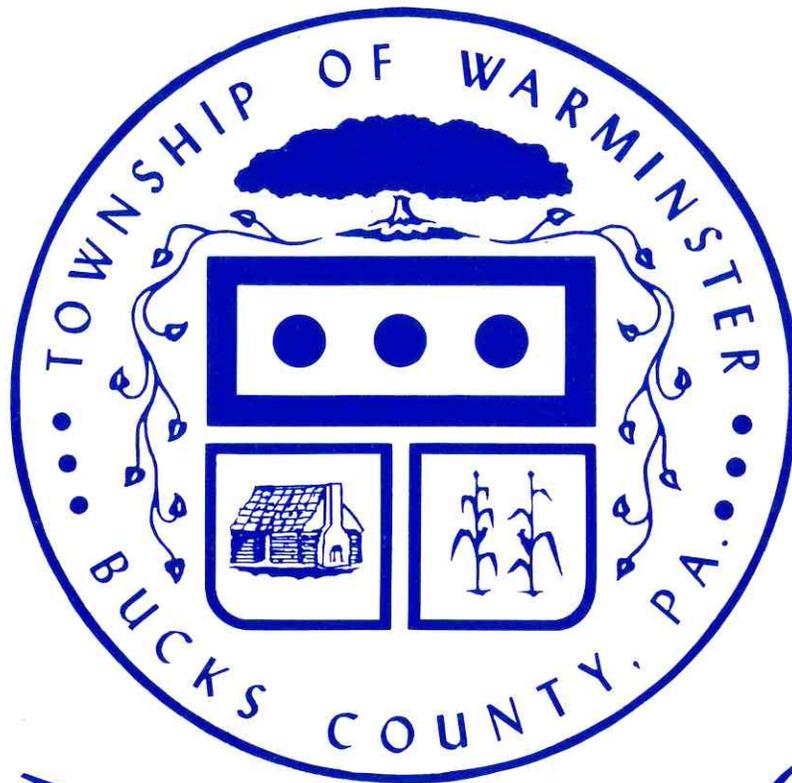


A HISTORY OF
WARMINSTER
TOWNSHIP

THE FIRST 275 YEARS



1711-1986

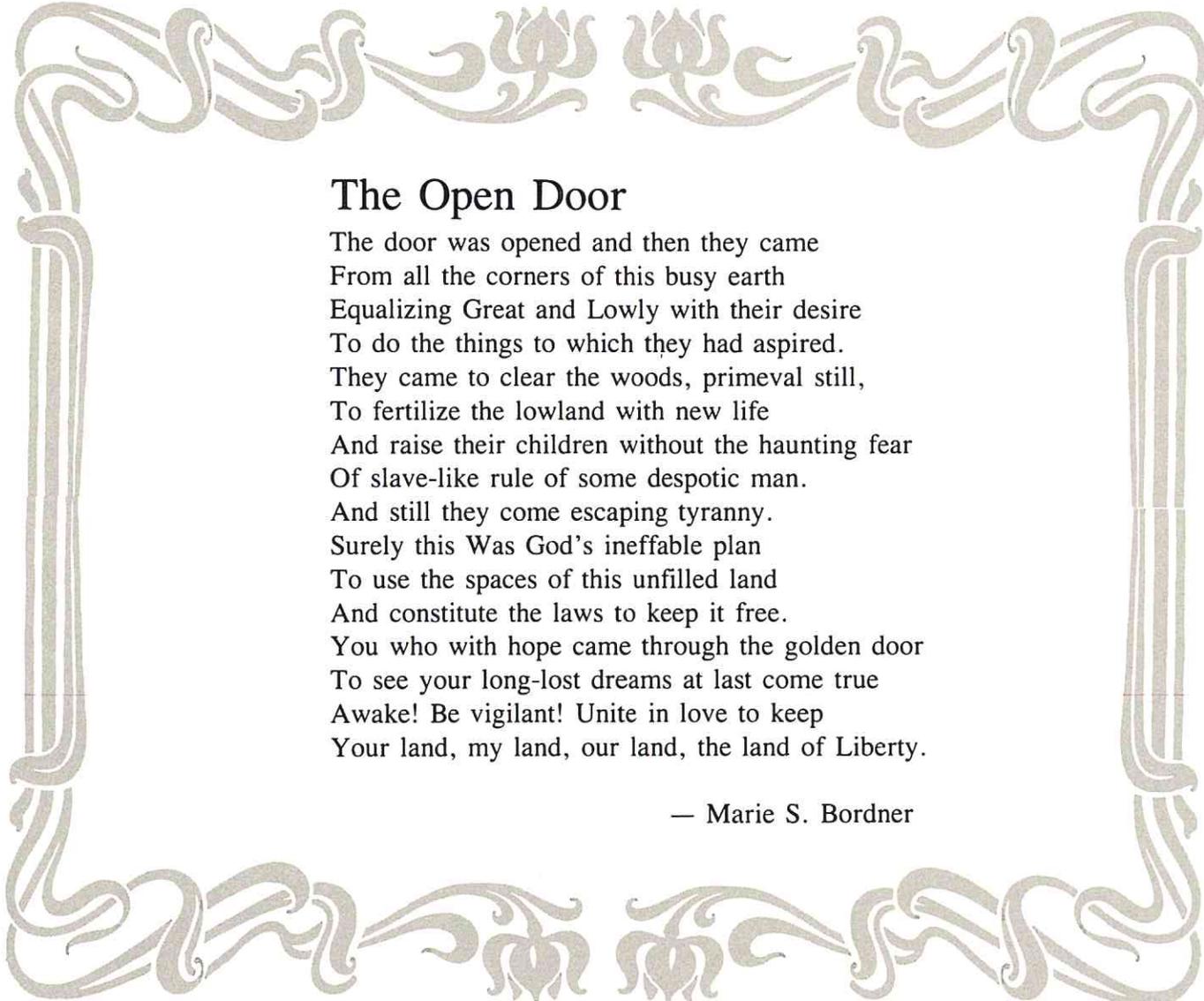
A History of Warminster Township

By

Paul C. Bailey

Published by the Warminster Township
275th Anniversary Commission
by authorization of the
Warminster Township Board of Supervisors
Paul C. Bailey, Township Historian, Author

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The door was opened and then they came
From all the corners of this busy earth
Equalizing Great and Lowly with their desire
To do the things to which they had aspired.
They came to clear the woods, primeval still,
To fertilize the lowland with new life
And raise their children without the haunting fear
Of slave-like rule of some despotic man.
And still they come escaping tyranny.
Surely this Was God's ineffable plan
To use the spaces of this unfilled land
And constitute the laws to keep it free.
You who with hope came through the golden door
To see your long-lost dreams at last come true
Awake! Be vigilant! Unite in love to keep
Your land, my land, our land, the land of Liberty.

— Marie S. Bordner

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 15, 1986

To the Citizens of Warminster, Pennsylvania:

I am pleased to send warm greetings for the 275th anniversary of Warminster.

Each city and town of our great country is unique, but all are bound together in the love of these United States. We are fortunate to live in a nation of strong and proud communities where everyone has a chance for success and the blessings of liberty and freedom can be enjoyed by all, regardless of background.

As you commemorate this anniversary, you have a splendid opportunity to renew your commitment to preserve the spirit which has forged America into a land of wonder. I am proud to join you in making such a commitment on this historic occasion for the people of Warminster.

With hearty congratulations and best wishes for continued milestones,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald Reagan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

GREETINGS:

As Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I am pleased to extend hearty congratulations to all the residents of Warminster as you observe the 275th anniversary of the founding of your township.

Communities such as yours are the backbone of the Keystone State. All residents can be proud of Warminster's strong community spirit which has held its citizens together in fellowship and cooperation over the years. In commemorating the founding of your community, you are paying tribute to the hard work and dedication of countless men and women who have contributed to your great past, while anticipating continued success in the future.

Best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable anniversary celebration.

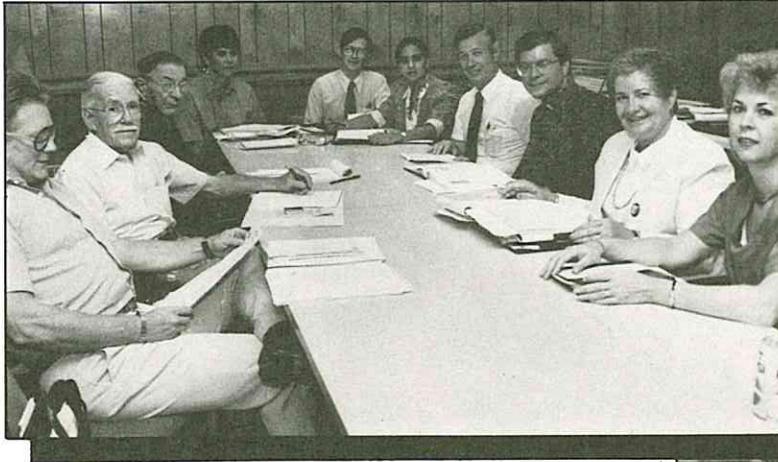



Dick Thornburgh
Governor

1986

A YEAR OF CELEBRATING!

