



THE
HISTORICAL DIRECTORY

OF
SUSSEX COUNTY, N. J.

CONTAINING

A brief summary of events from its first Settlement, with
Descriptive and Historical Notices of each Town ;

ALSO,

The Name and Post-Office Address of each Freeholder.

EMBELLISHED WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

AND

A VALUABLE MAP OF THE COUNTY.

COMPILED AND EDITED BY

EDWARD A. WEBB.

1872.

** Rev. John F. Shaw is pastor of the Reformed Church of Lower Wallpack. Rev. S. Miller is pastor of the Wallpack Centre M. E. Church, and it has no connection whatever with the church at Dingman's Ferry, Pa. The Reformed churches of Dingman's Ferry, Pa., and of Peter's Valley, N. J., are known in the denomination as upper Wallpack. The present pastor is Rev. S. S. Garretson.*

WALLPACK CENTRE M. E. CHURCH.

* This church, together with the church at Dingman's Ferry, is now under the charge of Rev. John F. Shaw. The corner stone of this edifice was laid in June, 1871, on land donated by Jacob Roe. It is a frame building with brick foundations and a slate roof. It is 60x38 feet, and will seat 300 persons. The audience room, 20 feet from floor to ceiling, is handsomely painted and frescoed. This elegant structure, which took the place of a quaint old meeting-house, a relic of primitive days, was dedicated in March, 1872, and on the day of its dedication \$1,500 was raised by subscription to pay off the debt.

WANTAGE TOWNSHIP.

Wantage is about eleven miles long and about seven broad. It is the largest township in the county, having an area of over 40,000 square acres. It is bounded north by Orange County, N. Y., south by Frankford, Lafayette and Hardyston, east by Vernon and Hardyston, which are separated from it by the Wallkill, and west by Montague.

Wantage comprises that portion of the Kittanny Valley which lies between Pochunk Mountain on the east, and the Blue Mountains on the west.

The surface of this valley is uneven, covered with several ridges of low hills, running north and south, with bottoms of considerable width, in which is land of great fertility. Along these valleys run two small streams, tributaries of the Wallkill.

The natural scenery of this region is rarely surpassed. It is thickly settled throughout, and contains about a sixth of the whole population of the county. Less than one hundred and fifty years ago the Indians claimed the whole of the district as their hunting grounds, where now villages and farm houses thickly dot the surface. The early settlers of Wantage

are of a mixed origin, some of German and others of New England parentage, besides Huguenots, or French Protestants. These latter, exiled from Holland in the latter part of the seventeenth century, emigrated to America, and passing up the Hudson, settled near Kingston, N. Y., from which place some individuals pushed farther on and settled in this town.

The villages in this township are Deckertown, Beemerville, Coleville, Libertyville, Mt. Salem and Rockport.

DECKERTOWN.

About the year 1740 Peter Decker, a Hollander, the great grandfather of John B. Decker, and ancestor of almost all who bear that name still living in the township, passed over the Blue Mountains from the ~~Neversink~~ settlement, and came into this valley. Being struck with the exceeding fertility of the soil, he immediately prepared to erect a dwelling, and selected for its site the spot on which Deckertown now stands. His house stood near Gilbert Chardevoyne's Hotel. This was probably the first white man's abode in the township.

The village of Deckertown is situated about fifteen miles northeast from Newton on the Clove river. It is the business centre and principal place for trade to a district ten miles in extent. Since the construction of the Midland Railroad the village has taken a new start. Several new and handsome buildings have been erected.

Two or three large and well-furnished hotels provide ample and comfortable accommodations for travelers.

A newspaper called the *Deckertown Independent* was commenced in the spring of 1870 by Stephen H. Sayer, which is still published under the able management of Messrs. Sayer & Noble.

No school of any note had been sustained in the township until 1833, when William Rankin commenced an academy in this village under great difficulties, not for want of personal merit, however, as was afterwards proved, but for want of an appreciation among the people of such an institution. By persistent energy, however, he built up for himself quite a reputa-

tion, so that ten years afterward, in 1843, an article appeared in the *Sussex Register* which spoke of his success and qualifications, and stated that about a thousand youth had been under his charge and that many of his pupils had become prepared to enter college, or commence professional studies.

There is now situated here a well-built academy ably conducted.

There are also about fifteen stores, a large grist-mill, a blacksmith's shop, and a foundry running a ten horse-power engine.

BEEMERVILLE

Is situated in the southwestern portion of this township, at the base of the Blue Mountain range. It is divided into what is often called Upper and Lower Beemerville; the latter is about a mile southeast of the other, and contains a saw-mill and store; it is on a branch of the Papakating River. Upper Beemerville contains two carriage manufactories an hotel, a tannery, store, and harness shop, two blacksmiths and one wheelwright.

It received its name about fifty years ago from Henry Beemer, who kept the hotel here at that time.

A cemetery was laid out here in 1866, and called the "Beemerville Cemetery." It contains five acres of land, having a good osage hedge around it.

The population of Beemerville is about 200. It has long had the promise of a railroad to run through Culver's Gap, connecting it with places east and west. The nearest station now is Deckertown, five and a half miles distant on the Midland Railroad.

