

During the 25 years of retirement Mr. Dennis became President of the Board of Commissioners of Caln Township. During this time Caln Township became a First Class Township. He served as Commissioner for three years. He also served 18 years as Justice of Peace in Caln Township.

At the time of his retirement Mr. Dennis and his wife built a lovely home in Caln on land they had purchased there. He is active and takes care of his property. Since the death of his wife he lives alone and does all his own work.

We are grateful for the time he spent on the enclosed sheets. This copy was made for all to enjoy and preserve. The original copy is kept by his family. The typist of this paper was a willing volunteer, though not an able typist. However, I'm sure you will enjoy the contents.

Frances P. Ash.

Mr. Raymond M. Dennis
Downingtown R.D.#1 Pa.

Mr. Dennis was asked if he would be willing to be taped for an Oral History of Downingtown Project. He chose to write his rememderences of Downingtown when he was a boy rather than be taped. Over several weeks he wrote about the town, streets, homes and residences of Downingtown as he remembered it about the year 1900. Now that Mr. Dennis, in 1978, is ninety years of age, you will appreciate how well he remembered his boyhood years. You can almost visualize this young boy having the freedom of the whole town as his playground. You can enjoy with him his many and varied experiences.

Past boyhood, Mr. Dennis continued a full and interesting life. His early schooling was in downingtown Schools from there he attended the University of Penna. from which he graduated in 1910 as a Civil Engineer. In time he married Helen Crowe also of Downingtown. They became the parents of two children, Alice Dennis Ezrah (Mrs Charles) and Raymond M. Dennis Jr. grand children and grand children.

The work he did during his working years is a list of varied and challening jobs. After graduating from college he was employed by the Pottstown Bridge Co. in the engineering department in the Philadelphia office. Then he went to New York City and installed a cement testing labratory for the Electrical Testing Labratory. He worked for several years as a checker in the engineering dept. of Worth Bros. Steel Co. in Coatesville. When he left there, he went to Deepwater N.J. as a Safety Engineer at the Dye Works. After a short stay at the Downingtown Mfg. Co. in the engineering dept., he went to Uniontown as Supt. for Wilkie Construction Co. Here he was engaged in building a seven milê strip of concrete road between Uniontown and Connellsville, Pa. While there he spent the winter inspecting all the bridges Washington, Fayette and Green Counties. This was the result of an order issued by Governor Sprowl after the collapse of a bridge in Delaware Co. that caused the death of several people. After he left this job, he came back to Downingtown and worked for several months with W.I. Pollock Jr. In the year 1922 he went to Lenape with Charles Fairweather and installed all the equipment and operated the plant for a short time. This plant was known as the Lenape Hydraulic Pressing and Forging Co. It is still in operation. Mr. Fairweather had been the founder and president of the Downingtown Iron Works. In 1925 He went to Leukens Steel Co. in Coatesville as Supt. of the Flanging Dept. for fifteen years. After a short spell as head of Flanging Sales, he spent the last eleven years as General Manager of the By Products Division. In 1953 he retired after 29 years with Leukens

My family moved to William St. on Jan. 1, 1889 and later to Webster Ave, Downingtown. I must confess that what this treatise will contain dates back 75 or 80 years ago, and being in my 90th year there is a possibility of some discrepancies for which I apologize. This article will be in two parts. The 1st. part will deal with life during that period and the second part will deal with the physical aspects of the town.

Having lived thru 7 generations so far I am sure that it will be hard to believe the vast differences that will evolve. These were the times before the arrival of the automobile. Travel was made possible by the horse and buggy or you walked. Some people were fortunate enough to own the horse and buggy. Some evidence of this is the stables along the alleys that have over the years been used to house the family car. Feed was cheap, oats and corn 50¢ a bus. and hay 8, 10, 10 a ton. Very few people owned their homes and rents started at \$5.00 per month up to \$10.00 per mo. We bought one side of a double house for \$1500.00. The only convenience was running water. There were 6 bed rooms, a bath room, no fixtures, double parlor, kitchen, front and a back porch. The toilet was in the back yard. All properties were enclosed by a picket fences. Houses were heated by wood stoves. The kitchen range was used to cook, bake, and heat water. The parlor stove had a pipe that went through the ceiling and heated the bedrooms.

Saturday night was bath night. The kids got their bath in the wash tub along side the kitchen stove range. On severe cold nights in the winter, bricks were heated in the oven of the kitchen range, then wrapped in newspaper and placed in bed for warmth.

Most of the housewives baked bread, rusk, pies and cakes at home, usually twice a week. I well remember going to Mrs. Claytons on William St. for 2¢ worth of yeast. There were several other places in town where these ladies raised hops and made yeast for home baking. There were also several places in town where people kept cows and sold milk. We bought milk from Sam Brown on Mary St. 4¢ a qt. and later farmers brought milk to the door for 5¢ a qt. It was hauled in 40 qt. cans in a farm wagon. They used a long handled dipper, would place it in a container on the front porch.

There were two bakeries in town, Barrets in the West and Chas. Hess in the East end. They ran routes through town with a horse and wagon. Bread was 5¢ a loaf, no wrappings, rusk was 10¢ a doz. Cinnamon buns were 10¢ for 1/2 doz. Pies were 5 and 10¢.

There were several meat markets in town. Hunts on Brandywine Ave. Krauters in Johnstown, Hoopes on the West end. Some ran routes through town and Frank Leslie came in twice a week from Sugars Bridge. I remember, if my Mother bought a good size piece of meat he would give her a couple slices of beef liver and a soup bone free.

There were quite a number of grocery stores in town and some of them ran routes through the town. Twice a week they would call in the morning and take orders for groceries and deliver them in the afternoon.

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Various small farmers churned butter . Mrs Davis who had a small farm on Bondsville Road delivered butter for 25¢ a pound the year round. When delivered the butter was wrapped in cheese cloth.

Almost everyone had a garden in the back yard. Large amounts of vegetables were canned for winter use. Cabbage and root vegetables buried in the garden for the winters use. Celery was stored in the cellar. Nearly everyone had a potato bin in the cellar. Potatoes at 50¢ a bu. were stored the same way. Well I remember, along in March how we had to remove the sprouts that had grown during the winter. Cherries, berries of all kinds were canned for winter pies. They were picked in the fields where they grew wild.

There were two school houses at this time, one in the West Ward and one in the East Ward. The East Ward school was 2 stories in height and the first four grades were taught. They went to the West Ward school entering the fifth grade. The West Ward school was 3 stories in height. There were 3 rooms on each of the first 2 floors and one small and one large on the third floor. The small room was used as science lab. I recall we had to teach ourselves as there was no teacher.

Teachers in West Ward were Ada Mendenhall, Mary Bear, Maggie Speakman, Ella Smith, Cora Walker, Sallie Liggett who taught the grades. High School teachers were John Hunsicker, principal, Mr. Seipple. Miriam Cooley, Mrs. Noon, Miss Whitehead and Miss Snively. When I entered High School as a freshman in the Fall of 1902, the entire enrollment was approximately thirty students.

The high school room was located at the rear and covered the entire width of the building. At the rear of this room was a one story frame structure that was used as an extra recitation room.

The school yard at the rear of the building was equally divided by a high board fence. The east side for girls, the west side for boys. Close in the rear of the yard were 5 one hole toilets on each side of the yard.

Students living outside the limits of town went to numerous one room schools. Some of these schools taught 7 grades all in one room with one teacher. On finishing, they came to town entering a grammar grade. Eight graders were taught in other and on completion they entered the high school in town.

In these days a high school graduate was eligible to teach in these one room schools by taking an examination. Geo. Moore was Supt. of Chester County schools and he was responsible for giving exams. Those passing were issued teachers certificates with the stipulation that they attend summer school to further their education.

In passing, I think it would be enlightening to state what these young ladies had to endure by becoming a teacher. One of the girls in my class lived at the extreme end of Downingtown next to the Friends Meeting. She walked up to Center Square, took the trolley to Thorndale and then walked out Marshallton Road, over two miles, to Shadyside School. She boarded at one of the homes till Friday and then repeated the journey back home for the week end. What was the grand stipend for this labor? \$40.00 bucks a month less \$3.00 a week for board less trolley fare.

