

# SUMMIT

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Section

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Magazine

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# EDGE

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Cover Photo by Nick Della Sala



# Let's Go to SUMMIT

**B**elieve it or not, there was a time in New Jersey's agricultural past when land at the crest of a mountain was considered to be more trouble than it was worth. Not so anymore. In fact, Summit might be Exhibit A. Few places in America can match the combination of beauty, energy, culture, affluence and convenience Summit packs into its six square miles. These are not words one sees grouped together very often; for most towns, in fact, they are aspirational.

The "top-down" view of Summit begins, appropriately, on a ridge of the Second Watchung Mountain, home to the Reeves-Reed Arboretum. The grounds were developed over a period of decades by several prominent landscape architects, including Ellen Biddle Shipman and Calvert Vaux. Vaux co-designed Central Park with his partner, Frederick Law Olmsted. Three county parks within Summit's borders offer additional

recreational activities and, of course, the Watchung Reservation abuts the town.

Summit's historic downtown, which claims a spot on the National Register, is home to more than 200 businesses. It has been a shopping and dining destination for tens of thousands of area residents for decades, catering to a wide range of tastes and budgets. Its most iconic eatery is undoubtedly the Summit Diner, an Art Deco masterpiece located at Union Place and Summit Avenue.



Upper Cased Editorial

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Summit has long been a hub of the performing and visual arts, thanks to the Summit Playhouse and Visual Arts Center of New Jersey. Mondo Summit, on Springfield Avenue, combines various aspects of art and culture in a “vertical mall” topped by an intimate performance space. For many years, the city boasted its own opera house; it is now a multifunctional space at the nexus of Kent Place and Springfield Avenue.

Summit’s educational landscape is one of its prime selling points, offering an appealing mix of public and private educational options. More than 4,000 students make use of the city’s nine public schools, which recently earned a rating of 9 (out of a possible 10) from greatschools.org. Summit Senior High typically ranks among the Top 20 schools in the state. The area also features several parochial schools, and Summit is home to Kent Place, one of the finest all-girls prep schools in the Northeast.

The population of Summit is just north of 22,000 and has been holding steady in the low-20s since

*Around the Block*  
Or *Around the Globe*

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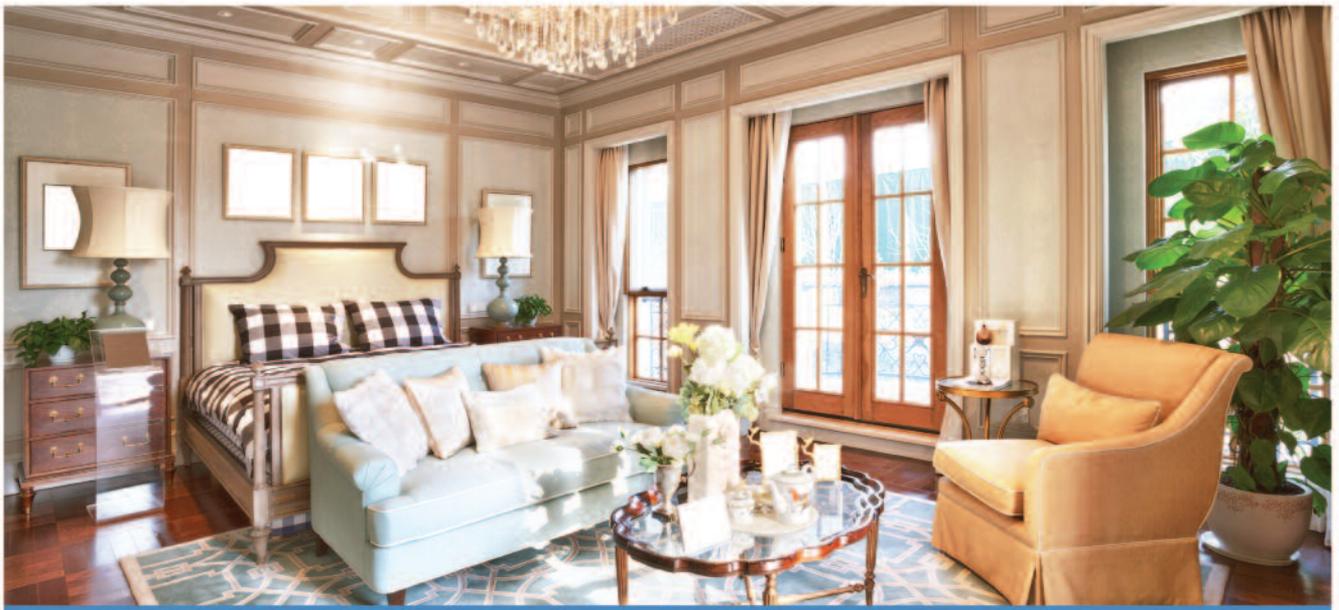
Photo by Summit Downtown, Inc.

