

After the Civil War two additional churches were established — the Methodist in 1870 and the Episcopal in 1878. The Central Railroad (today's Central Railroad of New Jersey) established its depot at Martine Avenue, Fanwood, since Scotch Plains remained opposed to railroad encroachment.

Immigrations from Southern Europe, beginning with the arrival of the Italians, contributed fresh talent and leadership to the town. Noteworthy among them were the first arrivals, Joseph Del Nero and his wife in 1860. These Italian pioneers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries provided the community with three mayors and numerous other town leaders and officials as Scotch Plains entered the first half of the present century. Numbered among the eighty-nine veterans of World War I (population: 1,400) and the nine hundred of World War II (population: 4,500) are names reflective of the rich and varied heritage of the town from the oldest pioneers to the newest.

Politically, until 1794, Scotch Plains was a part of Elizabethtown, an area also including present day Westfield and Fanwood. In that year Westfield Township was created with an approving Scotch Plains included in this designation. Still another political change occurred in 1877 when Scotch Plains neared political identity of its own, becoming legally known as Fanwood Township. In 1895, an area of about one square mile separated from Fanwood Township to become Fanwood Borough. The two Fanwoods existed until March 20, 1917, when George H. Johnston successfully persuaded the state legislature to legalize the original colonial name — Scotch Plains.

. . . and now . . .

Scotch Plains, primarily a residential community, is located in north central New Jersey twenty-two miles southwest of New York City via U.S. Highway 22. As part of the Greater New York metropolitan area, Scotch Plains benefits from the resources of the larger cities. New York and Newark papers are regularly read here; their radio and television stations are heard; their cultural, educational, and entertainment facilities are easily accessible from Scotch Plains.

Scotch Plains itself offers a happy combination of the rural and suburban life. With an area of 9.06 miles, the third largest in Union County, it ranks eleventh in population. Parks and playgrounds cover more than 18 per cent of the total town acreage with the two largest park areas included in the Union County Park Commission's 5,000 acre park system. These two parks, the Watchung Reservation on the north side of town and Ash Brook Golf Course on the south, combine with the Plainfield Country Club on the west and the Scotch Hills Golf Course on the east to provide large green spaces as boundaries.

Population Characteristics

Scotch Plains has grown from 1,200 people in the 1900 census to approximately 23,500 in 1980 with the average age in the thirty to forty age group. The median income per family is about \$19,000. The median number of school years completed is 12.6.

Following World War II, Scotch Plains had a huge increase in population. From 1950 to 1960 the population increased from 9,069 to 18,491. With a 103.9 per cent increase, it ranked as one of the eight fastest growing Union County municipalities. The 1970 census population of 22,279 revealed a gain of only 20.4 per cent over the 1960 figures. This change was due to the diminished availability of vacant land for residential construction and to a lower rate of birth.

About 90 per cent of the residential area of the town has been developed. The late 1970's saw condominium apartments built in the center of town and construction begun on condominiums and apartments on land on the south side of town previously set aside for industrial development. Open spaces also diminished as farm land was sold to housing developers.