Passaic County

*Rich History – Bright Future*
Passaic County, NJ, has seen and experienced many milestones which has paralleled our nation's history.
From the earliest fur traders, who set up trading posts along the Passaic River in the towns of Passaic and Wayne, to the birth of the first planned industrial city of America in Paterson, to the birth of the silk industry in Paterson to the iron mines of Ringwood and West Milford.

The Acquacknonk Landing site in Passaic.
Passaic County saw the birth of America’s industry at the Passaic Falls and the development of the first planned industrial city in America, Paterson.
With its growth we saw the rise of not only industry, technology and wealth but the rise of political power which brought a local citizen of Paterson, Garrett Hobart to the second highest position in America – Vice President of the United States.
Other prominent names and families rose through our industry and many were laid to rest in Cedar Lawn Cemetery in Paterson. Among them are: Hobart, Danforth, Cooke, Lambert and Haines.
One of Passaic County’s outstanding geologic and treasures is the “First Ridge” of the Watchung Range which is located partly in Clifton, Woodland Park, and Paterson. The First Ridge geographically extends northward to Hawthorne and to Cupsaw Mountain in Ringwood and extended southward to the town of Springfield, New Jersey.
The First Ridge can be easily seen in the west from the major highways of Routes #46, #80, #3, and the Garden State Parkway which traverse this area.
Our first elected Governor of New Jersey, William Livingston ordered the First Ridge be fortified in 1776. This Ridge acted as a fortification protecting the citizens and Patriots in New Jersey. The ridge became a highway for communications between General Washington and his army.
During most of the American Revolution, the British were housed in New York City, and their troops menaced Washington’s eastern supply lines and controlled the shore and sea lanes along our eastern seaboard. Through the use of the Watchung Range, General Washington was able to spy on any movements of the enemy.
During the early part of the American Revolution, many on both sides (Patriots and the British) realized not only the significance of the First Ridge, but of The Great Notch which was one of the major entrances into the Preakness Valley.
It has been reported that over 40 Signal-Watch Towers were built and used on the First Watchung Ridge. These Towers were observation points which could be seen from other strategic areas along the Watchung Range. These towers contained barrels of pitch and artillery which were not only for observation but for sounding an alarm and informing Washington of the British movements and incursions into the area.
These signals alerted the militias to man their fortifications along the Watchung Ridge for an incursion by the British forces. If the British forces, then encamped in eastern Bergen County, had penetrated the First Ridge of the Watchung Range, they would have been able to break not only General Washington’s communication lines but to restrict the flow of patriots and critical supplies to his Army.
So preventing any British incursion was a military necessity. It was crucial for the Patriots, who were serving in the Continental Army to protect this Ridge. One local historian wrote that the fortified Ridge was “the Bulwark that saved the Nation.”
At Long Pond Iron Works in the Hewitt section of West Milford, cannonballs and other military supplies were fabricated and then transported along Cannon Ball Trail to the Continental Army.
Huge chain links were forged at Long Pond Iron Works. These iron links were later connected and stretched across the Hudson River at West Point, preventing British General Clinton’s forces from joining British General Bourgeon’s forces at the Battle of Saratoga, thereby dividing the Colonies.
American General Gates with the help of Benedict Arnold forged a victory that persuaded France to declare war on England and helped to provide aid to our fledgling nation. It was the Marquis de La Fayette who brought the good news of France’s alliance to General George Washington at his headquarters in Morristown, New Jersey.
General de La Fayette used farm houses in both Wayne and Hawthorne as his field headquarters while serving in the American Army during his time in Passaic County. The French Army units, who camped in Wayne, helped provided the extra muscle needed to defeat the British at Yorktown thereby helping us gain our freedom as a new nation.
There are many other locations that were important to our country’s Revolutionary War and its history. They include Washington’s Headquarters at the Dey Mansion in Wayne.
General George Washington and his troops camped on this site during his retreat across NJ. The site was the First Dutch Reformed Church in Passaic. It is now St. Peter and Paul’s Polish National Church. Also shown is the Sycamore Tree which was where Washington met his officers according to urban legend.
