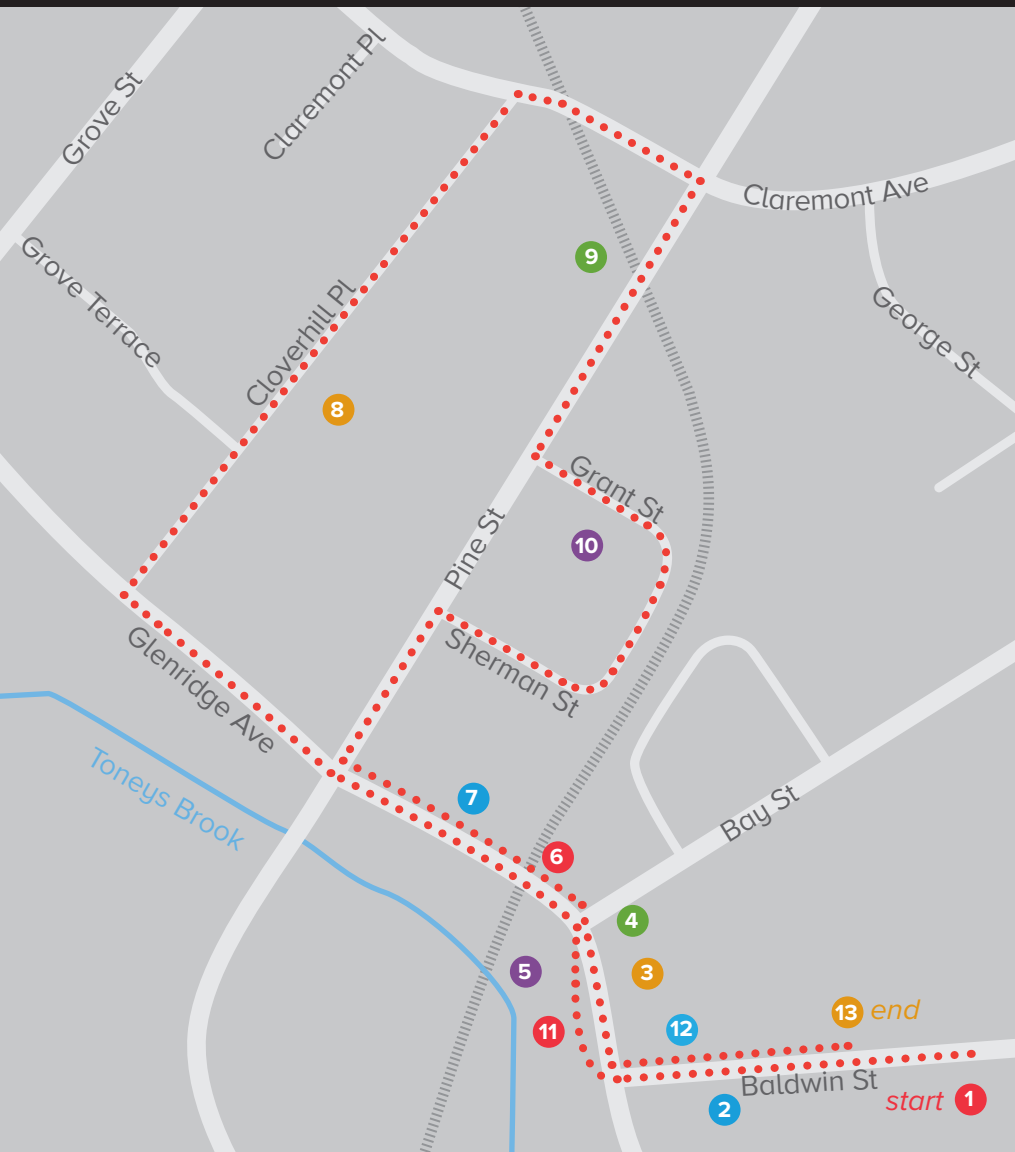


PINE STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT 1 MILE

Montclair's Little Italy



In 2000, the Pine Street Historic District was listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** because it “has retained its historic integrity and reflects the Italian working class community which developed and resided in this neighborhood in the late 19th and early 20th century.” Italian immigrants brought their way of life to America – one dominated by the church, family, and close social circles. They also brought their Italian craftsmanship and masonry skills. The Pine Street area was also home to African American families moving north during the Great Migration.

Begin in front of the Minnie A. Lucey House

1 MINNIE A. LUCEY HOUSE, 1930 272 Baldwin Street

Originally named the Baldwin Street Community Center, this building housed community and social programs that had begun in the Baldwin Street School in 1915 for the Italian immigrant and African American families that lived in this area. An Italianate villa, it was renamed in 1932 to honor a beloved social worker who helped Italian immigrants assimilate into the American culture. This building, the Baldwin Street School, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church dominated the social, cultural, and religious lives of this community.

