

ISLAND HEIGHTS

self-guided

HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

1995



ALSO AVAILABLE



THE RIVERFRONT TOUR
THE WESTRAY TOUR

HOW THESE TOURS CAME TO BE

In March 1995, my Island Heights Girl Scout Troop 425 took on the task of working on a self-guided historical walking tour of Island Heights, as suggested by Ellie Rogalski, the Borough Clerk. It didn't seem like such a big task at the time, and as originally envisioned, it wouldn't have been. After all, we had the 1981 New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory of Island Heights as a starting point, and we had access to earlier printed walking tours to refer to. A few meetings and we should be done (or so we all thought).

We narrowed down the more than 300 sites that were placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Sites to 84 which we felt really should be included. That was the part of the project the Girl Scouts worked on. Then we realized that visiting that many sites was far more than a one day project so we ended up with three separate tours. Already the project, was growing beyond the "simple" printed booklet we all thought we were doing. Then came the idea of adding architectural notes to the simple historical notes we had planned. The project grew again, and it was

time for the Girl Scouts to move on to other things leaving me to finish the task.

Inspired by my large collection of Island Heights postcards, my "thoughtful" husband told me that it would be "easy" to add in graphic images which would, we all agreed, make the finished product so much better. The project grew larger again. Then began the task of culling through all the old sources for information, calling up the owners and former owners of houses, sorting through all the photos, postcards, etc, available. Countless hours later, I have pretty much compiled the Riverfront Tour, the Camp Meeting Tour and the Westray Tour. I'm sure I've left out many facts that should be included and included a few "facts" that really aren't. If you will let me know about these errors of omission and commission, I will try to correct them in later editions of this work. And, of course, old photos and stories of some of the houses are still needed.

*Sarah Punderson
May 16, 1995*

NATURALLY A PROJECT OF THIS SCOPE REQUIRED THE ASSISTANCE OF TOO MANY PEOPLE TO THANK BY NAME BUT

A FEW DESERVE SPECIAL THANKS FOR THEIR:

Mary Kay Millard for giving the Girl Scouts and the project a direction and her editing.

James Punderson for scanning the photos, layout, typesetting and computer graphic work.

Lizh Murphy for contributing the "ISLAND HEIGHTS HISTORY" and access to previous research.

Donald Bortomley for his photograph collection.

Island Heights Junior Girl Scout Troop 425
Lindy Capron, Dana Jansports, Michelle King, Alice Lopez, Rachel Perry, Sarah Jeanne Punderson, Hillary Schen, Hilary Sheehan, Nancy Sheehan, Amanda West and especially *Donette Lopez* my co-leader.

Ellie Rogalski was responsible for walking through the town, sorting through photos and touring the town, for marching the various research materials, for making the display board and preparing the "What Do You Know Kids" question inserts.

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ISLAND HEIGHTS HISTORY

Once a major waterway, the creek on the north side of Island Heights is what first made the island noteworthy to ships navigating into Toms River. In 1762 the Dillon family took ownership of the whole island, and the remains of their first house can be found within a much altered structure on the northeast section of the island. In later years it was divided into the Brinley, Hurry and Westray farms. In 1878 the Island Heights Association was formed by the Rev. Jacob Graw and 12 other ministers and 17 businessmen to purchase land from the Brinley farm to develop into one of the nine Methodist Camp Meeting communities in New Jersey.

The Association quickly cleared a site at the peak of the 60 ft. bluff overlooking the Toms River and constructed cottages and a tabernacle so that thousands of people would converge on Island Heights late in the summer of 1878 for the first religious camp meetings. In addition to promoting the religious aspects of this new community, the incorporators were quite keen on the real estate development potential for such a location. The land was carefully blocked into salable lots and promotions were run in Philadelphia and the surrounding areas. Before long the community became known for its yachting activities and seashore

pleasures, and many grand "cottages" were being built. However, because of its Methodist origins no liquor was (nor still is) allowed to be sold within the boundaries of the town. As the development succeeded, the Westray and Hurry farms were annexed to Island Heights, which eventually became a Borough in 1887. Because of the quality of the original architecture and the preservation of the remnants of that era, Island Heights is now on the State and National Registers of Historic Sites and the Victorian ambiance of a bygone time flavors our lives.

