-96) of the Summit Herald, built this mansard-roofed house in about 1860.
22. **708-710 Springfield Avenue.** Built in 1866 (see cornerstone under porch) as the West Summit Presbyterian Chapel, this double house was also the first home of the Baptist Church (Christ Church today), from 1876-86. The baptismal pool by the brook in the back was frequently filled with frogs by impish neighbors.
23. **663 Springfield Avenue.** This was the Italinata home of Lewis McKirgan, a lawyer and a member of the 1879 Township Committee, whose signature is on the map of that date shown of the other side of this sheet. He opened Fairview Avenue in 1870.

THE ERA OF EXPANSIVE HOMES CIRCA 1870 - 1911

24. **80 Park Avenue.** When built in 1871, this house was the third school building to be erected in Summit. It was then located at about 73 Park Avenue, on the site of the Roosevelt School gymnasium, and was moved to this site when Roosevelt School (closed 1979; converted to condominiums in 1983) was built in 1905.
25. **199 Kent Place Boulevard.** Nicholas D.C. Moller, who owned all of this area between Morris Avenue and Passaic Avenue, and opened Kent Place Boulevard in 1868 (See #8 & #10), built this mansard-roofed home with its tiered porches for his daughter, Clara Moller Barr, in about 1879. Later, Francis E. Dana lived here calling it "Linda Vista". It was the home of the Elkwood Play School from 1947 to 1983.
26. **196 Kent Place Boulevard.** This eclectic Victorian home was built by N.D.C. Moller in the 1870's for his son, Frederick, who called it "Melrose Cottage". It is now looked upon as Summit's "doll house". Other good examples of Victorian architecture are the four 10-gabled houses at Nos. 83, 85, 88 and 93 Kent Place Boulevard.
27. **35 Beekman Road.** Anthony Comstock's "Breeze Crest" is a fine example of the Queen Anne or Centennial style of architecture. As head of the N.Y.C. Committee for the Suppression of Vice, which sought to ban the sending of obscene matter through the mails, he was instrumental in obtaining passage of the "Comstock Law". The carriage house is also worth noting.
28. **44 Blackburn Road.** "Stoneover" was the Chateau style home of William Z. Larned, who was influential in bringing about the Township of Summit's incorporation as a City in 1899. It is now the Convent and Administration Building of the Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child. Larned was also first

president (1891-96) of the Summit Bank (now SETCO), and the founder and first president of the 1st National Bank (Est. 1897—now National State Bank).

29. **14 Bedford Road.** "Avebury" is a typical English country home, the Gothic gate house for which (425 Morris Avenue) was built before the residence. It is presumed to have been built by James L. Truslow, Jr., in 1887. Carlton Academy was organized there in 1907, and today the house is part of the Oratory School (name changed in 1924) campus.
30. **165 Hobart Avenue.** In Revolutionary War times this property was the farm of Richard Swain, who tended the alarm gun and warning beacon* located across Hobart Avenue (See #36). In 1889, John H. Wisner built the present house, "The Clearing", which became the home of Richard Early Reeves in 1918. In 1974, these beautifully landscaped grounds became Summit's Reeves-Reed Arboretum. Note the shell-topped south entrance.
31. **535 Springfield Avenue.** Dr. William H. Risk built this Chateau-type house on the site of the very early Samuel Potter farmhouse in 1890, with stones brought here from Pennsylvania. His brother, Dr. J. Boyd Risk (See #17), lived in the house from 1911, and since 1944, it has been the Brough Funeral Home — sans an extensive front porch. Both brothers were active in our early government, and both had extensive real estate holdings in Summit.
32. **115 Kent Place Boulevard.** "Ivyholm" was the Romanesque home of Summit's first mayor (1899-1901 and 1904-07), George Wilcox. His wife, Mary Budington Wilcox, was a founder of the Fortnightly Club in 1893, and its first president. For many years, it was completely covered with ivy.
33. **235 Morris Avenue.** This Eclectic Gothic Victorian house (restored as a two-family home in 1978) is on a part of the Isaac Sayre farm and was built about 1883 by Charles W. Faitoute, one of Isaac's descendents.
34. **7 Russell Place.** What is now a residence was originally Oakes Memorial Chapel. When the present stone church was built in 1918, the earlier church (built in 1898 and enlarged in 1903) was moved here and remodeled as the church rectory.
35. **214 Springfield Avenue.** This Colonial Revival house, built by James C. Foley in 1908, and for many years the home of Frederic Norris Collins, once sported a front-yard pond. Since 1950, "Twin Maples" has been the home of the Summit Fortnightly Club (Est. 1893). The matching carriage house is typical of the early estates.
36. **226 Hobart Avenue.** In 1908 Henry B. Twombly built this home on the site of the Signal Station* (beacon and cannon) used in both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. (See #30). A commemorative S.A.R. plaque (dedicated in 1896) was moved from the exact site of the beacon to the front retaining wall when the house was built.
37. **250 Hobart Avenue.** This 27-room mansion, "Norcote", was built in 1910-11 by Carroll Philips Bassett, who, as a young engineer, installed Summit's water, sewage-disposal and electrical systems in the early 1890's. Since 1955, it has been the home of the Beacon Hill Club. The large carriage house with its cupola and courtyard matches the residence.

* See "The Revolutionary War Beacon at Signal Station No. 10" by Margaret W. Long.

** For more complete accounts of many of the properties listed here see the Summit Historical Society's book, "Glimpses Into Summit's Past".