

Chapter 1: Historic Development

Wall Township is a 30.6 square mile suburban municipality located in the southeastern corner of Monmouth County. The Township is bordered to the east by the seashore communities of southern Monmouth County, including Belmar, Sea Girt, and Manasquan; to the south by the Manasquan River, and to the north by the Shark River and the communities of Howell, Colts Neck, and Tinton Falls.

Major highways providing access to the Township include the Garden State Parkway, Interstate Route 195, and State Highway Routes 18, 34, 35 and 138. These highways provide direct regional access to the employment centers of northern New Jersey and New York City. Housing development pressure related to these employment centers has affected the Township's land development trends.

Wall Township has a significant local employment base provided by light industry along the Route 34 corridor. In addition, a major retail center serving southeastern Monmouth County is located on the Route 35 corridor north of Atlantic Avenue. Of note also is the Allaire Airport, situated near Routes 195 and 34, which has the most extensive aviation facilities in east-central New Jersey.

Wall Township was incorporated on March 7, 1851 by an act of the New Jersey Legislature which separated it from Howell Township. The township is named after Senator Garret Dorset Wall, who served in both the New Jersey Legislature and the United States Senate. He was also elected by the Legislature to serve as Governor, but "General Wall" declined the honor.

Until the end of the 1700's, settlements were sparse and consisted of dispersed land holdings. The earliest settlements in Wall Township were along the boundaries of the Shark and Manasquan Rivers where the first businesses developed. These included docks, fisheries, saltworks, saw and grist mills and taverns.

These rivers also provided an abundant source of fish, oysters, clams and crabs for Native Americans and European settlers. Several Native American artifacts have been discovered on the bank of the Manasquan River, near the Old Tatum Farm, suggesting that a campground once existed there. One of the earliest European settlements was also located on the Manasquan River near the Old Squan Bridge in an area now referred to as Allenwood. The bridge, constructed in 1768, provided a river crossing leading to Toms River and Long Branch.

In the 1800's, settlements evolved along land transportation routes. Communities such as Chapeltown, New Bedford, Hurley, Blansingburg, and Bailey's Corner grew up along stage coach routes. Coburgh, also known as Shark River Station, was a thriving village because it served as a transfer point from stage to sea travel. Railroads also affected the pattern of development in Wall Township. For example, New Bedford was a stop on the Raritan and Delaware rail line. In the later 1800's, Allenwood and Allaire were stops of the Freehold and Jamesburg Agricultural Railroad, which ran from Squan Village (Manasquan) to Jamesburg, and then connected to a trans-Jersey line.

Religious congregations also influenced the growth of settlements in Wall Township. For example, Glendola was originally known as Chapeltown because, in 1813, the Independent Methodist Church was established there. Blansingburg was the location of a Quaker meeting house in the early 18th Century. By the 1830's, that settlement included a school and a store.

In the early 1820's, the economy of the region was influenced by Monmouth Furnace, later renamed the "Howell Works." This company built homes, a church and a school. This area is now known as "Allaire Village" and has been preserved and restored as an historic park by the State of New Jersey.