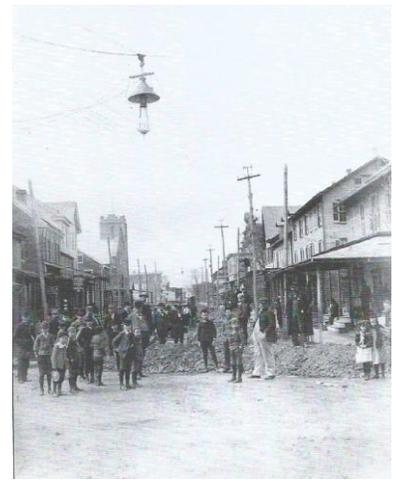




# Historic QUAKERTOWN

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## August 2021 Newsletter

The Board of Director's met on July 6, 2021 and, at that meeting, the date of September 22, 2021 was set for the Annual Meeting. The time is 7:00 PM and the place is McCoolle's Arts & Events Place, 10 S. Main Street, Quakertown, PA.

Also, at that meeting, the Board accepted the resignation of Victoria Blackmore as a member of the Board of Director's.

By Unanimous Consent, the Nominating Committee has nominated Jan Hench, Christina Landis, Jim Lukens and Jack Schick for election at the Annual Meeting to three-year terms to the Board of Directors.

The fundraiser that had been scheduled for September 11, 2021 has been cancelled.

The Archive's and Display Committee continues to work its way through the many items that it has in its possession and registered for future use. It meets at the Burgess Foulke House every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. More help can be used, and we urge you to become involved in this way.

As items are "discovered," there have been many write-ups done by members and friends of the Society in past years. These must be converted into Word documents so they can be stored in our computer, but it is also our goal to share these with you. There is a treasure trove of information contained in these works.

Following is one such example. This is the transcript of what was shared at what was then Benetz Inn (now Collector's Bazaar on Route 309, north of Quakertown Borough) at a membership meeting in October 1985.

As you will see, it takes the reader on a tour of what was Quakertown Borough during the childhood of Helen Walp Hubbard. For some of you, it will bring back old memories either growing up in the borough or coming to "town" to do the Friday night shopping.

As always, we hope you enjoy the essay! And we hope to see you at the Annual Meeting.

## Reminiscences And Responsibilities

By Helen Walp Hubbard

October 1985

Benetz Inn

Do you like to reminisce? You know, they say it's a sign of old age. Let's face it, we are all a year older than last year. I'd like to begin by taking you cross the railroad tracks to East Broad Street, but before we do that, I want to ask you a question. Do you recall the large, decorated tree on the railroad lot that shown in all its glory at Christmas time? Do you know who made the tree dimensional star that adorned the very tip of that tree? Ralph Fisher made it and for many years it was displayed until it became too weather beaten to use.

Now we're ready for our tour on East Broad Street from Belmont Avenue to Hellertown Avenue. This particular area has had a profound bearing on my childhood (growing up). The people living there then, and the merchants have taught me many things.

There was Knauss' Meat Market where we always traded, and not only at the shop but the "butcher team;" and later the truck that went from house to house. I was always curious as a child and thought some day I'd like to be a butcher. Can you picture that? The men at the meat market taught me what to look for in quality and cuts of meat. Sam Gerhab, on the wagon, was very friendly and when I went out to buy something, at the sound of the bell, with my plate and small purse, he cut a piece of "Helen's" meat, as he called it – pressed ham and gave it to me. To this day I like it very much but avoid eating too many cold cuts. My mouth still waters for their pickled tongue, sausage (smoked or fresh), scrapple, died beef, tripe, and ring bologna.

Then too, as a child I was delegat3ed top go to the meat market and pick up the casings for sausage when my grandfather butchered his pig before Thanksgiving. I was about six and a half or seven when I first had that responsibility.

During the strawberry season, Trinity Lutheran Church had their annual strawberry festival on that vacant railroad lot. That event taught me responsibility because I usually helped to set up, wait on tables, greet friends, and stayed until all the properties were put away. So much happened on that lot.

Do you remember the Booster Parade sponsored by the local merchants on a Saturday once each year? It centralized on the railroad lot. There were booths, vendors, speakers, parades, etc. My mother took a five-cent chance and won a huge teddy bear whose eyes lit up. In fact, it was just as tall as my brother Charles at the age of three or four. How we loved that teddy bear.