The People who "MADE IT HAPPEN"



A Working Session of the Commission and Committees'

(left to right)
 Peter W. Brunner • Paul Bailey
 Albert W. Beyer • Alison Drummond
 Timothy Noel • Susan Dorfman
 Walter Clemens • Father Gill
 Lorraine Butch • Dorothy Rose-Brennan



Checking the Details for the History Book

Lorraine Butch • Paul Bailey • Dorothy Rose-Brennan



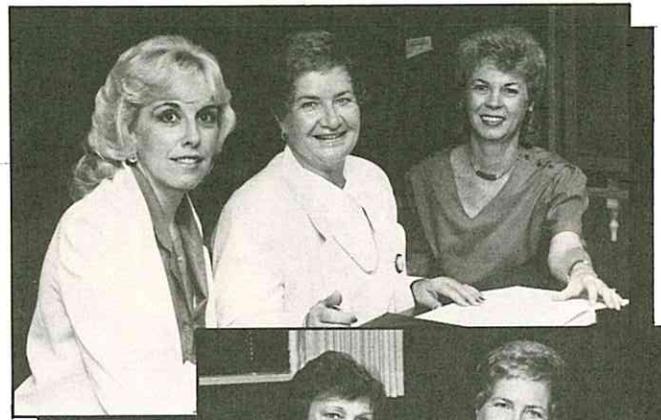
Purpose, Planning and Hours of Hard Work

*(left to right) Albert W. Beyer • Joseph Oliver • Pauline Bush
 • Susan Dorfman • Walter Clemens*

Commission Members Jean Pietrangelo, Lorraine Butch and Dorothy Rose-Brennan smile in relief as everything "falls into place."

Planning the Parade and Harvest Festival

Jean Pietrangelo • James Bowden • Elmer P. Clawges • Timothy Noel



Overseeing the Publicity

*Vail Garvin
 Lorraine Butch*



The Warminster Township Administration and Board of Supervisors



(left to right) *LeRoy J. Fetterman, Township Manager • Thomas W. Lisowski • Christopher Staub, Vice Chairman
• William T. Davis, Chairman • Carl J. Messina, Secretary-Treasurer • Raymond J. Regan*

The Warminster Township 275th Anniversary Commission



(left to right) *Vail Garvin • Lorraine Butch, Chairman • Jean Pietrangelo • Dorothy Rose-Brennan*

FOREWORD

This history was originally compiled in 1960 in celebration of Warminster's 250th Anniversary. Since that time the township has undergone many changes making it necessary to update the history and correct a few mistakes.

Any area historian puts his reputation for integrity on the line when he puts his version of history into the printed word. Much of what we call "history" occurred in a period when records were poorly kept, if kept at all, so that the present day historian must rely on books written by second and third generation historians who are not always in agreement with one another. This fact must be reckoned with when any question is raised regarding a statement of so-called "fact." I'd be willing to wager that there are many historians who, after reading a science fiction story such as "The Time Machine," wished longingly that such a machine was indeed a reality, so that he could verify some of those aspects of history that are clouded in doubt.

Most of the "facts" presented in this present history have been checked and rechecked several times, so that we are reasonably certain as to their veracity. Should there be any proof to the contrary, we will be happy to include such information in a possible later edition of this book.

It should be noted that, within the time span that was allocated for this publication, it was not feasible to research the histories of some of the mentioned properties to the degree that was desirable. This will be done over a period of time by the Warminster Township Historical Preservation Board

as part of the duties assigned to that Board by the Warminster Board of Supervisors. Persons interested in cooperating with information and/or pictures of the area are urged to contact the Warminster Historical Preservation Board, attention of Mr. Timothy Noel, Township Building, Warminster, Pa. 18974.

Our many thanks to the following who, under very short notice, helped to put this book together:

Beverly Blackway of Today's Spirit newspaper, for the loan of pictures and information.

Dorothy Rose-Brennan who, as publishing consultant, gave much needed advice on format and layout.

Allison Drummond, for help in typing parts of the manuscript.

Police Chief Elmer Clawges, for offering the services of the police photo lab in copying borrowed pictures and to Officer Frank Luczak, who did the actual work.

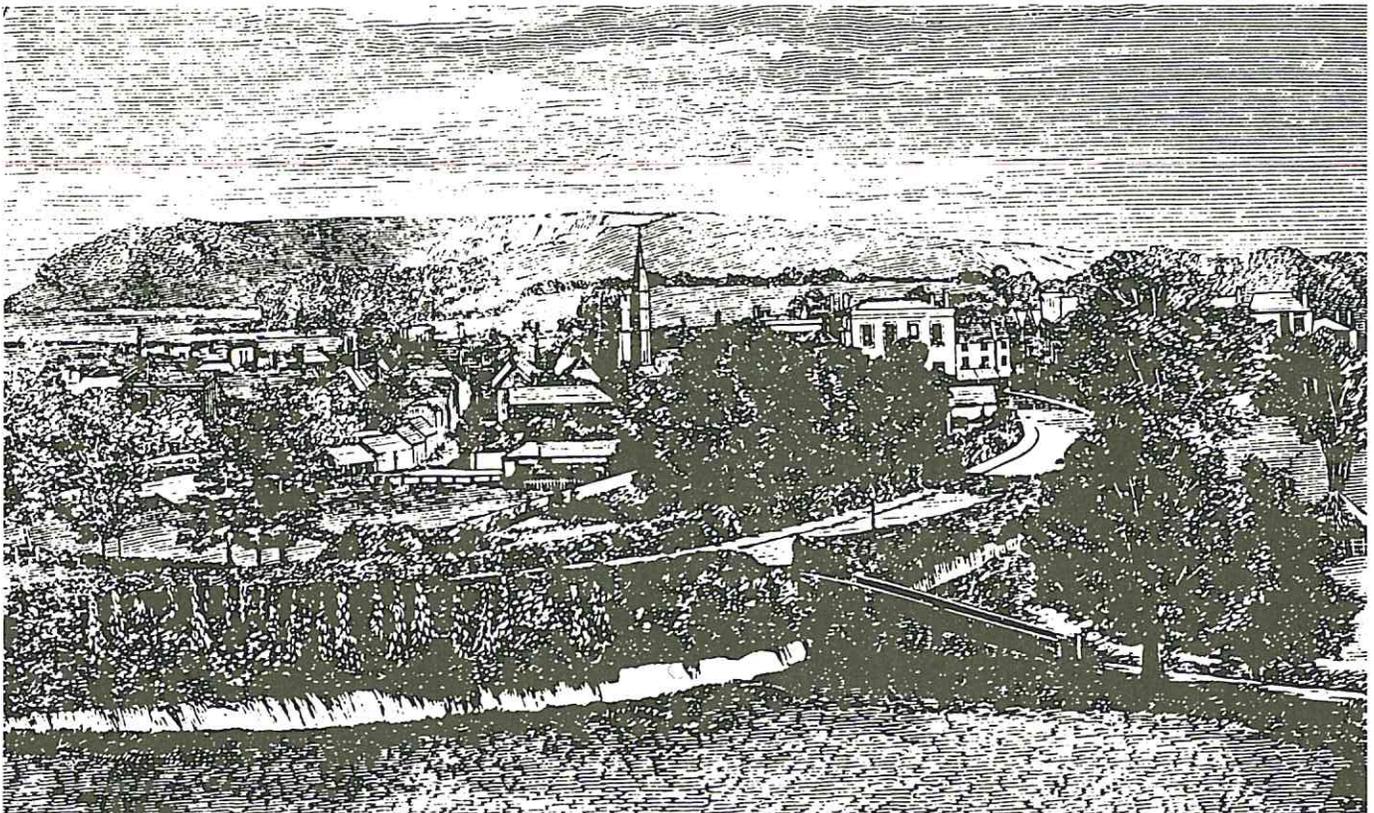
Timothy Noel, for research and information.

Peter Brunner, for the loan of books.

