



Record Group:	Green Township (Sussex County)
Subgroup:	Township Clerk's Office
Series:	Birth, Marriage, and Death Returns, 1848-1878
Accession #:	1994.072
Series #:	MGRCL001
Guide Date:	9/1994 (JK)
Volume:	0.25 c.f. [1 box]

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Institutional History

Green Township was formed from Hardwick and Independence Townships on 27 December 1824. Parts of the township were ceded to Byram Township in 1829; other portions added from Newton Township in 1853; and part ceded to Fredon Township in 1904.

Legislative History

Recording of births, marriages and deaths on the municipal level was first required in New Jersey by "An act relating to the registry and returns of births, marriages, and deaths in the State of New Jersey," passed into law on 3 March 1848 (P.L. 1848, p. 155). This legislation directed township clerks to submit each June, to the Secretary of State, reports (called returns) of births, marriages and deaths which had occurred within their municipality during the previous year. The law stipulated that the data be gathered as follows: birth information was to be collected directly by the clerk or his representative during the month of May; information about marriages was to be reported to the clerk monthly by those authorized to perform marriages; death information was to be reported to the clerk monthly by those in charge of burial grounds within the municipality. The clerk was required to record the information in a separate book and, every June, forward a copy to the Secretary of State on pre-printed forms. Both the book and the forms were provided by the Secretary of State.

During the next thirty years, supplemental legislation was passed in an attempt to increase compliance and to provide more accurate statistical data. Legislation in 1851 required births to be reported to the municipal clerk within a month of the event by the attending physician, midwife, or -- if there was no such attendant -- by the parents themselves. Also, the Secretary of State was given the responsibility of notifying township clerks if their returns were past due (P.L. 1851, p. 434). Under legislation of 1862, the duty of gathering birth information was transferred from the clerk to the township assessor, who then reported to the clerk. The assessor was also required to include with his return a signed affidavit attesting that he had performed his duties to the best of his ability (P.L. 1862, chap. 85, p. 161). Legislation of 1863 required the assessor to "make a personal demand" for information regarding marriages from those authorized to perform them (P.L. 1863, chap. 256, p. 472).

Finally, in 1878, the use of returns of birth, death, and marriage records was replaced by the filing of individual birth, death, and marriage certificates. The new law outlined who was responsible for submitting the certificates and which county, city, or municipal official was then responsible for forwarding them each month to the Secretary of State. (P.L. 1878, chap. 239, p. 354).

Content Note

This series consists of Green Township's record of births from 1 May 1848 to 1 June 1878, marriages from 1 May 1848 to 1 June 1878, and deaths from 1 June 1851 to 1 June 1878. Also included at the beginning of the volume (now disbound) are a printed copy of the 1848 law requiring the submission of returns and two assessors's affidavits attesting to performance of duty. It is not known why there are no death returns for Green Township until 1851. However, a review of the Secretary of State's 1848-1878 death returns shows that many municipalities (including Green Township) did not report death information during the first few years after 1848.

The returns are recorded in a single volume divided into three sections of pre-printed pages. Birth returns include: the date and place of birth; the child's name (if any) and sex; the parents' names, occupation, and residence; and the time of making record. Marriage returns include: the marriage date; the name, age and marital status of both parties; the residence and official station of the individual performing the ceremony; the place of marriage; the names of both parties' parents; and the occupation (sometimes used for the parties; sometimes used for the parents). Death returns include: the date of death; the name, sex, age and occupation of the deceased; the place of birth and death; parents' names; the cause of death; and the time of making record.

NOTE: As this volume is not indexed and entries are only roughly chronological, the information contained in the returns may be more readily accessible using the Secretary of State's vital records on microfilm and hard-copy indexes in the Archives search room.

Contents

1. Printed copy of "An Act relating to the registry and return of births, marriages, and deaths, in the State of New Jersey," 3 March 1848.
2. Assessor's affidavits of faithful performance of duties: Samuel Hill, 6 August 1863; and John H. Ayres, 15 August 1876. Both were sworn before Justice of the Peace Job J. Decker.
3. Returns of births, 1 May 1848 - 1 June 1878.
4. Returns of marriages, 1 May 1848 - 1 June 1878.
5. Returns of deaths, 1 June 1851 - 1 June 1878.

Created July 2004

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