

John Deans (1872-1938)

“Mayor of Greenlawn”

John Deans was born in Manhattan in 1872 and came to Greenlawn after his marriage to Elizabeth Breen in 1899. He ran a general store in the building on Broadway, which is now the Greenlawn Hardware Store. As business prospered, John Deans purchased and enlarged the building and then in 1910 built “The General Store” on the southwest corner of Broadway and Smith Street and moved his business there (today the building serves as an Italian restaurant).

Mr. Deans was known as the unofficial “Mayor of Greenlawn” because of his interest and work benefiting the community. He was a charter member of the Columbia Hook and Ladder and its second Chief (1906-13). John Deans was on the school board and a trustee of the Greenlawn Presbyterian Church. He was active in politics in the Huntington area. Mr. Deans served as Justice of the Peace, was in charge of the Automobile License Bureau for all of Suffolk County, and was Purveyor of Taxes.

John Deans was a charismatic individual and a friend of everyone. He knew every one in the neighborhood and sent the children of the community birthday and holiday cards.

On July 26th 1938 John Deans passed away. As a legacy, he left behind a scrapbook, full of news clippings he amassed from 1905 till his death in 1938. We do not know if this was a hobby of his or if he had the foresight to capture the development of Greenlawn in the early 20th century for future generations to learn about and enjoy.

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