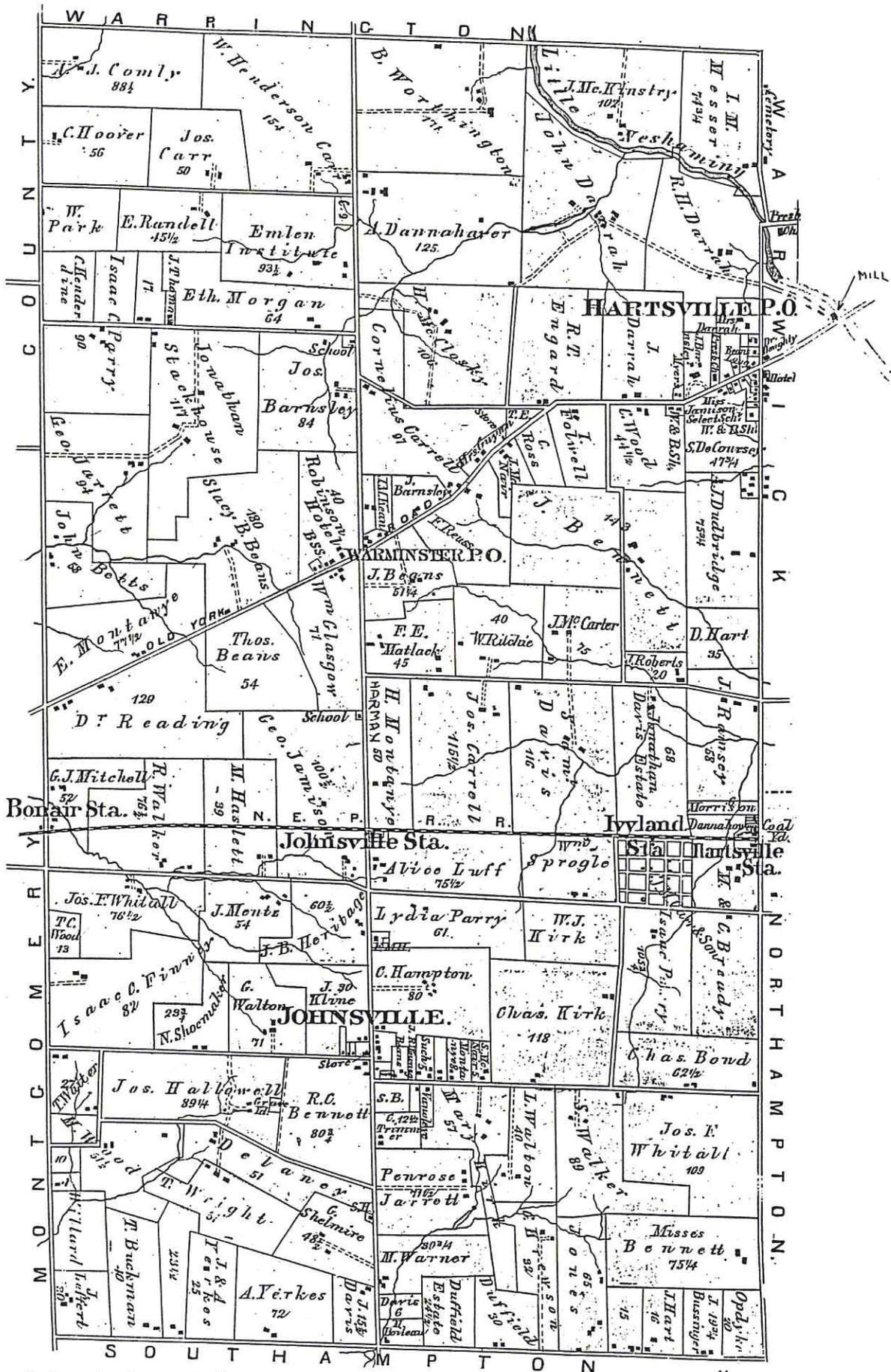
Pauline Bush, for the loan of books and other material.

My wife, Dannielle, who was responsible for my writing the original history in 1961.

Paul C. Bailey



WARMINSTER, England, 1879.



Scale: 2000 feet per inch.

1876 MAP OF WARMINSTER TOWNSHIP



Warminster Township

THE EARLY YEARS

Long before Wm. Penn's famous treaty with the American aboriginals we call "Indians," European settlers explored the wilds of what is now known as Bucks County and made their homes here. The trickle which started some years after Columbus made his startling "discovery" increased with each successive expedition to America. These were the transients who explored for wealth, for curiosity, or for adventure. Here was a wide wilderness, an interminable, great forest; no roads dissected its vastness and only the eternal meanderings of its streams interrupted the smooth contours of great forest lands. Lower Bucks County was much the same as the rest of the country, a few faint Indian trails and an occasional Indian village being the only signs of human habitation. Game was abundant; through what is now your living room once roamed deer, elk, panther, fox, lynx. In the not too distant Delaware River, unpolluted then by "progress," shad, bass, and pickerel were plentiful and it is recorded that, even as late as the 1850's, whales, sharks, and seal were seen in the Philadelphia vicinity. In the skies above, wild geese, turkey, pheasant (then known as the hazel hen), the majestic eagle, the now extinct passenger pigeon, all crossed and criss-crossed in great numbers.

The early transients of this area exist only in Indian folklore though there are a few faint hints of their identity in recorded history. The first settlers learned from the Indians that, many years before, white men had ascended the Delaware and worked a copper mine in the vicinity of Bowman's Hill. This mine was rediscovered in the early 1800's and gives a degree of proof to the legend. Certain evidence leads us to believe that these people were Swedes and may have been responsible for the later concentration of Swedes along the Delaware areas.

Those who followed later were the hard core of the present population, many driven here because of religious and political persecution in their European homelands. Others settled here by virtue of patents issued by Sir Edmund Andros, who became Governor of New York in 1674. These were "settlers" in the true sense of the word, clearing the land and building permanent homes, churches, schools, and trading centers; these were the builders of communities. In this they were assisted by the friendly Delaware Indians.

Far too little credit has been given the Indians in the development of a civilization which was eventually to destroy their own. The Lenni Lenapes, as they were known, consisted of a number of tribes; the Turtle tribe being indigent to the local area. In spite of later incidents, justly brought about by the sight of their lands being engorged by the greedy whites, they were basically a friendly tribe in contrast to the warlike Sioux of the midwest plains. During the early years of settlement, during the period of the clearing of the lands for farming, food was scarce and the whites had little to offer in trade for staples during the winter months. There are, in family legends and in recorded history, many stories of the hospitality and generosity of the local "savages" who supplied the means of existence to the pioneers during their frequent early periods of hardship. Watson, in his annals of

Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, sums up the situation very clearly in saying that "—the difference [between the early settlers and the Indians] in many respects was not great; when to live was the utmost hope, and to enjoy a bare sufficiency, the greatest luxury."

Thus, when Wm. Penn began, in 1682, to organize his "New Deal" in government in the new country, he had the nucleus of what was later to become one of the most solid and prosperous centers of population, in the country. Already was formed the spirit and substance of "—government of the people, by the people, and for the people," although at that time, the laws of these scattered pioneers were a simplified form of British law with overtones of democracy and Biblical teachings. In a raw and unknown world, the basic concept of law became the Golden Rule and most of the "laws," though unwritten, were strictly adhered to in the policies of a world where authority was not always assigned, but rather assumed, by those whose qualifications of leadership made them eligible. When Penn appeared on the scene with his innate sense of justice — fathered both by his own character and the persecution of his "Quakers" in Europe — and his great capacity for organization, the old rule changed and order began to appear in the laws of the land. The fact that Penn possessed, through the King of England, proprietary rights to the land no doubt helped in his position; but his inherent friendliness and high moral character endeared him, not only to his tenant heirs, but to the Indians, who spoke of him affectionately as "Brother Onas" — their word for pen, or quill. Penn made the Indians realize from the very start that he intended to deal justly with them and it is to his credit that, as long as he lived, his word was respected even more by the Indians than by his own people. It is sad that those who followed in his footsteps did not attempt to match his stride.

On June 23, 1683, William Penn bought from the Lenni Lenapes the land "—lying between the Pennepack and Neshomamic creeks and all upon the Neshomamic creeks and backward, of the same, and to run two days journey with a horse into the country." Warminster Township was in this area. General Davis, in his History of Bucks County says "—the surface of the township is generally level, with but little broken or untillable land. There is no better land in the county than the plains of Warminster which extend eastward to the hills of Neshaminy—."

At the first Provincial Assembly held in Philadelphia, Bucks, and Chester counties were assigned. There were no legal subdivisions in the county before 1692, although for the convenience of collecting taxes and for other municipal purposes, limits and names had already been unofficially given to many settlements. Southampton and Warminster were so called as early as 1685 by the provincial council in drawing up the county borders. The Bucks County court, in 1692, formed the township limits throughout the county for the purpose of more convenient tax collecting. This was done by a jury which met at the Neshaminy Meeting House in Middletown, situated within a mile of what is now known as Langhorne. The settled parts of the county were divided into five townships, four others being mentioned but not

returned as geographical subdivisions. For purposes of municipal administration, our Township was described as “—Southampton and the lands about it, with Warminster, one.”

In 1703, the court recognized Southampton as a township in itself and it was permitted to elect its own highway supervisor. In March, 1711, Southampton petitioned the court to be separated completely from Warminster in county assessments and tax collections. The petition was granted and the separation became official. For some reason, which has been lost over the years, Southampton in 1712, again petitioned that it be allowed to “*remain* a township in its entirety.” This has led to some confusion as to the actual date of separation. McReynolds, in his “Place Names in Bucks County” gives the date 1712. Davis’ History of Bucks County states: “The two (Warminster and Southampton) elected but one constable and overseer for several years, and they were not entirely separated in their municipal administration until about 1712.” Other sources are at variance as to the date when each became “a township in its own right,” but it is generally conceded that the first petition on the part of Southampton was made and granted in 1711.

Warminster was named after a small town in County Wiltshire, at the western extremity of Salisbury Plain, England. The name is of Saxon origin — WAR meaning a fortress and MINSTER meaning a church of a monastery.

WARMINSTER PIONEERS

Warminster was one of the earliest townships settled and most of the land was taken up by 1684, according to Holmes map of that date, although much of it was the property of absentee owners.

A few families began to emerge above the indistinguishable mass of early settlers. In the Warminster boro area they were the Nobles, and later the Yerkes and Beans. In Johnsville, they were the Longstreths and the Harts, later the Cravens. Hartsville’s early families were the Tennents, the Beatty’s, the Darrah’s, and later, another branch of the Hart family. There were so many and it is with a great deal of regret that it is not possible, in this little volume, to dwell at any length upon more than a few.

