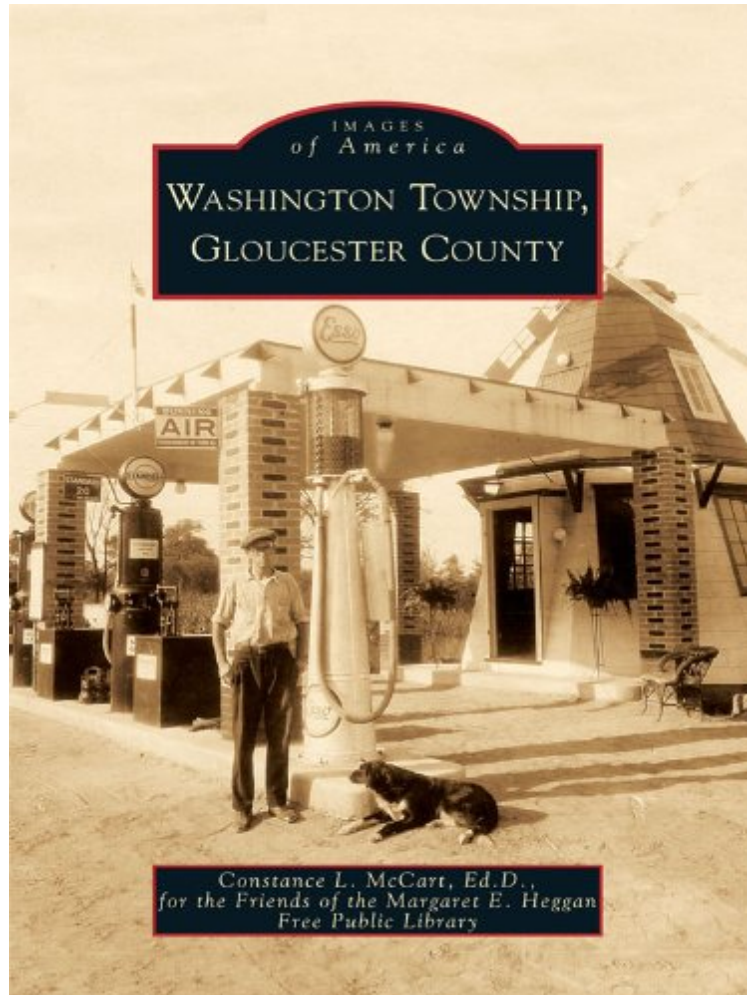


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## Washington Township, Gloucester County (Images of America)

*Constance L. McCart Ed.D.*

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**Constance L. McCart Ed.D. : Washington Township, Gloucester County (Images of America)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Washington Township, Gloucester County (Images of America):

Washington Township, now the largest community in Gloucester County, was first incorporated in 1836. Its 22 acres of land, however, had been settled by Europeans as early as the 18th century, when farms were established near Lenni-Lenape encampments. By the mid-19th century, the area listed the communities of Hurffville, Turnersville, Spring Mills or Grenloch Terrace, Dilkesboro, Creesville, Bunker Hill, Chestnut Ridge, and Bells Lake within the township borders. While it remained a farming community throughout the first half of the 20th century, during the 1950s modern housing developments began to replace the farms and peach orchards. The vintage photographs in Washington

Township, Gloucester County have been compiled to serve as an archive and assist in preserving the township's rich history.

Title: New 'Images of America' book highlights the history of Gloucester County's Washington Township  
Author: Jessica Beym  
Publisher: The Gloucester County Times  
Date: 6/29/09  
Those call Gloucester County's largest municipality home affectionately refer to it as "Township." But the history of this once rural, farming community which sprung from the soil in the shape of many housing developments may not be well-known to all its residents. A pictorial history of Washington Township can soon be found in the latest edition of the "Images of America" series, this one specifically dedicated to Washington Township, Gloucester County. The book will be available to the public June 29. Constance McCart, a resident of the township for more than three decades, authored the book with the help of numerous residents who offered their old photos and knowledge of the town. McCart, a member of the Friends of the Margaret E. Heggan Free Public Library, said she got involved with the book 18 months ago as a way to help raise money for the group which supports the library's services. "Washington Township is for the most part a bunch of developments that sprang up from farmland since the 1960s, starting with the Whitman Square development," McCart said. "And most of the people who live here are from somewhere else. Consequently, they don't know a whole heck of a lot about the town's history." Those who have lived here for some time may not call home "Township" but, rather, Turnersville, Sewell, Hurffville, or Grenloch. These villages named after many of the founding families help make up the 23-square-mile township. "By the mid-19th century, a number of small communities had sprung up around the farms," the book's introduction reads. "Some, like Dilksboro and Creesville, no longer exist in any form, while others Hurffville, Turnersville and more remain in name only as reminders of the early residents." While Washington Township is not the largest town in the county in terms of land, it is in terms of residents with more than 50,000 people. Many of them may not know that the township was originally part of neighboring Deptford Township, becoming incorporated as its own in 1836. For a while, it was part of Camden County, but then came back to its roots here in Gloucester. Because of the community's somewhat splintered history, McCart said that compiling the book became a bit more difficult than she had imagined. "There was no central location where you can find all the photos of our township, so it seemed as if that would be a tremendous idea to try to see that things didn't disappear," McCart said of another reason for creating the book. The group advertised and sent notices throughout the community to solicit photos for the book, and sometimes one family would lead them to another who happened to be the unofficial historian for one of the founding families. More than 100 pages of the book are filled with black and white photos from years and years ago, depicting images such as the Haines dairy farm that stood on East Holly Avenue in Hurffville, an old mansion built by Samuel Bell and the Bells Lake Mill, and freight cars unloading goods at the Grenloch train station. The book, which was published by Arcadia Publishing and will be sold for \$21.99, will be available June 29 at book stores as well as at the Heggan Library. A book signing will be held July 7. McCart said she hopes Washington Township residents will take interest in the book for its rich history. "I think they will get a better idea of the township as an entity instead of just a collection of developments," McCart said. "It will help give them a sense of place." About the Author  
Constance L. McCart, Ed.D., is a retired school administrator and graduate of Rowan and Temple Universities. She is a resident of the Grenloch Terrace section of the township and resides in the Colonial-era Wilkins family home. All of the author's profits from book sales will benefit the Friends of the Margaret E. Heggan Free Public Library of Washington Township.