The Clove Church, in Clove Valley, and the Deckertown and Beemerville Presbyterian Churches were for many years under one charge, the notices of them are, therefore, given under the head of

CLOVE CHURCH.

In the year 1787 a Reformed church was organized and a church named Clove Church, from the valley in which it was

built, the first pastor being the Rev. Elias Van Benschotten. This church was for many years in a very flourishing state, but after the death of Mr. Van Benschotten it was neglected by its own denomination, and in 1817 it was made the First Presbyterian Church of Wantage, organized by Rev. Gershom Williams, of the Presbytery of Jersey. About this time the

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF DECKERTOWN

was built, and Mr. Williams preached here as well as at the Clove, and at the "Log Meeting House" for a year and a half as a stated supply.

In June, 1829, the Clove Church was taken down and a new meeting house built, which cost \$3,300.

The "Old Log Meeting House" was situated at Beemerville, under the same charge with the Clove and Deckertown churches. The Presbyterian members of this church, however, wishing to organize separately, they determined to build a new church, the "Log Meeting House" being occupied by Presbyterians, Baptists and Congregationalists in common. The new church was of stone. It was built in 1835, at a cost of \$3,000, and called the Second Presbyterian Church of Wantage.

Rev. Andrew Tully, the present minister, was the first installed pastor of this church.

"OLD LOG MEETING HOUSE," BEEMERVILLE.

This building was torn down in about the year 1823, when a frame building was erected as a free church. At this time the Congregationalists were the most numerous denomination; that, together with the Presbyterians and Baptists worshiped in this church. In 1835, when the Presbyterian church was built the Congregationalists joined them. The union church from that period went down, and for several years past has been unoccupied.

COLEVILLE.

This village is situated in the western portion of this township, at the base of the Blue Mountains. It contains a saw-mill and two grist-mills, driven by a stream which takes its rise at Sand Pond on the mountain back of the place. There are also two stores, a blacksmith's and a wheelwright's shop, a harness-maker's shop, a cheese-box manufactory, and two hotels. The Dotterer House is a first-class hotel. A fine hall is attached to this building, where ample accommodation for entertainments of every description is furnished.

LIBERTYVILLE

Is a post village about three miles south of Coleville ; contains a store, a blacksmith shop, and a Methodist church.

The old Patterson stage route ran through this place and was the means of establishing a post-office here. This road was established in about the year 1830, and passed through Snufftown, Hamburgh, Deckertown, Libertyville and Montague, in this county.

COLEVILLE AND LIBERTYVILLE M. E. CHURCHES.

These two Methodist churches are in one charge. The Red Church, called so on account of that being the original color of the building, was erected in 1837, by Isaiah Winfield. The first pastor of this church was the Rev. Mr. Baker.

The Libertyville M. E. Church was organized in 1860, and the building was immediately put up. The pastor in charge at this time being Rev. S. C. Mertene. The ground upon which the church edifice stands was deeded to it by Jacob Courtwright.

Rev. W. McCain is now on the charge of these two churches.

MT. SALEM.

This is a small village in the northern extremity of the township. It contains a store, blacksmith's and a wheel-

wright's shop, an hotel and a still-house. There are two Baptist churches here, neither of which are regularly occupied.

ROCKPORT, a short distance from this place, contains a blacksmith's and a wheelwright's shop.

MAHACKAMECK DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH, NOW DEERPARK REFORMED CHURCH, PORT JERVIS, N. Y., AND ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCHES ON THE DELAWARE.

The Mahackameck Dutch Reformed Church was organized in the year 1737. Being then without a regular pastor this church and three others on the Delaware selected a lad, Johannes Casparus Fryenmoet, who had begun to study for the ministry, and sent him to Holland to complete his education and receive ordination.

He returned in 1741. His charge consisted of the four churches on the Delaware—the Mahackameck at Port Jervis, the Minisink at Montague, Wallpack Church in Wallpack, and Smithfield Church at Smithfield, Pa. The salary paid by the four churches amounted to \$400.

Mr. Fryenmoet continued his labors in this field until 1756. In September, 1760, Rev. Thomas Romeyne commenced his labors as pastor, and continued until the year 1772. From this time until 1785, a period of thirteen years, the churches were not regularly supplied, owing probably to the troubled state of the country during the Revolutionary war.

On the 11th of May, 1785, a call was given by the Mahackameck, Minisink and Wallpack churches to Rev. Elias Van Benschoten, who accepted it and was duly installed in the August following. He continued as pastor until 1800.

The next regular pastor was the Rev. John Demorest, who was with them for five years.

For eight years afterward the churches were filled by occasional supplies, when, in 1816, Rev. Cornelius C. Elting accepted a call from this and the Minisink churches. He continued as their pastor for twenty-one years, after which his services were exclusively given to the Mahackameck church.

As this last act broke the link which connected the Mahackameck church with those in this county, it is not the intention to continue its history; it might, however, be well to state that the Mahackameck Church, now Deerpark, has recently completed a fine building at a cost of about \$50,000, and is now in a very flourishing condition.

A description of the present buildings of the Minisink and Wallpack churches will be found in the description of the villages in which they are situated.