John Hart, the first of that name in Warminster, came to Pennsylvania from Whitney in Oxfordshire, England in the fall of 1682, preceding Penn by a few months. On Oct. 11, 1681, he had purchased one thousand acres of the Proprietary for 20 pounds and, on his arrival, located 500 in Byberry and 500 in Warminster. In 1683, he married Susannah, daughter of his friend John Rush. Mr. Hart was at first a minister among Friends but later became a Baptist and, in this capacity, preached to a small congregation at John Swifts in Southampton, thus laying the foundation of the Southampton Baptist church. About 1695, Hart moved his family to his Warminster tract between Bristol and Street Rds., adjoining Johnsville where he died in 1714. The Harts were a prolific clan; John 2nd married Eleanor Grispin of Byberry in 1708 and had a family of ten children whose descendants Gen. Davis states, “—now (1876) number thousands and are found in all states south and west of Pennsylvania.” Two of this ten reached positions of some distinction; Oliver, who studied theology under Wm. Tennent (2nd)

at Freehold, N.J., and later became a famous Baptist minister in South Carolina; Joseph Hart became an officer in the Revolutionary army and was very active afterward in civil life. The family home of the Harts remained in the family for 170 years.

Bartholomew Longstreth was born in Longstrothdale, England, in 1679 and immigrated to Pennsylvania in 1698. In 1710, he bought 500 acres from Thomas Fairman in Warminster partially in what is now Johnsville, and built a log cabin for quarters. He married Ann Dawson, daughter of Hatboro’s John Dawson, in 1727. Dawson was probably the first settler in Hatboro and it is said that Longstreth fell in love with Ann when he saw her carrying mortar and stone in her apron while helping her father build the Crooked Billet Inn. If this is correct, we don’t wonder that Bartholomew was smitten on the spot; in those early days it took strong men to survive and prosper, and an equally strong partner in marriage for help and encouragement. Ann rode to the wedding at Horsham Meeting on a pillion behind her father and, after the wedding, climbed up behind her husband for the ride to her new home. No Niagara Falls or Bermuda at that day and age; honeymoons were for the very wealthy and there was immediate work that had to be done daily on a farm. This was not an era or place for “pantywaists” of either sex. In spite of his being 48 when he married, he managed to father eleven children during his remaining years. He was a township supervisor, and was responsible for opening the York Road from Hatboro to the Neshaminy in 1716.

Longstreth was also instrumental in the building of Newtown Road, from County Line to Bristol Road. At the time of his death in 1749, he owned 1000 acres which was divided among his children.



JOHN LONGSTRETH HOUSE, now on Navy property.

The old Longstreth home was owned by five generations of the family and, since it was first built, has undergone extensive alteration.

In connection with Mr. Longstreth’s opening of the York Road, it is interesting to note that, according to information received from Mr. Wm. Pennebaker of Hartsville, most of the lands on and adjoining the present York Road were not taken up until after the road was opened in 1716. If this is correct, it could lead to an interesting puzzle; was there an open strip of land from Hatboro to the Neshaminy purposefully set aside in the anticipation of the road to come, or did

York Road simply follow a line of unclaimed ground which determined its eventual course? Mr. Pennebaker states that he can produce references to support his statement, even though some of the early maps are in contradiction.

Another anomaly in the course of history has been called to my attention, again by Mr. Pennebaker, who has done extensive research among the old records at both Philadelphia and Harrisburg. This one is in reference to the Noble tract. The histories seem to agree that Abel Noble was among the earliest of settlers in the township, being an original purchaser of land in Warminster. Davis History of Bucks County states that “—he owned 695 acres at the resurvey in 1702,” and then goes on to say that the original Noble tract “lay on both sides of York Road.” According to Mr. Pennebaker’s information, this is incorrect, the *original* tract did not extend as far west as York Road and Able Noble increased his boundaries only after York Road was built. This is important to the historian in that it effects the probable date of several of the properties of uncertain vintage now *facing* York Road not to mention other phases of county history in which the Nobles were involved.



*NOBLE HOMESTEAD in the 1940's. Later Fireside Inn.
Northeast corner, York Road and Beech Street.*

The Nobles are considered to be among the very earliest settlers in Bucks County. Richard Noble held a local office under the Duke of York in 1675. He was a surveyor and settled on a tract of land in Bristol Township above the mouth of the Neshaminy. Available sources do not state at what date his son Abel first came to Warminster though one informant claims it was 1684. This has yet to be authenticated. The boundaries of the original Noble purchase are left in doubt in the light of the aforementioned information, but we do know that Noble eventually owned 695 acres which extended on both sides of York Road, of which he conveyed 165 acres in 1743 to his son Joseph, who, in 1762, sold it,

and a few more, to Harman Yerkes, the first of his family in Warminster. Abel, 2nd and Job Noble were sons of the first Abel and, between them, still owned most of the original tract at this time.

Job’s home was much later to become the Fireside Inn at the northeast corner of York Rd. and Beech St. The building burned down some years ago and is now the site



NOBLE HOMESTEAD as the Fireside Inn, 1957.

of a small shopping center. In 1734, Abel the first conveyed to Job Noble a house and 40 acres. He, in turn, transferred it to his daughter, whose married name was Gilbert. This house, located at the northwest corner of York Road and 5th Avenue, recently owned by Mr. Philip Reeves, is now an office building.

The Noble family burial ground is located high in the field back of, and slightly westward, of the Calvary Community Church on County Line between Madison Avenue and the Reading Railroad.



*Site of the NOBLE FAMILY CEMETERY.
On Hill back of Wolverton’s Welding, County Line Road.*

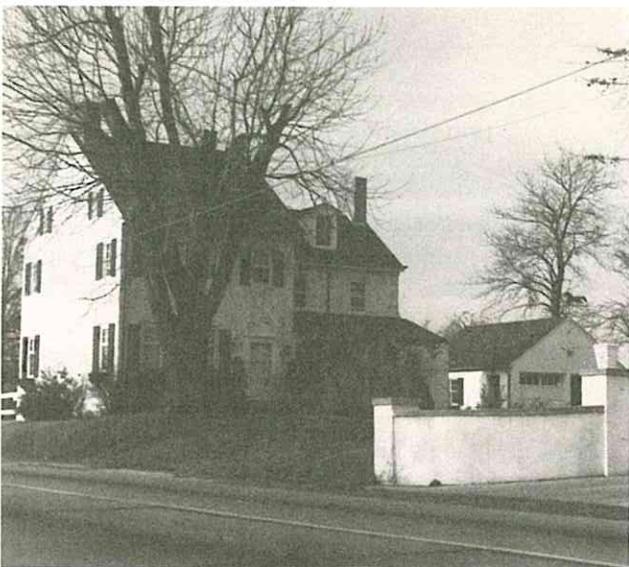
The Yerkes family has been one of the most constant in the history of the township, having been large landholders and farmers here for almost 190 years. It is interesting to note here just why it is that a prominent name dies out in a community. In the early times, sons were more or less expected to follow in the paths of their fathers and estates were divided among the sons. As an area grows, however, so does

opportunity grow in surrounding areas and the sons of the family are lured to the greener grass, or to trades and professions more to their liking. In any one generation, if there is a predominance of daughters and the few sons decide to stretch their wings, the family name in that area must become extinct. The last of the Yerkes family in Warminster were Elizabeth and Louise Yerkes who owned the family homestead at Jacksonville and Street Roads. The two maiden ladies died in 1951 thus bringing to an end the name of Yerkes as large landholders in Warminster.



YERKES HOME, Street Road. Demolished by Hurst Corporation.

The story of these two ladies starts back in 1762 when Harman Yerkes bought 181 acres of the Noble tract on Street Road. He was the grandson of Herman — or Harman, as it was pronounced — who was the brother of Anthony Yerkes. The two brothers immigrated from Germany about 1700 and Anthony became burgess of Germantown in 1703. Our Warminster Harman (3rd) gradually increased his property until it included a large part of the Noble tract. It was later divided among his sons, Andrew and Harman, 4th.



MONTANYE HOME. North side of Street Road, west of Louis Drive. Demolished in widening of Street Road

The family spread across Warminster during the last century to become one of its “first families.” In 1826, Elizabeth Yerkes married John Craven Beans. Mr. Beans was a member of another prominent family of the times.

Judge Harman Yerkes was admitted to the Bucks County bar in 1865 and was an eminent and highly respected president judge for many years. Clarissa Yerkes married Samuel Montanye, son of Thomas B., who was pastor of the Southampton Baptist Church. Most of the sons and daughters married locally in that day and we find certain local families of many different names having a common ancestor. Many of the middle names were the maternal family names, such as John Craven Beans, son of Thomas Beans and Christiana Craven. Many of the descendants of these families still live in and around Warminster although the day of the large landowner is drawing to a close in a fast growing township.

EARLY WARMINSTER SCHOOLS

Almost from its very beginning, Warminster has been a center of education among the outlying Philadelphia areas. This may have been brought about by the importance of the Neshaminy Presbyterian Church, since many of the early schools were organized by various ministers of that church.

One of the earliest public schools was built on his property in 1835 by Robert Darrah, who also provided a teacher year after year for a long period. The school was of a high caliber, a number of its teachers being graduates of Yale and other well known colleges, and the classics, French and higher mathematics were taught. In this tiny building, a number of young men of the vicinity were prepared for college and many of its graduates, men and women, “went forth from its humble walls to engage in teaching common schools.”