The net total was \$25.00 a month. In addition to this they usually had to take care of an old pot bellied stove used for heat in the winter and take care of 30 or 40 children. These teachers turned out some great students who became great in their chosen professions. I recall one boy from East Fallowfield who became one of the leading physicians at the John Hopkins in Baltimore, Md.

These were the days when you were born, died and buried from home. Emballming had not yet appeared on the scene. John S. Weldon was undertaker in the East end and Allan Keim in the West end. In some cases funerals did take place in the church.

People really cared these days. I recall sitting up all night with an elderly sick man. Lots of times this was done to relieve the family. There were quite a few midwives, My Mother was one and she delivered many a baby and would have the child washed and dressed in the Mothers arms by the time the Doctor arrived. This happened often in winter stormy weather. No phones and one had to walk for a doctor. Many operations were performed in the homes. The same applied in the case of a death. The body was prepared for burial by various neighbors. My Mother was guilty of this job. All of these various services were given free.

The following Doctors were in town; Doctors Kerr, Matlack, Parke, Bremerman, Arnold and Pennell. Dr. Kerr was a surgeon and connected with the Chester County Hospital. In nice weather doctors made house calls walking to the homes. In inclement weather they used a horse and wagon. They always carried a little black bag containing pills and powders and sometimes they would give a prescription. These could be filled by any one of the three drug stores, H.B. Sides in the West and Dr. W. Hutchinson in the East end. The Doctors charged \$1.00 for house calls and .50¢ for office calls.

Downingtown was always a bustling town. Even back in these days. Some of the companies furnishing a large number of jobs were Pa. and Reading R.R. The yards in the West end was full of shop housing painters, tinsmiths, carpenters and etc. A work train used to carry the track men to lay over engines to be watered caoled and made ready for the next day. there were resident ticket agents, tower men, brakemen, baggage men, track walkers, engineers, firemen and many more who made up the army of men required to keep the trains in operation.

There were at least five paper mills running around the clock. Also the Cohansy Glass Works, Floreyes Brick Works, several grist mills and feed suppliers for farm feed, not to forget the stores and their help.

Hours were long and wages were low. Most people worked 60 hours per week. A 10 hour day, six days a week. Labor was paid \$1.00 for a 10 hour day's work. My Father was a carpenter for Pa. R.R. and worked 60 hours plus a week for .25¢ per hour which came to about \$60.00 per month. Clerks in stores earned \$10 to \$12 per week and got a discount on things they bought. a number of men worked piece work and they were able to make a little more. One thing what you earned you brought home. Uncle Sam had not yet stuck his hand in your pocket. Wages did increase considerably at the time of World War I

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The streets were lighted by gas lamps which were placed on street corners ,at intersections. The lamps each had a pilot light and required a lamp lighter to turn them on at night and off in the morning. Streets were not yet covered with hard top and were very dusty especially in hot weather.

There was only the Alert Fire Co. in the West end prior to 1899. 1900. Early in 1900 the Minquas came into existence. The fire engines were steam puffers and the motive power was horses. Each company had a driver who took care of the horses and drove the equipment to the fires. To be at the Fire House when an alarm came in was a sight you would never forget. The harness was suspended and the horses would rush out to be beneath the suspended harness which would be snapped into place and away they would go with the streams and sparks and smoke gushing from the engine stack. After the return to the Fire House and the fire was exterminated, the equipment was thoroughly cleaned and the wood placed in the fire box ready for the next call. I might say the equipment was always kept shining like new. Wilfred Downey was the driver for the Alert and Bill Laird drove for the Minquas. During the week the horses drivers for both companies were used for work in the borough. In the hot weather Companies had sprinkler wagons used to sprinkle the streets which went a long way toward keeping the dust under contro;

Times have not changed much over the past 80 years. Girls became pregnant and had to marry. Mothers performed abortions and the daughters died from infection and nothing was said or done about it It was only served as gossip. The town also had Call girls who used to spend their time in the daylight hours sitting by the big window in the West end post office watching for the arrival of a traveling salesman.

Houses were mostly heated by coal stoves. The kitchen would have a range and the other stoves was the parlor heater. In lots of cases a pipe led from this stove to a bedroom on the second floor usually occupied by the parents Coal cost from \$3 to \$10 a ton. Every home had a coal bin in the cellar by a cellar window There were 3 coal dealers in town, B. Frank Evans by the East Downingtown station (later Swanks), Wells and Walker at Cambys present location, and John McGraw and Sons in Johnsontown. Coal was delivered by horse and wagon. In some cases when the cellar window could be reached from the street a large metal trough was run from the wagon to the window and coal was shoveled by hand and ran down the chute to the cellar. If this method could not be used the coal was shoveled in bushel baskets and carried into the yard where a small chute carried it through the cellar window to the bin. These were the days when the hands and feet got their daily work out. People usually had enough of coal delivered to last the winter.

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The two hotels in town and the various livery stables depended largely on the patronage of the traveling salesmen. The salesmen arrived by train, put up at the hotels, hired teams from the liverymen and then drove to cover the surrounding territory. The orders they took eventually arrived by railroad shipment. Provisions were made along Lancaster Ave. in the business section to take care of the horses. In front of the Post Office in West End was a circular cast iron watering fountain that served both man and horse. The water was supplied by a small pipe from which man could drink. The water ran continuously. On the Brandywine side of the Swan Hotel was a long wooden watering trough. Pipe railings along the curb served as hitching places for the horses.

Mail was carried exclusively by the railroads of the country. Passenger trains carried postal railway cars which were staffed with roadway postal clerks who sorted the mail en route. Mail was picked up at stops and also on the fly. Special posts were placed along the tracks below the station and the mail sacks were suspended on them. The postal railway cars were equipped with a special arm operated from the inside of the car and picked up the mail bag while the train was in operation. There were also exclusive trains which were made up entirely of railway postal cars.

Through the kindness of the Bell Telephone Co. Phila. office from a Mr. J.J. Brady, I obtained the following information. The first Bell telephones were installed in Downingtown in 1906. The recipients were Samuel Black, Dr. Bremmerman, Harry B. McFarland and Downingtown Mfg. Co. From this small beginning of four phones in 1906 the number grew to 700 in 1924; 971 in 1931; 1200 in 1941; 4000 in 1956 and 14538 on Jan. 1, 1978.

There were other independent phone companies in addition to the above. Keystone and United were two of the companies I recall.

United came to Downingtown in the 1890's and the first exchange was located in the Harry Worrall drug store. Around 1902 this exchange was moved to the residence of Charles Walker on the northeast corner of Green and Washington Streets.

The bridge over the Lincoln Highway was a three arch stone type with a large buttonwood tree at the northeast corner.

Starting on the north side of Lincoln Hwy. going east the first building was the Log Cabin and was occupied by the James Boggs family. The next house was a single stonehome with a stone barn in the rear, The Downing's home. There was a small areaway and then a cluster of buildings (3). The first was a two story frame structure housing the furniture store and mortuary of John L. Weldin, undertaker. The came the resturant of Hattie McMorckle who could turn out one of the best oyster stews. The family lived above on the second floor. Next was the office of Jerry Carpetner, Justice of the Peace. He also wrote insurance and did notary work. There was an alley next to this office ,it lead back to the Downing barn.

Next was a two story frame building with a one story frame attached. The two story section was at the rear and contained the blacksmith shop of Wesley James. A Mr. Tredell built wagons and did the paint work. At the rear of the blacksmith shop was the single stone home of Isaac Roberts. The one story frame section of the frame building ran to Wallace Ave. and contained three stores. First was the Broschard Barber Shop followed by the Nickleodian, the first silent movie in town. It showed silent one reelers for a nickle. The next store was the resturant of William Hess where you could get another excellent oyster stew.

Crossing Wallace Ave. (continuing east) was another line of two story stores in a solid line ending at the Miller Bros. Most prop-ritors lived above the stores or they were rented to other families.