the late 1950s. A post-WWII building boom transformed the sleepy suburb into a popular enclave for New York’s financial professionals, and that is still the case. At least a quarter of Summit residents are connected in one way or another to the financial services industry. Given its commutable distance (just over 25 miles) from Manhattan, homes in Summit are naturally in high demand. And although—like most affluent towns in New Jersey—Summit hit a speed bump during the most recent recession, real estate prices remained robust. Today the median price for a home is over \$1 million, with attractive entry-level homes starting in the high \$300’s. There is an abundance of large homes in town, many designed by well-known architects.



### A LITTLE HISTORY

The origin of Summit’s name (aside from its obvious geography) is not entirely clear. During the American Revolution, it was called Beacon Hill because warning fires were lit to alert militia to British troop movement.



Benjamin Moore

FARROW & BALL



www.RicciardiBrothers.com



Photo by Nick Della Sala

Prior to the war, it was referred to as Turkey Hill. After the war, locals in Springfield sometimes called it The Heights. Summit was part of New Providence through the Civil War. It was incorporated as a township in 1869 and reincorporated as a city two decades later.

Even so, the name *Summit* appears to have already been in play by the early years of the 19th century. In 1837, for example, the old Morris and Essex Railroad came through the area and carved a path through “The Summit hill,” which immediately bolstered the area’s commerce and made it a country getaway for wealthy New Yorkers, who stayed at small hotels and inns. Also in 1837, famed legal scholar James Kent moved to “Summit Lodge.” The four-room house was eventually absorbed by the larger structure that today

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stands on Kent Place Boulevard. The Kent Place School was built nearby, on his old property.

In the early 1900s, as Summit became a popular pick for well-heeled commuters, regular train and trolley service to Newark was established. Broad Street, which is uncharacteristically straight (and broad) was originally laid out to accommodate a trolley line.



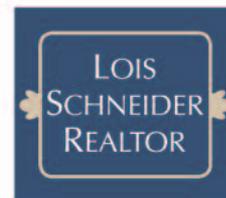
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## RICH & FAMOUS

Throughout its history, Summit has been home to a steady stream of high achievers. Among its native daughters and sons are actors Meryl Streep, computer scientist Dennis Ritchie, seven-time U.S. tennis champion Bill Larned and baseball All-Star Willie Wilson, whose exploits on the (football) field for Summit High draw thousands of views on YouTube. Summit has also been the choice of countless captains of industry, as well as several game-changing scientists and engineers. **EDGE**



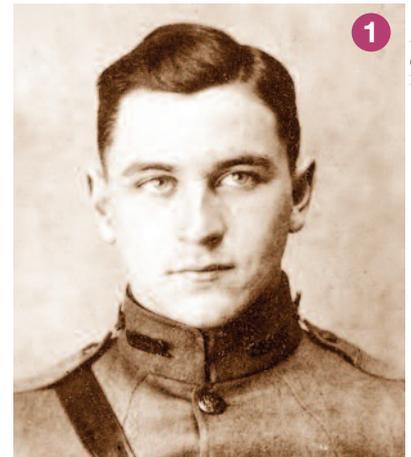
Photos by Nick Della Sala



# So You Think You Know Summit

## 1. Summit resident Ray Brooks is America's...

- a. most famous lion tamer
- b. first knee transplant recipient
- c. only round-the-world balloonist
- d. last surviving World War I flying ace



U.S. Army

## 2. The Reeves-Reed Arboretum on Hobart Avenue...

- a. has over two million daffodils
- b. is Union County's only arboretum
- c. was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted
- d. was built on the site of a former Nike missile base



