

Title:

Haledon, New Jersey: A Renaissance In The Making?

Word Count:

405

Summary:

Passaic County, New Jersey is home to a number of towns that point to its industrial past, including Haledon, a gritty borough that finds itself at a critical crossroad between unchecked urban blight and budding renaissance.

Keywords:

Haledon, Passaic County, New Jersey, urban renewal, business improvement district, Manchester High

Article Body:

Not every small town in America can live up to a realtor's dream of providing top notch schools, new housing, well kept streets, and abundant recreational opportunities. Where Haledon, New Jersey currently lacks in refinement, it offsets some of this with its sense of history as well as opportunity. Read on to find out more about this small Passaic County borough.

On the western border of the city of Paterson in northern New Jersey lies a gritty town, Haledon, home to more than 8400 residents compacted into an aging one square mile borough. As a working class community, the town has long served as a bedroom community for blue collar workers who skillfully manned the textile mills that dotted the town and surrounding communities for well over a century.

Today, the mills are no longer in use and most of the buildings have since been converted to other uses. Once a community occupied mainly by Dutch and Italian immigrants, the borough's tapestry has expanded to include residents from Eastern Europe, Latin America, and from various other parts of the world. Indeed, the shops and stores scattered throughout Haledon point to the rise of the local Muslim population, including Circassians, who are helping to shape Haledon's future.

Haledon government officials are currently in the process of preparing an important overhaul of the borough's main business district on Belmont Avenue by installing new curbing, sidewalks, streetlights and pavers, as well as looking at possibly securing private property to develop much needed off street parking. A federal grant totaling \$350,000 was secured in December 2004 which will be

used toward the project.

The town's most important landmarks include the Botto House/American Labor Museum on Norwich Street, a rallying point for the 1913 Paterson Silk Strike and the borough hall on Belmont Avenue which itself was once a mill.

School age children in Haledon attend the town's lone elementary-middle school and then can go on to Manchester Regional High School, also located within the town.

Overall, the town has a shortage of recreational facilities - there is no municipal pool - and the borough has its share of urban blight. High taxes, a limited infrastructure, underperforming schools, and a declining business base are all challenges currently faced by the borough. Still, with the anticipated sale of borough owned property including the Haledon Reservoir, a much needed cash infusion may help to bring about a long anticipated and much needed renaissance for the borough.