Walk east towards Glenridge Avenue

2 FORMER BALDWIN STREET SCHOOL (a.k.a. GEORGE WASHINGTON SCHOOL), 1912–1923 15 Glenridge Avenue

Now a condo building, this Neoclassical structure was one of many schools built in the early 1900s to accommodate the growing population. After the Montclair Board of Education no longer needed the space in 1957, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church operated a school in the building from 1961-1971. This building is located partially in Glen Ridge!

Turn right on Glenridge Avenue.

3 THE FUSCO BUILDING, 1913 29-31 Glenridge Avenue

Look up and see “Fusco” near the roof of this building. The Fusco family, who came to America as part of the large wave of Italian immigrants in the 1890s to 1920, was one of the earlier Italian families to settle in Montclair and a prolific developer of this area. The family also owned a contracting business at 49 Bay Street and several other residential buildings.

4 ST. SEBASTIAN SOCIETY 37 Glenridge Avenue

Affiliated with Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Saint Sebastian Society of Montclair was founded on May 23, 1926 by the Italian immigrants who emigrated from the town of Cerami, Sicily. Even today, the Society hosts a festival here every year to honor their champion St. Sebastian.

5 TONEY'S BROOK

A small tributary of the Passaic River, Toney's Brook, perhaps named for Anthony Oliff or Olive (1636-1723), was the site of an early industrial community in Montclair. The first mill on the waterway was built in 1695 just south of here near today's Bloomfield Avenue. By the late 19th century, the modest workers' homes were increasingly occupied by the Italian, Irish, and other immigrant groups, which led to the development of the working class neighborhood in the late 19th and early 20th century. Barely noticeable today, Toney's Brook was once the lifeblood of the community.

6 MONTCLAIR CONNECTION, 2002 The railroad tracks

In 2002, two railroad lines servicing Montclair were joined via a new track and grade crossing on Glenridge Avenue at “the Montclair Connection.” The “Montclair Line” entered Montclair south of Glenridge Avenue and terminated at Bay Street. The “Boonton Line” ran a few blocks north of Glenridge Avenue with stations from Walnut Street to Montclair Heights. To achieve the connection, a number of homes along Glenridge Avenue, Grant and Sherman Streets were demolished.



This photo, taken in 1930, is of Glenridge Avenue looking west. Notice the buildings on the right side of the street – 55 and 57 – discussed below.

7 51 GLENRIDGE AVE, 55 GLENRIDGE AVE, AND 57 GLENRIDGE AVE

Look at the buildings on your left after you cross the railroad tracks. Here you see the three prominent styles of architecture in the neighborhood. In general, you can date other buildings based on these three styles. 51 Glenridge Avenue, built in 1890, is a vernacular building, like a small farmhouse. 55 Glenridge Avenue, built around 1910 by Italian craftsmen, is highly ornamented with limestone keys, and elaborate brickwork. 57 Glenridge Avenue, built around 1927, is much simpler and most of the detail work is in brick patterns, typical of post World War I buildings.

Continue on to Cloverhill Place, then turn right.

8 CLOVERHILL PLACE

Not officially part of the Pine Street Historic District, Cloverhill Place was a transitional street. Surnames in the 1925 phone directory include Romano, Gagliano, Fusco, and Cacciopo mixed in amongst Applegate and Chicester. Minus cars and some vinyl siding, the houses on this street retain the look of the early 20th century.

Turn right on Claremont Avenue, then right on to Pine Street.

Many Italian immigrants came to this country to escape the economic depression gripping Italy following the Italian unification in the 1870s.

9 OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH, 1937 94-98 Pine Street

This Romanesque and Italianate church, reminiscent of churches in Italy, speaks to the immigrants who built it and worshiped here. The second church on this site, it was the last major building completed in the historic district. The first Mass was held in an unfinished wooden church in 1907 just south of this church.

Turn left on to Sherman Street, follow the street around.

10 SHERMAN AND GRANT STREETS

As you walk along these streets, you get a sense of what this community looked and felt like in the early 20th century, with multi-family housing for the increasing Italian immigrant population. If you look across the tracks, you can see where Grant Street continues. Before the Montclair Connection, these two streets were one continuous road.

Turn left on to Pine Street, then left on to Glen Ridge Avenue.

11 THE MATTHEW G. CARTER APARTMENTS 20 Glenridge Avenue

Although not that old, this building honors Matthew Carter, Associate Pastor at Union Baptist Church, housing activist, and first African American mayor of Montclair (1968).

Turn left on Baldwin Street.

12 NICOLO'S BAKERY 2-6 Baldwin Street

Nicolo's Bakery is reminiscent of the many Italian-style businesses that defined this community as Montclair's “Little Italy” throughout most of the 20th century. Nicolo's was established in 1967.

13 TOWN MARKER Near 18 Baldwin Street

Note the small stone marker (about 3 feet high) near the street. This marker, with ML on one side and BL on the opposite side, marked the boundary between Montclair and Bloomfield, now Glen Ridge. The actual town line seems to have shifted a bit over time.