



Historic QUAKERTOWN

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December 2020 Newsletter

Greetings Members & Friends,

It is hard to believe that 2020 is just a few days from ending. The time goes by so quickly. 2020 leaves with us some good memories and some not so good.

The “second wave” of covid-19 has hit the community hard and the case continues to be the same with the Historical Society. At this point we have no hard and fast plans for 2021 other than to move on when the time is right. We continue to meet as a Board and work at the development of the Society and with that comes expenses that cannot be avoided.

Our income has been extremely limited. As a 501 C 3 corporation we are authorized to take tax deductible contributions. Even though you are receiving only the benefit of the monthly newsletter for now, would you please consider a contribution to the Society before the year ends? It would be deeply appreciated.

We, together, will get through this time frame and come out better for it. In the meantime,

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

The following article was amongst the various artifacts found at the Historical Society. We don't know who wrote it and, for that matter, know of its total voracity. We do know that it was composed as early as 1972. The items and dates listed are in no particular order nor do they have any correlation one with the other. What is included in this Newsletter is only a part of the whole document and will be continued in further Newsletters.

We hope you enjoy some of the history of Quakertown.

Quakertown's Past

The Free Press began to move to its new home at 307 W. Broad Street on January 31, 1902. As of May 1972, the Free Press is still at the same address, has remodeled, and has made the building larger since 1902. August 13, 1881, the first volume and issue of the Free Press hit the streets of town. John G. Stauffer, prominent publisher and founder of the Free Press established in 1881, died at the age of 74 years.

The Philadelphia and Lehigh Valley Traction Company purchased Lake Lenape, at Menlo in Perkasio, from the Everhart Estate. It was purchased for use as a waterpower source, and also as a pleasure Lake in January 1902.

The Weiss Department Store announced they would move to their new quarters and take the storerooms formerly occupied by the Dunlap Tire Company and the adjoining storeroom to be vacated by Ritter and Son. The store vacated by The Weiss Store was rented to John Smith, former partner of Kooker and Smith Furniture Store. This was July 20, 1933. Smith Furniture, run by the son, is still at the same location. Weiss Department Store was still at the same location until Milton Weiss, son of original Weiss storekeeper, decided to sell his half to Sigals which took place July 4, 1971. His brother, Alfred Weiss, still maintains his store (1972).

April 8, 1937 – Quakertown Post Office moved into their new quarters at 5th & West Broad Street, Quakertown, PA. Penny post cards, a fixture in American life for 75 years, became a thing of the past as of January 1, 1952.

On January 14, 1932, Woolworth's opened a 5 & 10 Cent Store at the corner of 3rd and West Broad Streets in Quakertown. Many years later they moved to Quakertown Plaza Shopping Center and are still located there now. When they moved, Linford Rotenberger purchased the spot, and it became the Friendly Book Store. The Friendly Book Store had another location before moving which is the former Raymond Bergey Restaurant (next to Sines 5 & 10). The former Bergey Restaurant, or bookstore, and Shelly's Candy and Bakery Store have since been torn down to make way for the Provident Bank Parking lot.

Dennis Fluck, of East Broad Street, received a letter from the U.S. Department of Commerce in Washington, D.C. They reviewed the weather observation stations from the beginning.

J. L. Heacock – January 1, 1872 to April 7, 1914

Gotlieb Fry – April 7, 1914 to April 1, 1917

Charles W. Shive – April 1, 1917 to December 1918

John Benner – December 1918 to June 22, 1954

Dennis Fluck – June 22, 1954 to present

Tohickon Bridge is being renovated for safer and larger traffic between Quakertown and Richlandtown in March 1964. The bridge was completed, and traffic resumed in November 1964.

Twin Gables on West Broad Street was sold to Clarence Loux of Perkasio, PA on March 5, 1953. Late owner was Paul Moyer.

An old Liberty Bell Limited, once the pride and joy of the Lehigh Valley Transit Company's line between Allentown and 69th Street in Philadelphia, was put into retirement in the museum yard of the New England Electric Railways Historical Society, Inc. in Kennebunkport, Maine on December 4, 1952.

In April 1941, the third disastrous fire in history of Quakertown Stove Works swept thru the molding building. Estimated loss of \$35,000.00 to the building and machinery and \$50,000.00 worth of patterns.

In April 1941, Robert Heft and Kenneth Scheetz were killed on Station Road bridge (near Fairview railroad crossing) on Easter Sunday.

In July 1957, a \$50,000.00 fire destroyed Quakertown Sakes Company's livestock building located on Station Road.

On April 13, 1961, a diner was erected on West Broad Street in a matter of 24 hours and had vestibule type entrance which extended 6 inches over the sidewalk. Borough says it is a violation of the law. Diner is no longer there but was moved to Hellertown. Also, at this writing, the Quaker Village Shopping Center occupies the ground (1972).

On June 1, 1961, Reverend Earlin Harold Lutz was elected pastor of the First United Church of Christ (Reformed), West Broad Street. Reverend Paul Stoudt was retiring. Since then, the building has been sold to Baptist Church. The United Church of Christ has built a new church on 4th and Park Avenue, Quakertown.

On June 10, 1961, the Methodist Church on West Broad Street, Quakertown received a new Minister, Reverend Robert Brenneman, to replace Reverend James Bingham, who retired.

