



Old Sussex Almanack

The Newsletter of Sussex County Historical Society

Published Quarterly

Summer 2017

Message from the President

During 2017 the Society has sponsored numerous events and lectures to help celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Hill Memorial Building - the museum on Main Street in Newton that holds thousands of historical artifacts and treasures.

One event that will be a milestone for the Society will take place on **Saturday, October 21st** with the formal dedication of the American flag from the late 1780s. This flag is unique in that it has only eleven equal-sized horizontal stripes - all white linen. The canton, where the stars are located, is also all white linen, and runs the full height of the flag from top to bottom. The thirteen stars are blue, six-pointed, and clustered in the top section of the canton.

The flag has been in the possession of the Society for approximately 50 years, and was at one time improperly mounted and framed. Now, the flag has been professionally examined, cleaned and conserved, and properly mounted and framed. The conservation and framing of this important relic of our country was financed through generous donations from: the Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council; donations given in memory of **JoEllen Livick**; Col. John Rosenkrans Chapter NJSSAR; and, Lt. Charles A. Meyer - American Legion Post 86, Newton, New Jersey.

The flag is displayed in the main lobby on the first floor of the Hill Memorial building.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of your Society, allow me to invite you to this special event, which begins at 2:00 PM at the Hill Memorial Building. Light refreshments will be served that afternoon in the library.

Wayne T. McCabe
SCHS President

If the Old House Could Talk!

By Dr. Peter Lubrecht, SCHS Member



The Sussex County Historical Society has received two generous donations of the houses across from the Hill Memorial Museum on Main Street in Newton. One of them, built in 1802, was the home of the Newton Academy until 1820. The other, number 79 on Main street was built in 1888 by a local merchant Michael Patrick Tully. Old houses send messages about

the people who lived in them, even while standing silently by for years absorbing the daily lives of the residents. This house is no different and its tale and that of the original owners are unique.

Michael Patrick Tully, the owner, had it built on property originally deeded from the Estate of Jonathan Hampton to Edward Dunlop. The lot passed through several hands over the century and finally was sold to Tully by William P. Nicholas for \$2000 with a \$1700.00 mortgage on December 31, 1887. Probably in 1888 construction on the "Tully House" began.

The family chose a "Queen Anne House" which was the rage for those endowed with some amount of wealth; it was built on a smaller scale than the H.W. Merriam House down the street which was finished in 1884. Michael Tully was also buying a summer house on Culver Lake at about the time he was building the house in town. He had come a long way from his birthplace in Ireland.

Michael Patrick Tully was born in Killoe Parish, near Ballinamuck, County Longford in the heart of Ireland. His mother died in 1847 and during the time of "The Great Hunger", his father Patrick, a tailor, took the four surviving children to Dublin to earn a better living than he could in the rural country side. After three years in Dublin, Patrick took the family to Liverpool and Chester England where for three years they worked at tailoring. Michael was trained at Smith and Sons of Chester the "finest tailors" outside of London. In 1855 Patrick and three children returned home to Killoe, but 19 year old Michael stayed in England and then in 1858 immigrated to America where he studied "cutting" with a famous New

"If The Old House Could Talk" continued on Page 4

Sussex County Historical Society



82 Main Street, P.O. Box 913
Newton, NJ 07860
973-383-6010

www.sussexhistory.org
Email: sussexcountyhs@gmail.com

HOURS

Friday: 9 am-1 pm;
Designated Sundays: 1 pm –4 pm
or by appointment

SCHS Officers

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Vice-President

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Society is to promote public knowledge and interest in the history of Sussex County, New Jersey, and surrounding areas, by compiling, publishing and disseminating information; collecting, preserving and studying historical, genealogical and archaeological records, documents, papers and artifacts; maintaining a museum for public exhibits; promoting the preservation and protection of buildings, cemeteries and other sites of historic interest; and cooperating with other organizations of similar interest.

WELCOME

These following individuals are newly enrolled members for the 2017 year

Member	City	State	Type
Robin Dennis	London	UK	Individual
Judeth Kaylor	Little Falls	VA	Individual
John Magin	Cape Coral	FL	Individual

SAVE this Date for a Future SCHS Event

HALLOWEEN IN THE CEMETERY

A Historical Tour, Not a Scary Tour!

Adults-\$10.00 / ages 12-18-\$5.00 /

Ages Under 12-Free

☞ *Sunday, October 29, 2017* ☞

Starting at 2:00 pm

Old Newton Burial Grounds

Behind 75-79 Main Street, Newton

(Rain Date - Saturday, Nov 4, 2017)

This is a Fundraiser for the preservation of the Tully House and the Newton Academy building

Tickets available at the Museum or at the event.