There were also some other notable people who were with General Washington when he crossed the Passaic River at the Gregory Avenue (Acquacknonk) Bridge in Passaic, New Jersey. Thomas Paine, accompanied Washington’s troops and wrote the immortal words: “These are the Times that Try Men’s Souls” while watching Washington’s struggling soldiers retreating across New Jersey.
Another famous New Jersey resident, Surveyor General Robert Erskine of Ringwood, not only who facilitated the movements of the Continental Army but was Washington’s Surveyor and map maker. His tomb is shown here on the grounds of Ringwood Manor.
Farmer and patriot, John Post and a band of other Passaic County Minutemen and women not only tore up the bridge (located near Gregory Avenue) connecting Passaic and Bergen County but also supplied food and assistance to Washington’s retreating army.
The Dey Mansion in the Preakness Valley served as the headquarters to General George Washington. It also provided the food and supplies to his army.
Since the American Revolution, many historic houses throughout the County have been restored as local Historical Museums. The Schuyler-Colfax house in Wayne is shown here.
During the American Revolution, Alexander Hamilton, George Washington and a number of influential Americans saw and recognized the significance of the Great Falls. They understood that America’s future and growth would come from the power of the waters that cascaded over the falls.
A decade or so later, Alexander Hamilton who was now the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, recalled the power of the Great Falls.
As an advocate of Industry and Manufacturing, Hamilton enlisted financers in New York to subscribe to a $200,000 fund to underwrite the establishment of the *first* Manufacturing Complex in the United States.
In 1791, Hamilton convinced then New Jersey Governor William Paterson and the State Legislature to enact a State Charter for the Society for establishing Useful Manufactures (SUM).
As an incentive for Governor Paterson’s approval, the town created by this charter, was to be named in his honor – Paterson. The Town of Paterson was established in 1792.
After a short period of inactivity, workers and engineers under the direction of Pierre Charles L’Enfant (also the architect of Washington, D.C.) began constructing a three-tiered channel and a canal system.
The canal system were called raceways. It diverted the Passaic River’s water to create power to turn the engines of this new industrial city.
Early on, Samuel Colt, the developer of *Gun that Tamed the West* established his Colt Gun Factory in Paterson. He and L’ Enfant collaborated to create the first American community, integrating waterpower, industrial development and urban planning.
In 1837, Passaic County was organized and in time Paterson became the center of county government. Shown are the Court House Annex and the historic Court House.
Rural areas received the benefits of not only the selling their goods but purchasing new inventions and technology which came from the industrial growth of Paterson. The photo is from circa 1850. It is a view looking east from Main Street.
In time, Paterson’s new industries emerged. Producing not only textiles, textile machines, steam locomotives, submarines, revolvers, and various other products. Soon weaving mills and dye houses became one of Paterson’s most important industries.
Paterson’s silk became one of its greatest industries: weaving and dye houses became the most important industry, giving rise to Paterson a new name: “Silk Capital of the World”. The following pictures show the different types of industry and manufacturing that occurred in Paterson.
Textiles manufacturing
Textile Dyeing
Locomotive manufacturing
Silk manufacturing
Gun Manufacturing (Colt)
As Paterson’s industry grew, new weaving mills were being established on the sites in the towns of: Passaic, Clifton, Haledon and Little Falls and then spread to other towns throughout Passaic County.
John Holland, a Paterson educator and inventor, created the first functioning submarine. His first attempt at a launch (in the Passaic River near the Great Falls), resulted in failure as it unfortunately sunk. Pictured are John Holland and one of his later modeled submarines.
During the 19th century, rich industrialists built palatial residences in and around the area. Vice President Garrett Hobart had his residence and estate in Wayne. The house is now part of the campus of William Paterson University.
In the 1800’s Francis Lynne Stetson, assembled lands from pioneer farmsteads in Ringwood and named his country estate Skylands.
