

# Allentown Borough Historic Architecture Walking Tour

Find the walking tour online at <https://www.allentownvinj.org/walking-tour.html>

## 1. Cafferty Grist Mill-42 South Main Street\* c. 1855

Abel Cafferty built this mill in 1855, replacing the original mill built by Nathan Allen in 1706 which at that time served the surrounding Allens Town. The mill was in use until 1963. Note the impressive post and beam system with little use of nails inside to support the 4 story structure. The mill was also built with 300,000 handmade bricks which originated from local claybeds (current site of heritage park). The mill was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.



*Cafferty Grist Mill*

## 2. The Abel Cafferty House-38 South Main Street c. 1800

This federal style structure was the home of Abel Cafferty, the builder of the Cafferty grist mill. The bricks used in the front portion of this home were from the same clay pit as the bricks used in the construction of the mill. Note the bricks have fragments of metal sediment (usually iron alloy) in them known as slag, which was the style at the time. The slag appears as gray-black bricks scattered throughout especially on left side exterior wall. In the 1970s this house was sold to a development corporation and was almost demolished. However, through the efforts of local residents the house was preserved.



*Abel Cafferty House*

**3. The Imlay House -28 South Main Street\* c. 1790**

A Georgian style structure built around 1790 by Quaker John Imlay as an estate for his retirement. Georgian style architecture is notable for symmetry and proportions, derived from Greek and Roman architecture. Note the symmetrical and gothic style pediment over the doorway. The structure was built with fifteen rooms and eleven fireplaces. The French Louis XVI parlor wallpaper was sold by the third owner, Emma Gordon (died 1936) to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for display in the American wing. In addition, this structure was very likely a site on the underground railroad.



*The Imlay House*

**4. 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church & Parsonage (present day Allentown Public Library) 14-16 S. Main street\* c. 1879**

Built as a church and parsonage in 1879 by builders Elias and Benjamin Rogers. This is a Victorian style structure with Greek influence. Note the mansard roof on the parsonage portion of the building as well as the bell tower capped by a pedimented belfry. The church was very badly damaged by a fire in 1972 and then sold to the Allentown Public Library Association. The Association restored and renovated the building and won the NJ Historic Preservation Award in 2005 for best adaptive re-use. The transcribed bricks outside the library are used to raise funds for the Allentown Public Library Association which maintains the building.

*1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church & Parsonage*



**5. Allentown Methodist Church-23 Church St.\* c. 1859**

This congregation originally began to organize around 1790. The current church was built in 1859 by Elias and Benjamin Rogers for \$5,000. The church is a vernacular classic revival style which is notable for large columns, pilasters, pedimented windows and domes, demonstrated throughout this building. Vernacular architecture is a style influenced by local traditions, preferences and availability of nearby materials. The sanctuary was renovated in 1952 and in 1959 the Christian education building was added.



*Allentown Methodist Church*

**6. AME House and AME cemetery-33 Hamilton Street c. 1875**

Originally built and owned by the Union AME church in order to maintain the adjacent cemetery. This structure was built in 1875 in the vernacular Victorian style. Note the entrance on the south elevation near the cemetery. The AME cemetery next to this building dates back to 1835 and Sergeant George Ashby was buried in the cemetery in 1946. Sergeant George Ashby served in the 45<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Infantry and was the oldest surviving veteran of the Civil War in New Jersey at 102 years old. The Union AME church of Allentown is the second AME congregation in the county started in 1835. The original church was erected in 1850 and was located at 72 Church Street where the present day Union AME church building stands (built in the 1980s due to fire of the original building).



*AME House*

**7. Governor Newell House-81 South Main Street c. 1798**

This house was originally built in 1798 for Dr. Thomas Montgomery and is a vernacular federal style. William August Newell, was governor of New Jersey from 1857-1860 and moved into this house around 1844. He served three terms in US congress and established the U.S. Lifesaving Service (present day US Coast Guard). He was also personal physician to President Abraham Lincoln.



*Newell House*

**8. Allentown Presbyterian Church-20 High Street\* c. 1837**

A church structure was built in 1756 on the current site and was replaced by the present building in 1837. The current building was modelled after the Baptist church in Bordentown, NJ and is designed in a combination of Wren-Gibbs and Greek revival styles. Wren-Gibbs style entails elements of design borrowed from two architects Sir Christopher Wren and James Gibbs. It was a popular design for churches in England and America up until the mid-1800s. In addition, the current building has many bricks from the original structure built in 1756. The church is also Greek revival style and in 1858 the steeple and Greek revival portico were added. In 1929 the steeple burnt down and was reconstructed 2 feet lower by Charles D. Knowles. Also, Governor Newell is buried in the cemetery of Allentown Presbyterian Church.



*Allentown Presbyterian Church*

## **Bonus Stops**

**9. A. Robbins House-114 South Main Street c. 1856**

Built in 1856 for Aaron and Elizabeth Robbins. This house is a Victorian Italianate with an ornate cupola and octagonal eyebrow windows. Italianate style was popular from around 1840 until the 1880s and was influenced by the Italian renaissance architecture and countryside. Note the “twin” Italianate house at 123 South Main St. In 1941, Norman Pepler moved his funeral parlor into this residence and it still operates at this location currently.



A Robbins House

**10. Meirs House-123 South Main Street c.1858**

This Italianate style house was built for Charles Meirs and his wife Anna Meirs in 1858. It is a “twin” Italianate Victorian with the A. Robbins house across the street. Both houses were built by two generations of the same family. In addition, both Italianates have carriage houses behind the main structure.



*Meirs House*

*Sites open to the public are marked with (\*). The remaining are private residences and closed to public viewing.*



