

South Orange and its seventy five years

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South Orange and its beginnings.

South Orange was created January 26, 1861 after having been a part of Clinton since the year 1836 and the town of Fairmount which had its beginning March 11, 1862.

The southern part of Clinton, which was called South Orange, was sparsely settled, having only about thirty houses, the Presbyterian Church, Columbian school, a tavern at the corner of South Orange Ave. and Valley street, and the general stores of Mr Taylor and John Freeman. The postoffice was opened in Freeman's store October 8, 1841 but was discontinued for a year and then reestablished in 1843.

The boundaries of South Orange were as follows:

Beginning at the line between Orange and Newark, half a mile north of South Orange Ave. then south to the bridge over the east branch of the Elizabeth river taking in the estates of William Steckman, Daniel Hedden, Charles P. Lum, J. E. Courter, Samuel

Headley, Peter Tailade and then to James E. Smith's land on the top of the first mountain, adjoining Walker Rd. and then to D. W. Smith's house on Scotland street, then to Center street and back to the place of beginning. These boundaries take in ^{mapped to} ~~the~~ ~~land~~.

The people of South Orange were prosperous as their farms were the choicest in ~~So~~ New Jersey. The center of town ^{was} ~~at~~ what is now called the village. Jefferson village was the name given to the southern part of the township in honor of Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson village soon lost its fine name after John W. Sheldon about 1861 purchased 50 acres of property, and along with a few residents they built a railroad station on Morris and Essex Railroad and called it ~~improvement~~ the name inspired by Mrs. Elizabeth Hudson because of the large maple tree which stood near the station.

On March 20 1869, 76 years ago, An "act to incorporate the Village of South Orange in the county of Essex" was passed. The boundaries were as follows:

From Center Street to 100 ft south

of Seton Hall College farm house to a point on
Irvington Avenue to the center line of
Prospect Street and then to the foot of
the mountain back to Center Street.
These boundaries are the same ones we
know today.

The village of South Orange had
as its first president, S. J. Couderc and
for its trustees there were William J. Beebe,
Abijah F. Lillon, Theodore Blume, Thomas
Finner, James W. P. Gardner and William
Redmond. Beebe & Redmond soon resigned and
George B. Surrall and Eugene Plunkett resumed
their positions. Mr. Surrall became president
in 1871. He made vast researches of road making and
he described it as "construction by repairs." This
method was adopted in repairing the village streets.

John Vose, a New York lawyer
was influential in attracting New
Yorkers to settle in the Montrose
section of South Orange, for he
purchased 70 acres of land and
laid out streets and plots of land.

The first school to be recognized was the Columbia school in 1814, long before South Orange was incorporated.

Seventy-three citizens were enrolled, and the official name given was

the "Columbian School of South Orange".

A resolution of December 31, 1814 read, "first, that the trustees of the said school do proceed in arrangement for building; second, that the said building be built on what is commonly called the school house common; third, that the said building be built of wood, two stories high, forty-five feet in length by thirty-five feet in breadth". This school is a part of what is now called South Orange

Jr. High. The building was completed in October 1815 and at a meeting there it was resolved "that the price of tuition be fixed at \$1.75 per quarter, for spelling, reading, and writing."

An additional charge of 25 cents was added for arithmetic.

The cost of ~~maintaining~~ upkeep for the school was divided among the pupils.

The wood building was replaced by a brick one in 1880, though the second story was not completed for three more years. The cost of the new school was \$16,000. In 1867 the school district was changed from No. 6. Clinton to No. 28 South Orange township, which also included Vailsburg. During Dr. Elmer E. Shermans' term as principal from 1881-1893 free text books and supplies were introduced and the

High School was established. Miss

CA Etta Hillborn was the first graduate and the only in her class. It was in 1891 that manual training was

added to the course and that the High School course was made for four

years. In 1898 a brick addition was built on the Columbian School, for which

\$25,000 was spent. In 1894 the township of South Orange consisted of

three school districts - Hilton, Maplewood, and the Village.

In 1913 the Fielding School was erected in honor of Charles Gale Fielding, president of the Board of Education for several years.

In 1920 Marshal School was built in honor of James Marshal, president of the Board from 1916-1919.

The general plan for the development of the school system was to have elementary schools throughout the district, so that there would be one near every young child, then the schools at which the young adolescents would be concentrated and one for the older youth. The Columbian School although it only arranged for the accommodation of 750 pupils had ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ 1920 1,089 pupils.

~~More or less of a~~ tradition of South Orange and Maplewood had its beginning a few years before 1920. It was set up by the Board of Education,

suggested by a few members of the Grand Army of the Republic living in South Orange, in which on every Memorial Day ^{Two} ~~the~~ procession forms, one from each town, which march to the center of the district, at the Columbian High School, not far from the cemetery and "there in a most beautiful setting have joined in inspirational exercises such as cannot fail to train all who attend in true patriotism."