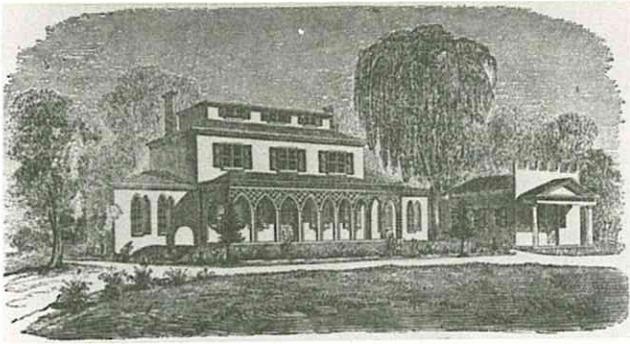
The Belville Academy was founded in Hartsville in 1818 by the Rev. Robert Belville, who conducted this school for nine years.

Samuel Long, a graduate of Jefferson College, had a boarding school near Hartsville during the same era.

Daniel Longstreth, a great-grandson of Bartholomew Longstreth, of early Warminster fame, established a boy’s school in his great grandfather’s home after having inherited it in 1840. This old place is shown in a later section and is located on the east side of Newtown Road, about a quarter of a mile north of Street Road.

Hart’s schoolhouse was built on Newtown Road during the early 1700’s. This was the first of three schools built on the same site. It was torn down and a new one was built in 1756. A third was built on the stones of the second in 1831 and demolished in 1860 after three new schoolhouses had been erected on Street Road. These old schoolhouses were also used for community purposes; the Moral Society met there in the late 1700’s and the Warminster Debating Society held its meetings in the third school on this site.

Sometime about 1832, Rev. James P. Wilson started a “classical school for boys” in what was later to become the Roseland school for girls. This school existed for about eight years.



*ROSELAND FEMALE INSTITUTE, now Hartsville Inn
at intersection of Old and new York Roads.*

One of the most popular schools of the time, Roseland Female Institute in Hartsville was founded by Rev. Jacob Belville in 1850. A brochure issued in 1855, from which the accompanying illustration was taken, lists pupils from Alabama, Georgia, Illinois and many neighboring states. Tuition “—in English branches and Latin” was \$75.00 per session (21 weeks), including room and board. Times certainly *have* changed!

Included in the same brochure is a testimonial for “Ten-
nent School for boys and young men, under the care of Rev. Mahlon Long, within a mile of Roseland.” This was located across the Neshaminy in what is now the cemetery of the Neshaminy Warwick Church. It was originally a log building which was replaced, in 1824, by a stone structure, since torn down.



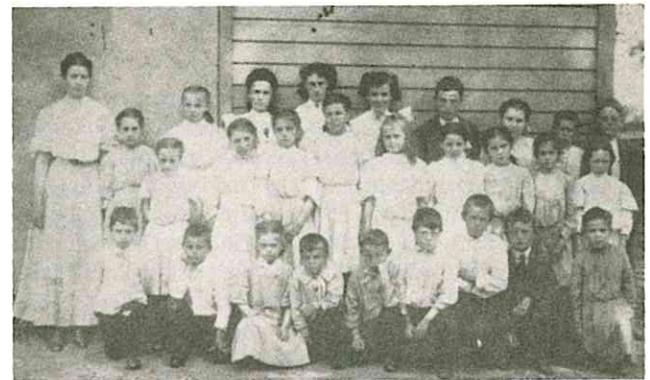
*OAK GROVE SCHOOLHOUSE.
Street Road across from Catherine Street. Demolished.*

The Oak Grove school was located on the south side of Street Road, opposite Catherine St. and was demolished in the 1960's. It was one of the three, including Prospect Hill and Willow Dale, that were built in the 1840's. These were the predecessors of the larger Warminster Elementary School, at Street Road and Madison Ave., built in 1928. These three one room schoolhouses were the first schools in Warminster to be built with the taxpayers money in compliance with legislation enacted by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1834 making free common schools a practical possibility for every child in the State.

The Prospect Hill School was located on the south side of Street Road just east of Centennial Road. It was demolished in the 1960's.



*JOHNSVILLE SCHOOL, also known as Prospect Hill School.
Street Road, east of Centennial Road. Demolished.*



CLASS OF 1908 at the Johnsville School.



*WILLOW DALE SCHOOL.
Southeast corner of Street Road and Norristown Road. Demolished.*

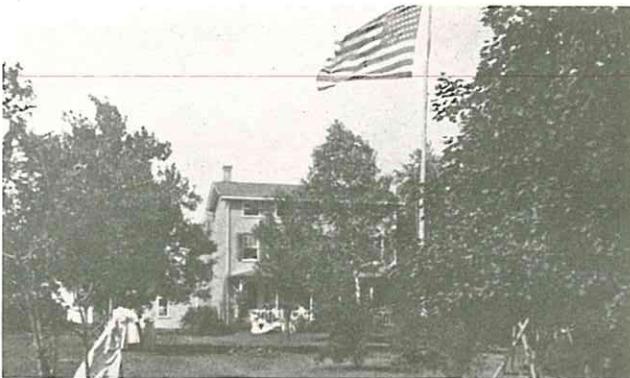
The Willow Dale School was located on the southeast corner of Street Road and Norristown Road. It was demolished in 1960 with the widening of Street Road.

Recently, one of the last of the large farm lands in Warminster was broken up for development. This was the original home of John Beans, located on the west side of York Road, opposite Juniper St. According to Mrs. Wallace Stephen, until recently the owner of the property, Beans had a school house on the property. Of all the area histories, Battle's History of Bucks County is the only one mentioning this school.



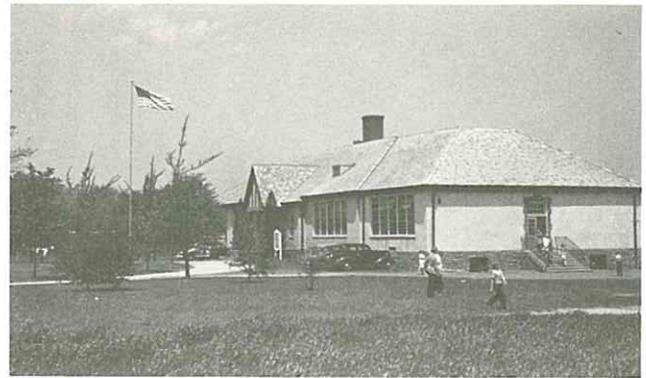
CLASS OF 1896 at Willow Dale School.

The Emlen Institute for Boys was founded by Samuel Emlen of Burlington, N.J., who bequeathed \$20,000 for the founding of an institution for the education of orphan children of Negro and Indian descent. It was first organized in Ohio in 1841 but later moved to a 55 acre farm in Solebury, Bucks County. In 1872 it was moved to Warminster Township on the south side of Street Road about a mile west of York Road. It declined and finally closed in 1892 and the property eventually became the Episcopalian charity known as St. Stephen's Orphanage in 1897. Later, it became Christ's Home for the Aged.



ST. STEPHEN'S ORPHANAGE. Located on the site of Christ's Home Retirement Community. Demolished.

Log College is a legend unto itself and is presented herewith in detailed form as the progenitor of all scholastic institutions of the general area.



WARMINSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. Built 1928. On Street Road at Madison Avenue. Now an office building.



Warminster celebrates the opening of the new school in 1928.

WILLIAM TENNENT AND LOG COLLEGE

Our township has been blessed many times during its history by men of great humanity and vision. Most of these have been ministers of the Gospel whose presence in the area was the result of the pure chance of having been appointed to this locality. Consequently, it is we who have derived the benefits of their outstanding characters.

William Tennent was the first of these pioneers. Born in Ireland on or about 1673, he was 43 or 44 when he came to this country. Originally a priest of the Episcopal Church of Ireland, he felt an increasing dissention within himself in regard to a number of aspects of that faith which resulted in his applying to the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia for admission as a member on September 16, 1718. In 1726, he was invited to become the pastor of the Neshaminy Church; he accepted and remained there until his death some twenty years later. His whereabouts during the eight year interim before joining the Neshaminy Church is somewhat obscure. Some historians believe that, during this time, he was pastor of the Bensalem Church. Watson (Annals, Vol. 2, p. 96) denies this and points out arguments to the contrary.* Because of space limitations, we will not enter

* The history of the Craven family indicates that he preached in the Craven home during the winter and in the barn during the summer before assuming his pastorate at the Neshaminy Church.

the details here but rather rejoice in the fact that regardless of where he spent his time previously, we are happy that he resolved to spend his remaining years in Warminster Township.

Mr. Tennent was one of those rare characters of whom too few appear in any one generation. Although a self-effacing man, he had rare ability as a teacher, both in the Gospel and in formal education, as proven in the number of his students who rose to high positions in later life. Of these, we will have more to say toward the end of this chapter.

The true picture of early history is difficult to obtain. The present would-be historian is limited by time in his research into an era when records were poorly kept, if kept at all. For this reason, we cannot say definitely at what date the Log College was established. We do know that the thought occurred to Mr. Tennent before he came to the Neshaminy Church, being concerned about the lack of educational facilities in this new territory for his sons and the youth of the area.

Watson's "Annals" gives the date of the founding of the "College" as 1721. Davis' History of Bucks County gives the date 1728; Rev. Turner's History of Neshaminy Presbyterian Church concludes that it was 1735. Thomas Murphy's "Cradle of the American Presbytery" states that it was 1727. While not wishing to confuse the interested reader, these so-called "facts" are given to illustrate that the path of the historian is not an easy one and that what one reads of history is not always correct. At least three of these sources must be incorrect, and so the historian must do a certain amount of generalizing.