The first store was the saddle and harness shop of Richard Webster followed by William Kurtz's shoe store. At the rear of this store was a small room where Philip, brother of William, repaired shoes. Next was the grocery store of William Roberts and later Milton Holl. Next was the barber shop of Ed. Swarner. Then came the notion store of Tillie Kurtz, wife of William. The next store was the clothing store of Joseph and Vance Miller known as the Miller Clothing Store. They had two sisters working there named Ralston and Foy who wored for years there making alterations and suits to order.

Between the Miller's store and the next line of stores was a narrow alleyway that connected to the alley in the rear

The next solid line of stores ran east to Dr. Kerr's. First was the Farmers Bazaar operated by Thomas Eachus followed by the general dry goods store of Henr Harry Reed. Next the store of Theo. Griffith and son. The next store was tin roofing establishment of William Stauffer, it also carried a line of cookware. The bakery of Charles Hess was next followed by the grocery store of Hugh Gormley. Hubbs grocery and meat store was next. The next building was the residence of James R. Gordon. The next store housed the painting and paper hanging business of Bareford Brothers, John and Mark. The harness and saddlry store fo Judson Armour followed. The next building was a two story stone home of Dr. Kerr and the long store brother-in-law Harry Worell. There was a narrow areaway between the two properties.

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Next to the Worrell property was an alley leading to the alley in the rear and to the blacksmith shop of William Naylor. There were two stores in the next building, one a residence and a store of Daniel Zittle, painter and paperhanger, they also sold tobacco and cigars. The next store sold candy and snowflake, an ice cream made with milk. I cannot recall the proprietors name.

The tracks of the Downingtown and Lancaster R.R. are next. This line ran through Glenmore, Honeybrook and New Holland to Lancaster. The next building was the lower paper mill of S.A. Bicking. It had at one time been the Shel mire Grist Mill. The Shel mire home was next. It later became the office of the paper Company. The next building was a one story stone building used as a school which was operated by Mr. Hernz. All of these buildings have been razed. The next stone house was occupied by the Hernz family and Mrs Hernz ran a boarding house. John R. Hunsucker, principal of the schools was a boarder during his stay in Downingtown,

During these years there were a number of private schools. Some of them bore the name of Lycaums

The next single building was occupied by Ed. Downing. Several vacant lot before you came to a single brick residence the home of Thomas Downing and his sister Mrs Matlack, the widow of Dr. Matlack. The next residence was the dwelling of A.P. Tutton, president of the Downingtown Mfg. Co. There was an ornamental fence across the front. This home was razed to make way for the present apartment complex. Next to the Tutton property was an alley leading back to a house called the Carriage House. In front of the Carriage House was the Tea House. I don't remember who occupied the next double brick house. The double stone house, next was occupied by Ed. Bicking family and Mrs. D.W. Hutchinson and son Harry. Then came the dwelling of Joseph Bicking next door to the Episcopal Church, the manse has since been razed. The next single house was the residence of Thresa and Dick Thomas. Then came the Edge, Carey and Hoopes homes. The Edge ladies were relatives of Governor Edge of N. Jersey. I do not recall who was in the next house on the corner of R. 113. Across R. 113 was the home of John Fox., later it was lived in by Dr. Huggins, dentist, and his wife Nell Fox Huggins. The house next was the Breeze dwelling. Andrew Breeze came here with the Cohansey Glass Works. There was some distance until you came to a stone, single home where Mr. McPherson lived. Next was the blacksmith's house, Frank Laird. The stone walls are still standing and the William Woodward family lived in the next and last house. It was a stucco stone building. The Woodward house was a short distance east of the drop.

Starting at the Brandywine and traveling east on the south side of Lincoln Hwy. ,there was a one story frame building built on stilts . This was used as a paint shop by Wesley Jones. Next was the upper paper mill of S.A.Bicking,running to the Brandywine Ave.

Across the ave. was the Swan Hotel operated at this time by Theo. Hallman,Stepfather of Frank Mancil. There were several stock yards to the east .Here during the year Mr. Mamm Munman held cow sales. He would bring a carload of fresh or close springers from the western part of the state and sell them at public auction. After the sale,we boys would be lined up to deliver the cattle to various farms within a range of 3 miles. For this service we recieved 50%.

Next came a two story brick building.I cannot recall who operated the first store but Frank Hoy lived on the second floor. The next store was the drug store of D.W.Hutchinson and then the jewelry store of Harry McFarlan and he resided on the second floor. He also did repair work on watches and clocks. Beech Alley next ran through to a short Jefferson Ave. A small frame building came next and it sat back quite a distance from the highway and it had a pail fence around the yard. This was the office of Dr. Larkin, a dentist. The next building was Frank Davis'gutter,spouting and tinroofing business. This was later razed to make room for the Grange Bank.Next there were two residences.One of the two was occupied by William King. Next came the two stores;one a grocery and meat store of Frank Gates and then a general store of Louis Cartun. Both families lived on the second floor of their store.

The residence of George Elston came next and the store attached served as East Downingtown's Post Office.J.Havard Downing was Post Master. Crossing an alley, which ran back to Washington Ave. where a gas station now stands. On this lot stood the stone dwelling of S.A.Bicking. His lot ran all the way back to Washintoan Ave. and there was a large brick stable and carriage house at the rear of the lot. Next was a small building that served as a shelter for the watchman,Mr. Hedrick, who operated the gates which were raised and lowered across the Highway when trains were in operation and crossed the highway. The next building was the main one story building now occupied by Ushers Motors.This was the first Sales and Service for Automobiles operated in Downingtown. Buick products were sold there. Dr. Parke,Dr. Kerz, Guyon Miller and Wm. Carey were directors Mr. Carey ran the business

The next building was a block of four two story stone houses called the Halfway Houses and dated back to the early days of this country. They were so named as being half way between Phila. and Lancaster in Large-~~Coa~~ Stage Coach Days

The Minquias Fire House was built on the vacant lot next to the R.R. I mention this in order to tell you an incident that occurred at the start of the construction. Guyon Miller was one of the prime movers of the fire Co. and William Allen was local supervisor of the P.R.R. There was a dispute about the property line between the P.R.R. and the Minquias Co. There was a railroad siding run off the main rail line parallel to the Minquias property. William Allen had several flat cars loaded with ties into this siding hindering the start of the fire house foundation. During the argument, Guy Miller and some of the firemen attached a fire hose and soaked Allen and his cohorts. Miller lost out on this day but later the situation was resolved. (People have not changed) Leaving the Halfway House the next building was the First Presbyterian Church., Dr. Patterson was the pastor.

The next building was a large frame building having 32 rooms At sometime earlier, I believe, it was a girls school. At this time it was the residence of Theo. M. Griffith family.

Crossing Green St., there was a two story double brick residence and I cannot recall who lived there. However, the next brick residence was the home of the elder Dr. Parke. The stable at the back housed the horses and wagons and were attended by a black ~~man~~ gentleman by the name of Nathan Brown. He was in the employ of the Parke family all of his days.

The next brick building was the residence of the Brown family. The present building is a complete change made by a family named Taylor

The next stone was the Library and I believe Mary Rodgers was the Librarian there for many years.

The next residence of Guyon Miller was burnt out recently and has now been rebuilt and made into apartments. The next brick single home belonged to Wm. Stauffer and family. Next to it was a double brick house. John Brownback lived on one side, I do not recall who lived on the other side. The next double brick dwelling was the home of Poet Laureate of Downingtown, Abner Baldwin. The other side on the corner of Chestnut St. was the home of Lew McFarlan now the home of his son Willwam McFarlan.

Crossing Chestnut St. the stucco house was the home of Charles Chandler. The next brick building was the home of the first bank in Downingtown. A large stone double dwelling with the windows in the front. It was the home of Mr Brown and John Bender. Next came a single frame building followed by the two story stucco stone grade school with the bell in the belfry on the roof, The only teacher I can recall is Anna Hall. At one time the Methodist congregation held Sunday School services in the school. This was prior to 1892 when the present church was built on Brandywine Ave.