For the purpose of encouraging outdoor sports, an organization was formed known as the South Orange Field Club, one of the most widely known in Northern New Jersey. In the autumn of 1889 a five-year lease was signed with the Meadow Land Society for use of the field north of So. Orange Avenue between the railroad and the East Branch of the Rahway. Tennis courts, baseball diamonds, bowling alleys were installed. In winter part of the field was flooded for

skating. A golf course was soon opened in the vicinity of the park.

Rev. Louis Cameron, rector of the Church of the Holy Communion, was stricken with a serious illness in 1909, and

sympathies poured in the rectory.

The minister, loved by all, was the faithful guardian of the parish since 1895, had also served local organizations namely Century Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, as its Master. A

memorial was erected in memory of this great man. It was a five-acre tract of land situated on the east bank of the Parkway river, for a playground for children. This field was called the Cameron field.

The Seton Hall College, was built in 1860 as a Catholic institution. It was named for Mother Seton, who introduced the Sisters of Charity into the United States.

Seventy-five years have passed

since the village form of government was adopted for this section of South Orange. There are twenty five miles of streets, nearly all paved and the area of the village is 1,515 acres. The idea of culture and refinement has been well sustained in South Orange.

Recently there have been various attempts to bring about a consolidation of all the Oranges ~~and~~ or a greater Newark which would include most of Essex County, but the citizens of South Orange are opposed to any such union, feeling that the village ideals and characters would be lost. But the village is and always be willing to cooperate with its neighbors in any project.

The village government has been generally progressive through the years.

A recent Princeton Survey, ordered by the Board of Trustees has gone over thoroughly the work of ~~see each~~

department recommending changes:

THE VILLAGE

IN RETROSPECT

With a look of pride and a bit of sadness, the Village of South Orange is nearing its 75th birthday. The progress that has been made over the years can be measured in a great many ways. Possibly the easiest method of observing this, is to merely look around, comparing what we have with that which existed in 1869.

The Village today possesses a modern up-to-date school system, as compared with the one-room affair of earlier days. Our form of government is more or less the same. However, those changes which have been made, have tended to make it function more smoothly and efficiently.

Back in 1869 there were only a few stores in the Village and these were quite limited in their facilities. Today, modern stores line the streets of our business section. The spirit which existed in the first days, still is present today. This was recently exhibited, in one form, last Sunday when, despite the weather, the American Legion men together with volunteered personnel and equipment, collected about forty-four tons of scrap paper.

The number of clubs and organizations of various types, is an indication that the people of the Village are willing and able to put aside part of their time, little as it may be, in order to group together for social and business reasons.

Our churches are here today, larger in number than when the charter was granted. Their work has had and is having an important bearing on the lives of our citizens.

Three days after the charter was granted and government under it had been set up, the first paper in South Orange appeared. This spirit of the freedom of the press and keeping the Villagers informed, has continued down through the years.

And so we take off our hats to the Village and to you, its citizens. May the next seventy-five years hold as much in store for South Orange as the past seventy-five have.

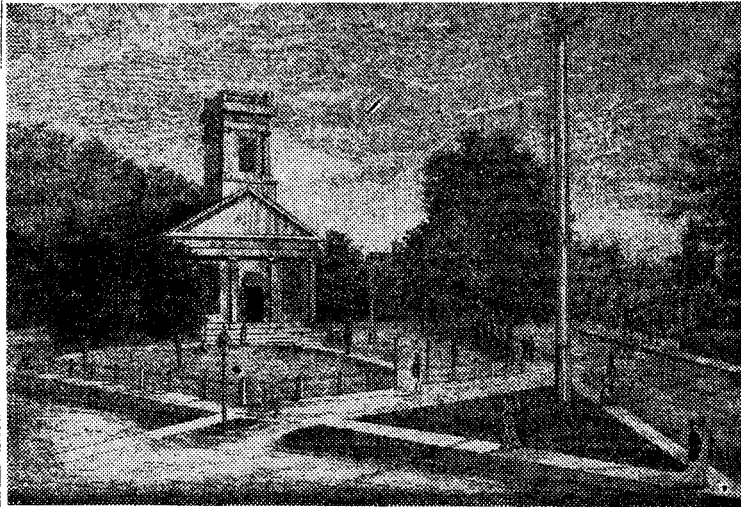
LIBRARY STILL ON SECOND FLOOR



Shown above is Becks Hardware and the South Orange Library on the second floor of the same building. The old horse and buggy, the mode of

Courtesy S. O. Library
travel in those days, is shown on the side of the building. One of the early lamp posts is also shown.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Courtesy S. O. Library

Shown above is the First Presbyterian Church in 1869. The church was standing at the same location as the present one. The triangular area is where the flag pole now stands.

