



Historic QUAKERTOWN

26 N. Main St. P.O. Box 846
Quakertown PA 18951
www.QuakertownHistoricalSociety.org
QuakertownHistoricalSociety@gmail.com
Phone: 267-227-3864



March 2022 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

It looks like we are all but finished with winter 2022! While, if you are like me, there were days that you complained about the weather, it really wasn't too bad. Having said that, we are ready for the warmth of spring and summer.

The Quakertown Historical Society is starting to come out of the "mothballs" that was created by Covid-19. We plan on scheduling a clean-up day at the Burgess Foulke House and Liberty Hall – both inside and outside the buildings. We will let you know when that is planned and hope you find some time to help.

Significant work has been done by the Archives & Display Committee doing a general clean-up on the third floor of the Burgess Foulke House and at the same time, unearthing many artifacts including items about the Quakertown Band.

President Christina has started labeling various items in the Burgess Foulke House and Liberty Hall along with a brief history of the item. Sometime in the spring, we hope much of this will be done so those taking a tour of the facilities will get a better understanding of what life was like in Quakertown in the 1800's.

With the help of a grant given to us by the Upper Bucks Community Fund of the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation, we have been able to purchase a new laptop computer and printer. These items were very much needed and will be put to good use in the years to come.

The Archives & Display Committee is in the process of changing the display found in what we call the "Museum" which fronts the Upper Bucks Chamber of Commerce. A miniature circus with a functioning model train is part of the design along with new paintings and photos.

A significant part of Quakertown's history is the role that service clubs have served. At one time there were at least a dozen that were active in both meeting as a club and then supporting the various events with their financial contributions. In some cases, the clubs were actually doing various events in the community.

While there are now just a few that are active, they still serve the community in a variety of ways. Attached is an article written by a member of the Historical Society and an active service club member over the years.

Also included is a nostalgic look at the history of Quakertown sports. The article first appeared in The Free Press on August 16, 1980 and was probably done by George Fox.

Finally, is an article by Carolyn Potser, a long-time teacher at Quakertown Community High School about the Quakertown Borough Centennial in 1955.

We hope you enjoy all three articles!!

My Service Club Experience

By Doug Hutchinson

As most local residents know, Quakertown has a very rich history – going way back to the Revolutionary War. However, what most of us don't think much about is the additional history that is added every day.

While I didn't grow up in Quakertown, I have been a part of the added history since 1967 when my wife and I built our new home in the Pleasant Valley area and Quakertown became our go-to shopping area for our daily needs.

Some years later, in 1976, I left my employment position in Bethlehem and began a new career starting my own business. One of my first steps was to make an appointment with Mr. Phil Miller, then president of

Quakertown Nation Bank (now QNB Bank). I needed a loan to get started. Armed with my business plan I showed up at the bank. In short order Mr. Miller read over my plans and quickly as well as firmly said “You won’t be able to do that!” He did however, loan me the needed funds. His intuition was so true! As with so many new businesses, the founders have great expectations even to the point of being delusional.

After I finally began to make progress in growing my new business, Phil (we were on a first name basis at this point) encouraged me to join the local Kiwanis Club. I had never belonged to any service club before, but I soon found that serving the community can be very rewarding.

The Quakertown Kiwanis Club was formed in 1924. I joined in 1978 and found myself surrounded by many of the “movers and shakers” in the Quakertown area. Long before my arrival in Quakertown, the Kiwanis club was recognized as a significant contributor to many of the Borough projects, particularly projects in and around the park system.

Kiwanis favored investing in projects to assist young people. Two annual projects were sponsored by Kiwanis and headed up by Kiwanian Harold Stauffer, a dentist in town at the time.

One was the annual easter egg hunt for the children. We held this event rain or shine. If it rained, we held it in the cafeteria of the high school.

Also, each year, near Christmas, we would obtain the names of some needy families with children and arrange to see that they were taken care of by buying shoes for them at Moyer’s Shoe store and/or providing Christmas gifts for them. Members of the club would personally deliver these gifts. There were lots of other projects, but these stand out in my memory.

As was the case with many service clubs in those days, women’s clubs were separate from men’s clubs. In Quakertown, the women had their clubs: BPW (Business and Professional Women), the Women’s Club and the Soroptimists; while the men had Jaycees, Optimists, Sertoma, Lions, Rotary and, of course, Kiwanis.

In the late 1980’s some of the men’s clubs began to invite women to join. I don’t know what the reaction was to that new approach in other clubs, but some of the Kiwanis club members were not happy about it. Some were so unhappy that they decided to drop out of the club. I won’t mention any names, but the net result was a significant drop in attendance and membership. In addition, as has often been the case, finding younger people interested in joining a service club was difficult often because club membership could be costly since we met every week for dinner.

Kiwanis was often teased about our meetings because of the frequent changes in location. When I joined, we were meeting at Trainer’s Restaurant until they had a fire – then we met at the Moose Hall (they too had a fire) and Carlo’s Internationale and eventually at Benetz Inn. Through no fault of the club, each of our meeting places went out of business for various reasons.