The building beyond the school was the residence and grocery store of J. Hunter Wills. Crossing Woodbine St. the next building was a double stone building and one side was occupied by a Mr. Good who at one time dug graves at Northwood cemetery. Next was a single frame house and at this point was a lane that led to the home and barn occupied by the Iredell family. The stone house next to the Friends Meeting was the home of

WALLACE AVE.

Going North on Wallace Ave. where the alley intersected stood a small one half story frame house occupied by the Harry Jacobs family, a black family. Mrs Jacobs did washing and ironing. The going rates were 50¢ per wash and 50¢ for ironing. Continuing north on the Ave., the Florey Brick Works were on the right side. Two kinds of bricks were made here. The salmon and face brick. The salmon were used for the inside lines and the face bricks were used for the outside of the building. The two ponds along Penna. ave. are some of the clay pits that were never filled after the clay was dug out. The brick building, still standing was the residence of one of the Florey family. The Iron Works building was the location of the ovens and forming building. This was one of the few piece work shops in town. there was a red steel bridge over the Brandywine and it was known as the Red Bridge. The deep hole in the stream at this location was a great bass fishing ground.

Going south on Brandywine Ave. on the west side the corner lot was the property of the paper mill. The first building, going south, was a two story brick building. The first floor was the general store of Charles Chandler. He sold dry goods etc. Next was the plumbing store of James R. Gordon. The top floor of his building was the home of the Archive, Downingtown's newspaper, owner and editor was Harry Skeen. Adjoining this building was a one story frame, home and meat market of Robert Hunt. The entrance to the Bicking Paper Mill was next to this building.

The next two frame buildings were near the back of the Hoy lot and surrounded by a pail fence and in spring and summer were a profusion of sun flowers and hollyhocks and many of the old time flowers not seen today.

The next double brick was the home of the Phillips family and Bent Carpenter family. At the rear of the side yard was a one story brick building, the Downingtown jail. It had four barred cells inside and on the side next to the Methodist Church was a board fence about five feet high. On Sunday morning the kids would climb the fence to look in the small window to see how many drunks had been lodged on Saturday night. At the rear of the church all along the Brandywine was a long frame shed where the teams of the people who drove to church could be hitched. By the way, All the churches in town were equipped with these sheds.

Between the Methodist Church and the Opera House were the double brick homes. I can recall only one resident, Samuel P. Bicking.

I recall the local shows that were put on several times at the Opera House. On a percentage basis, someone from the outside would come in and put on a musical. The performers were local talent. The programs usually contained solos, duets, choruses, mixed and ladies and men, also recitations. In these days people had to provide their own means of entertainment.

Crossing Park Run was a row of four two story houses, brick. This section of Brandywine Ave., being the low part of town, was flooded from Park Run back to the Lincoln Hwy. The next single dwelling was the home of Dr. Matlack; next the single brick of Jesse Smith; next the double brick of John Happersett and Charles Reel; next the home of Arthur Hess, Now the office of P. Canby. The lumber and coal yard of Wells and Walker was next. Ther

There was a lane at the rear of the home of Dr. Matlack that ran along the Brandywine. It was along this lane that the first tennis courts were built. It was called the Brandywine Tennis Club. Annual get together meetings were held over the years at the home of the members. It was organized about 1903 with about 12 members. Regulation clay courts were constructed with the creek side enclosed with wire. I am the only surviving member of the Tennis Club.

Passing under the R.R. bridge we come first to the Frank P. Miller Paper Mill. His residence was next door. The next house was the home of William Kerr and further down the road was a double brick home, George Kerr lived in one side. Back of this dwelling in the meadow was a stone and frame building. The Kerr Paper Mill was the last building on this side of the road.

The high steel railroad bridge caused a lot of excitement as it was one of the longest and highest at this time.

Going north on the other side of the road was the Kerr home and farm. The barn has lately been razed. The Kerr farm ran back to Boot Road. The stone houses between the Boot Rd. and the P.R.R. were occupied by Freeman, John Elston, etc. The large field bounded by the Boot Rd., P.R.R., Chestnut St and Brandywine Ave. enclosed the 1/2 mile Downingtown Race track. The grandstand and bleachers were about where the paper mill is now located. Harness racing was held on Saturday afternoons and holidays. Coming through the underpass at the level of the P.R.R. tracks was a frame dwelling house, the waiting room, ticket office and freight room of the Downingtown terminal of the Reading R.R.. This line ran to Bridgeport, across the river from Norristown. Passenger and freight trains were in use. Mr. Kunkle was the station agent. Back of the station was a large stone building occupied by the Martin family; it has since been razed. The next building was a single brick dwelling on the entrance to the Martin home and the Reading R.R. as it came off the Brandywine ave. I do not recall who lived in this house, the first I can remember was the Parke Smedley family.

The double serpentine stone building was occupied on one side by Wm. McFarlan. There was another double brick house and then Park Run. This side of the Brandywine Ave. as far as buildings are concerned was the same in 1900 as it is today except for a few renovations to the exterior as will be revealed later.

Paralleling Park Run was a road leading back to the ice plant. I cannot remember whether ice was really manufactured here, but I do remember it was bought down from the plant in Coatesville to Wm. Krauter for distribution in Downingtown. You could buy 10 lb. for a nickel. I can still see the horse drawn wagon with the spring scale hanging from the back and the step that ran across the back of the wagon.

Crossing Park Run you come to Short Jefferson Ave.: This is still the same today. Some of the people living here were the McClintocks, Baldwin, Magill, . Railroad sidings ran into the freight station from the main line of the Downingtown and Lancaster Line. At the end of the row brick houses the street took a left, right angle turn up to Washington Ave. Along the R.R. siding was the Coal yard of B. Frank Evans, later Josiah Swank.

Back on Brandywine Ave. (and starting at Jefferson Ave), going north was a row of brick homes. These were occupied by the Morans and Warrens. The next double brick house was the home of the Frains on one of the sides. Then came the single brick residence of John L. Weldon, undertaker. The next double brick building was occupied by Wm. Crowe and Harry L. Skeen. The next brick building was the home of John Pollock. The attached store was occupied by Arthur Silknetter. He operated a grocery store across Washington Ave. On the other corner was the home and marble yard business of Wm. McClintock. This building was rebuilt when taken over by the late Dr. Miffin Mercer. Back in 1900 the side yard was filled with tomb stones running along Washington Ave. The frame building at the rear was where the work on the stone was done prior to being placed in the cementary by Frank Weaver. The single brick building now a barbershop was the Methodist Parsonage.

Between Washington Ave. and Jefferson Ave. on Green St. was a row of brick homes on the east side of the street the same as today. On the other side of the street was open ground. The Long Jefferson Ave. ran from Green St. to Whiteland Ave. On the south side of Jefferson Ave., between Green St. and Chestnut St., there was only one single brick home occupied by the Furlong family. There was a store run by Tom Furlong. The store was originally built by Joseph Hillman from Phoenixville.

Crossing Chestnut St. there were several homes and at the far end of the street there were several home occupied by black families. I recall the names of Henderson, Thomas and Parker as some that lived there.

Crossing Jefferson Ave. and going west it was pretty much open fields up to Chestnut street. From Chestnut St. west on Jefferson Ave. it was pretty much the same as today except for some improvements and the building of new homes in the vacant lots. Some of the names of the residents were Baldwin, Hall, Keech, Fahey, Pierce, Smith and Good.

Chestnut St. ran from Lincoln Hwy. south to Boot Rd. Going south on Chestnut from Jefferson Ave. crossing Park Run, the streets running east and west were Garfield, Grant, and Lincoln. This section was called Glasstown. The name came about after the arrival of the Cohansy Glass Works which were located about where the The Pepperridge plant is at present time.

The Glass Works came in 1900. and the double brick houses were built about the same time. Cohansey Glass Works remained in Downingtown twenty some years and then closed down. A brass works company was here for a short time and it was located in this section of Chestnut St. Some of the residents of Glasstown were Davidson, Rutter, Willard, Bacon, Harrington, Byler, Townsley and Stine.

