



# FOUNTAINS

ISSUE 8

The Official Newsletter Of The Sussex-Wantage Historical Society

Spring—Summer 2022

## Message From The President

Hello to all members. We had our annual meeting on June 11 this year at the new Sussex Community and Cultural Center. Unfortunately it was not well attended and there was not a quorum for the Board of Directors 3 year vote so the vote request has been sent to members via email. I have a few great things to talk about. I will have our table at this years Wantage Fall Festival at Woodbourne Park on October 8th and also at Sussex Day on October 15th. 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 on September 17. Of course I will be set up there as well. There is an application in this newsletter so if you have or are a part of a non-profit organization and would like to participate, please print it, fill it out and either mail or email it to me. We would love to have you. This is a celebration of Sussex County history and all of our organizations are a part of it. We are still hoping to move the fountain that TJ Dunn donated to Sussex in 1906 into that park. We are still waiting on donated services to do that but we don't give up. We have also partnered with the Sussex Borough Community and Cultural Events Advisory Committee to co-sponsor their events and help raise money for them. It is Sussex Borough's 120th anniversary this year. Any ideas of ways to celebrate that? All those that were members in 2021 have had their memberships automatically extended thru December 31, 2022. New membership applications for 2023 will be mailed towards the end of the year. 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. Let me know your ideas for upcoming newsletters or projects. Have a great summer—Mario

**2022 Annual Meeting  
Held  
Saturday, June 11,  
2022  
2023 Annual  
Meeting date TBD.**

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# History of the Sussex Fire Department



Walkkill Hose Company



Protection Hook & Ladder Company

The Sussex Fire Department began as two separate companies. The Walkkill Hose Company and the Protection Hook & Ladder Company. The Walkkill Hose Company was organized on February 11, 1896. The meeting minutes read as follows: "A meeting of young men was called Tuesday evening, February 11, 1896 to meet in the parlors of the DeCamp Hotel (current 82 Fountain Square) at 8 o'clock. The object of the meeting was stated by John Stanton, after which a number of gentlemen present made favorable remarks upon the advisability of organizing a Hose Company. F.W. Lawrence was elected chairman, C.E. Wilson secretary and S.F. Quince treasurer. On motion made by J.W. Carber, the officers were made permanent...and after enjoying a 'smoker' and talking further upon the subject, all were given a chance to sign the roll as the first volunteer fire company of Deckertown, after which the meeting was adjourned..."

This created the second oldest fire company in Sussex County, with the oldest being Newton, which was organized in 1873. It was the only fire department in Sussex Borough, Wantage Township and part of Vernon and Frankford Township. They had several meeting houses along the way which included Kimble Hall on March 12, 1896, then to some rented rooms in the independent building (current 76 Main St) in 1898 and in 1902 they moved to the Wolfe Granite Building (current 86 Main St), along with their hose cart and stayed there until 1926.

The hose carriage was acquired soon after their organization as the minutes of August 10, 1896, read...." Moved by John Riley that the hose company give the hose carriage to the Borough" a few months later, they were able to get the Newton Town Committee to loan them hand engine in charge of Sussex Engine Company #2 along with 200 feet of hose. Secured by John J. Stanton, J.W.C. Carber and Mr. Meeker, the new apparatus was brought into town on the evening of January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1897. This was such a big deal that a brass band played and there was a parade.

Both the Walkkill Hose Company and the Protection Hook & Ladder Company would share the same chief, with the office of chief rotating between the two companies, in even numbered years he was assigned to the Hose company and in odd number years he was assigned to the Hook & Ladder Company. So, if you were elected in an even number year, you would be called the chief of the Walkkill Hose Company but would serve both companies and the same for odd numbered years where he would be called the chief of the Protection Hook and Ladder Company but would serve both. J.W.C. Carber was the first chief 1896. They responded to their first fire on November 8, 1897, at the William H. Caskey farm on Clove Road. The Walkkill Hose Company's assets were a \$35.00 truck, two hose jumper trucks (\$150.00 each), a parade carriage and a side hand pumper. Their first really big fire was at the Ewald Brothers Shoe Factory, which would later become the home of the Booth Brothers knife factory (current 100 Main St). The top floor had caught fire on March 30, 1901, at 10PM. With the top floor destroyed and the rest of the building with heavy water damage, the fate of the shoe manufacturer was sealed, and 120 employees were out of a job.

