



# FOUNTAINS

ISSUE 7

The Official Newsletter Of The Sussex-Wantage Historical Society

Spring—Summer 2021

## Message From The President

Hello to all members. We had our annual meeting on May 29th this year in the pouring rain at Deckertown Commons. As you might expect, it was not well attended because of the weather. I have a few great things to talk about. This year the Sussex Fire Department celebrates its 125th anniversary will be playing host to the 101st annual Fireman's Inspection Parade on October 2nd in Sussex Boro. I will have our table at this years Wantage Fall Festival at Woodbourne Park on October 9th and also at Sussex Day on October 23rd. I hope to see you all there. Sussex County History Day is back this year and will be at the Academy Green behind 79 Main Street in Newton. Of course I will be set up there as well. Also some really big news, the Sussex Boro Mayor and Council has designated the area formerly known as Bogg's Field, located behind the Clove Lake dam, an official park and renamed it the T.J. Dunn Community Park. We are hoping to move the fountain that he donated to Sussex in 1906 into that park, and we are scheduled to have a playground, donated by Alexandra's Playgrounds and built by the local community, installed on October 16th. We are also partnering with the Sussex Borough Recreation Committee to co-sponsor their events and help raise money for them. I also want to make mention that in 2019 the Deckertown Union and Papakating Cemetery was awarded a Sussex County Historical Marker. There is a very nice about 1 and a half minute power point slide show about the cemetery put together by Lisa Permunion. You can see it at <https://www.sussex.nj.us/cn/webpage.cfm?tpid=16951> or go to the Historic Marker Program homepage and click on the Deckertown Union & Papakating Cemetery slideshow link. As always, for the latest news on what is happening with the society or for Sussex and Wantage news, Like and follow the Sussex-Wantage Historical Society on Facebook or drop me a line with any questions or comments. Have a great summer—Mario

**2021 Annual Meeting  
Held  
Saturday, May 29,  
2021  
2022 Annual  
Meeting date TBD.**

## In This Issue

- Union House
- Resolutions to establish the T,J. Dunn Community Park and move the Fountain
- Wantage—Part 3
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# Union House



**Union House—Sussex Borough**

The property was originally owned by IG Coykendall in 1848 and it was not an Inn at all at that time. It was an antique store and a clothing store and an attached dwelling to the north in 1885. It became by 1904, a furniture store, jewelry store, a cobbler shop, and a Chinese laundry on the first floor with a meat store and billiard room in the basement. There was also a bowling alley attached in the rear. By then it had expanded into an Inn. The public library occupied the former jewelry store in the middle of the building and in 1904 it was sold by Benjamin H. Smith, who took possession of it in April 1878, to Frank U. Dickson. It was called the Union House at that time and Dickson kept the name. A Sussex County Independent article dated November 4, 1904, states "the house is well equipped with electric lights, steam heat and Lake Rutherford water, with the finest system of sewerage to be found in any hotel in the state, all of which have been introduced during the past ten years by Mr. Smith. The barns, sheds and outbuildings are comparatively new and of the best material." The Union House comprised the main block of the building fronting Main Street until about 1910, when the bar was added to the southwest and a three-story addition to the northwest. It had served as a retreat for many during Kilpatrick's great Civil War Reenactment and many dignitaries had stayed there. It was then sold by Mr. Dickson to Mr. and Mrs. Louis Stout (I do not know the year) and it was they who changed the name to the Sussex Inn. Today it is the Early American Tavern. It is an important part of Deckertown/Sussex Borough history and is the third oldest standing building in the Borough behind the Fountain Square Inn and Old Stone Bakery.

# T.J. Dunn Park & Fountain Move Resolutions

## **BOROUGH OF SUSSEX RESOLUTION #2021-83R**

### **DESIGNATING BLOCK 204, LOT 19 AS T.J. DUNN COMMUNITY PARK**

Thomas Jefferson Dunn known as TJ Dunn was a great and notable citizen of the Borough of Sussex. In 1905 Mr. Dunn donated a drinking fountain at NYS&W Railroad Terminal and in 1906 he donated a second drinking fountain at the L&N.E. Railroad Terminal.

He was a devout congregant of the First Baptist Church of Sussex where he donated the steeple clock, pipe organ and a large stained glass window.

T.J. Dunn played an intricate role in the history of the Borough of Sussex and for this we honor him with a namesake park.