Unfortunately, Kiwanis continued to decline. One of the reasons for the decline, too, was that we often met early at the bar and one or another of the members might have too much to drink which became an embarrassment to the other members. As a result, members were reluctant to invite prospects to the meetings. Eventually, the local Kiwanis Club was forced to disband shortly after 1990.

By that time, I had gone through the “chairs” (ie: Treasurer, Vice President and President) for Kiwanis and decided to sit out for a while. In the meantime, some of my friends, namely Bob Wieand and Walter Derr (both officers with Quakertown National Bank) were pushing me to join Rotary. Tom Bisko had replaced Phil Miller as president of Quakertown National Bank, and Bob and Walter wanted me to support Tom in his new position.

In 1993, I was inducted into Rotary with the proviso that I wouldn’t go through the “chairs” again. Serving in those offices can require a lot of time and by that time my accounting practice was finally beginning to prosper. Phil Miller was absolutely right - it took me a lot longer to create my new business than I had anticipated. By this time, I had joined the Chamber of Commerce and had just gone thru the “chairs” with that organization. I hadn’t yet learned to say “No”, which also got me heavily involved with the YMCA.

The Rotary Club also has a rich history of contributing to the community. Several recent efforts stand out – the club provided dictionaries to many students in the area as well providing computers for the school system. Rotary, much like Kiwanis, also seeks out local families to assist around the holidays. We annually provide funds for various charities such as Children’s Development Program (CDP), locally, as well as national and international charities through the Rotary Foundation. Each year the Rotary board of directors evaluates the funds available from various fundraising projects and prepares a list of charitable causes the club will sponsor.

As an aside, I later discovered an interesting bit of history. One of our Rotarians, namely Peggy Adams, had assembled a history of the formation of the Quakertown Rotary Club. In reading the history, I discovered the Bethlehem Rotary Club was responsible for the formation of the Quakertown Club. On June 24, 1924, the president of the Bethlehem Club presented a Rotary Banner at the founding meeting in Quakertown. To my surprise, I discovered that the presenter was William Hutchinson, my grandfather. I never knew that he was a Rotarian until I read that history.

History of Quakertown Sports
The Free Press
Do You Remember?
August 16, 1980

You're getting along in years of you remember – Quakertown's 98-0 win over Nazareth Military Academy...Football games at LuLu Park...Wooden goal posts...First night game on Alumni Field...Majorettes first twirling fire batons...Kicking off without a kicking tee...Numbers on backs of jerseys only...A touchback counted two points and extra points were made with dropkicks...Quakertown having the first clock in the Bux-Mont League...Official George Erb strutting off a 15-yard penalty...A lot of years are behind you if you recall – Football practices held where the Senior High School now stands...Public address announcer's booth in one of the light towers...Porky McNair's two extra point kicks ending Quakertown's 20-year losing streak against Lansdale...Paul "Moose" Barndt head coach at Souderton...Frank Stump's six touchdown performance against Upper Moreland...End Austin Shorty and his famous sleeper play opening a game for a long gain...Coach Joe Musso stomping on his old hat at a poor call by an official or Dick Wisneski throwing his clip board high in the air for the same reason...Zimmie Weber putting on a display of broken field running...You're no younger if you remember – Warren S. Buck climbing the light tower to take movies of a game...Jack Slotter playing against Sell-Perk with a wired jaw...A 64-yard punt by Charles "Skip" Kline...Upper Perkiomen playing night games under flickering portable lights...Faculty manager Jesse Cressman carrying around his metal cash box...Ambler's Earl Mundell scoring down the sidelines for a TD...Games played in the snow...Quakertown footballers going to Camp Dent for a two-week period of practice...Rumors of moving the Thanksgiving Day game to Lehigh's Taylor Stadium to accommodate the large crowds...Johny River's two touchdowns and fine defensive play against Emaus (the original spelling)...You've been around for awhile if you recall – Bonfire pep rallies at 6th Street & Park Avenue...Teams like East Greenville, Lansdale, Doylestown, Jenkintown, Sell-Perk, and Ambler playing Bux-Mont football...Earl Strom officiating high school games instead of National Basketball Association contests as he does now...Richie Kline missing the Thanksgiving Day game because of an injury...Quakertown's home side bleachers beyond the track on the Eighth Street side of Alumni Field...Rebuilding the wooden goal posts so Sell-Perk could manage a tie over highly favored Quakertown...Ambler game postponed because of a snowstorm...93-yard pass play by Bob Lewis and Gary Dimmig...Horns used by officials on penalties instead of flags...Great Runs by Tommy Moyer, Bob Landgreen, and Paul Thomas...teams with only one or two players weighing more than 165 pounds...You're getting along indeed if you remember – Team nicknames like Flatlanders, Erdenheimers, County Seaters, Drakes, Bulldogs, and Huskies...TV crew following Jim Waite for a documentary, which proved a dud...Center Dutch Yanish's pass interception not counting as a TD because he downed the ball on a leaf-covered five-yard line...Quick whistles by officials on Harry Dietz's slick faking...place kickers like Porky McNair...Yogi Koehler, Bill Dietz, and Butch Smoll...Guard John Strawn and his Blue Creeper old jalopy...Eddie Becker's circus catches...Little Franny Keegan as an end.