ARCHITECTURAL NOTES

The popular architectural styles during the development of Island Heights between 1880 and 1920

to describe a style, and more often than not ^{several} more than one style were

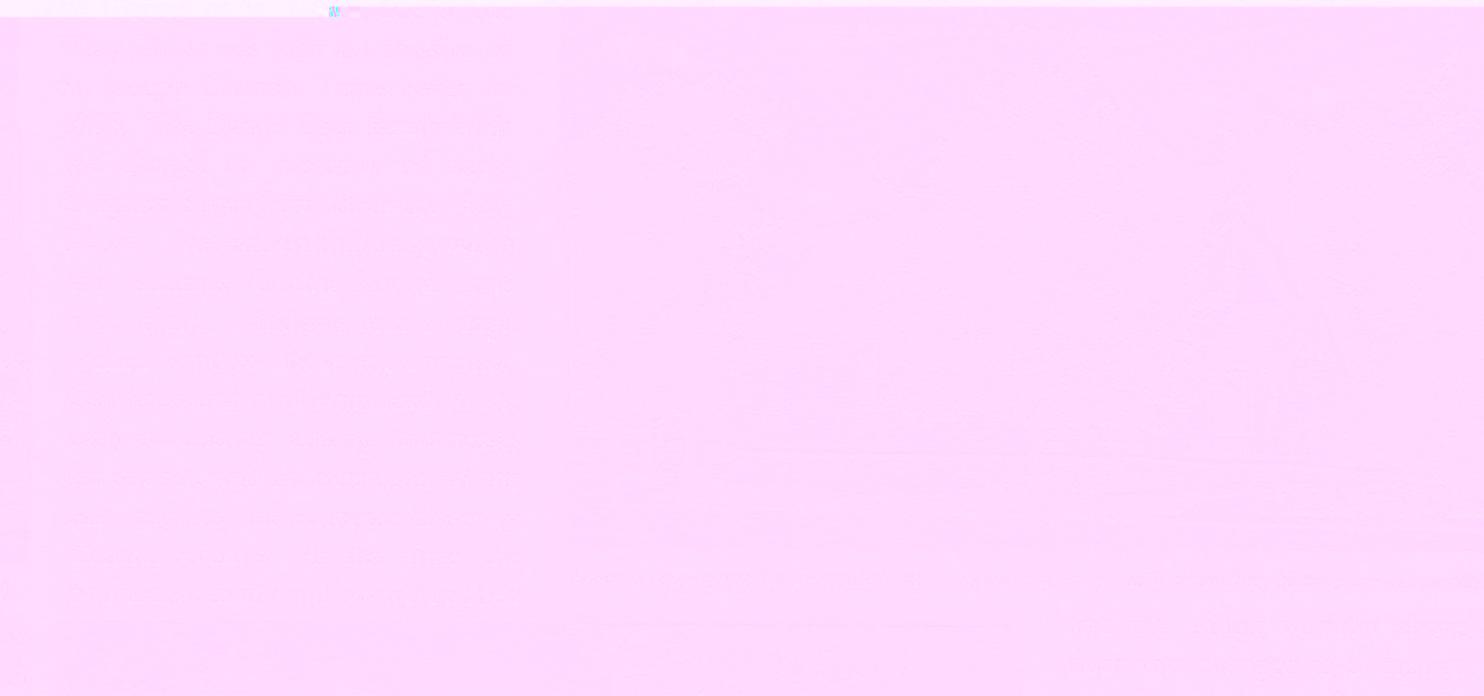
clapboard. The houses were decorated with gable ornamentation, spindled

1. *Island Heights, New Jersey: A History and Guide*, by Thomas C. Smith, published by The Board of Education, Island Heights, New Jersey, 1977.
2. *Island Heights: A Short History of Monmouth County, New Jersey*, published by Garden State, Neptune, NJ, 1999.

3. *The Green Covey Historical and Heritage Commission*.
4. *Island Heights and Whiting Park 1878*, booklet printed in 1878, reprinted by the Green Covey Historical Society.
5. *Island Heights of Long Ago*, New Jersey, compiled by Judith Smith and George Hoffmann, published by the Green Covey

Historical and Heritage Commission, 1999.
6. *Island Heights and Whiting Park*, published by the Green Covey Historical Society.
7. *Island Heights: A Short History of Monmouth County, New Jersey*, published by Garden State, Neptune, NJ, 1999.
8. *Island Heights Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 42, May 29, 1987.