Clarence Lewis, a New York City financier, purchased the Stetson’s estate and erected a Tudor style mansion on the property. In 1966, the State of New Jersey purchased Skylands Manor, its Tudor Mansion and 1,117 acres. Eventually the State designated and created a portion of this estate as the State Arboretum and Botanical Gardens.
Paterson textile industrialist, and immigrant to America, Catholina Lambert built a Castle and Stone Tower along the First Ridge of the Watchung range overlooking southern Passaic County and Paterson.
Lambert’s Castle today can be seen rising majestically with its tower from Route #80 resting majestically over Passaic county and its surroundings. The castle now houses the Passaic County Historical Society with its museum and research library.
Due to Paterson’s proximity to Ellis Island and the New York Harbor, Paterson, was not only a stopping point for many immigrants to America but for a vast number of them - their final destination. Different ethnic groups from all over Europe settled in Paterson to fill the growing needs of Paterson’s Industry.
The many ethnic neighborhoods supplied not only the labor needs of Paterson, but they brought with them their unique and varied cultures. These immigrants came not only for the opportunity to work, but to become part of the “American Dream”. The “Dublin Statue” created by Federici is located in Paterson and shown in both photos.
As in other industrial cities, Labor Leaders and Unions started to become established in factories in order to obtain better working conditions and better pay. Workers in many of Paterson’s industries began to organize. The Mill owners resisted the labor movement and were supported by the authorities and the police.
In 1913, Paterson Authorities refused a permit to union organizers to demonstrate their grievances against the Mill. In response to the refusal by Mill owners and authorities to let the workers organize, strikes took place throughout the towns of Paterson, Passaic, Haledon and Clifton. Physical confrontations took place with many workers being hurt and seriously maimed in these riots.
Immigrant silk workers Pietro and Maria Botto, invited the thousands of demonstrators and strikers to their home to vent their frustrations. The Botto House (located in Haledon), was later recognized by the State of New Jersey and the Federal Government and National Labor Unions as the birthplace of the American Labor Movement.
Passaic County has a variety of recreational activities for each of its residents. The Passaic County Golf Course is located in Wayne, which offers a professional course at modest prices and is open to all residents.
There are numerous County Recreational Venues located throughout Passaic County. Among them are: Garret Mountain Reservation - Paterson, Greenwood Lake and Wawayanda State Park – West Milford, Monksville Reservoir – Ringwood, Wanaque Reservoir – Wanaque.
The county has an extensive parks system consisting of over 16,000 acres. These parks offer a wide range of recreational activities ranging from hiking to golfing.
The development of the Great Falls Industrial National Park is now being organized at the Great Falls of the Passaic River by the Federal Government. The Falls is shown in its splendid glory.
Passaic County is comprised of 16 municipalities. Located within the county are the addresses of two major Universities: William Paterson located in Wayne and Montclair State which is in Montclair, Clifton and Little Falls, NJ.
The County also has two Business Colleges (Berkeley and Dover).
Passaic Community College which has campuses located in Paterson, Passaic, and Wanaque - three different sections of the county.
There are three hospitals and a healthcare center in the county. There is a County Hospital, two General Hospitals, and Preakness Healthcare Center.

- St. Mary’s - Passaic
- St. Joseph - Paterson
- St. Joseph - Wayne
- Preakness Valley - Wayne
Passaic County’s highlands, supply not only fresh water but clean air from its forests to most of Northern and Middle New Jersey.
A walk through our Botanical Gardens in Ringwood and the upper country hiking trails, are a jewel in the metropolis called the greater New York Metropolitan Area.
Our small farms still supply locals with fresh vegetables and fruits and we can still call our foods “Jersey Fresh.”