1955 – 2005: From Centennial to Sesquicentennial
Carolyn's Corner by Carolyn Potser
Quakertown Free Press May 22, 2003

Excitement reigned the week of June 18, 1955, in Quakertown and the surrounding area comprising the Quakertown School District. From Saturday to Saturday, residents joyously celebrated the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of Quakertown into a borough. Daytime and nighttime events were scattered throughout

town, many on Alumni Field, in the former Junior-Senior High School on Seventh Street, and on the borough streets.

Ralph S. Butler, then a sales representative for an insurance company, and borough council treasurer, headed the executive committee that supervised over 30 committees handling hundreds of details involving people, places, and activities. Their hub of operations was an unused store at 219 W. Broad Street, manned by an office secretary.

In only two more years, Quakertown will observe its sesquicentennial, it's 150th birthday. If residents are looking forward to holding special events akin to those held in 1955, planning should soon begin.

In 1955, satisfying the local penchant for parades, centennial festivities opened and closed with two spectacular parades – on June 18, a Cavalcade of Progress parade, and on June 25 a Firemen's Parade. An audience of 20,000 watched the Cavalcade of Progress parade led by the state police. One hundred marching units made up of eight divisions marched a two- and one-half-mile route. Included were a 40-foot destroyer, the USS Philadelphia, entered by the Navy, an old stagecoach. A six-mule team pulling a covered wagon. A national guard tank company, the Queen's float, antique cars, the Harrogate String Band, numerous floats representing civic and fraternal organizations, the Brothers of the Bush, and the Sisters of the Swish.

That opening night, Abby Viehe, the Centennial Queen, was crowned at Her Majesty's Ball. Abby, her maid of honor, Gunta (Connie) Legzdins, and four princesses of her court, Nancy Ames, Betty Foulke, Joyce Gerhart, and Arielou Jphnson, visited all four dances held in their honor, at the Moose home, the Goodwill Social Club, the Acme Parking Lot Square Dance, and the teen dance at the high school. Chosen for their beauty, personality, photogenic appearance and poise, dozens of young women ages 16 to 21, sponsored by a local civic or fraternal organization, competed for the crown through a system of votes by residents.

The following day, Sunday, was deemed Religious Day. The combined choirs of 300 voices representing the churches of the Ministerium of Quakertown and vicinity, The Citizen's Band, and the Quakertown Band joined in presenting a sacred concert on Alumni Field. A judge from the Lehigh Valley, the Hon. James F. Henninger, was the guest speaker.

Most activities took place in Memorial Park Monday through Friday. Girls up to age 13 participated in a Junior Miss Pageant and boys competed in a quoit tournament on Monday. On Tuesday children wore costumes portraying early dress in Quakertown; local manufacturers held open house in their plants; and fans enjoyed an all-star baseball game. Rural Day on Wednesday emphasized games and athletic contests for children, a tractor driving contest, an Old Dress Contest, a German band, a greased pig-catching contest, a chicken barbeque dinner, and another all-star baseball game.

Thursday was christened Old Timers Day. Persons over 75 were entertained on the veranda of the Bush House Hotel by a German band, soloists, and a barbershop quartet. The Lions Club sponsored a Brothers of the Bush chapter and awarded first prize to John Strawsnyder for having the best beard. The Sisters of the Swish proclaimed that Hildegarde Gerling wore the oldest costume.

Fridays highlights were a pet show, a midget baseball game, and representatives of the armed forces. Citizens who failed to abide by Centennial regulation found themselves "arrested" by Keystone Cops and placed in stocks for punishment.

In the evening throughout the week hundreds of amateur performers under the guidance of a professional director, presented "Quakerama," a pageant picturing the history of Quakertown. Episodes in the pageant included The Red Man, O'Pioneers, The Seventh Day, The Dawn of Education. School Days, A Village Born, The First Train, The Cause of Freedom, Bustles and Mustaches, The Gay Nineties, and the Grand Finale.

On the closing day, Saturday, June 25, 1955, over 3000 firefighters staged a colorful parade with more than 80 pieces of apparatus. The oldest piece of apparatus was a 1772 George Washington pumper. Following this parade, local firemen sponsored a week-long carnival, which helped to sustain the celebratory mood.

When asked what advice he would give concerning a celebration to observe our town's 150th birthday in 2005, Ralph Butler encouraged all the people of Quakertown to take an interest in helping to make such a project successful. His emphatic words were.: Keep Quakertown great; participate.

If people and organizations are interested in assisting with events they may contact Pam Coleman, Main Street Manager, at 215-536-2273 or www.quakertownalive.com. She is not responsible for organizing the sesquicentennial celebration, but she will collect names until such leadership is established.