As we move toward Hellertown Avenue, we come to the old car barn building owned by Ethel Lippman, formerly owned by her father, Mr. Kline. Part of that building housed a bowling alley, ice cream parlor, and the old Broad Theater with all its happy memories – matinee on Saturday afternoon after my bath. Admission was 10 cents and sometimes a "special" for a nickel – all silent movies – Tom Mix, Mary Pickford and handsome Earle Williams who was the drawing card for local women. We brought our own snacks – cracker jack, candy, pretzels, popcorn, peanuts, cookies etc. The floor would be littered with peanut shells, pretzels, boxes, wrappings, and paper. I recall for people who played the piano – Arlene Reichenbach Hoffman (Mick Hoffman's wife), Katherine Fitting (Eugene Fitting's sister), Walter Bartholomew, and Pete Moyer. Do you know anyone else? The theater was always used as a place to assemble in town for local plays (home talent and we really had it then), minstrel shows, graduation exercises, important town meetings etc. It was the only building in town large enough to accommodate a crowd.

Next to the theater was a small American Store. That's where many people on the east side did their shipping. It was my responsibility quite often to shop there on my way home from school. One thing I enjoyed buying was two cans of Farmdale peas for our dinner that evening. We had creamed peas on toast topped with sliced hard-boiled eggs, pickled cabbage, sometimes sweet potatoes, rice pudding or apple tart or sliced peaches for dessert. I look back now and find that it was a well-balanced meal. At that time there was always a sale on canned goods, bread, jellies, and pretzels. It was difficult walking around the displays because the store was very small.

Now we come to Kline's store where one was never given a "no." It was always "I have it" or "I'll get it for you" and how true that is to this day. One can learn a great deal about many things speaking with Ethel

Kline Lippman. Those people taught me truth and dependability. I loved to browse about that store and still do. Do you remember Bernard Newman, a member of our class whom the Kline's raised? He came to Quakertown after World War I from Europe, I believe. He was a very quiet, good-natured person, an excellent math student. He always carried dried fruit (prunes, raisins, or apricots) in his pocket and would share them with his friends.

The next building we approach is Kooker's Furniture – later Kooker and Smith. I can recall when Mr. Treffinger had his undertaking business in the rear of that store. All the bodies from train and car wrecks were brought there before shipping them out. Our family, through the years, had found the furniture dealer very reliable. The also did excellent work in picture framing.

Mr. Freed, the lawyer, occupied the adjoining building. When my parents did not have the time to make the Building and Loan payments, I was entrusted to take that money, which I had guarded with my life, and make the payment. I was very pleased to do it and felt quite grown up with that added responsibility. Dick Paul's sister, who was one of the secretaries in that office, had a pet gray mouse (dead) on her desk and was petting it during one of my visits. I could not appreciate that and ran from the building.

There was one merchant I shall never forget – Mr. Lambrecht, the shoe repair man. No matter what you'd ask him to repair, he did it in his gentle way. Nothing was too much trouble although it cost only five or ten cents for repairs. I recall it cost five cents to have two buttons replaced. The other day I supplied two buttons for my shoes, and it cost me \$2.00. Mr. Lambrecht and his wife were always interested in my welfare. Before he closed his shop, I visited with him in the shop where nothing seemed to have changed. He remembered me by saying "You were the one who always brought the shoes in to be repaired." He taught me honesty, patience, and concern for others and that luxuries are not necessary in order to enjoy life. We need more people like that today – people who are concerned for others. I see so much indifference.

Mr. and Mrs. Benowitz occupied the store where Cassel's Grocery functions. They sold everything under the sun such as suits coats, pants, overalls, shirts, shirt waists, underwear, leggings, union suits, slippers, petticoats, nightgowns, night caps, dresses, aprons, sheets, pillowcases and bolsters, blankets, bedspreads, handkerchiefs, jewelry, trinkets, etc. I remember them because of their appeasement. They had the art of making peace. I'll explain. My brother, Charles, wanted a small American flag the day before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, but my mother tried to explain to him that he had a larger one at home. However, he cried and insisted that he wanted it. Mr. Benowitz said, "Buy the boy a small flag and he'll be well satisfied and won't cry" and He'll be well satisfied and won't cry" and "you'll then feel peaceful. So, my mother bought the two-cent flag, and all was well.

