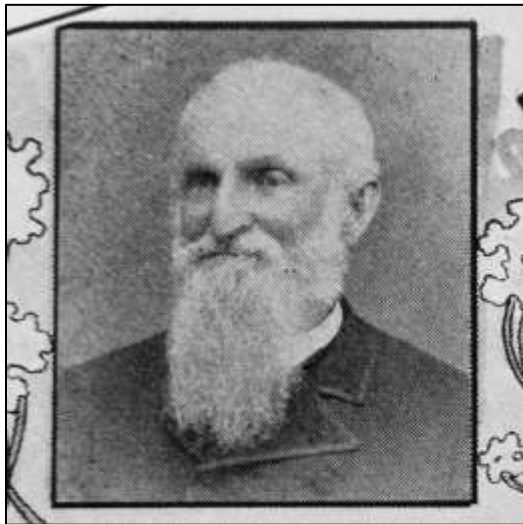


David Graham Thomas House
59 Graham Avenue, Metuchen

The David Graham Thomas House at 59 Graham Avenue, at the intersection with Spring Street, was built ca. 1850. The land on which the house now sits was once part of a large parcel of undeveloped land owned and farmed by one of the area's early European landowners, Samuel Compton.

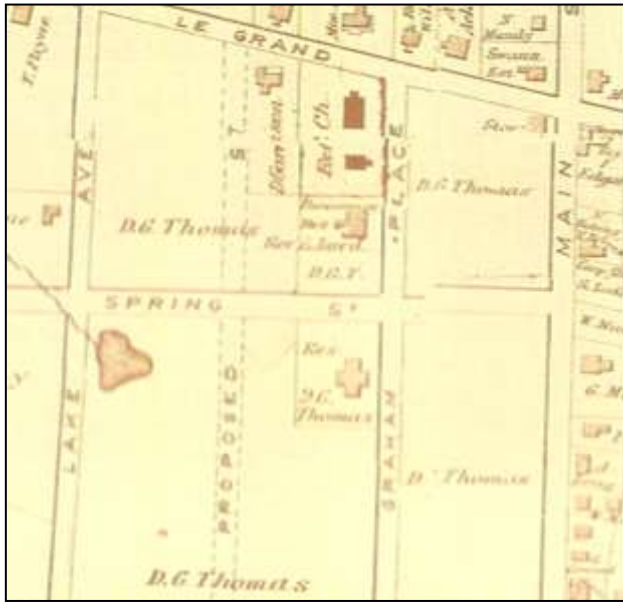


In 1849, Compton sold the area bounded by the current day Northeast Corridor line, Main Street, Lake Avenue, and High Street to David Graham Thomas (1808-1893). Thomas, who had come to this area of New Jersey with his brother, Lewis, from Woodbury, Connecticut in 1831, built this house ca. 1850.

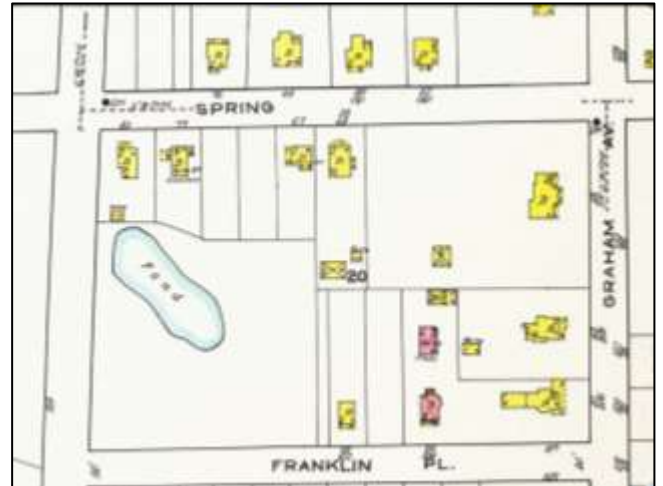
During the next several years, Thomas opened Graham Avenue and surrounding streets and expanded his property through additional land purchases.

While serving as an Elder in the Reformed Church, he donated the land for the first Reformed Church building (built 1857) and its Parsonage House (built 1867). The church, which sat facing Le Grand (now Amboy) Avenue at the foot of Graham Avenue, later burned and was rebuilt at the corner of Lake Avenue and Franklyn Place. The Parsonage House was enlarged and became a private residence after being separated from Le Grand (Amboy) Avenue by the Lehigh Valley Railroad. After the cut for the railroad was made, Thomas built the first footbridge crossing here for his use. The Parsonage was later home to Governor George S. Silzer and is still extant.





Census records from the second half of the 19th century show Thomas and his wife, Ann, his large family, and his servants living on the property, being operated as a farm. In some years their adult children & spouses are also listed as residents in the home, notably the Reformed Church's Reverend N.I.M. Bogert, who was married to their daughter, Augusta.



In 1893, Thomas died and was buried in the First Presbyterian Church cemetery on Woodbridge Avenue. As a memorial gift, the family donated the pond and property to the west of the house, on Lake Avenue, to the borough of Metuchen. It was named Tommy's Pond and Thomas Park in his honor. Anna continued to live in the house into the 1920s.

The house remains a prominent and significant element in the historic Graham Avenue/Spring Street neighborhood.



Images:

David Graham Thomas House, ca. 1895

David Graham Thomas (1808-1893).

1850 Atlas of Middlesex County, showing Thomas' property.

1868 Map of Metuchen, showing Thomas' house and property.

1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Metuchen

David Graham Thomas House, 2001.

Compiled with images and information from the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society Archives by Tyreen Reuter in 2018 for the Metuchen Historic Preservation Committee.