1. 101 CENTRAL AVE - ST. GERTRUDE CHURCH



2. 100 CENTRAL AVE - ST. PHILIP EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. Philip Episcopal Church is a historic building located at the corner of Central and Green Avenues and Edwin Edwards, who operated a stage and livery on Central Avenue. It was originally sided with natural cedar shingles and embodies a good example of combining the Vernacular Queen Anne and the Shingle Styles.



A postcard view showing the original shingles.

3. 115 OCEAN AVE. - FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The original Methodist Episcopal Church was dedicated in August, 1895, six years after the first Camp Meeting was held in Island Heights. It served the community until 1925, when its location on the northeast corner of Simpson and Van Sant avenues.



METHODIST CHURCH, ISLAND HEIGHTS, N.J., IN THE WINTER CLOAK.



The First United Methodist Church was completed that year on the corner of Simpson and Ocean Avenues. Inspired by a similar structure in New England, the Rev. Alfonso Dare and Mr. Charles K. Haddon, both summer residents, lead the congregation in this undertaking, both spiritually and financially. Philadelphia architect H. L. Duhring adapted the New England plans and supervised the project. Local carpenter and boat builder Max Wright hand carved the massive beams as part of his involvement in the construction. The

Rev. John Simpson, one of the incorporators of the Island Heights Association, was the first pastor of the Church. Simply put, the Church is Shingle Style with Colonial Revival influences, notably the open belfry. However, the interior speaks to and honors our nautical hearts and souls, from bayman to yachtsman, from paddler to power racer. The strong, wooden walls, beams and trim keep us in mind of the old sailing vessels that once plied these waters, keeps us in touch with our roots.

4. 110 OCEAN AVE. - PIERCE HOUSE - "TWIN OAKS"

around 1910, this house is thought to be designed by the Philadelphia architect Charles Z. Leder. It is an excellent example of Shingle Style with natural plain

cut cedar shingles covering all facades, including the massive porch posts. The large jerkinhead roof and gables emphasizes the horizontal lines

common to the Shingle Style. Captain R. K. Pierce was the owner of the Sunnyside, an award-winning speedboat.

Built throughout Philadelphia, Klaus the Sh

5. 114 OCEAN AVE. - OGDEN COTTAGE

This house was built around 1895 for John L. Ogden who worked for the Philadelphia Water Company. This early Shingle Style house was originally covered in cedar shingles. The rounded corner on the west end



area between Ocean Avenue and the river. It is 1 1/2 stories high, with a porch facing the campground. These cottages were simply built without a foundation; they had a first floor kitchen and living space, and then an open sleeping loft under the eaves. Next door, at 129 East Camp Walk, is a larger original building that served as the camp meeting offices and could accommodate visitors.



8. CAMP MEETING GROUNDS

This playground now empty of all trappings from its history, still whispers to the visitor who stands at the top of the bluff and gazes at the Toms River. Here sat the worshippers, looking down from this natural amphitheater toward where the preacher would have stood under the trees. This relationship with nature as part of worship is a typically 19th century notion of the appropriate way to make a connection with the



Lovers Lane, Island Heights, NJ



spiritual. The first structure built here was simply an octagonal preacher's stand, later replaced by a large open auditorium with lodgings over the platform for visiting clergy. The bluff was terraced with grass in wide steps leading down to the water. There was a "camp walk" that went all the way to the western bluff from this central location.



9. WEST CAMP WALK

The houses at #16 and #18 are two original camp meeting cottages with some alterations. You can imagine

Behind #18 still exists a "community well". The Gothic Revival Style based on 13th century French and English

characterized by a steep pitched roof, windows in the gables, often arched, a simple

12 West Camp Walk - Keyser Cottage

Frederick Peter built this cottage in 1900. The architect Louis Dohring create a new three story Shingle Style house by realigning two camp cottages and joining them with a large central hallway. Of particular interest are the eyebrow dormers in the roof on all sides. Bryant was an engraver and a

Frederick Peter who built a summer house in Island Heights (#2 on the Westray Tour). Bryant's daughter Mary married Howard Keyser Jr. Their sons, Howard Keyser III and James Keyser owned Keyser Bros. Iron Works, Philadelphia and made the Dodge Gates at the entrance to

camp meeting site of the Methodist North Cathedral (1900). This cottage is owned by Bryant's great-grandson, James M. B. Keyser. Three of the surrounding cottages all belonged to the Bryant family at one time.