## History of the Sussex Fire Department..continued

On March 2, 1902, Deckertown was officially changed to Sussex Borough. On May 19, 1902, the first uniform was adapted. It was a double-breasted long coat which went down to about 18" from the ground with pants to match. It cost \$13.50 per suit. Both companies paraded together on September 2, 1903, at the Sussex County Sesquicentennial (150<sup>th</sup> anniversary) celebration in Newton. They went by train with their trucks being loaded on a flatbed car. They purchased their first motorized truck in 1917, which was a Studebaker, for about \$1,400.00. Charles Wolfe and Walter Frech built the body. There were many forms of alarm used in the early days to alert the town that there was a fire. They included bells, whistles and even metal rings that were placed around the Borough.

Now let's talk about the Protection Hook & Ladder Company. It was organized soon after the Walkkill Hose Company on February 24, 1896. The first meeting minutes read like this..."Meeting called to order in the store room of C.E. Pinkel, E.H. Chamberlin was elected chairman and J.E. Managan, secretary. Motion made for the name of the company. W.J. Pinkel proposed the name of Protection Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1, after which vote was adapted. A committee to ask for an appropriation of \$250 to be entered in the annual budget to be voted on for the purpose of purchasing a ladder truck...motion made and carried that the chairman write a notice of public meeting to be held Friday evening, February 28, 1896, for the purpose of giving the public a chance to express their views in regard to fire protection and also to organize a hook and ladder company." That meeting was called to order at Hornbeck Hall (current 37 Main St). It was filled with many citizens, and they all expressed a strong desire to have a well-organized fire department. The chairman then read some testimonials from the citizens of Newton who expressed the same support for organizing the company and endorsing the recommendation to get a hook and ladder truck. It was at this meeting that their motto was created and adopted, "Always Ready and Willing."

The Protection Hook & Ladder Company decided that they wanted to become an independent company, so they reconsidered taking an appropriation of \$250 from the Borough and became incorporated in July of 1897. They held their meetings in several separate places until they finally decided to rent rooms from the Junior Order of American Mechanics for \$2.00 per night. Their first truck house was a barn located on 2<sup>nd</sup> street.

The Hook & Ladder Company made an agreement to lease a lot for \$20 per year to build their fire house on (current 4 Hamburg Ave). The building was constructed and cost about \$2,475.00 to build. They had their May 9, 1898, meeting in the new fire house. They agreed to buy a lot on the corner of Main Street and East Main Street from Mrs. H.R. Abers for \$2,500.00. They moved their current building across the street to the new lot. In May of 1898, they purchased their first uniforms at a total cost of \$4.58 each. It consisted of a shirt - \$2.00, Belt - \$1.00, Cap - \$.88 and the trimmings - \$.70.

From the Hook & Ladder Company's record of fires..." May 13, 1899: alarm given by L&NE railroad engine at 3:30AM., both companies responded and took their machines as far as the west end of Bank Street, seeing the fire was so far out of town they then returned to the truck house. Later learned the fire was the burning of Nelson DeWitt's barns." This is important because this would seem to indicate that the carts were pulled by the men and the distance may have been too great to go. Sometimes they would use the Decker & Simmons team with its driver, but it doesn't look like it was used this time. The Borough bought two firetrucks in 1924, one each for the Hose Company and the Hook & Ladder Company. By working together, the two companies were able to purchase a LaFrance truck for \$9,000.00 in 1938. Then in 1960, a 1,000-gallon American LaFrance truck was purchased for \$25,000.00.

They offered their lot on Main Street & East Main Street to Sussex Borough for a Borough Hall and Firehouse on January 21, 1924. The Borough Council voted to approve it on March 9, and it went to a public vote. The vote came back as 351 yes and 298 no votes. So, the plan moved forward. The new building was designed by architect David Canfield of Middletown, NY and the contractor was William I. Houghton of Newton. He bid \$17,475.00 to build it but because of some later changes, one being constructing the building out of brick instead of wood, brought the cost up to \$30,000.00. The first Council meeting at the new building, now 2 Main Street, was on May 26, 1926. In 1956 an addition would be added. The Hook & Ladder Company sold their old building for \$307.27 to Chris Textor. It was moved and is still standing behind a private home at 29 East Main Street. The two companies moved into the new fire house in 1926. They both officially merged as the Sussex Fire Department around 1957 and moved into their new and current firehouse at 25 Loomis Avenue in 1974, with the dedication ceremony being held on Saturday, November 2, 1974. They continue to serve Sussex Borough and its surrounding communities with honor and dignity.