Going north on Chestnut St. to Lincoln Hwy. there were no homes facing the St. The homes on the east side of Chestnut St. from Washington Ave. to The Lincoln Hwy. were occupied by the Larkin, Eppheimer and Hoffman families.

Going south on Whiteland Ave. from the Lincoln Hwy. to Boot Road there was open country. On the other side of Whiteland Ave. near the intersection of Washington Ave. was a single brick home occupied by the Ed. Dolley family. Further out Whiteland Ave. was the residence of the Hutchinson family.

Going east on Washington Ave. from Brandywine Ave. was the small frame house of a black family named Gibbs. Back of this house on Beach alley, on the North side was a house occupied by Henry Springer whose occupation was a lather. Back in these days houses were lathed as a means of holding plaster. He was so proficient that he could lath the average home in a day and a half. Across the street was the home of Nathan Brown, mentioned before in connection with Dr. Parke.

Coming back to Washington Ave. there was a row of brick homes and a double brick home. Some of the residents were Jenks, Wyler, and Gurtezen. Next came the station of the Dand L.R.R. also the warehouse, since razed. Crossing the tracks was the plant of the Downingtown Mfg. Co. Mr. A.P. Tutton, president. (D & L RR)

It was through the kindness and the thoughtfulness of Mr. Tutton that I was helped to work my way through the University of Penna. He saw to it that I was given a position in the offices for the summer while I attended the University. I was always sorry that he did not survive to see me graduate in 1910. He had passed away in 1909.

Crossing Green St. and continuing east on Washington Ave. the south side up to Chestnut St. there were not very many vacant lots. Some of the residents living there were Warrens, Davos, Shull, Wm. Moore, contractor, Browns, Dennison, Parke, Horace Carpenter, David Balentine, Sylvester Makens, Crowe, Tyson. Crossing Chestnut St. on the same side was the residence of Jerry Carpenter and beyond his house was open country.

Between Chestnut St. and Whiteland Ave. on the North side was a single frame home of Cyrus Walton, plaster and contractor.

Starting at Chestnut St. and going west on the north side of Washington Ave to Green St. were the homes of Tom Guthrie, building contractor and later the Lewis home. the Zook family and Fred Channel who owned a place at the shore also. He would give employment every summer to a number of the school girls to wait on tables and other miscellaneous jobs, the jobs paid \$3.00 a week room and board were included. Other families were Snyder Patton, Garrett Peoples, B Ballentine and Milton Holl. Across Green St. was the home of Charles Walker on the corner. Peace and Collins lived next. Then the trolley house. ~~I do not recall who lived between here and the R.R~~ Between here and the R.R. was an open lot on which was a well worn path across it used as a short cut to the Lincoln Hwy.

Crossing the R.R. was a double brick dwelling occupied by Demins and the Way families. A vacant lot and then a livery stable of Biles. Crossing Beech St. was another vacant lot used as a cow lot in connection with the Mummah Cow Sales.

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Seventy five years ago there was a peculiar situation in Downingtown. There were three divisions as follows: West of the Brandywine was Downingtown and east of the same stream was East Downingtown, the third division was the south side of the R.R. called Johnsonstown.

East and West Downingtown each had their own post office and fire companies. I well remember when it was decided to have one post office and the discussion and feelings that followed when a decision was being made as to the location of the one post office. Finally, it was decided to place it near the center of town and it was located in the municipal building where it remained until moved to its present site. Over the years the feeling between the three sections has gradually disappeared.

The following is my recollection of Downingtown in the period 1894-1906

There were numerous vacant lots in town which in later years have been filled with buildings. The western boundary of Downingtown was Whelan Ave. Between Whelan and Lloyd Ave there was the Silvas home at the corner of Lloyd Ave. and Lincoln Hwy. There were the six Plate Glass houses with mansard roofs and a brick dwelling on Lincoln Hwy. named the Duff residence. On Highland Ave. there was one brick home of the Wards. At the end of Williams St., west of Whelan Ave. was a red frame barn owned by Sam Brown. Next came the gas works, consisting of a large water sealed storage tank and the gas plant. Thomas Holliday was the Supt. and John Knauer was the engineer. Soft coal was converted into gas.

About one hundred yards west of the gas house were two small spring fed ponds. Wm. Krautter cut ice from them and stored the ice in the ice house on Bradford Ave. The land beyond Whelan Ave. was farm ground.

Going south on Lloyd Ave. passing under the R.R. bridge, the road was called Poor House Rd. and it is along this road that the reservoir supplying Downingtown with water is located.

After passing under the R.R., the farm house and tenant house were the property of Dr. Eskleman, a physician with practice in Phila.

A short distance west of Lloyd Ave on the Lincoln Hwy. was the old toll gate and the house was occupied by the Walker family. Their daughter, Cora, taught fifth grade in the Downingtown school.

Across Lincoln Hwy., opposite the Silvas home, were the water troughs of the Pa. R.R. The pumping station was located along the highway and was used to pump water into the steel troughs which were located in the center of the tracks. These were the days of the steam locomotives and the water was scooped up on the fly. Part of the hedge that was along the tracks to protect traffic on the highway is still standing.

Having covered the territory west of Whelan Ave., I will now start on the north side of the Lincoln Hwy. and travel east.

The first house was a stucco stone building home of Miss Phoebe Whelan built in the 1700's. It has just been leveled to make room for a parking lot. The house was a dwelling occupied by James Fox. It is now the Moose home. The next two frame buildings were on a grade some distance above the street level. I recall Charles Deets and a Mrs Sellers lived there. Next was a one story frame building where a China man lived and had a laundry. Later this location was bought down to street level and the present apartment building was erected by a Mr. Smith who had a plumbing business.

Samuel Black and his sister occupied the next building. Then came a green grocery of Frank Swarner. Then the Western Union Telegraph Office in charge of Sam Black. Messages were sent and received by Morse Code. Many telegraphers served their apprenticeship here working without pay. Later on they obtained positions in towers on the Pa.R.R. and various other places. There was a narrow alley way next leading to the rear of this building where the Broschard family lived.

Jesse Roberts store came next. It was a novelty store and in the cellar was the mecca of the children at Christmas time which was a great event in your life when you were a child. I remember Dad buying sleds for my brother and me. He paid 50¢ each for them and we could not have been more pleased had they been bikes.

The H.B. Sides drug store was next. These buildings were both three stories high and the owners lived in the upper stories.

The next building was called the Improvement Company Building and was three stories high. The ground floor was stores and the upper floors were used as rooms for various lodges, with one exception, the room above the Post Office was the office of Dr. Wood, a dentist. The cellar under this building contained three rooms occupied by Brochard's Barber Shop, pool room and Chews restaurant. Hair cuts were 15¢ and a shave was 10¢. Access to the cellar rooms was through two stairways from the street level. On the street level, next to Sides was a clothing store, Mittel's Grocery and the Post Office. The Post Master was M. Cox. His sister, Emily really was the boss and operated the post office. To the rear of the Post Office on Stuart Ave. in the same building was a shoe store operated by Wm. W. E. Ash and Howard Laird. The Improvement Co. Building has since been leveled for a parking lot

Crossing Stuart Ave., we come to Odds Fellows Hall, a three story stone stucco building. The first floor was a miscellaneous store of Pappy Shirk where you could find most any article from a spool of thread to a pound of sugar. The second floor was used as a general room for meetings and the lodge room was on the third floor. Adjoining this building was a small shop occupied as a barber shop and next a small one story used as a butcher shop run by Pawling

The next building was a three story brick double building. On one side the O'Neil sisters lived on the other was the home of Allen Keim, an undertaker. This building was later turned into an apartment building by Frank Walbert. The next double dwelling was occupied by Chris Fulmer and I do not recall who lived on the other side. Wm. Ryan had a grocery store next and lived above the store. The next building had two stores, a millinery shop, the first in Downingtown and run by Annie Downey. She always had one or more young ladies serving their apprenticeship in learning how to trim hats for ladies and girls. I remember that one of the apprentices was Anna McCausland of Guthersville. Barret's Bakery was also in this building. On the first floor were cases and shelves containing the baked products and a few tables in the rear where ice cream was served at 10¢ a scoop. The second floor was the real Ice Cream Parlor which was always crowded on Saturday evenings. This was where the young blades took their best girl. If you were flush you would order the delicacy of lady fingers with the ice cream. The next single stucco building was the residence of the Wm. M. Barrett family. In the rear was the bakery building housing the ovens and equipment and joining it was the building where the ice cream was produced. Frank Lenhardt was the baker and Frank Pawling made the ice cream. The next home was the home of Jason Thomas. The next home was that of John B. Connell. There was a peculiar placement of the fire hydrant here. It was back of a picket fence near the pavement. The kids used to turn the spigot on when they were on their way home from school.