SAVE this Date for a Future SCHS Event

SCHS Holiday Open House

☞ *Friday, December 8th 2017* ☞

At 6:30 pm ~ 8:30 pm

In the Hill Memorial Building

Old Newton Cemetery Committee Update

By Wendy Wyman, SCHS Trustee

While the members of the cemetery committee continue to meet on Wednesday mornings at the Old Newton Burial Ground to cut grass and trim brush, we are also making some new discoveries. We have found an enthusiastic individual who is passionate about repairing gravestones. John O'Brian, a member of The Association for Gravestone Studies, has been listed as a reference in publication Markers XVII. He has provided us with valuable information in the cleaning and repair process and is willing to demonstrate this for us. But, perhaps even more exciting, his research has found two gravestone carvers whose work is found within the Old Newton Burial Ground...John Solomon Teetzel and Abner Stewart.

According to his own gravestone, **John Solomon Teetzel** was born on February 27, 1762 in "Upper Saxony Germany". Educated for the Roman Catholic priesthood, he ran away from college and was ship wrecked off the east coast of the USA, landing in NJ in 1780. Teetzel lived in German Valley (renamed Long Valley) until he married **Rachel VanTill** in 1786. He then lived in Hardwick Twp. (part of Sussex County at that time). Teetzel carved and signed gravemarkers in New Jersey from 1789 to 1800. During this time he made 99 gravestones found in fourteen cemeteries within four counties: Morris, Somerset, Sussex and Warren. He



is considered the single most active carver identified in the northwestern part of this state. We have 2 of his gravestones in the Old Newton Burial Ground: **Levina Inglis**; age 10; 8-25-1799 and **Phoeby Inglis**; age 12; 8-31-1799. The majority of Teetzel's gravemarkers – 86 – are inscribed in English, while 13 were carved in German. His most common "signature" was a simply an uppercase "T", but one stone in Hope is signed "TEETZEL IN HARDWICK". Other characteristics serve to distinguish his work including the fact that all of his markers have a border carved parallel to the edges of the stone, most often gray sandstone. The stones are evenly shaped with smooth sides and front. His designs included simple flowers, four-pointed stars, ivy, and elaborate monograms of the deceased. Teetzel was a literate man with fine handwriting

and often witnessed wills and recorded inventories for his neighbors. Teetzel moved his family of 7 children to Grimsby in Upper Canada in 1800. There he continued to carve gravemarkers in Grimsby and Palermo, but was primarily a farmer and at different times served as Grimsby Masonic Lodge Secretary, Assessor for the Twp., Tax Collector in 1807, 1814 & 1815, and Town Warden in 1810. He and Rachel had 6 more children while living in Grimsby. Following Rachel's death in 1813, Teetzel married Mary Campbell and they had 4 more children in Grimsby. John and Mary moved to Palermo in Halton County in 1819 where they purchased a 100 acre farm and had 2 more children. He never returned to Germany, but was heir to the Tetzel Estate and tried unsuccessfully to get his oldest son Charles to go in his place. Teetzel is buried in the Palermo United Church Cemetery, Canada, having died there on December 4, 1836.

Abner Stewart was trained by **Ebenezer Price**, the most active of the East Jersey Carvers. Price lived in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. Sometime in the late 1790's Stewart moved to northwestern New Jersey and worked in Marksboro, Hardwick Township. Stewart carved solely in English and seemed to have taken over Teetzel's "old stomping grounds". His stones are masterfully carved, but the only decorations are small initials and occasional sidebars. Stewart's work is not as researched as Teetzel. We have found one stone identified as his work by the engraving: "made in Marksborough", belonging to **William Sosman**; age 31; 11-25-1802.

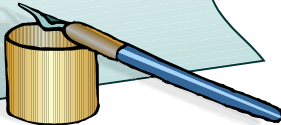
The cemetery committee would love to have more members ...come join us...you just never know what we will discover next.