In summary, a visit to Passaic County will not only show the birthplace of America’s industry and labor but its natural and scenic beauty as well. Why not spend a day exploring our rich, historic and beautiful scenery.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Passaic County:
Board of Chosen Freeholders:
  Terry Duffy - Freeholder Director
  Deborah E. Ciambrone - Deputy Director
  Pat Lepore
  Greyson Hannigan
  Bruce James
  Michael Marotta
  Edward O'Connell
History and Tourism Advisory Board:
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  Walter Krawiec – Vice Chair
  Pat Kramer
  Marie Mahler
  Gloria Martini
  Maggi Puglia
  Arlene Potenzone
  Fred Roth
  James Van Sickle
  Marcia Sotorrio
  Stacy Tsapatsaris

Paterson Museum:
  Bruce Balistrieri - Curator
  Jack DeStefano – Director

Cedar Lawn Cemetery:
  Reinaldo Ortiz - Superintendent
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<td>Clifton</td>
<td>Clifton City Historian</td>
<td>Donald Lotz, City Historian</td>
<td>973-470-5800</td>
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<td>Little Falls</td>
<td>Little Falls Historical Society</td>
<td>John Veteri, Esq, President</td>
<td>973-256-0170</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lfnj.com/historicalsociety.asp">http://www.lfnj.com/historicalsociety.asp</a></td>
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<td>Haledon</td>
<td>Haledon Historical Society</td>
<td>Bunnie Kuiken, Historian</td>
<td>973-595-7766</td>
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<td>Hawthorne</td>
<td>Hawthorne Historical Society</td>
<td>Donna Iannelli</td>
<td>973-427-5555</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passaic</td>
<td>Passaic City Historian</td>
<td>Mark S. Auerbach, City Historian</td>
<td>973-471-9596</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cityofpassaic.com/Departments-Historian.html">http://www.cityofpassaic.com/Departments-Historian.html</a></td>
<td>City Hall, 330 Passaic Street, Passaic, NJ 07055</td>
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<td>Passaic County</td>
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<td>Edward A. Smyk, County Historian</td>
<td>973-881-4834</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paterson</td>
<td>Passaic County Historical Society</td>
<td>Geri Mola, President</td>
<td>(973) 247-0085</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lambertcastle.org/">http://www.lambertcastle.org/</a></td>
<td>Lambert Castle, 3 Valley Road, Paterson, NJ 07503-2932</td>
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<td>Ringwood</td>
<td>Open Space, Conservation, Recreation, Farmland and Historical Preservation Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Debbie Buchanan, Secretary</td>
<td>973-962-7037</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ringwoodnj.net/content/102/default.aspx">http://www.ringwoodnj.net/content/102/default.aspx</a></td>
<td>60 Margaret King Ave., Ringwood, NJ 07456</td>
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<td>Totowa</td>
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<td>Vicki Coyle, President</td>
<td>973-790-3265</td>
<td><a href="http://www.totowapl.org/">http://www.totowapl.org/</a></td>
<td>537 Totowa Road, Totowa, NJ 07512</td>
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<td>Historical Committee</td>
<td>Marie Mahler, Chairperson</td>
<td>973-839-3000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.waynetownship.com/his-com.htm">http://www.waynetownship.com/his-com.htm</a></td>
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<td>Robert Brubaker, Chairman</td>
<td>973-694-7192</td>
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<td>475 Valley Road Wayne, New Jersey 07470</td>
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<td>West Milford</td>
<td>Historic Preservation Commission</td>
<td>Steve Boshart, Chairman</td>
<td>973-728-7000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.westmilford.org/Cit-e-Access/webpage.cfm?TID=11&amp;TPID=3370">http://www.westmilford.org/Cit-e-Access/webpage.cfm?TID=11&amp;TPID=3370</a></td>
<td>West Milford Town Hall, 1480 Union Valley Road, West Milford, NJ 07480</td>
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<td>Woodland Park</td>
<td>Woodland Park Historical Society</td>
<td>Maureen Mingione</td>
<td>973-345-8100</td>
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<td>All</td>
<td>Canal Society of New Jersey</td>
<td>Brian Morrell, President</td>
<td>(908)-722-9556</td>
<td><a href="http://www.canalsocietynj.org/CSNJ/index.html">http://www.canalsocietynj.org/CSNJ/index.html</a></td>
<td>PO Box 737, Morristown, NJ 07963</td>
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<td>Ed Marchese</td>
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