Thomas Pedrick lived in the next single dwelling and operated a livery stable in the next building. Next was a blacksmith shop in a frame building and then a wheelwright shop. Mr. Glauner was the blacksmith and Brinton Stringfellow was the wheelwright. At the rear of this building was a stone quarry which has ceased operation.

On the corner of Downing Ave. and Lincoln Hwy. a building was erected by a Mr. Hoffman, He operated a shoe store on the ground level and lived above the store. Continuing across Downing Ave. there was a vacant lot and then a single brick dwelling occupied by Stewart Fondersmith and next was the home of Dr. Brenerman.

Then there was a field which was part of the Jos. R. Downing farm and the home of the Downingtown Ball Park. It contained a wooden grandstand and bleachers. Here played a County League made up of Downingtown, West Chester, Coatesville, Parkesburg and others. Games were played here on Saturday afternoons. I recall Robert Ash and James Fitrer were players on the Downingtown team. The only other building on this side of the street was the Baptist parsonage and church. Just across Manor Ave. there was a field before you came to the Brandywine. The field was part of the Jos. R. Downing farm.

Starting on the south side of Lincoln Hwy. at the west end of town the first buildings were the property of the Pa. R.R. West of the station was the tower which was in operation 365 days of the year, 24 hours a day. Then came the baggage stand which was in operation during the day and was manned by a baggage man. The Adams Express Co. had part of this building. There was a station building with a long covered platform facing the train tracks. In the station was a coal fired stove for heat. It was cared for by the baggage man during the day and by the man who walked the tracks at night. The Union News Co. had a small building at the rear of the station where newspapers, magazines, cigars, and cigarettes were sold. Next was the underpass going over to the south side of the station and railroad and Johnstown.

We now come to the Pennsylvania House, a place of great activity in those days. The west end of the first floor was the bar, then an office and waiting room, next the dining room and finally the parlor.

It was around this time that there were a lot of changes made in the ownership and operation of the Pennsylvania House. I will only say that I remember well when Joseph Pierce was proprietor. The ownership finally ended with Louis Gibney who with his family occupied the Escholtz property at the top of the hill across from the Ringwalt property.

A History of Downingtown written at the time of the semi-centennial in 1909 by Charles Pennypacker gives a detailed account of the various changes. This book also gives a very detailed account back to the beginning of the Town.

The Pennsylvania House not only took care of regular lodgers and traveling public but many extra people who came to town because the Pa. R.R. was constructing the low grade freight line south of town. Saturday night the bar was packed six deep and some standing outside. The kitchen was in the cellar at the east end of the hotel, the food was raised to the dining room by means of a dumb waiter. This was a contraption operated with ropes and pulley. Between the hotel and the next building was an open space about eight feet below the street allowing an outside entrance to the kitchen.

The next brick building was the livery stable operated by Chris Fulmer. This was big business in these times because there were many traveling salesmen.

The next, a single building was the store and dwelling of the Walberts. He operated a tobacco store and also delivered newspapers. Jacob Keyery operated a jewelry store next door. He also repaired watches and clocks and lived above his store. Sarah McGraw had a notions store next door.

The dwelling and stables of Mr. Richard Wells was next. His house was an old type Victorian dwelling with plenty of gingerbread trimming on the outside. Mr. Wells was one of the owners of the Wells and Walker Lumber and Coal Yard. This dwelling and yard occupied the entire space now covered by the Arco Service Station.

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The front section of the next building was the general store of Frank McCaughey. He carried a line of dress material that was sold by the yard. The next building was the McCaughey residence. The larger part of the next brick building was the office and residence of Dr. Arnold. A widow, Woodcock lived in the smaller side of the building.

The next building was the grist mill of E. Vinton Philips, on the corner of Viaduct Ave. and Lincoln Hwy. Miff Miller worked here while he was attending medical college in Philadelphia.

Across Viaduct Ave. opposit the Mill was a stone dwelling the home of Joseph Booth, plumber. This house sat a considerable distance back from the highway. In the past years it has been torn down.

Next was a two story building, brick,. The first story was the barber shop of Horace Walton and the second floor was the home of the Linegar family. Attached to the east side of this building was a one story frame building owned by Thomas Hoopes and was used as a meat market. The next stucco building was his residence and also served as a boarding house catering to school teachers.

The next single dwelling was the residence of Mary Ingram and later it was owned by the Robert Eachus family. The next home was that of Squire Johnson and next to it was a one story and on half office building where Squire Joseph Johnson and his son Wilmer carried on a surveying and insurance business as well as fullfilling the duties of a squire required by law. This office was the first home of the Brandywine Building and Savings Association. Squire Johnson was secretary of the assoc.

The prime mover in the Brandywine B.&S. Assoc. was Joseph Miller on of the owners of Miller Bros. Clothing Store located in the east end of town. It would take a book to cover all the good deeds performed by this man. He helped to start a new era in Downingtown. Through the efforts of his organization people who had rented homes now were becoming owners

I must give one example of hrs many, many good deeds of Joseph Miller. Mr. and Mrs Alec McCausland were driving home from Downingtown after a heavy thunder and lighting storm. As they approached their home at the top of the hill entering Guthriesville on R. 322, they saw the dead bodies of their entire herd of milk cows under a tree in the meadow. It was through the efforts of Mr. Miller that they were guided through this catastrophic situation.

The next one story building was a paint store. When this building burned down, many of the children were disappointed that it was the school which was next door.

I want to say a few words about the classes in the school. The graduating classes were small. two of the early classes contained two graduates. One class graduated Joseph Laird and Louise Huber and another class graduated May Ash (Philips) and Amelia Krauter (Mahan). Another oddity was that black students never went above the third grade. In those days there were no restrictions as to age in going to work and very little restriction about quitting school and going to work. I recall one instance in third grade when a girl walked out of the school in the middle of the afternoon and never came back.

Central Hall was the next building, a two story building and is the present Lutheran Church. In the rear of the ~~the~~ building were living quarters where Mrs Millard lived. The upper part of the building was used as an entertainment center catering to Punch and Judy Shows and church and school entertainments. The lower floor was used mostly by Jay Edge who taught artifacts etc. to a Boys Club.

The next stone building was the residence of Louisa Miller. In back of it was a single residence, I do not recall who lived there. The next and last building was the Reece Ladies residence.

The first street running east and west, north of Lincoln Hwy. was Highland Ave. The only residence here was that of Samuel Nelson and the Ward building mentioned previously.

On the vacant lot between the Duff residence and Hunt Ave. (on the south side) was the remains of the old Hunt mansion. The bricks of this mansion were brought over from England.

The next street running east and west from Manor Ave. to Whelan was Penna. Ave. There were only two buildings facing on the south side of Penna. Ave., between Downing Ave. and Stuart Ave. they were the old private school turned into a double residence and the dwelling of Issac Y. Ash (between Stuart and Whelan Aves.)

Going west on the north side of Penna Ave. was the home of Len Ewing (corner of Penna. Ave and Downing Ave.) Next was a brick residence. I do not recall who lived there. Next came a single frame house occupied by the Joshua Lowry family. Then the single frame house of Merrit Dixon and next was the frame residence of the Shirk family (corner of Penna and Stuart Aves.)