# Judson J. Wickham

Born in Wantage Township on March 1, 1839, to William and Maria (Corkendall) Wickham. His father who was called William Jr. eventually settled in Colesville and was in the agricultural trade and livestock buying. Judson was a boy then. In 1854, William Jr. was injured in an unspecified railroad accident. Unfortunately, this made him crippled for the rest of his life. He held several Township offices and was a very valued official. Being well known in Sussex and Orange County, NY, his circle of friends was extensive. He died in 1885 and his wife Maria died 1875. She was only 65 years old. Her father, Manuel Corkendall, was a well know citizen of Wantage Township near Colesville. He was a farmer and died when Judson and Maria would have been very young. While Maria was one of four daughters and had four brothers, Judson was one of seven children, comprised of 2 boys and 6 girls. Large families were common in those days. Judson spent his early life in Wantage Township and that is where he was educated, though I do not know the exact school. He got married to Miss Emma Decker, who was a daughter of John B. and Sally (Decker) Decker, on January 13, 1859. She was born on a Sussex County farm in 1844. They went on to have five children. John, Charles, Frank, Eva, and Blanche. They became grandparents to six of their children. Interestingly, the great and legendary trotter, Goldsmith Maid, was born on the John B. Decker farm in 1857. He was a great judge of horses and raised other racehorses too. Goldsmith Maid won 95 of 121 races and earned an estimated \$354,200 which was a record until the 1940s. A Sussex County Historic Marker stands at this site. (Current 51 Unionville Road, Rt. 651 in Wantage Township)

Judson and his wife moved to Deckertown in 1875 after farming in the Clove area of Wantage Township for many years. While in Deckertown he became the manager of the Union House (current Early American Tavern and former Sussex Inn, 9 Main Street). The same year he purchased the Christman House (current Fountain Square Inn, 82 Fountain Square). He operated this establishment for two years under the new name of the Wickham House. A friend of mine in the historical community was able to secure a photocopy of the Wickham House ledger. As the picture I display on the next page will show, it was used for both business and sometimes a little fun for the children with some pages having drawing that were clearly done by young children. In 1877 he exchanged it form farm property owned by Dr. J. Warner of Craigville, NY, and moved to Orange County, New York. He farmed there for four years. I guess that he had enough of farming so he sold the farm and once again returned to Deckertown. He purchased a piece of property and began dealing in cattle. He was thought of highly and was very respectable in the trade. He became wealthy doing so. He used some of this wealth to invest in real estate and had three properties on Main Street in Deckertown as well. He had eventually amassed a fortune. He remained in Deckertown/Sussex until about 1918, when his wife died, and he returned to Middletown and Blooming Gove, NY to spend the remainder of his days.

He was known to have deeply cared about the welfare of his community and will always be willing to advance the public good. He, like his father, held several Township offices as well being a Sussex County Freeholder. Thru his compassion and easy-going manner, he had a large circle of friends. He died peacefully on January 22, 1925, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Fred S. Gregg in Blooming Grove, Orange County, NY after a long illness. In an interesting fact, his aunt Julia Wickham married Colonel Simon Kilpatrick and she gave birth to Hugh Judson Kilpatrick on January 14, 1836. He would of course go on to be a Civil War General and during the battle of Gettysburg, earned the nickname "Kill-Cavalry." He also had a great reenactment on his property in Wantage Township (current Deckertown Turnpike/Libertyville Rd) where about forty thousand people took part from August 25 – 28, 1878. A Sussex County Historical Marker Stands at this spot.