John L. Decker vs Mary Ann B. Kelsey et al

(FILE H27-46). COMPLAINT FILED 7/18/1890

Genealogical Information
from
Chancery Court Cases

By
Richard M. Stevens



John B. Titman lived in Green Twp. for about twenty years. Around 1870 he followed his brother James B. Titman and moved to Sparta Twp., where he lived with the James L. Decker family. In 1878 John B. Titman and James L. Decker jointly bought the Joseph Cole farm (Z6-546). This 150 A. farm lies on the west side of House's Corner Road and northeast of White Lake. In 1883 they also bought a wood lot about one mile away, on the Pimple Hill (S7-336). John B. Titman died on 7/25/1887 intestate, never having married. He was survived by his brother and two sisters. This suit was brought by James L. Decker to have the property sold. There must have been some dispute among the owners, since they were all over 21 years of age, and not subject to any outstanding judgments. It would seem they should have been able to sell without the expense of a court suit. There was no opposition. The sale was held at the Cochran House in Newton on 12/29/1890. The farm and wood lot were purchased by John's brother-in-law Thomas M. Boyer for \$6556.41.

Genealogy:

1. JOHN B. TITMAN: brother of James B.(2), Elizabeth B.(3), & Mary Ann B.(4); never married; deceased 7/25/1887.
2. JAMES B. TITMAN: brother of John B.(1); married to Delilah; living in Sussex Co. in 1890.
3. ELIZABETH B. BOYER: sister of John B.(1); wife of Thomas M. Boyer; living at Bridgeville, Oxford Twp., Warren Co. in 1880.
4. MARY ANN B. KELSEY: sister of John B.(1); widowed in 1890; living in Easton, Pa. in 1890.

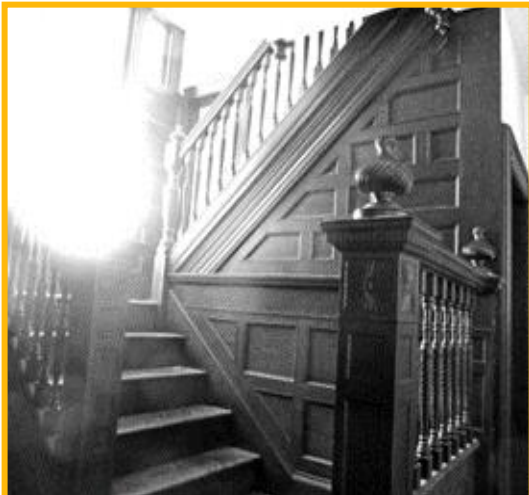
"If The Old House Could Talk"—continued from front page

York "Cutter" and eventually was employed by Brooks Brothers Clothiers in Manhattan. During the 1860's, he traveled for the company to Newton, New Jersey; Coldwater, Michigan and Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. Finally in 1870 he was living in Newton at the Cochran House. He married Theresa Ann Smith on 10 September 1873 and moved in with her and her Step-Mother, Sara Ann Wintermute Smith, her Uncle, Charles Wintermute Smith and her Grandmother, Elisabeth Wintermute, on 411 Water Street in Newton.

Instead of moving out of the crowded house, Michael Patrick Tully decided to build a beautiful new home for all of them on Main Street across from what is today the Hill Memorial Museum. The Queen Anne design has a formal front parlor, a dining room, reception room, a butlers' pantry, and a center hall Chestnut carved stair case. The upstairs has four bedrooms, a tiled bath, and on the third floor the maid's quarters. The backstairs go directly to the kitchen and the rooms and hallways are lit by the colors of stained glass windows.

By the time the extended family moved in, Michael Patrick Tully was a successful clothing store owner and "Merchant Tailor" in Newton. His house was a smaller example of the mansions of the "Gilded Age." He lived there until his death in 1915, and, as the family died or moved, the

house passed through many different hands including law offices and finally homeless squatters. It stands now as a proud "old lady" fallen onto bad times.



If only the walls could talk, but in many ways they do. The fireplaces and large windows in the front parlor probably saw funerals and gatherings. The dining room had passage to the pantry and the kitchen, and here and there lie remnants of a wealthy household. It was one of the early houses sporting electricity and steam heat and it still shows remnants of carved plaster, and, on the front portico, there is a gold head on a frieze.

Is it haunted? Could there be ghosts in the halls waiting for the house to be restored? The Historical Society plans to bring it back to life and use it as an educational center and possibly a library. The "Tullys" were life members of the Sussex County Historical Society before the Hill Memorial Building and Museum was built, so this restoration

would be important to them. On a recent visit a Museum member took a picture of the cen-

FOCUS ON GENEALOGY

By Valerie Stern, CG
SCHS Member

Ellis Island and Your Last Name

“...but my family’s name was changed at Ellis Island.”

