

Summit Historical Minute

“Deserted Village”

Presented by Betsy Dietze, Summit High School Senior

Dec. 5th, 2017 Common Council Meeting

The first village in the area, located in the Watchung Reservation and now known as the Deserted Village, was first founded by a man named Peter Wilcox and his family in 1720. It was named "Peter's Hill". The center of the town was a watermill that was built and used for many generations, through changes of ownership. About a century after the creation, a man named David Felt purchased the mill and water rights in 1845. The town was changed to "Feltville". There was a population of about 200 people, including a general manager, clergyman, school teacher, printers, bookbinders, blacksmiths, shoemakers, barber, tailor, etc. It was rather prosperous, until about 1860 when David Felt retired, sold the village, and left. After that, people of the town began to disperse as the new and upcoming industries failed to succeed. By 1880 the town was deserted and decaying. But still today you can visit the area and see the historical museum put in recognition of the first settlers of the area.