## **Sussex-Wantage Historical Society**

**P.O. Box 212**

**Sussex, NJ 07461**

**973 864-7852**

**Mario Poggi - President/Secretary**

**Robert Holowach - VP/Treasurer**

**Russ Eaton - VP**



## SHORTS:

### Amos Munson

The next time that you drive north on Hamburg Avenue in Sussex and pass the Evi Willson house, there you will find Munson Street. The street that bears Amos Munson's name does so for a very good reason. You see, he owned most of the land in that area, including what was to become Munson Street. Here is his story. Amos Munson was not born in Deckertown, he was born on his family's homestead in Har-dyston Township on February 11, 1802. He grew up on this farm and went to school locally like anyone else. When he got a bit older he got a job as a clerk in a store in Hamburg. On January 14, 1824 he married Elizabeth Ryerson of Vernon. In March of that same year the couple moved to Paterson and Amos took up the profession of running a butcher business. He was very successful at it and in 1838 they decided to move to Deckertown. He purchased 144 acres of farmland where he proceeded to build their house. His great intelligence and business fortitude made him very successful in pretty much anything he set out to do. He was very forward thinking and as a farmer he grew his estate. He eventually owned so much land in Deckertown that he is known as one of the fathers of the town because of what he did with much of that land to contribute to the growth and development of it. He contributed to the building of all of the churches and the schools in the town. He also worked diligently to advance the material, educational and social interests of the town. He knew that bringing the Midland Railway into Deckertown would make it a hub and increase business. He thought it so important that he gave \$1,500 of his own money to the project, which was no small amount in the day, as well as giving 2572 feet of his farm property to be used as the railroad right of way. On part of that right of way is where the Depot was built. Much more of his vast land eventually became Sussex's current streets, including the one named for him and the plots where homes are built. He was always looking for new inventions and as a farmer he was ahead of his time. He had the first mowing machine and horse rake in Sussex County. He would always have the newest mechanical farming equipment available on his farm. Amos and Elizabeth had no children. They continued to live in Deckertown and were known as the finest of citizens and well respected by all. Amos Munson died on March 16, 1884 and is buried in the Fairview cemetery along with his wife Elizabeth who died January 15, 1891.

### Name Change To Sussex Rejected By Governor Vorhees

The articles in "From the Archives" are reprinted from previous editions of The New Jersey Herald, which began publication in 1829; the Sussex Register, which began in 1814; and the Sussex Independent, which began in 1871. The stories appear in their original form, although some have been edited for length.

100 Years ago, April 4, 1901: Local Briefs: Residents of the Borough of Deckertown were greatly exercised last week over an attempt made by means of legislative enactment to have the name of their borough changed. The new title, as we understand it, was to be "the Borough of Sussex". An act permitting such a change, indeed, did pass both branches of the Legislature. The bill then came to the governor for his official signature. As is customary before signing all bills, the Governor inquired if notice of intention of the passage of such a law had been properly advertised. To his surprise, as well as the surprise of the committee to which the bill had been referred, no such advertisement had been made. There was but one thing for the Governor to do and that was to consign the proposed law to his capacious waste basket, which he quickly did, despite the expostulations of several much-interested parties. The matter of changing the name of Deckertown is one in which the residents of that Borough are the most greatly interested.

Outsiders should have little if anything to say about it. However, the title of "The Borough of Sussex" strikes the average person as a trifle conflicting with the county of Sussex, and the belief is quite prevalent that this confliction would lead to endless trouble. For instance, a Newark gentleman should desire to visit Deckertown. In the event of the change in the title of that borough, he would be forced to tell his neighbor he was going to Sussex. Now Sussex covers a great extent of territory. It has fifteen townships, to say nothing of numerous towns, boroughs, and villages. Hence the imperative necessity of emphasizing just what particular part of Sussex the sojourner expects to visit. It is hardly probable that any village, town or borough will ever become so important in this county as to absorb the name of Sussex. This is the principal objection raised against the change. Now if the residents of that borough would decide upon the name of Wallkill, for instance, no possible exception could be taken. Or, if brothers Stickney and Stanton could shake hands over the apparently ever widening chasm between them, and mutually decide to call it "Harmony", or some other equally fraternal name, they would be performing an act in the interest of the public good for which their kindly offices would long be held in gracious remembrance.