How many times have you heard that declared? Despite all reports to the contrary, the myth persists. A little research will make it clear that Ellis Island had nothing to do with name changes. Here is an overview:

- When an emigrant purchased a ticket for ship’s passage, he did it from a booking agent in his own country, who wrote down the passenger’s name. Even if the emigrant himself were illiterate, the agent was usually of the same background, familiar with the name, and had a good chance of spelling it accurately.
- The booking agent, usually an employee of the steamship company, then passed on his list to the ship’s captain or his purser. If the list was then transcribed, the opportunity for error would be only the same as when any record is transcribed from one form to another.
- The clerks admitting arriving passengers did not write anything down. They simply checked the passenger’s verbalized name against a manifest – or list of passengers – provided by the shipping company. Qualified translators were at hand to avoid misunderstandings of pronunciation.

If your ancestor’s name was changed from the one used in “the old country,” it was very likely the person him or herself who changed it! There were many reasons for this decision:

- In those days, there were no anti-discrimination laws, and an ethnic-sounding name may have been a hindrance to finding a job.
- His name may have been so difficult for his new associates to pronounce that he gave up and changed to something more Americanized. (Think Jürgen to George; Stanislaus to Stanley; Giacomo to Jack).
- A literal translation was chosen to fit in better with the American culture. (*Schwarz* to Black; *Stein* to Stone; *Pescatori* to Fisher).
- A cultural naming pattern was too hard to maintain. Example: a Swedish woman did not usually adopt her husband’s name when she married. Because this led to misunderstandings of a woman’s marital status in this country, she might change her name on American records. However, when corresponding with her family, she might still use the surname she was born with.
- Church records (Lutheran, Dutch Reformed, Irish Catholic) may have a name spelled according to tradition rather than by the Americanized form. Often, over a period of time, a church’s records contain two or more versions of the same family’s name.

Transcription errors, again, might be responsible for a name change over the years. Somewhere along the way, an official - or one of your helpful relations - may have made a guess at copying a name written in old-style handwriting.

Then, of course, there were the enumerators, or census takers! An enumerator was not always of the same ethnic background as the people he was enumerating. As many of those people being counted could not read or write, he just had to spell the name as best he could. A grapheme like the Polish “scz” in the name *Blasz* might well be written as *Blash*. Also, vowel sounds vary widely in European languages and accents (An *Erwin* from Scotland might be written as *Airwin*.) This is one reason why you might find members of the same family spelled differently in different locations.

So, the next time you hear someone claim that his or her traditional name was changed at Ellis Island, help dispel the myth, and “pass the buck” on from those poor customs inspectors!

NEW SUNDAY HOURS

Hill Memorial Museum & Library are open every Friday 9 am to 1 pm
Now the Museum and Library will be open on selected Sundays
List of **SUNDAYS** Museum and Library to be opened in 2017
Hours Open – 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

SEPTEMBER 3
SEPTEMBER 17
OCTOBER 1

OCTOBER 15
NOVEMBER 19
DECEMBER 17

Progress on Museum Displays at Hill Memorial

By Wendy Wyman, SCHS Trustee

“The Cochran House” has been featured in a new display on the table in the center of the **Sussex Room**. It includes pictures, china, flatware, menus, and a ledger from 1901. The Cochran House was located on Spring Street, at the intersection of Main Street. It was first built as a 3-story hotel in 1843 by Dennis Cochran and quickly became the center of local social, business, and political activities. In the desire to “modernize” Newton, The Sussex County Historical Society held their dinners at The Cochran House after each of their Annual Meetings in the early 1900’s. The Cochran House was demolished in 1961.



A display on the **“History of Mining”** has been completed in the main foyer. Included are iron and zinc mines, as well as slate and limestone quarries. The “Andover pig iron” has been retrieved from the basement and iron briquettes from the Edison Mine were found upstairs. Thank you again to Bill Strait for his help with the many photographs...some from the museum glass plate collection.

Please stop by and check out all of the new exhibits celebrating the Hill Memorial’s 100th anniversary!

“If The Old House could Talk” Continued from Page 4

Is it a spot of light?

The Historical Society will be seeking funding and help. **Any ideas? Please let us know.**

Donations for the preservation of both the “Tully House” and the Newton Academy building are greatly appreciated! Please send a check to the Sussex County Historical Society, PO Box 913, Newton, NJ 07860 or go to our website www.sussexhistory.org/ and click on the donation symbol. The Sussex County Historical Society appreciates any amount of monetary support. **All donations are tax deductible.**