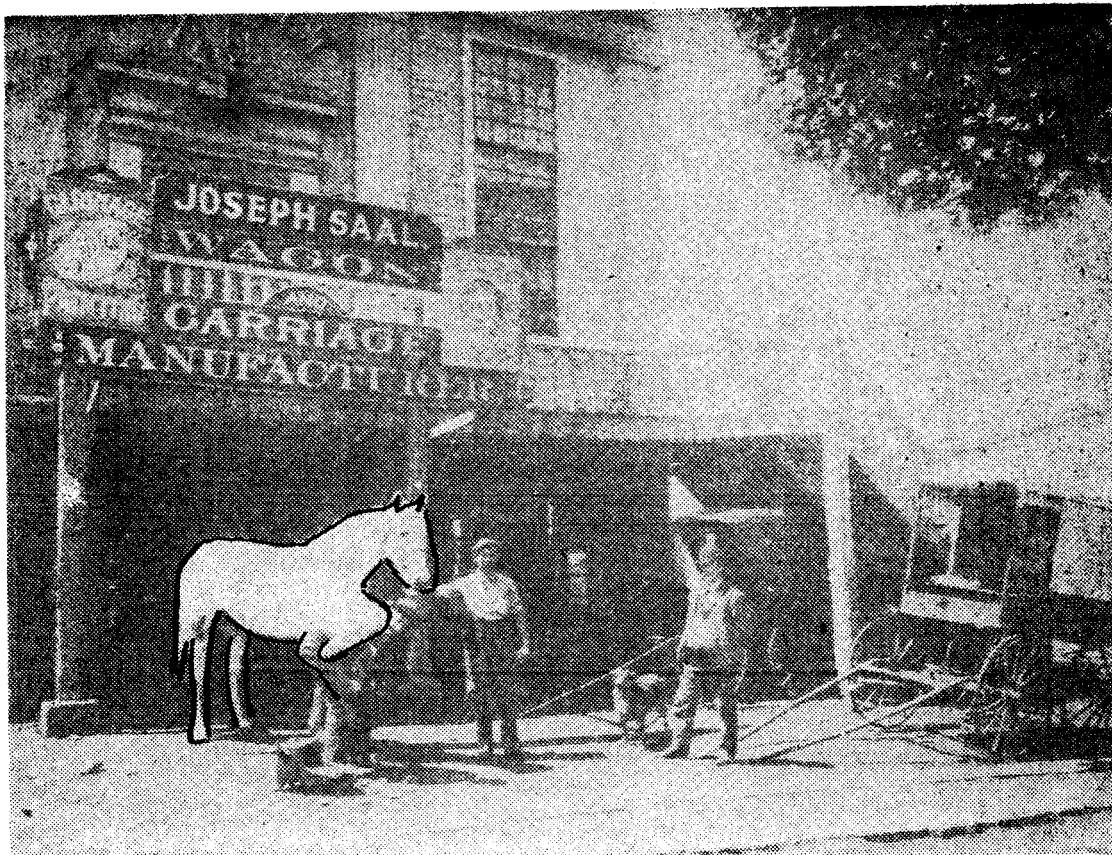
SOUTH ORANGE JUNIOR HIGH



Shown above is what was the old Columbia Orange Junior High School. The building now forms a part of South

