

Town of Northfield
(Town of Bakersville)
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
Intersection of County Roads 585 and 563
Northfield
Atlantic County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1041

HABS
NJ
1-NORTH
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
(Town of Bakersville)

HABS No. NJ-1041

Location: New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail, Intersection of County Roads 585 and 563, Northfield, Atlantic County, New Jersey.

Significance: Bakersville, now Northfield, is representative of the early eighteenth-century bay towns which grew up along Shore Road, the main transportation artery prior to the railroad. The town had a prosperous shipbuilding business among other industries. Today, the town has become a mainland suburb to Atlantic City.

History: The hamlet of Bakersville, located south of Pleasantville, took its name from Daniel Baker who operated a shipyard on the east side of Shore Road in 1814. Other shipbuilders in the immediate vicinity were Christopher Van Sant and the Somers family. Bakersville's dependence on the sea is evident in the fact that navigation was a required school subject in 1817.¹

In 1850, Bakersville's businesses were comprised of two carpenters, one shipbuilder, and one merchant,² with one store and boarding house located on the east side of Shore Road at what today is Tilton Road, and the only other store nearby on the west side of Shore Road.

By 1901, An industrial directory described Bakersville, population 600, as a banking town with "all natural advantages necessary to make it a good location for manufacturing...The climate is healthful, the water supply abundant and of good quality." Two other industries, J.C. Fairfield and Sons, which manufactured fish guano, employing eight people, and Robert Muffett's brick manufacturing, employing nine people, also operated in Bakersville in the early 1900s.³

The name of the town changed from Bakersville to Northfield by 1905.⁴ Today, little distinguishes Northfield from Linwood and Pleasantville, the two other mainland suburbs of Atlantic City it is situated between. Now all traces of the town's early industrial success is covered with plazas, professional centers and law offices. Shed-like "modular" commercial buildings and a textured concrete post office represent typical architectural treatment. Perhaps the most obvious "historic" monument along Route 9 is the Northfield McDonald's; with its famous golden arches incorporated into the building and protruding through the roof above, the McDonald's marks a

¹ William McMahan, South Jersey Towns (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 236.
² Kirkbride's New Jersey Directory, in Atlantic County Historical Society Yearbook 9 (October 1980), 17-18.
³ A 1901 Industrial Directory, in Atlantic County Historical Society Yearbook (October 1988), 24.
⁴ John L. Kay and Chester M. Smith, Jr., New Jersey Postal History (Lawrence, MA: Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1977), 27-28.

tradition of fast-food service in an area now inundated with Seven-Elevens, Dunkin Donuts and the inevitable WaWa Market.

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- Sources: Kay, John L., and Smith, Chester M., Jr. New Jersey Postal History. Lawrence, MA: Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1977.
- Kirkbride, "New Jersey Directory of 1850" in Atlantic County Historical Society Yearbook 9. October 1980.
- McMahon, William. South Jersey Towns. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973.
- Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, 1991.
- "A 1901 Industrial Directory." Atlantic County Historical Society Yearbook. (October 1988): 26-7.

Project Information:

This project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of HABS historian Sara Amy Leach, project supervisor. Three historians completed the research during summer 1991: Field supervisor Sarah Allaback (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Alfred Holden (University of Vermont), and Camille Gatza (North Carolina). David Ames (University of Delaware) made the large-format photographs. Historian, Elizabeth Harris May (George Washington University), edited the HABS reports.