The next building was the brick home of a widow and ^{the} mother of druggist Harry Worrel and Mrs Dr. Kerr, a retired school teacher. In the next double brick lived Jeff Groff and Patrick Rowan. Then a frame dwelling of the Barret family. There was a large frame barn at the rear of the next vacant lot. The Whitley and Ingram lived in the next double frame house. Next to it was a vacant lot and then the frame home of the Ryan family (corner of Whelan and Penna Aves.)

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One block north of Penna Ave. was a short street named Webster Ave. it ran from Downing Ave. to Stuart Ave. On the south side of the street were two double houses built of frame. They were occupied by The Connel, Hale Crowe and Pawling families. On the opposite side of the street were two double brick houses, a double stucco, and frame building and the single dwelling of Samuel Lineinger. The other residents were Loury, Webster, Trego, Worrell, Loomis, Hart, John Shutt. Next to the Lineinger residence was an alley running through to Penna. Ave.

North of Penna. Ave. running west from Stuart Ave. were two short streets named William and Mary. The names were for the King and Queen of England. This section was called Kamestown named for the builder from Phila. by that name.

William St. ran west from Stuart Ave. to Whelan Ave. and consisted of two story double frame houses on both sides of the street. Name of the residents living there were Holliday, Burke, White, Ingram, Carter, Ingram, Dennis, Scott, Springer, Myers, Dowlin, Walton, Wilkinson, Clayton, Keech, Cressman, Harrington and McLaughlin.

There were three double frame houses on Mary Street. The families who lived there were Brown, Evans, Walton, Lockart and Mendenhall.

Running north and south from Lincoln Hwy. were ~~the~~ streets of Downing and Stuart Aves. Downing ran to Manor Ave. There were no buildings on the west side, on the east side was the Alert Fire Co. building and the homes of E. Vinton Philips and Phelps Family. The three cornered field bound by Downing Ave., Manor and Penna Ave. was part of the Jos. R. Downing farm.

On Stuart Ave., going north from Lincoln Hwy. the single brick house on the corner of Highland Ave. was the residence of David M. Cox, the postmaster and one time commissioner of Chester County. The next large single brick building was the home of Capt. Eicholtz. The only other residence on this side of the street was the single brick home of Levi Dowlin.

On the opposite side of Stuart Ave. the first building was a large stone stucco house the home of Abiah and Louisa Ringwalt. Abiah was in the nursery business and there were three large hot houses back of his home. This property ran from Stuart Ave. to Downing Ave. and the south side of Penna. Ave. There was also an alley that ran from Stuart Ave. to a stone quarry at the rear. This alley served as an entrance to the hot houses. There were several stables and an ice house along the alley.

The ice house was on the Barrett Bakery property and was filled every year. The ice was used for the manufacture of ice cream sold at the Bakery. At the end of the alley was also a small single frame dwelling. All of the buildings on the Ringwalt property were razed when Perry Tyson purchased the property and built a beautiful stone residence which is still there.

In the next block between Penna Ave. and Webster Ave. were two residences, the homes of Mr. Swift and Mr. Wm. Arters. On the corner of Stuart and Webster Aves. was the home of Brint Stingfellow and next a single frame house the home of the Williams family. The only other building was the frame Church of U.A.M.E. and the parsonage next door facing on Manor Ave.

Entering Downingtown from the North-west startting at the old toll gate on Route 322 and the junction of Edges Mill Rd. there was a toll gate operated by two madden ladies by the name of McMinn. They lived in a house close to the road. The farm at this intersection belonged to Joe Baugh and his sister Ida. It was known as the "upper" farm. Next was a single frame house

The Copeland home came next .They operated a lime kiln and quarry on the south side of the road. There was a large market market for lime in these times. When the by-pass around Downingtown was built all of these buildings were destroyed.

Next came the Zook farm presently the Lloyd farm. On the other side of the road(north) was Rock Raymond Rd.running north. On the west side of Rock Raymond Rd. was a farm owned by Mr. Harbson and now occupied by Atmore Pollock. Just beyond this farm on the same side was a small old log cabin on what was called the Forty Acres and owned by Abiah Ringwalt. On the east side of the road was the "Lower" farm of Joseph and Ida Baugh, later bought and operated by Atmore Pollack, grandfather of the present Atmore Pollock now living there. The road then wound up and over the hill to the farms of Freemans and Lamme and Nichols.

Back on Route 322 or Manor Ave. and next to the Zook farm was the W.I.Pollock farm . the barn stood next to the race and has since been torn down. However, the farm house is still standing and is the property of the St. Joseph Catholic Church. The house is used as a home for the Nuns.

The white house on the corner was the property of the Forbert family. At the rear was a stable housing stallions used for breeding. Following the race you would come to a single frame house of Widow Woodcock. Next was the Grist Mill run by John Pollock, father of the large Pollock family . The miller at the mill was Jesse Smith. Across from the mill was the barn and farm house. The mill and farm eventually became the property of W.I.Pollock Jr. who was in the contracting business. The little old stone house was used by a tennant. This property back in early history was a tavern owned by the Ringwalts and was a stop over for the stage coming out of Philadelphia.

Back on Manor Ave. and across from the Masonic Building at the bottom of the hill was a spring house which served as a place to keep milk cool that came from the Joseph R. Downing farm. A short distance up the road was a log cabin occupied by Rosy Halderman and her son. Next to the log cabin was a large farm gate leading into the meadow and back fields of the Downing farm. It was at the bottom of this lane that Beaver Creek joined the Brandywine. This juncture of streams was the old swimming hole known as the "Nine Dozen". The next building , which is the present Womens Club was the farm house and nearby were a barn and out buildings of the Jos.R. Downing farm. Mr. Downing was a bachelor and served as president of the National Bank. William Hamilton rented the farm at this time and his sister, a Mrs Mitchell and family lived in the west end of the farm house.

When Joseph Hoopes, a former resident of town came into possession of the property, he tore down the barn and built a stone residence. The field in front of the farm house was free of buildings and ran down to the Lincoln Hwy. and was enclosed with a rail fence.

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Where Beaver Creek crossed Manor Ave. was an old three arch stone bridge. a cluster of buttonwood trees stood on the south-east corner of the bridge. The trees are gone and the bridge has been replaced with a new one.

Back to Lincoln Hwy. and heading south on Viaduct Ave. there was a lane leading east to a small building used as an abator where Thomas Perdue slaughtered animals for the Thomas Hoopes Meat Market. Next to the Philips Grist Mill (on the corner) was a one story frame building that housed a harness and saddlery business owned and operated by Samuel Lineinger. Mr. Lineinger had only one leg. He used one crutch which he made to move himself about.

Between this shop and The Pa. R.R. underpass were two small frame houses . I do not recall who lived there.

Going through the underpass and making a turn to the west on Viaduct Ave. we come to several double brick houses. I recall the first on was occupied by Wm. Knauer. Some of the other residents were Doran, Moulder and Rowan.

St. Joseph's Alley ran from Viaduct Ave. south to the B Brandywine Creek. It was along this alley that Wm. South had a one story stone building erected for his photography work. He was one of the original developers of color photography. He was, in my opinion, a genius and I do not know the true story of how he never seemed able to receive proper credit for his work. His brother, Ed., came to town about the same time and married Laura Mendemhall, a graduate of our local schools and an accomplished musician, especially the flute. She is still living at the age of 96 years. The brothers South were also accomplished musicians.

At the southern end of the alley were a couple of frame dwellings occupied by the States and Scott families. I remember when Sal Scott passed away they had to remove the door to get her casket from the house. She weighed over 400 pounds.

There was a blacksmith shop owned by Hoopes Draper also on St. Joseph Alley.

The Pa. R.R. Station on the east side of the tracks was also off the north side of Viaduct Ave. The Robert Russell family resided in the station building. He was the ticket agent. Continuing west on Viaduct, past St. Joseph Alley there was a double frame house on the right. Continuing across Bradford Ave. the road led into the coal yard of John McGraw and Sons. There was a short alley going south from the yards and there was a single frame house along this alley.