Now we come to the ice cream parlor (corner of East Broad and Hellertown). I don't know who owned it before Mr. Unangst bought it, but I do know that Breyer's Ice Cream was always featured there (and still is) and that Chief of Police Rhoades patronized the shop. I would see him quite often when I had an extra nickel for a soda – made with syrup, milk, and seltzer – just like the ice cream soda without the ice cream. I believe Dorothy, your aunt, worked at the fountain. Ice cream sodas were ten cents. It was a great place to congregate after choir practice. Also, on a Friday night when people came to town to do their shopping; however, most of the time was spent meeting friends and talking on the street corner and in the ice cream parlor. My mother and I usually had a soda about once a week.

I recall one evening we were sipping our sodas when a woman whom my mother knew jumped up and threw her arms above her head screaming and jumping and holding her head. In a matter of seconds, she sat down again and continued eating her ice cream. A man's voice from the other end of the room bellowed, "next time it goes to your head take smaller bites."

You could buy penny candy (large assortment), boxes of candy, cigars, papers, trinkets, etc. and Moxie which was forbidden by many because it was rumored that Moxie was habit forming. Do you recall that Moxie had a bitter taste? I always enjoyed the posters with pretty girls drinking Moxie. Don't want to forget that the Citizen's Band met on the third floor of that building for their weekly rehearsals. That, too, was an added attraction on the east side.

I'd like to mention the Gussman Dry Goods Store on the opposite side of the street as we cross Hellertown Avenue. There were several steps leading up to the entrance. I thought at the time that the counters were very high on either side of the aisle. Later on, West Broad Street had the Rufe-Gussman Store.

You all know the location of the Eagle Hotel. My idea or impression of a hotel was a place where men frequented the bar to get their daily drink. No one explained to me what went on there.

Behind and next to the Hotel was a vacant lot where the Chevrolet garage now stands. Years ago, the Medicine Show came to town and put on a performance at 7 P.M. sharp each night for about eight days. After the show the bottles of Elixir were sold – good for everything that ailed you. My father took me to the shows many times. I'll mention this also. He and I always went to the fires we had in town during the evening or at night. As a child, I wouldn't have missed that, although he walked so fast that I had to run to keep up with him.

Now we cross the East Broad and stand on the opposite side of the street waiting for the "tripper" (trolley that ran from Richlandtown to Red Lion Hotel at West Broad and Main Streets). That too, was a great corner for gossip and visiting. The "tripper" reminds me of the cable cars in San Francisco. I never got sick on the cable cars but was always so sick when I rode the "tripper" despite its bumps, swaying, and upheavals. I would have to hold my breath and brace by feet whenever it stopped and sometimes manage to get off the car just in time.

On that same corner, Charlie Hoffman had his grocery store. Our families were related and good friends; however, we felt we couldn't afford to buy all our groceries there. He had good quality merchandise, some imports, very select produce, some meats and specialties like olives, fancy cheeses, packaged (individual) crackers and cookies. Oh, yes, we can't forget the molasses barrel. You brought your own container (jar, kettle), turned on the spigot, and the molasses flowed freely. Then you took your container to the counter and paid for the molasses.

We'll now move to Bill Boyer's shoe-shining parlor. He sold boiled hot dogs and whenever Anne Benner McCormick and I had a nickel to spare we'd go there after school and buy a five-cent hot dog with all the mustard we'd want. He also sold cigars, candy, newspapers, etc. Because of his generosity, we, the family, enjoyed a week of record playing on his portable victrola. Bill knew my father very well and loaned him the victrola with many records. We enjoyed Caruso, old-time songs, hymns, and westerns. What a kind, generous man he was. He taught me to share things with others.

Now we approach the Moose Building. Only occasionally did we go there for dinner. My Aunt Mary had a family reunion and dinner in the 50's for us.

How can I forget Mr., Baney, the barber? Dorothy's father also worked there. His shop occupied part of the building. He kept my dutch boy bob cut and trimmed until one day, jokingly, he said. "I think I'll snip the tip of your ear" and do you know he did just that - accidentally, of course. At the age of 5 1/2, that wasn't an acceptable gesture. I refused to go there for several haircuts, but later returned. He had a wonderful assortment of shaving mugs lined up on shelves. Some of them were very ornate and others plain with only names inscribed in gold lettering. What I enjoyed most was the gentle dusting of my neck with perfumed talcum powder after each haircut, also the softness of the brush and the disappearance of that itchy cut hair around my neck. I don't know the price of a haircut at that time – probably 15 or 20 cents. Can anyone comment on that?