On August 13, 1961 new ground was broken for the new church site of Trinity Lutheran Church at Erie and N. Hellertown Avenue. A 12-foot cross was erected on this site.

On July 10, 1952, the United States Senate confirmed the appointment of Paul H. Lewis as Postmaster of Quakertown. Mr. Lewis died on September 4, 1968. Francis Hoffman became Acting Postmaster until Donald Gerhab become the Postmaster.

On June 26, 1952, the abandoned trolley tracks on Main Street were removed by the Lehigh Valley Transit Company.

On June 26, 1952, after 35 years of service at Trinity Lutheran Church, N. Hellertown Avenue, Reverend Nathan B. Yerger resigned his pastorate. Reverend Yerger died November 4, 1953. Reverend Harold Artz became the next pastor of this church.

On July 3, 1952, Quakertown Borough Council granted the Lions Club permission to erect a rustic footbridge across Licking Run Creek to West Broad Street as an entrance to Memorial Park.

The Palace Theater, located one block west of the Reading Railroad tracks and the Karlton Theater, located on West Broad Street beside the Free Press building, merged on November 26, 1931. On April 3, 1967, the Karlton Theater closed its doors. Linford Rotenberger, owner of the Friendly Book Store at Third and W. Broad Streets, purchased the former Karlton Theater. The Palace Theater closed its doors and Dimmig Electric bought the place to convert into a retail service store. That purchase took place sometime around August 25, 1971. They remodeled the place and opened for business in November 1971. Dimmig Electric Company has been in business since 1937. The old building at 117 W. Broad Street has been sold to Sine's 5 & 10 Cent Store. Present owner of this store is William Harr, grandson of Howard B. Sine, founder of the store.

The long history of Deaterly's Department Store passed another milestone on September 11, 1961. Francis Deaterly was the original owner and then passed the store on to his son Paul Deaterly. The Jacob Mosser interests of Philadelphia will dispose of the merchandise. The building housing the store is a double structure and Deaterly's Store occupied only one side of the building. Various other businesses occupied the other side. At one time Sine had his 5 & 10 Cent store there before moving across the street to his present location. Also, Bobiak opened a restaurant and before that Allen's Radio and TV shop. In March of 1963, Deaterly sold the complete building to Ralph Moyer for a shoe store. Mr. Moyer remodeled the building and then moved his present store from East Broad Street, formerly David Lambrecht's shoe store, to his new location. His store occupies the entire building.

On February 1, 1961, a stamp vending machine was placed in the lobby of the Quakertown Post Office.

On February 25, 1966, the final payment on the 6-year-old fire hall was marked by a mortgage burning by the Quakertown West End Fire Company at the annual dinner held at the Moose Home at 7:00 PM. The West End Fire Company was housed on Main Street before undertaking this new building on Park Avenue near Route 309.

On May 11, 1978, Yeakel's Bakery, formerly known as Fritz Bakery and located on South Hellertown Avenue, closed its doors for good. It had been in business for many, many years.

On August 18, 1964, the Soldier's Monument on the Reading Railroad property was moved to Memorial Park after a 45-year stay at the Railroad property (1919). Tarantino Brothers are moving this monument and it will face Mill Street. Two other monuments, one on either side, will be dedicated to veterans of World War II and the Korean War. The monument was gotten from donations after World War I. Since then, shrubbery and flowers have been put there by various organizations.

A new 13-foot pavilion is being built at Quakertown Memorial Park by Allen Portzer with Edward Sroka & Company laying the cement groundwork.

On November 11, 1964, rededication of the Soldier's monument (all three of them) was held to include a parade.

On August 17, 1964, Best Maid Hosiery closed its doors. A new plant, by the name of Spinlon, will take over.

On August 1, 1926, the Quakertown Police Department was inaugurated, and Harry Rhodes was the first Chief of Police. Harry Welsh served from 1936 to 1942. Newton B. Rapp served from 1941 to 1964. Mr. Rapp, before becoming Chief of Police, served as a patrolman from July 1939 to March 1942. Our new Chief of Police is Frederich J. Christman.

On June 1, 1966, the 52-unit Park Manor Apartments was completed. On June 15, a sample unit will be available for inspection. Exclusive rental agent is Kenneth Kratz Company. The deluxe garden type, air conditioned, apartments will be available for occupancy on or about July 1st.

On June 14, 1966, the first Medicare premium notices were mailed to some 50,000 elderly people in the area who signed up for the voluntary doctor bill insurance to supplement their basic hospital insurance under Medicare. This was announced today by George Ervin, Social Security District Manager in Allentown.

On November 30, 1966 demolition for Quakertown's \$1,000,000.00 urban renewal program officially got under way when a contractor's wrecking ball attacked the old stove works on West Broad Street.

On July 5, 1961, Howard Kooker Furniture Store on East Broad Street was sold to John & William Steltz, proprietors of Cross Keys Furniture Store in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

In July of 1978, Tom Diehl purchased Frank Headman's Meat Market (formerly Knauss Meat Market). In September 1979, Diehl, a native of Hellertown, Pa., went out-of-business.

In 1973 Linford Rotenberger sold Friendly Book Store, located at Third & W. Broad Streets, to Jim Roberts.

In December 1978, Mr. D's Restaurant on Route 309, across from Trainer's Restaurant, sold out to Howard Johnson's.

Nicholas Hardware moved to its new store on Route 309 just before Christmas in 1977