**SUSSEX COUNTY HISTORY DAY and**  
**Old Newton Burial Ground Tour**

At the Sussex County Historical Society's Academy Green  
(Behind 79 Main Street in Newton)

Saturday September 17, 2022

(Rain date Sunday September 18, 2022)

11:00am – 4:00pm

Vendor Information

Each vendor space is limited to ten foot by ten-foot area. Vendor spaces for Non-Profit and Civic Organizations are free. All other vendor spaces are \$20.00 each. We suggest that all vendors have a giveaway or prizes for the visitors if possible. This is not required but people seem to really like this.

Participants should supply their own:

- Tent (Optional, but it can get pretty sunny in the field)
- Table
- Chairs
- There is no electric available. We would rather not have any generators being used to keep the serenity of the cemetery and area.

Vendors should start arriving at 8:30AM to set up and should be completed by 11:00am. All vehicles must be off the grass and parked by 10:30AM. There is plenty of parking available on site at the SCCC parking lot attached to the Academy Green (old McGuire parking lot).

No alcoholic beverages will be sold or served.

Please complete and return the Vendor Form on or before August 1, 2022. The sooner the better to reserve your spot as space is limited.

Please send your completed application (and check for \$20.00 made out to the Sussex County Historical Society if applicable) to:

Sussex County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 913  
Newton, NJ 07860  
Attn: Mario Poggi

Non-profits and Civic Organizations may e-mail your completed Vendor Application (Because no fee is required) to:

[sussexhistorynj@gmail.com](mailto:sussexhistorynj@gmail.com)

If you have any questions, contact Mario Poggi at 973 864-7852 or e-mail me at [sussexhistorynj@gmail.com](mailto:sussexhistorynj@gmail.com).

**SUSSEX COUNTY HISTORY DAY  
and Old Newton Burial Grounds Tour  
Vendor Registration Form**

Print, complete and return Vendor Form by mail on or before August 1, 2022, to:

Sussex County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 913  
Newton, NJ 07860  
Attention: Mario Poggi

Non-Profits and Civic Organizations complete and return Vendor Form by email to:  
[sussexhistorynj@gmail.com](mailto:sussexhistorynj@gmail.com) or by mail to the address above.

Business or Commercial vendors selling a product, please include check in the amount of \$20.00 made payable to the Sussex County Historical Society.

Name of Business or Group:

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E-mail:

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Mailing Address:

---

Name of Contact Person:

---

Contact Phone Number:

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Item or Items to be Sold or Presented:

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Giveaway, game or prize: (Optional)

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# SUSSEX COUNTY HISTORY DAY

Sponsored by the Sussex County Historical Society

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 17, 2022 (RAIN DATE: SUNDAY, SEPT. 18)**

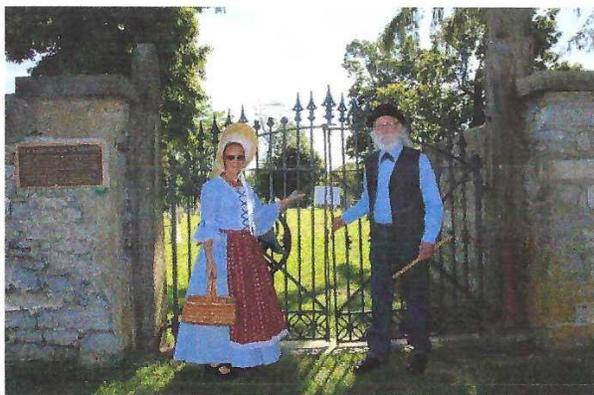
**11 am – 4 pm**

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

**FEATURING:**

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

Tours will be held at 12 noon, 1pm, & 3 pm; 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/Saturdays 9-1; at the gate; or online via Paypal to [sussexcountyhs@gmail.com](mailto:sussexcountyhs@gmail.com) (Buy your tickets early – sells out)



**THE LONG HILL STRING BAND (PERFORMING AT 11:15 & 2PM) ;  
CIVIL WAR ENCAMPMENT BY THE 27<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT;  
LOST ART LACERS; NJ FRONTIER GUARD; BLACKSMITH;  
PETTING ZOO; LOCAL HISTORICAL GROUP DISPLAYS**

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

**FOR MORE PROGRAM INFORMATION CONTACT: MARIO POGGI AT 973-864-7852  
OR WENDY WYMAN AT 973-383-0015 (FOR BAND INFO: [www.longhillstringband.com](http://www.longhillstringband.com))**