The Crescent Theatre / Part 2

100th Anniversary - July 24, 2017

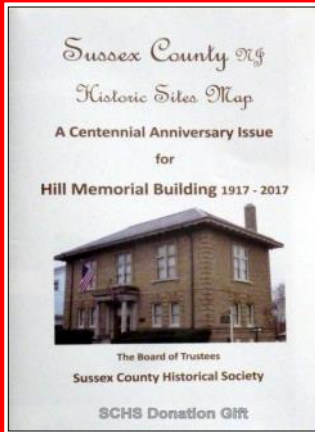
Written by Mario Poggi, SCHS Trustee

On April 16, 1928, Goble and Smith sold the theatre to the Crescent Theatre Company and Karl T. Mitchell of Otisville, NY became the new owner. At that time, news articles stated that he would be making some improvements and changes. One of the first changes that he made was to change the name from the Crescent Theatre to the Sussex Theatre. The 700 seat original Sussex Theatre at Hornbeck Hall was no longer functioning. There is speculation as to why he chose this name. One thought was that it would make the theatre easier to find because it would be more aligned with the name of the Borough. After all there were now a number of other theatres to compete with for patrons like the Newton Theatre and the Franklin Theatre.

Mitchell, having made the necessary technical improvements, announced that on Sunday, March 24, 1929 the Sussex Theatre would show the sound and talking picture, 'The Jazz Singer' starring Al Jolson & Mae McAvoy. It is said that Ms. McAvoy made a special trip from Hollywood for the viewing. She was a local and lived on East Main Street, attending the Harrison Street School and St. Monica's church. It was reported at the time that the Sussex Theatre was the first in the county to install the latest invention, Vitaphone type, thus allowing it to be the first to show a talking movie. The movie actually premiered in New York City on October 6, 1927 but most small town theatres had not yet received it. It was also ground breaking to begin showing movies on Sundays. As you might imagine many people did not like this idea, especially religious leaders in the county. It was also in early 1929 that new, softer seats were installed in the theatre.

Then the theatre changed hands several times. In June of 1929 it was purchased by James Sarro and Joseph M. Smith. Soon after that wonderful marquee was added. The marquee remained in place as late as 1976. In 1931 it was sold to the local Real Estate firm Essaness Realty Company who then leased it to Lee Shafer who was the theatre operator when Sarro and Smith owned it. Later owners included St. Cloud Amusement and Brandt Theatres. It was used for High School graduations until 1932 when the Sussex High School was built. It ceased operation in 1976 with the showing of 'Ode To Billy Joe' being the last movie shown and was purchased by the Borough of Sussex from Marius and Suzanne Sznajderman for \$30,000 in 1980, using a grant to purchase and renovate it to be used as the Sussex Community Center. The borough officials declared the movie equipment as surplus and sold it with bids. The balcony level was extended to create a full second floor and the original seating area downstairs was filled in and leveled off. Extensive interior renovations were made at that time and it served many years as the Community Center. In 1995 it was used as a temporary town hall while the Sussex Borough Hall underwent some renovations.

In 2001 more extensive repairs were needed and the Borough decided to shut the building down. In June, 2002 the Borough Council had an agreement written up to lease the theatre to the Tri State Actors Theatre for \$1.00 per year. Their first production there was 'To Kill A Mockingbird' in June, 2003. The Crescent Theatre was placed on the NJ State Register of Historic Places on July 22, 2005 and the National Register of Historic Places on September 7, 2005. It was leased by the Tri State Actors Theatre until 2011 when Cornerstone Playhouse, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, came in and leased the space and is still the present occupant, using an all-volunteer staff and local volunteer actors to provide live performances to Sussex County and its surrounding areas, keeping a light on in this old treasure.



For a donation of \$10.00 you can receive this Historic Sites Map.

Your donation helps the Society to continue providing this kind of Sussex County Historic Sites Map in future.

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS WELCOMED!

If so, please contact the Old Sussex Almanack Editor at 973-383-6010 Or Email: Attention: Editor , Peter N. Chletsos

Old Newton Cemetery Committee needs volunteers to help maintain & clean-up the cemetery's ancient gravestones & gravesites. The **Publicity Committee** needs individuals who are versed in public relations.

SCHS COMMITTEES

SCHS members are encouraged to get active in the SCHS. Many opportunities are available and are certain to capture your interest.

Volunteer on one or more of our committees - Finance; Programs and Special Events; Building and Grounds; Old Newton Cemetery; Museum; Library & Genealogy; Membership and Development (includes communications, publicity, technology and website).

If you are interested or want more information, call us at 973-383-6010 and leave a message or email us at sussexcountyhs@gmail.com.
Or

Just drop by, visit and talk to us!

Sussex County Historical Society

P.O. Box 913

82 Main Street

Newton, NJ 07860