It is generally conceded that the good Reverend accepted the pastorate of the Neshaminy Church in 1726, even though, as stated by Dr. Turner, he was "—never installed as a pastor in due form—." General Davis' History of Bucks County states that "The famous Log College was in Warminster, on the York Road half a mile below Hartsville, on the fifty acre tract given by James Logan to William Tennent, his cousin, in 1728." If the college was founded in 1735, as stated by Dr. Turner, it would have given Mr. Tennent only ten years in which to do all the great works that were later attributed to him, as he died in 1745. This is little enough time, indeed. Dr. Turner on the other hand states that Gilbert Tennent, Mr. Tennent's oldest son "—was licensed to preach in 1726 by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and assisted his father in teaching for a year at Log College, when he became pastor of a church in New Brunswick, N.J." This must be authenticated further. The actual date is relatively unimportant except to avid and precise historians; what is most important is that the College was begun and that some of its students were responsible for the eventual founding of Princeton University, first known as the College of New Jersey. This was first located at Elizabethtown in 1746, moved to Newark in 1748, and permanently located at Princeton in 1756. Of the early presidents of Princeton, two were Log College men, Samuel Finley and Samuel Davies. A third, John Blair, was acting president for a short time; and a fourth, Samuel Stanhope Smith, was educated at Nottingham which sprung from Log College.

The tiny institution on York Road which the neighbors jestingly called Log College was responsible, too, for the origin of many other schools the country over. Jefferson,

Hampden-Sidney College, and Washington University in Virginia, and many more can trace their beginning to the humble institution in Warminster Township.

Mr. Tennent's sons were Gilbert, William, John, and Charles, all educated at Log College. All four went on to become well known and highly respected ministers.

The Rev. Samuel Blair, educated at Log College founded, at New Londonderry, Pa., a similar institution which was responsible for the education of many famous men. At Mr. Blair's death in 1751, his younger brother John superintended the school for about nine years. John, too, had received his training at Log College. He later accepted a post at Princeton.

Rev. Samuel Finley, another of the Log College Alumnae, later became President of Princeton University. After receiving his training he was assistant pastor at a number of churches in New Jersey and finally accepted a pastorate at Nottingham, Maryland. Here he established a school closely following the pattern set at Log College. Many men who became eminent at a later date received their education at this school, among these being Governor Martin of North Carolina; Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia; Jacob Rush; John Bayard, Speaker of the House of Representatives; and Rev. Wm. M. Tennent, D.D., of Abington.

These and so many others went out into the world from this humble institution and taught the youth of the nation. In turn, their students, who spread out over the country, founded additional schools of learning. In a later edition of this history we will attempt to chart in genealogical form all the branches which arose from this simple little schoolhouse in Warminster Township. We understand that the total direct number is 64. Mr. Thomas Murphy in his "Cradle of the Presbyterian Church in America," states: "The writer must confess that he has been aroused to great wonder at the thought of so many men such as these coming from one unpretending school. One or two, there might have been, as exceptions towering up far above the rest, but here there were so many of them!"

One of the most colorful characters, in the opinion of the writer, to emerge from Log College was Rev. Charles Beatty. Emigrating from Ireland with his family at the age of fourteen, he was instructed in the rudiments of a classical education probably by his mother who was a highly respected gentlewoman. After attaining his majority, his independent character began to assert itself when he decided to make his own way in life, becoming a peddler as a temporary expedient. It was in this guise that he one day halted at Log College. To the immense surprise of Mr. Tennent, the peddler addressed him in Latin. A conversation ensued after which Mr. Tennent implored him to "—go, sell the contents of your pack and return immediately and study with me. It would be a sin for you to continue as a peddler when you may be so much more useful in another profession." The idea appealed to Mr. Beatty and he lost no time in complying with Mr. Tennent's advice.

After finishing his studies under Mr. Tennent he was ordained by the Presbytery of New Brunswick and accepted as pastor by the Neshaminy Warwick Church in 1743, from which position Mr. Tennent had retired due to ill health. Some years afterward, being concerned by the ignorance and want of mental culture in the people of the area, he became interested in a project to establish a public library at Hatboro. This Institution, still one of the most valuable and

extensive libraries outside of Philadelphia, was established in 1756 in a private home in Hatboro and owes its origin, in a measure, to the foresight and humanity of Mr. Beatty. The present building was erected in 1850 through a legacy of \$5000 of Nathan Holt of Horsham.

Mr. Beatty was an ardent patriot with an adventurer's spirit and the Synod of that day seems to have appreciated his talents, for he was sent on many missions that would have tried the spirit of a lesser man. In 1754, he was sent into the wilds of Virginia and North Carolina to supply destitute neighborhoods and newly formed congregations with the preaching of the Gospel. He served as chaplain under Colonel Benjamin Franklin in the French and Indian War in 1756. Franklin relates an amusing incident concerning Mr. Beatty:

"We had for our Chaplain a Zealous Presbyterian minister, Mr. Beatty, who complained to me that the men did not generally attend his prayers and exhortations. When they enlisted, they were promised, besides pay and provisions, a gill of rum a day, which was punctually served out to them, half in the morning and half in the evening, and I observed they were punctual in attending to receive it; upon which I said to Mr. Beatty, 'It is perhaps below the dignity of your profession to act as the steward of the rum; but if you were to distribute it out, only just after prayers, you would have them all about you.' He liked the thought, undertook the task, and with the help of a few hands to measure out the liquor, executed it to satisfaction; and never were prayers more generally and more punctually attended . . ."

After returning to Warminster from this expedition, Mr. Beatty further showed his patriotism and knowledge of human nature. During the French and Indian War, after being appraised by an enlistment officer that the people of the neighborhood were reluctant to be recruited in defense of the Pennsylvania Province, he told the recruiting officer to be at service the following day, which was Sunday. At the close of the service, he addressed his people in words to this effect:

"The savages have attacked the frontier settlements and are murdering our fellow citizens. The Governor has made a call for volunteers to march with a view to attack and drive them back, but I regret to learn that it is not very promptly met. It is certainly somebody's duty to go, and I have determined, if the Synod allows me, to offer my services as Chaplain, and thus do my part. Of course it would be very pleasant for me to have the company of any of the congregation, or my neighbors, who may feel it their duty to go."

During the following week, about a hundred men joined the company. Here, indeed, was a salesman! Who sold duty to mankind as well as duty to God. It was during this campaign that he wrote in his journal:

"Thursday, May 20th. Preached at Yellow Breeches, over Susquehanna, in a meeting house belonging to Presbytery of Donagal, at the people's invitation. Returned in the evening to camp; one of my pistols went off as I was laying it down, but, God be praised, did no hurt."

This was a man's man. Although a man of God, he carried not one, but two pistols, probably reasoning that with all the

good Lord's troubles, why bother Him if, in time of need, he could take care of himself.

In 1758 he served again under General Forbes in the march against Fort Duquesne, now Pittsburgh. One of the men who accompanied him in this campaign was Ensign James Darrah, an ancestor of the present Darrah family of Hartsville.

At the behest of the Synod, he was sent to Europe in 1760 to collect funds for the relief of ministers and their families in America. After a two year absence, he returned only to be sent into the interior in an attempt to convert the Indians. This was a dangerous mission as the savages were still aroused from the recent war and easy access to rum led to situations which could only be described as precarious. His success, however, was spectacular, and he arrived home safely after two months in the wilds.

During this busy life, he managed to father eleven children, eight of whom survived to adulthood. Four of these served with distinction as officers of the Revolution. Mr. Beatty lived for many years at what was known as the Darrah farm in Hartsville, on the southwest side of the Neshaminy Creek and Bristol Road. Two years before his death he built the stone house on the southwest corner of Bristol Road and York Road now owned by the Dare family. He died of yellow fever on Barbadoes Island in the Caribbean Sea, on August 3, 1772, age 57 and was buried there. It is sad that his remains could not be laid at rest here in the area in which he labored so long and accomplished so much.

The exemplary lives of such men as those we have described, and many more, have led us to devote considerable space to this very humble institution, the cultural effects of which have had such tremendous and far reaching consequences. We mentioned just a few of these men; there were many, many more who led less colorful lives but contributed so very much and demanded so little. Before leaving the subject, it might be of interest to note a few sidelights concerning Log College.

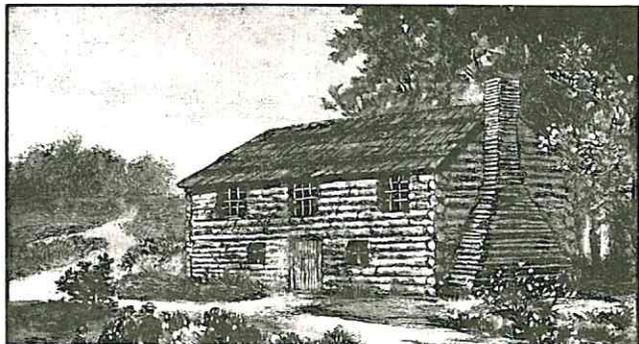
Watson's Annals, written about 1835, states that, at that time, the building was still standing. Today, not a vestige remains.