Courtesy Board of Education

CHURCH LATER BECAME A RINK



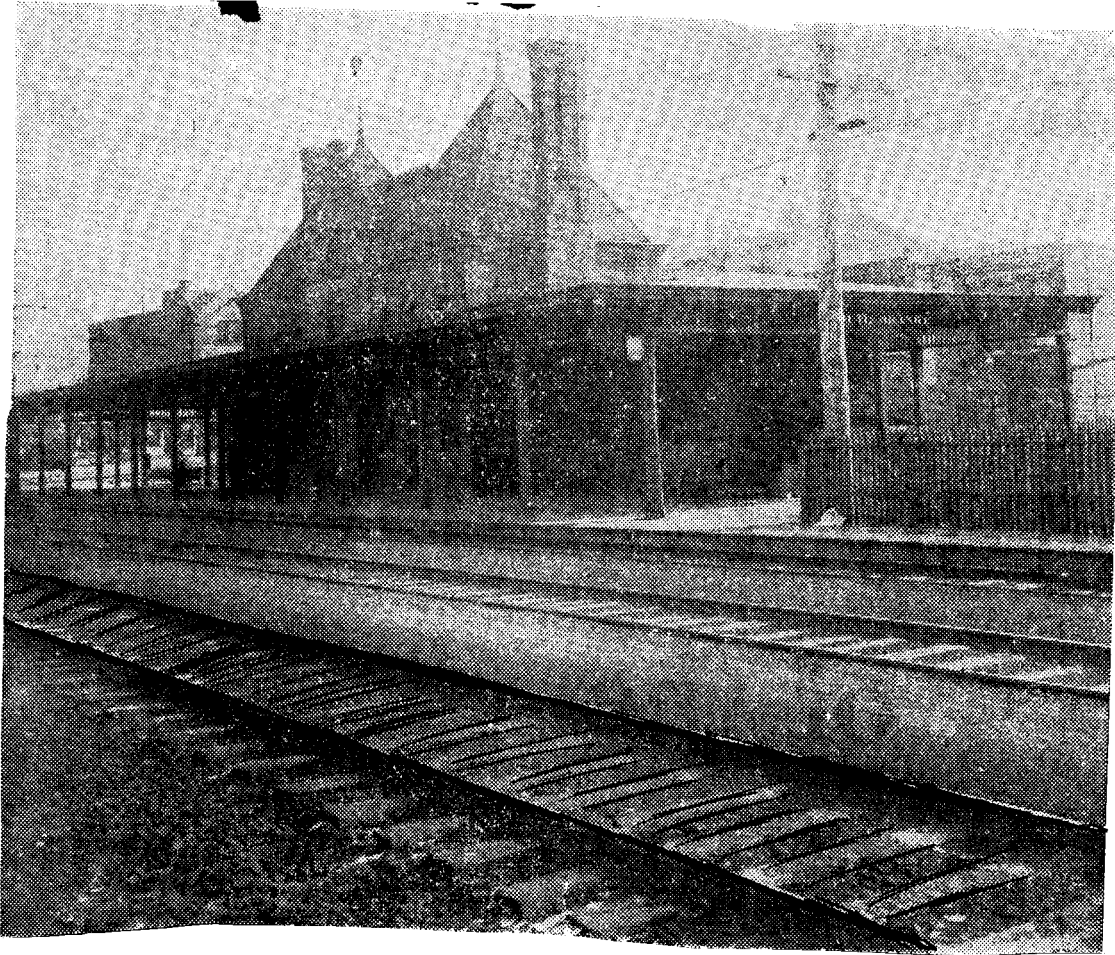
Shown above is the First Presbyterian Church after it had been moved to the location of the old Buick Garage. It was then used as a skating rink on the main floor and as a blacksmith's shop below. the church itself was raised and the rink was on the old floor.

SLOAN STREET ABOUT 1870.

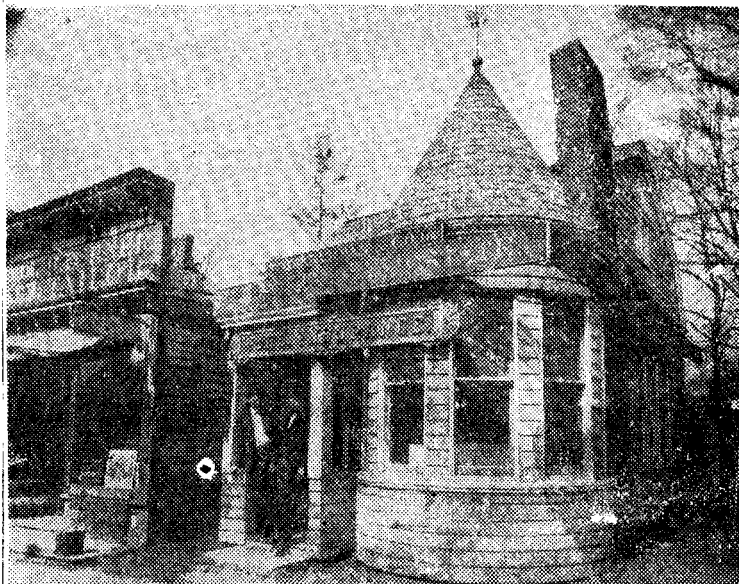


Shown above is Sloan street about the year 1870. An old ice cream saloon is on the left, and a paint shop was located on the second floor.

The old S. O. railroad station - until the present station was erected trains traveled through the street



CORNER OF S. O. AND SCOTLAND



Above is a view of what is now the location of Tublitz Brothers. The picture was taken about 1895 and shows the corner of South Orange avenue and Scotland road as it was at that time. At the extreme left is Dohm Jeweler, the father of the present jeweler located on South Orange avenue.

ORANGE LAWN TENNIS CLUB WAS ORIGINALLY REDMOND HOME



This is an early match at the Orange Lawn
Tennis Club. The beautiful club house
still stands as originally built with relatively
few changes.

Bibliography

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The South Orange Record April 23, 1944.