12 Simpson Ave - R. Pinkstone River Front Cottage

Completed around 1875, this is the family center from Philadelphia. Reverend Simpson's architect worked on the house believed to have been designed by Philadelphia architect Henry Park. One of the main buildings still existing at the Philadelphia grounds in 1875. This is a classic example of an Queen Anne style house with a conical roof and a circular porch surrounding the three stone pillars across the front heights.

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This postcard is left photo from Island Heights Herald illustrated edition of 1895 above

12. 21 SIMPSON AVE.

This house is a typical two story cottage built in the 1880's. The high

peaked roof is decorated with "gingerbread" or bargeboards

highlighting the unusual double arched windows in the gables

13. 101 SIMPSON AVE. - DAVENPORT COTTAGE

The full two story wrap-around porch is unusual for Island Heights in the 1880's. The porch columns suggest a Colonial Revival influence. Thomas

Davenport, from Philadelphia, summered here and would bring his housekeeper as was common in those days. However, in this case, as the

story goes, when the owner passed away he willed the house to the housekeeper, whose family summered here for many years.

14. 103 SIMPSON AVE. - "THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE"



This photograph was taken in the 1920's.

This is an excellent example of Carpenter Gothic architecture, characterized by "gingerbread" ornamentation and sawn railings. Other outstanding features are the well preserved board and batten exterior (the original cedar boards are intact, but the battens have been replaced) and the gazebo porch with polygonal roof. In 1880, the property was deeded to Mary Graw, daughter of Rev. Jacob Graw, founder of the Island Heights Association.

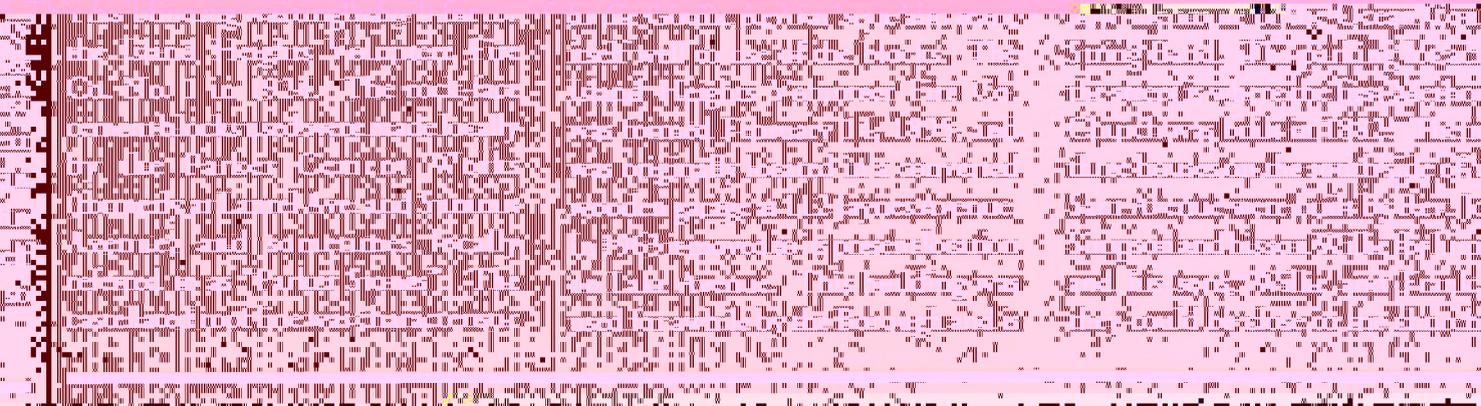
15. 105 SIMPSON AVE.

This cottage built around the 1880's, has sawn gable ornamentation copied from the Woolley Cottage on Jaynes

Avenue, now torn down, that is classic of the Carpenter Gothic Style. The use of straight "sticks" for ornamental

brackets and porch railings characteristic of the Stick Style.

16. 114 VAN SANT - "THE OLD FIREHOUSE"



16. 114 VAN SANT - "THE OLD FIREHOUSE" (CONT.)



Photograph of "The Old Firehouse"



Photograph of the original Firehouse located at 112 Jaynes Avenue.

17. 117 SIMPSON AVE. - THE BOWDINE HOUSE

This house was constructed about 1885 by Rev. John Simpson and his sons. It is a good example of the Vernacular Queen Anne Style, with

Colonial Revival details. The gambrel roof, rows of columns usually on a porch, and Neo-Palladian windows were Colonial elements often

combined in the Vernacular Style in Island Heights. Of particular interest are the Palladian windows - in its southern and northern peaks.