On the east side of York Road, a few hundred yards north of Christ's Home, a monument was erected in 1927 dedicating the site of Log College and marks, with fair certainty, the location of the Log College. A celebration of the edification of Log College in 1889 was probably inspired by the publication of a book by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Murphy, "The Presbytery of the Log College, or the Cradle of the Presbyterian Church In America." In addition to an estimated 4000 people, such notables as President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison; Postmaster John Wanamaker; Rev. Dr. J. O. Murray, Dean of the Faculty of Princeton College were present.

Mrs. Charles Kratz, formerly of Bristol Road, Hartsville, relates a somewhat amusing anecdote concerning the occasion. The original route of the President's entourage was supposed to have been north by way of Easton Road, east on Bristol Road and south on York Road, through Hartsville to the scene of the celebration. Accordingly, the residents of Hartsville went "all out" in decorating their homes for the President. Mrs. Kratz's father, Holmes De Coursey, in particular took great pains in making a grand spectacle of

his home on York Road across from the site of the now demolished Warminster Neshaminy Presbyterian Church. When it was learned that the retinue was coming directly up York Road from Willow Grove and would not get as far as Hartsville, the villagers, after their days of preparation, were sorely disappointed. Of her father, Mrs. Kratz says "My, but was he *mad!*" and, having had the privilege, in my younger days, of knowing Holmes De Coursey (who died at the venerable age of 96) I can vividly picture his wrath.

The sketch of Log College has an interesting story. It is presented here as told by Mr. Murphy in his book "Cradle of the American Presbytery":



LOG COLLEGE

"Beyond the brief description in the Journal of Rev. George Whitefield, the appearance of the building has been a mystery. No picture, or description, has been supposed to be in existence. The author is indebted to Dr. W. S. Steen [for a description considered, under the circumstances, as reliably authentic]."

"While engaged in geological and kindred pursuits at the Yuba mines, in California, he made the acquaintance of a man named Wilson, a pious and intelligent miner, in whom he became greatly interested. Both being natives of Pennsylvania and members of the Presbyterian Church, they would seek refuge in the forest on the Sabbath from the noise and profanity of the mine, and there study the Bible. On these days Wilson related his previous History. He was of pious ancestry in eastern Pennsylvania. A grandfather had importuned him to study for the ministry of the church of his forefathers and among other inducements, had presented him with a Bible in which there was a picture of "the first college established in this country for the training of young men for the ministry." It looked as if it had been an illustration from an old pamphlet or had been sketched by some bright youth of the institution. The building was small and rude, of logs, and located in eastern Pennsylvania, among the Presbyterians. On this picture, as a reminder of their far off home, the two had gazed times without number. Dr. Steen came to have it so fixed in his imagination and memory that he could recall it with the utmost vividness. Failing by correspondence to find either Wilson or the Bible, at the author's solicitation he described the picture so exactly that the designer had no difficulty in reproducing it with the utmost accuracy.

Of this, the Doctor has given the accompanying certificate with the liberty of making it public:

"I do hereby certify that the accompanying engraving is an exact reproduction of a picture of the first college building for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in eastern Pennsylvania, and which was constructed of logs, which I frequently saw in a Bible of a pious miner of the Yuba mines of California and which he received as an heirloom from a grandfather whose ancestral home was in that region of the State."

W. S. Steen

San Francisco, California

Dr. Murphy concludes "There can, therefore, be scarcely a doubt but that in this picture we have a correct representation of the original Log College building."

JOHN FITCH



SKETCH OF JOHN FITCH

The story of John Fitch is fraught with frustration, sadness and despair. There seems to be little doubt that the man was, in a large sense, a genius and, following the character of most genius', he led a stormy life, crisis following crisis until, in the end, a peace-and-quiet loving nature was completely overwhelmed.

Born in Windsor, Connecticut, on January 21, 1743, he was one of those sad individuals whom nature seems to select as a scapegoat from the very start of their innocent lives. A series of indignities and injustices inflicted by his family and others led him to go to sea as a boy. "I came home more Rich than I went, not being Resolved against the sea, nor much inamowred with it." (The capitals and misspelling are Fitch's.)

When he was 17 he apprenticed himself to a clockmaker named Benjamin Cheney who, as it turned out, was looking more for a cheap farm hand than an apprentice, and after suffering various indignities imposed by his miserly master, he was finally transferred to his equally miserly brother, Timothy Cheney, who treated him almost as badly, after which he established himself in business.

After spending several years doing “—small brass work” (buttons, ornaments, etc.) he married. His wife, Lucy, proved such a shrew that he left her with one child, a son named Shaler, not knowing that she was carrying another. After sundry wanderings through New England, New York, and New Jersey, he arrived in Trenton, where he met Matthew Clunn, one of the few people who ever offered Fitch the friendship and companionship he so craved. He seems to have had a talent for seeking out the “odd” characters of his time. These were the handy men, the “odd job” itinerants who presaged the present era; the fathers of our mechanics, the inventors who dared challenge the mechanical and scientific concepts of the day.

Fitch learned silversmithing under Clunn, a far more satisfactory apprenticeship than he had known under the Cheneys.

He was a lieutenant in the militia in the early part of the Revolution but left the service because of differences with other officers. Fitch’s nature was such that he did not get along with any but a very few people during his lifetime and those were persons who understood the inner drive and constant hunger for knowledge that continually beset him.

He left Trenton, where he had established a very profitable silversmithing business, just ahead of the conquering British and sustained a great financial loss in being forced to leave most of his tools and belongings behind. His wanderings finally took him to the farm of Charles Garrison, bordering on what is now Centennial Road between Street Road and County Line. Mr. Krewson of Johnsville, states that Mr. Samuel Walker, formerly of Johnsville, told him that tradition in his family pointed to an old stone house on Centennial Road as being the residence of John Fitch.

The house, located at the easterly bend on Centennial Road, was the home of Charles Garrison and, quite possibly, Fitch boarded with the Garrisons.

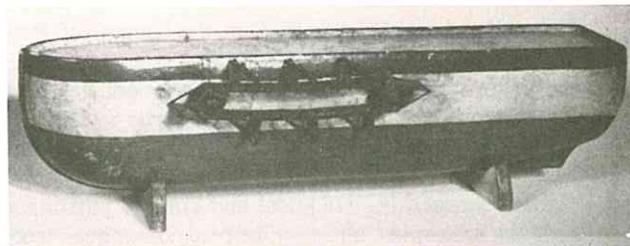
It is interesting to note that Fitch was a member of the Union Library of Hatboro during his various periods of living in Warminster. He seems to have never lost a chance to improve his mind when the opportunity was offered.

It is commonly agreed, among historians (and this agreement is indeed incredible) that Fitch first conceived the idea of a steamboat in April 1785 while walking the four miles home from the Neshaminy Church with James Ogilbee. This agreement probably came about as a result of Scout’s statement, quoted below. They were passed by a Mr. Sinton and his wife, of Hatboro, “in a riding chair” (probably the forerunner of the “buggy”) at the intersection of Street and York Roads. Mr. Fitch’s rheumatic joints must have creaked enviously at the sight, for he became lost in thought. If his thoughts had continued along the original vein, there might have been no Stanley Steamer; instead it could have been the Fitch Steamer, a hundred and some odd years earlier. Fitch was thinking that it would be wonderful if a carriage could be propelled by some means other than that of horses. Having rented out his horse for the day, the aching

of rheumatism in his joints — incurred while he was surveying part of the state of Kentucky in 1780 — impelled him to consider a means of locomotion other than “shanks mare.” He later stated that, at this time, he had never heard of a steam engine. He went home and labored for about a week, after which he became discouraged by the problems presented by the rough roads of that time.

Now, as stated above, Mr. Fitch claimed he had never heard of a steam engine; a document exists in which is stated “James Scout, under the date of April 15, 1788, certifies that Fitch told him, while walking with James Ogilbee, he first thought of a steamboat in consequence of Sinton’s passing him rapidly; and that in May or June following, Fitch showed him (Scout) a plan of the boat on paper.” Now, it surpasses credulity that the idea of steam power for locomotion or any other purpose could have occurred spontaneously on a street corner in Warminster or in any township. The thought, as with Watts, should have been engendered by some happenstance in which steam itself was a prominent factor. Mr. Fitch had, throughout his life, shown himself to be a man of sincerity and high moral character, so we rather think that it is possible that he had, at one time, read an article or heard a description of this new engine and forgotten it, the circumstances above described bringing it subconsciously back to mind.

Regardless of how the thought was initiated, Fitch’s ingenuity in working out the details of such a complicated machine is worthy of high commendation. In the space of



*Fitch's First Conception of a Steamboat.
His model of 1782 (Courtesy, American Philosophical Society)*

a month or so he had workable drawings of an instrument of power that was to revolutionize world policies and thinking. Fulton, who came into the field at a later date, reluctantly admitted that he borrowed some of his ideas from Fitch. As a matter of fact, Fulton’s boat was not as efficient as the later models of Fitch’s vessel. Fitch’s final configuration of 1790 attained a speed of eight miles per hour upstream while Fulton’s “Clermont” of 1807 was capable of a speed of only five miles per hour in dead water.