**WHEREAS**, TJ Dunn was a great and notable citizen of the Borough of Sussex and his 2 donated fountains, Steeple clock, and organ among other things are an intricate part of Sussex Borough's history;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by that the Governing Body of the Borough of Sussex, Sussex County, honor that contribution by designating Block 204 Lot 19 in the Borough of Sussex as T.J. Dunn Community Park

**CERTIFICATION:** I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Governing Body of the Borough of Sussex, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, at a meeting held on May 18, 2021.

  
Antoinette Smith, RMC, Clerk  
Sussex Borough



**BOROUGH OF SUSSEX  
RESOLUTION #2021-84R**

**AUTHORIZING RELOCATION OF WATER FOUNTAIN**

**WHEREAS**, a water fountain was presented to the Borough of Sussex by T. J. Dunn in 1906 and has had a significant and iconic presence in the Borough for decades; and

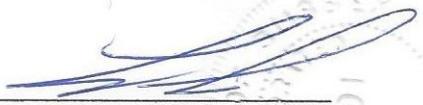
**WHEREAS**, due to development within the Borough, the water fountain was removed from public display and, because of its historic value and significance, stored and preserved at the Borough's Department of Public Works site; and

**WHEREAS**, an appropriate location for display of the water fountain has been found; namely, at the T.J. Dunn Community Park, in Sussex Borough, New Jersey;

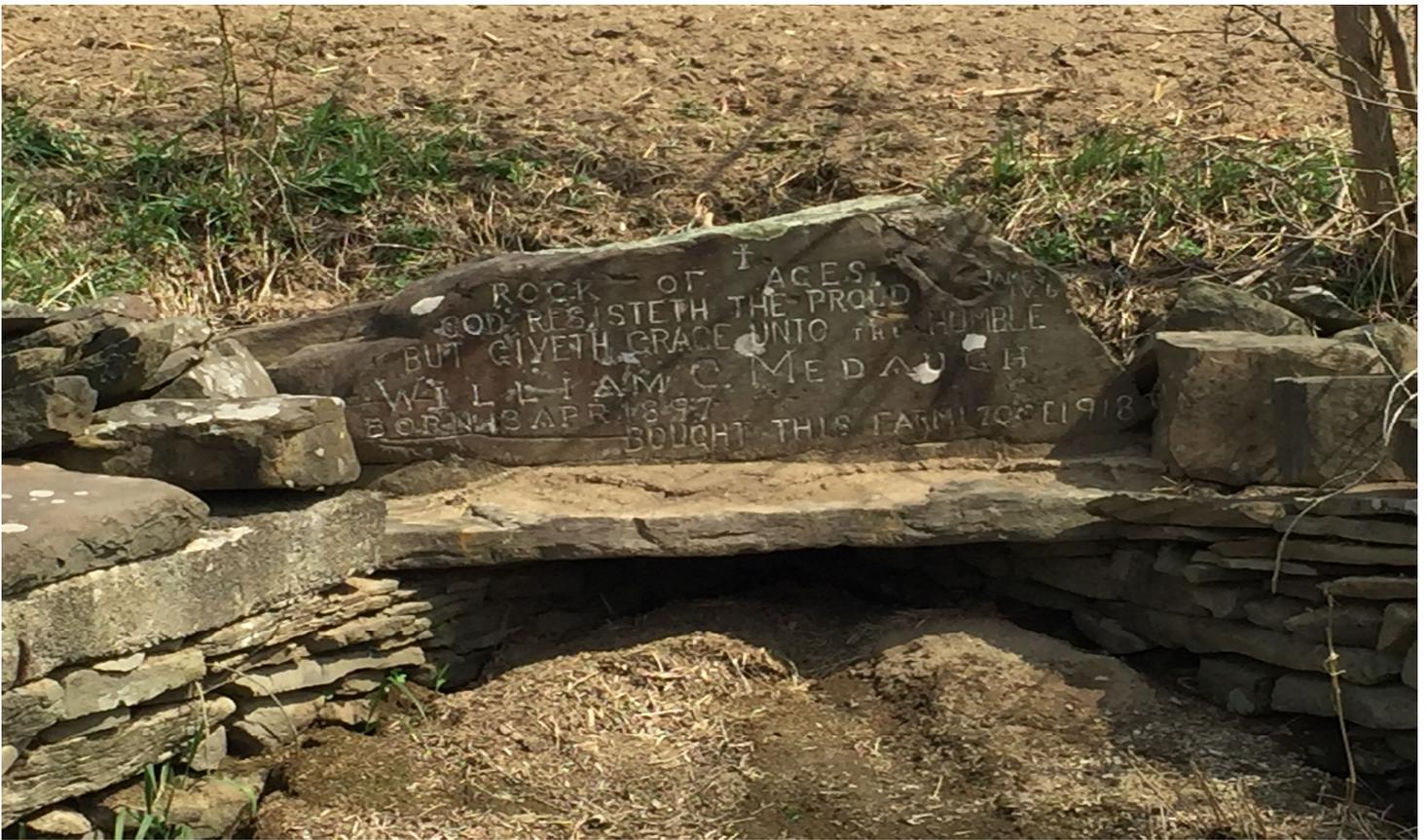
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Governing Body of the Borough of Sussex, Sussex County, that:

The T.J. Dunn Fountain currently preserved at the Borough's Department of Public Works site be relocated to the T.J. Dunn Community Park.

**CERTIFICATION:** I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Governing Body of the Borough of Sussex, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, at a meeting held on May 18, 2021.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Antoinette Smith, RMC, Clerk  
Sussex Borough





Hickory Street—Libertyville - Wantage

## Wantage Township (Part 3)(Final)

In the early 1800's, making a homestead in Wantage was very difficult. It was thick with trees. Depending on how much property you had, it could take years to clear enough land to try to make it suitable for farming. Most early farms were for the owner's own use and not for selling their crops. They would produce enough to sustain themselves and store what they could in root cellars (some which are still viewable today on some roads) for the winter. Some crops would be used to barter for items that they could not grow or did not have. If they were lucky enough to have a few cows, they would have milk, cheese, and butter and at the end of the cow's life, beef. There were some merchants starting to pop up in Deckertown and depending on where you lived in Wantage, you may try to brave the dirt, potted roads to get there and pick up some salt, tea, coffee, textiles, and other dry goods. Transportation was very tough. Many roads, if you could call them that, were nothing more than just worn, narrow paths that no one ever maintained. The main roads did get some more attention though and the township did have road masters as early as 1811. The main roads came to be called 'highways' and money was raised for their maintenance, though what that maintenance was is hard to tell. There are many reports of wagons getting stuck after a heavy rain. If it snowed, you were out of luck because there was no snow plowing back then. Early settlers also relied on wildlife for food. Deer, bear, various birds, etc. were hunted and prepared. Their favorite though was pork which they got hunting the hogs that they would find roaming in the forests. Their fat could be used for lard, their meat could be salted or smoked for long storage. In 1833, with the invention of the steel plow, it seems that things changed overnight. The invention of the steel plow really sped things up. The wooden plow had to be pulled by oxen and clumsy and would break down. The steel plow was sleek and could be pulled by horses. They were able to expand farms much faster and grow more crops. Corn was an important crop because it had many uses. Besides keeping some for their personal consumption, they would cut down the stalks in September and stand them up to dry. Then in late October when they were dry, they could be husked and put into a corn crib for storage. It could then, at the farmers choosing, be used to feed horses, pigs, and chickens. The stalks could be used to feed the cows. Even the husks could be used to firm up their bedding. It could be milled into cornmeal by themselves if they had a stone wheel or could be brought to one of the local gristmills for grinding.