Bradford Ave. ran south from the Pa. R.R. to the bottom of Gut Hill which leads west up a long hill to St. Joseph's cemetery at the top of the hill. There were several homes on either side of the hill. I remember the Draper family and I also recall a black boy by the name of Jimmy States who owned the first motor cycle in Downingtown living there.

Going north on Bradford Ave. the road led up to the P.R.R. yards. The large frame house on the right was the home of George Guiney. The family ran a boarding house. On the other side of the street was another frame house owned by the P.R.R. and occupied by the Wm. Allen Family. He was the resident supervisor of the P.R.R..

The railroad yards were a busy place filled with tracks and sidings from the main line. It contained an hostler section where the engines were cleaned,wartered,banked and steamed up in the morningwhen the crew arrived. There were usually 6 to 8 engines parked here every night. Some of the hostlers were McFadden,Knauer and Harrington. There were also a number of small buildings used to house shops for painting,carpenter work, tin work and many miscellaneous jobs. Shops for crews who worked out of Downingtown. A one story brick building along the tracks was where unclaimed greight was stored. Twice a year a public sale was held and the freight was sold to the highest bidder. adjoining this building was a long platform where milk brought in by the surrounding dairies was loaded for shipment into Phila. To the rear of this yard the ground rose to quite an elevation, On top of this hil was the ruins of the old hotel that had been destroyed by fire in 1880. It had been built by Mr. Kames.

Going south on Bradford Ave.,I will not try to give individual names according to home locations. However,I can recall the names on people on the avenue. They were as follows; Moses,Butler,Deets,Brown,Hoopes,Foy,Gilfoy,Knauer,Yohn,McFadden,Gallagher,Beale,Hilton,Ciarlone,and Father O'Reilly who was priest at the St. Joseph Catholic Church. Mrs Quinn wasin charge of the manse. Father O'Reilly was a wonderful man in many ways and was well liked by everyone. I recall that everytime the Methodist called a new minister The Father was always at the reception to welcome him.

On the corner of Viaduct Ave. and Bradford Ave. was the grocery store of Nathan Wilson. He was a veteran of the Civil War. At the next corner (Bradford and ChurchSt.)was the grocery store of Howard Simmons. At this time Church St. ended far short of where it ends today in 1977. There was only one single brick house on the South side of the street and that was occupied by WilliamScheely and later by the Mahan family. On the north side ,going west was a row of brick homes followed by several other homes. Then came the single dwelling of the John McGraw family. The next double frame was the last house on the street and the occupants were Mrs. Bersttler and the Ed. Weaver family.

There was an alley running east to join St. Joseph's alley betwe between the St. Josphe's Church property. The next house south of the church were frame and the last houses were the home of Wm. Knauer,his meat market and ice house.

The next street going west from Bradford Ave. was Prospect Ave. The inhabitants on this ave. were mostly black persons. Isaac Trowery was one of the leaders of the black population. and a fine man. Some of the other residents were Johns, Nugent, Wilson, Piecraft, Flowers.

A church was under construction and now in the year of 1977 that church has just celebrated its 75 anniversary.

On the west side of Bradford Ave. between Church St. and Prospect Ave. I recall one double brick home. It was in 1905 that George Ciarlone came to Downingtown and built a home and bakery at this location.

Thus ends the descriptipn of 1900 Downingtown as given by Mr. Raymond Dennis in the year of 1978.

Archive file

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Written by Raymond Dennis
Aug. 1979

Item # 13174

COHANSEY GLASS WORKS

This plant was located near the Chestnut St. Bridge over the Penna.R.R. in the east end of town. In addition to pint and quart jars the main product of various sizes bottles-2,4,6,8, ounces bottles. The main building contained the one large circular furnace which contained the molten glass. There was a platform on which the glass blowers worked. There were several openings from which the blower obtained the small globule of molten glass this he placed in a mold and blew it to size. The mold would open and shut. The bottle was removed and a guy called the Jaffner finished the neck and placed it on a peel resting on a stand. The peel was made of metal and the bottles were then carried by a "Peel Boy" and placed in the annealing furnace. The bottom of the furnace was in constant motion. I worked as a Peel Boy for several weeks. We worked 13 hours at night and 11 hours daylight for the sum of 12 1/2 ¢ per hour. I was a kid of 12 or 13 and I could not get on to the trick and broke too many bottles. After several weeks I was let go.

Then I jumped from the frying pan into the fire. I got a job at the F.P. Miller Paper Mill laying sheets as they came off the end of the machine. The hours and pay was the same as the Glass Works. I think I lost about 20 pounds on this job, sweating it off especially when we were laying 12 sheets at a time. The sheets were small 8 by 10, but they were coming the machine continuously,

Cohansey came to Downingtown from Bridgeton, N.J.

Andrew Breeze and J.P. Noll were early connectures to the Glass Works.

Glass blower's pipe was a thin iron pipe about 3 to 4 feet long.

The bottles were used for pharmaceticals extracts and medicine.

Archive file

PICNIC TIME

Written by Raymond Dennis from
his memory of the event. Aug. 1979

Back in the late 1800's the Methodist Church picnic was held in the meadow along what is now Rt. 322 below the Kerr Paper Mill, now Davy Paper Co. This was one of the big events of the year.

Between 9 and 10 a.m. the farmer would arrive at the church on Brandywine Ave. with the farm wagons and hay flat wagons to take the assembled children and adults to the picnic grounds. The trolley car had not yet made its appearance in our town. All the baskets of goodies were carried in a separate wagon. Upon arrival at the picnic location one long table of boards and trestles was erected and covered with table cloths. The following menu was placed there on: Fried chicken, cold boiled ham, cold slaw, pepper hash, hard boiled eggs, halved, various pickled products, bread, butter, lemon butter, home made root beer, lemonade, coffee, fresh baked bread and apple pie for dessert. All this food was home made and it makes my mouth water even today as I think about it. After everyone had been fed and the tables cleared, various games of the times were played. About the middle of the afternoon several cans of ice cream in wooden tubs arrived from Barret's Bakery and everyone was served a generous helping and some had a generous helping of home made cake.

This was one of the high lights in the life of a kid and one never forgotten.

In later years the picnics were held at Lenape Park on the Brandywine and this included a trolley ride

Written by Raymond Dennis
as he remembered it.
Aug. 1979

OYSTER HOUSES

Some 80 years ago every town had one or two Oyster Houses. I will endeavor to describe the ones I remember as a boy in Downingtown.

Oliver Chew had one in the cellar under the Improvement Co. building that used to stand on the corner of Stuart Ave. and Lancaster Ave. in the West end of town on the Lanc. Ave. side. There were two stairways from the street level to the cellar. The stairway next to Sides Drug Store went down to Broschard's Barber (shave and hair cut 25 cents) Shop. Next to this shop was a pool room with one Pool table. Next came the Chew Oyster House. In these days, the oysters were shipped in heavy burlap bags by railway freight. They were opened by hand and as for size and flavor, I have not tasted any today that could be comparable. There was one long bar with stools in front. Oyster Stew was served in 2 sizes, 15 cents and 25 cents also fries were 20 and 30 cents. Home made pies were served as dessert. The pies were cut into six pieces, 5 ¢ a piece. Also coffee, tea and birch beer were the drinks.

Later on Chas. Baen opened a restaurant on the street level on the east side of Sides Drug Store. In addition to oysters he also served meals.

In the East end of town, there were 2 Oyster Houses. One was run by Hattie McCorkle and was located in the building next to that brick building across from the bank. Hattie's place was torn down and is now occupied by Ray Sheeler Motors. She lived on the premises and had one room facing Lanc. Ave. with one small bar and a table.

The other Oyster House was run by Wm. Hess and was on the West corner of Wallace and Lanc. Ave. It was over the race. It was a one story frame building and was torn down years ago, when the Roberts Building was built. Now I hate stews and fries that you get at all the places, the quality and the taste are the same at all the places.

The fries were far different from those you get today. The crumbs were made on the premises and the fresh egg mixture was just that. The coating was thin and crisp and you did not have to hunt for the big fat oyster inside. Whenever I think of same, I start to slobber.