NJ.gov

## 3. The Carter House on Butler Parkway...

- a. serves as home to the Summit Historical Society
- b. was not originally on Butler Parkway
- c. is the oldest building in Summit
- d. all of the above

Jeff Boyce



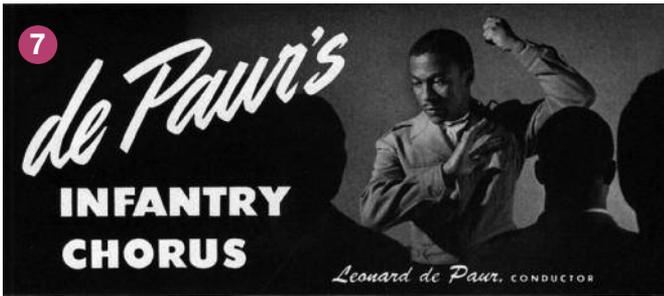
4



5

Nobel Foundation

Upper Case Editorial



7

**4. The Summit Diner...**

- a. was used in re-shoots of the 1982 film *Diner*
- b. was appraised by Sotheby's at \$5 million in 2006
- c. was the location of a 1979 surprise birthday party for Meryl Streep
- d. was manufactured in 1938 by Elizabeth's O'Mahoney Diner Company

**5. In 1972, Summit resident John Bardeen became the only...**

- a. two-time Nobel Prize-winning physicist
- b. three-time Union County "Man of the Year"
- c. four-time New Jersey bowling champion
- d. five-time Publisher's Clearing House winner

**6. The team name of Kent Place School's sports teams is the...**

- a. Ducks
- b. Dragons
- c. Diamonds
- d. Destroyers

**7. Summit-born Leonard de Paur...**

- a. served as a Musical Director for the Federal Theater Project
- b. was a U.S. Army lieutenant during World War II
- c. created Lincoln Center's "Out of Doors" festival
- d. all of the above

**8. Summit grade-schooler Tracy Marrow is better known as...**

- a. Ice-T
- b. Heavy D
- c. Too \$hort
- d. Big Daddy Kane

**9. The Sisters who formed Summit's Our Lady of the Rosary in 1919 came from a monastery in...**

- a. Prouilhe, France
- b. Brooklyn, New York
- c. Union City, New Jersey
- d. Boston, Massachusetts

**10. Architect Arthur Bates Jennings, designer of The Summit Playhouse, was best known for his...**

- a. turreted structures
- b. railroad terminals
- c. failed presidential run
- d. all of the above



9

Dominican Nuns



10

Jim Henderson

**Quiz answers at the end  
of page 12!**



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Visual Arts Center of New Jersey



Upper Case Editorial

**11. The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey traces its history back to the 1930s, when...**

- a. Eleanor Roosevelt donated a sculpture to the city
- b. *It Happened One Night* had its world premiere in Summit
- c. seven painters rented a studio loft on Springfield Avenue
- d. art students began sketching passersby on Hillside Avenue

**12. Summit High baseball legend Willie Wilson...**

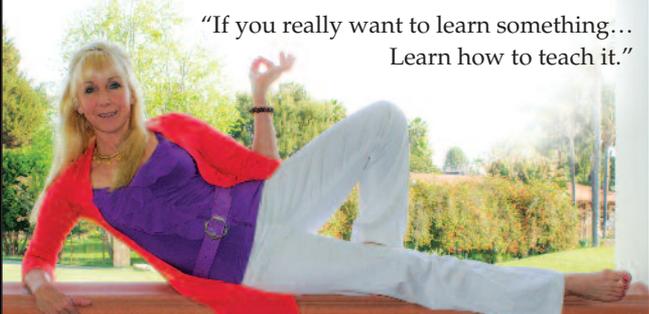
- a. played most of his games as a catcher
- b. stole 28 bases as a senior—all standing up
- c. had the highest batting average in the major leagues in 1982
- d. all of the above



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**So You Think You Know Summit...**

8A, 9C, 10A, 11C, 12D

**Answers: 1D, 2B, 3D, 4D, 5A, 6B, 7D,**

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