## **Wantage Township (Part 3)(Final) cont.**

Even today we see the great corn fields all around Wantage in the summer. During much of the 1800's, Wantage grew into a strong agricultural community, farmers all helped each other at harvest time. Deckertown had become a strong financial and business center where goods and services could be bought. There was a stagecoach between Paterson and Deckertown by 1857 and the railroads came in 1870 with two terminals in Deckertown, the Midland Railroad, which would become the NYS&W Railroad and the L&NE Railroad. Both would extend through Wantage towards Unionville with stops in Quarryville and Owens Station. Roads improved so it was easier to bring dairy and crops to the terminals for transportation to bigger cities. Things were looking great. Then came 1890. That is when Wantage fell into an agricultural depression. Milk prices had dropped to all time lows. Suddenly farms began selling for \$20 per acre and that included any structures on them. There was plenty of finger pointing to go around. The farmers blamed everyone from congress to the railroads for their decline. Their production was way down. Decades of mismanaging the land had depleted its minerals. Less was known about agricultural management then is known now. Many farmers just picked up and left to go to the cities where there was work in factories or other easier jobs. They just had no interest in rebuilding here. On October 14, 1891, Deckertown was allotted some land from Wantage and became a Borough. Its borders were laid out in such a way to form a perfect octagon. I do not know why this was its design. It became a 'donut hole town' being surrounded by Wantage. On March 2, 1902, its name was changed to Sussex in a failed attempt to become the County seat. It continued to flourish for years to come. It would get electric power in 1904 when the old Woodbourne mill site (where the old mill dam site was erected in 1753 by Cornelius Dirkse Westbrook, today's Woodbourne Falls) was purchased by Charles a Wilson and a dam and power plant constructed, and wires run into to Deckertown to provide electric lights. When the depression hit in 1929, milk prices had once again fallen to record lows. Many farmers in Wantage lost their farms because they could not pay their taxes or their mortgages. It was not until the federal government gave farmers a 35-year mortgage with very low interest that they would be able to stay. Another boost to the Wantage farmers was the donation of a 1,100-acre farm near Beemerville by James Turner to be used as an educational and experimental station. It later became a world-renowned dairy research facility that we know as Lusscroft Farm. As the years passed, farming would become easier because of mechanical equipment, pesticides, and herbicides, though still quite challenging. I am grateful to all the Wantage farmers for all they do and provide and for what the farmers of past generations have endured to get us to where we are today. There are still plenty of local farms in Wantage, though much less than earlier on as transportation got better and people were able to go farther away to seek employment in fields other than agricultural. Wantage, which is currently made up of many small communities which are either all or at least partially in Wantage. They are Beemerville, Colesville, Dunvale, Hanford, Lake Neepaulin, Lake Rutherford, Lewisburg, Libertyville, Martins, Mount Salem, Papakating, Plumbsock, Quarryville, Rockport, Roys, and Woodbourne. Each has a rich history and story to tell. Who knows, maybe they will be the subject of my next story.

### **Sussex-Wantage Historical Society**

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**[swhistoric.org](http://swhistoric.org)**

**Mario Poggi - President/Secretary**

**Robert Holowach - VP/Treasurer**

**Russ Eaton - VP**



**SUSSEX-WANTAGE**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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[swhistoric.org](http://swhistoric.org)

**2020 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP (JANUARY 1, 2021 THRU  
DECEMBER 31, 2021)**

**CURRENTLY MEMBERSHIP TO THE SUSSEX-WANTAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS  
\$10.00 (PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK OUT TO SUSSEX-WANTAGE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY AND MAIL TO THE ADDRESS ABOVE OR APPLY ONLINE AT  
[WWW.SWHISTORIC.ORG](http://WWW.SWHISTORIC.ORG) TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD USING PAYPAL)**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT IS/WAS YOUR OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU HAVE ANY HOBBIES \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT INTERESTS YOU MOST ABOUT HISTORY \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE OUR MEETINGS TO INCLUDE \_\_\_\_\_

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO BE A VOLUNTEER ON ONE OF OUR PROJECTS - Y N

# SUSSEX COUNTY HISTORY DAY

Sponsored by the Sussex County Historical Society

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 18, 2021** (RAIN DATE: SUNDAY, SEPT. 19)

**11 am– 4 pm**

To be held on the Academy Green, located behind 75-79 Main Street, Newton, NJ  
Parking available in the old McGuire lot courtesy SCCC.

**Featuring:**

**OLD NEWTON BURIAL GROUND TOURS** with costumed interpreters

Tours will be held at 12 noon, 1pm & 3pm; limited to 20 people; \$10 adult, \$5 seniors, veterans and 12-18 yr. old – proceeds benefit restoration of the cemetery – tickets available at Hill Memorial Museum Fridays 9-1pm; at the gate; or online via Paypal to [sussexcountyhs@gmail.com](mailto:sussexcountyhs@gmail.com) (Buy your tickets early – sold out in 2019)



**CIVIL WAR ENCAMPMENT BY THE 27<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT;  
THE LONG HILL STRING BAND** (performing at 11:15 & 2 pm)  
**LOST ART LACERS; NJ FRONTIER GUARD;  
LOCAL HISTORICAL GROUP DISPLAYS**

**All events FREE except the cemetery tours.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: MARIO POGGI AT 973-864-7852**

**OR WENDY WYMAN AT 973-383-0015**