

David Cochran, 3 min.

1. Where on Earth is Blawenburg NJ?

Blawenburg isn't the best-known place on Earth or even in the Princeton area for that matter. I rode through the village many times on my way to Rutgers without realizing where I was. I once had a mechanic at a car repair place just a couple miles away near Routes 206 and 518 look at my address and ask me where Blawenburg is. Most say, "oh yeah" after you tell them where it is.

It has a specific location identified by latitude and longitude coordinates: 40.4078° N, 74.7025° W. Blawenburg has a post office and zip code – 08504. The village is often identified by its street location - at the intersection of Route 518 and Great Road, which confusingly changes to County Route 601 (also named Belle Mead-Blawenburg Road and formerly named County Route 13) at the very center of Blawenburg. Or some may say, "It's just southeast of Sourland Mountain." Of course, if you have no idea where Sourland Mountain is or why it is sour, this may not be helpful at all.



Blawenburg in the southern part of Somerset County, NJ
It helps to tell people that it is a part of Montgomery Township. It's a little confusing to have a village within a larger municipality, but that's the way it is in our old township. Blawenburg isn't a separate municipality. In government-speak, it is called a CDP, a Census-designated Place. This means that the Census Bureau collects data specifically on Blawenburg despite its unincorporated status. In Montgomery Township, all the other sections are also CDPs - Belle Mead, Harlingen, and Skillman. In

the old days, the local communities had more of an identity than the township.

It can be difficult to get a package delivered in Blawenburg if you use a Blawenburg address...There is no home delivery in Blawenburg, so you go to the post office to get your mail, greet your neighbors, and find out what's really happening around the village.

It can be difficult to get a package delivered in Blawenburg if you use a Blawenburg address. Within Blawenburg, you can say that you live in Skillman. You then get to have a mailbox and have the Skillman post office deliver the mail to your house. There is no home delivery in Blawenburg, so you go to the post office to get your mail, greet your neighbors, and find out what's really happening around the village. There is something to be said for going to the post office and being greeted by name by a cheerful post mistress.

Shipping companies sometimes have trouble finding an address in Blawenburg. It doesn't come up on all GPS units as Blawenburg. I once had a shipper try three times to deliver a package. Ultimately, he had to call me when standing in front of my house to be assured that he was at the right place. Some people use the Skillman zip code which is read by all GPS units. These days many carriers automatically convert Blawenburg to Montgomery Township to save confusion.

Some hate the location confusion in Blawenburg, but I kind of like it. I like telling people that I live six houses east of the church. That's pretty easy to understand. Or I really like saying I live in the really old house with the really big tree in the front. But a decade or so ago, Wild Azalea Lane was cut through and I had to change the directions I was giving to say that I was in the fifth house from Wild Azalea. Alas, Google Maps seems to get it right, so now I just give people my street address and let them figure it out. Artificial intelligence seems to be helping!

As you will see over time in this blog, even though people aren't sure where it is, Blawenburg has an interesting history that many people, especially those who live here, should know about. The powers that be in the state and national government seem to agree that Blawenburg is a special place by putting it on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

In coming blogs, we will look at who lived here before the Dutch folks arrived, how Blawenburg got its name, and who some of the original families were. I look forward to your participation in this blog.

Blawenburg Fact: Blawenburg has two listings on the State and National Register of Historical Places. The village was awarded the honor first and then Blawenburg Reformed Church was awarded as well.

Looking Ahead: Before the Dutch Settlers Arrived