As we move on we approach the Fretz Drug Store and home owned by Dr. Fretz, and managed by Lamar, his son. Every time I see an apothecary jar (large or small) I think of that drug store. They had all sizes of beautiful jars filled with red, green, blue, purple, yellow, etc. colored water or medication. I think I learned to appreciate colors then. He also had a soda fountain, several tables, and chairs. I would be sent there to have a prescription filled or to purchase a box of Djer Kiss talcum powder which my mother used. I was always greeted with a smile and questioned about school and what I wanted to be when I grew up. Many times, I was treated to a delicious chocolate from one of their many boxes of fine chocolates. I liked to go there because there were many colorful and interesting things to see and my fondness for fine stationery.

I'll briefly mention the building on the corner of East Broad and Belmont Avenue which was Gerhart's corner grocery store and possible residence. I was only in that store twice to purchase a loaf of bread.

Before we conclude our tour, we'll cross Belmont Avenue and there we find the Globe Hotel. There was a barber shop in the bay window section of the building, a bar, rooms on the second floor, and a livery stable behind the building. The medicine shows also frequented the back lot of that hotel. So much was left to my imagination and little did I know about hotels as I said before, but I do know that the Eagle and Globe Hotels are landmarks in our town.

Now, in closing, I'd like to pass on to you "glimpses into the past."

1. As a very young child I can recall election night – presidential election when we shared an election cake (spice) with our neighbors on Franklin Street. Then we paraded with flares, when we waited for the returns that were telegraphed to the operator at the railroad station, sang songs, and ate popcorn and pretzels. That was a fun night.
2. Halloween was another fun night. I don't believe I missed marching in the annual parade until I left Quakertown to take my nurses training at Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia.
3. False Armistice - W. W. I. I was in the fourth grade and marched in the parade with a new pair of shoes bought at your father's store, Lilly Weiss. They gave me a corn which I had for 25 years. My father returned them, and your father gave me a new pair after I had waded several miles. He was so kind and gracious about it.
4. In sixth grade, taught by Adelaide Moyer, several of us recited all the battles, dates, places, generals, and results of the Civil War during three recess periods. It was an individual project.
5. Collecting for the Poor Relief once yearly under the direction of Chief Rhoades, Anne and I would stand on an assigned street corner with a cigar box from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. on a Saturday. We were very pleased with the results, also free dinner at Schroy's and 50 cents for our efforts.
6. Our parties at the Parish House of the Episcopal Church in a cold building. I had the responsible job of making mixture of long horn cheese, green peppers, and mayonnaise for the sandwiches.
7. Sleigh rides either to Steinsburg Hotel or Milford Square Hotel where we were served hot chocolate and doughnuts.
8. Under the direction of Mr. Neidig, when we were seniors, we took the census of 1927. At that time there were either 5,781 or 7,581 residents. I'm not certain of the number.
9. During our senior year, the Ringling Bros. Circus came to Allentown. Those of us who had permission from our parents went for the matinee but flunked an English test given by Miss Blackburn that afternoon.
10. Several of us stayed after school at our own will to become better spellers. Miss Blackburn rewarded us with 5 cents if we spelled certain words correctly.
11. Trips to Newtown, PA. for scholastic meets. I recall reciting "If" by Rudyard Kipling in the competition.
12. Our Washington, D.C. trip on my birthday – 18<sup>th</sup> of May. We went by train to Philadelphia and then by boat (overnight) from Philadelphia to Baltimore, completing the trip by train. While on board the boat six of us got hungry and wanted to celebrate my birthday so we went to the galley and ordered a chicken sandwich. They brought us each a sandwich – two pieces of bread with a chicken leg between them.
13. "Lucky Lindy's" trip – solo flight to Europe.

Have thou ever thought of all the progress that has been made during our lifetime?

Radio - Television

Travel faster than sound

Frozen foods

Trips to the moon

Computers

Medical and surgical fetes

Transplants and implants : heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, corneas, new joints,  
artificial blood vessels, etc.

They are so numerous – you may complete the listing.

I'm very happy to be here tonight. Aren't we fortunate to be together after living through four wars – W, W, I and II, Korean and Vietnam, and also having progressed in so many ways?

My prayer is that we'll be able to live in peace (peace begins with you and me) and that we can meet in 1986 to enjoy the fellowship and that we show others that we really care.

May God bless you.