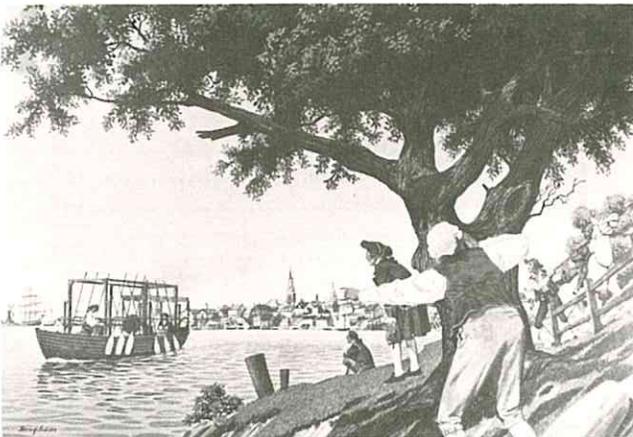
Any attempt to analyze the detailed structure of a local history is fraught with frustrating contradictions and sometimes requires years of searching to piece together the small fragments of information that are found in the oddest of places. One of the most harassing puzzles presented to the author has been the location of the shop in which the first model of the steamboat was made. Here again, the variance among historians has led to frustrating confusion. They all agreed on one point (hurrah!), that it was made in Warminster Township. One source holds that it was made “in a

wheelwright shop at York and Street Roads," possibly confusing the location with the place where the *idea* was originated. Another source states that it was in "—Cobe Scout's shop on Charles Garrison's farm." Still another authority dictates, with nonchalant assurance, that it was done "—in a log shop where Sutphin McDowell carried on weaving, on the farm lately (1876) owned by Mitchell Wood, four hundred yards east (?) of County Line. As it happens, two of these statements are correct, the authors simply did not enlarge enough on their information to pinpoint the location.



Site of Fitch's first tests in Davisville.

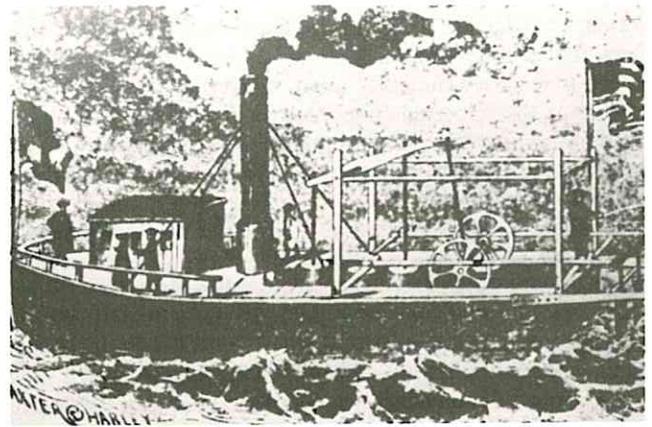
Happily due to the persistent inquisitiveness of Mrs. Richard Blackway, a paper was found, written by Gen. Davis about Abraham McDowell, son of Sutphin, in which McDowell states that he assisted in the famed experiment at the Davisville pond by pushing the boat into the open water when it approached the shore. Abraham was very young at the time but the event was so exciting to his young mind that he remembers vividly a number of important details, not the least of which was the fact that his father's weaving shop



Fitch's model of 1786 carried passengers on the Delaware River.

was near his home a few hundred yards north of County Line, and that here, also, Cobe Scout carried on his trade as wheelwright and silversmithing, having been taught the latter by John Fitch. Abraham further states that the famous model was built in this humble log building on what is now Centennial Road and this is probably as close as we will ever come to locating the spot where one of the great experiments of modern times took place.

Fitch's attempts to finance his project of building a full scale steamboat and his difficulties with his partners are a history in themselves. He did succeed in building at least two steam powered boats which were used for excursions up the Delaware River and served to prove that the steamboat was a practical means of navigation.



The 1790 model had paddles at the stern.

The steamboat had become his one great justification for existence. Every dollar he made, begged, or borrowed, he put into his idea and the consequent continual poverty and indebtedness finally overwhelmed him. Several staunch friends assisted with varying amounts as they were able; among these was Daniel Longstreth. A project of this magnitude, however, required a healthy financial organization. He had attempted to interest the government in his invention with no success; he was met with rebuffs on every side in attempting to finance the perfecting of his boat. In 1796, he returned to Kentucky, hoping to reclaim lands that he had titled during his survey of that state in 1780. Here again he met with bitter disappointment; his lands had been taken up some years before and he could not prove title without much litigation. This was the final straw. He committed suicide in Bardstown, Kentucky in 1798 and was buried in an unmarked grave. A sad end for a monumental genius. Later and much belated, the U.S. Government erected a monument on the spot.

A few years later, Fitch's patents became public domain and capitalists the world over were taking advantage of the fact.

While it must be truthfully admitted that, sooner or later, the steamboat would have been invented, it might have been *much* later as Fitch was far ahead of his time. The steamboat era, as a result, was given birth during the first decade of the 19th century with all its adventurous and romantic connotations, the conquest of the Mississippi, the itinerant gamblers, the traveling shows, and — Mark Twain.

All this, because an unknown Mr. Sinton and his wife happened to pass an ailing genius in a little town called Warminster, in Pennsylvania.

WARMINSTER DURING THE REVOLUTION

The Township contributed many names to the roster of those who served in the War of Independence — Darrah, Longstreth, Yerkes, Hart, Beatty and many more — all familiar in Warminster history.

During that war, the township saw Washington's army pass through on York Road several times in its travels between Philadelphia and Coryell's Ferry, now New Hope. The new flag of the Republic was first flown in the encampment a half mile above Hartsville along the Neshaminy Creek. The Battle of the Crooked Billet started in Hatboro and ended in the woods of Warminster. During that engagement, blood was spilled upon Warminster soil over the whole southeastern part of the township.

The details of this battle — if it can be termed thusly — are given in a paper presented by Mr. Charles Harper Smith before the Old York Road Historical Society on February 20, 1945. Mrs. Smith has kindly permitted the use of the paper in this township history. A condensed version is presented herewith depicting “—a skirmish which took place 166 years ago [in 1778], involved fewer than 1200 men, failed of its purpose, and reflected little glory on either the staff work or the valor of the contestants.” While these words of Mr. Smith may be a blow to local pride, history has a way of being, above all, necessarily practical and objective. Mr. Smith's review is one of the most authoritative that I have come upon and I prefer to put it in his own words. Its compact form has left out none of the details so interesting to the casual reader and I regret having to condense it further hoping that, in so doing, I have not destroyed the continuity and flavor of authority which pervades the original text. The brackets are my own and are used for my own comments and to provide continuity;

The Battle of the Billet was fought on the morning of May 1, 1778, near the town of Hatboro, then commonly known as “the Billet,” a short form of the name of its widely known Crooked Billet Tavern.

It was one of several minor engagements between American and British soldiers fought within the present borders of Montgomery County during General Howe's occupation of the City of Philadelphia. It is undoubtedly the best known of these minor actions, although it cannot be said to have been the most important. On the contrary, it had a purely local and temporary objective. The greater publicity given to the Battle of the Billet is due largely to the fact that it ended in Bucks County and became a favorite theme of that county's historians [of which there were many]. General Davis' interest was carried forward to recent years by the late Warren S. Ely of Doylestown. In 1928, he joined with Dr. John B. Carrell of Hatboro and Howard T. Hallowell of Jenkintown in placing a second monument [the first being on Monument Avenue in Hatboro] beside the Jacksonville Road, in Warminster Township, near the scene of an atrocity perpetrated by the British during the battle.

The battle was the culminating event in a six months campaign to prevent the British from receiving food and other supplies from the rich farming district north and northwest of the city. The campaign had been entrusted to the Pennsylvania Militia and its [23 year old] commander, Brigadier General John Lacey, Jr., of Bucks County. It was the only independent campaign assigned to the State Militia during the Revolution, and it demonstrated the futility of putting untrained civilian conscripts against seasoned veterans. But while the British were able to raid Lacey's territory with impunity whenever they chose to come out in force, he succeeded in cutting off a large proportion of their potential supplies by intimidating those farmers who preferred to exchange their produce for British gold instead of depreciated Continental currency. The British were willing to pay enormous prices for supplies. One blockade runner testified at his court martial that he had sold a pair of turkeys for 18 pounds, nearly \$75.00 at the present rate of exchange.

The British finally decided to put an end to this nuisance by sending out a force large enough to kill or capture Lacey's entire brigade, and to do so at a time when his men would be unarmed and practically defenseless.

Lacey had been promised a constant minimum of 1,000 men but the Supreme Executive Council was handicapped by the Militia Law of 1777, which limited each man's tour of duty to six week's active service. The result was that Lacey at times had only several hundred men in his command, and at others was reduced to a mere handful, incapable of defending even his headquarters post. The second half of April was one of the latter occasions. Lacey was compelled to abandon his forward outposts and withdraw with his few remaining men to his Billet camp, there to await reinforcements. The camp lay immediately north of the village in a wooded tract of some 20 acres. Its west end flanked the York Road, and its south side paralleled the present East Monument Avenue.

By April 27th the long awaited reinforcements had begun to arrive. Detachments of two battalions straggled into camp from day to day. General Davis records that “a body of militia” arrived on the evening of April 30th. Davis makes the further statement that the new soldiers were “without arms” and in this he is undoubtedly correct for the shortage of muskets and ammunition was so great that no supplies were available for county commands and were issued only when the men reported for duty in the combat zone.

By taking Lacey's official return of May 14th and adjusting it for battle losses, it is possible to make an accurate estimate of his strength on the evening of April 30th. The tally is as follows:

Captain Pugh's Company.....	21
Colonel Smith's Battalion.....	165
Colonel Watt's Battalion.....	147
Total	333

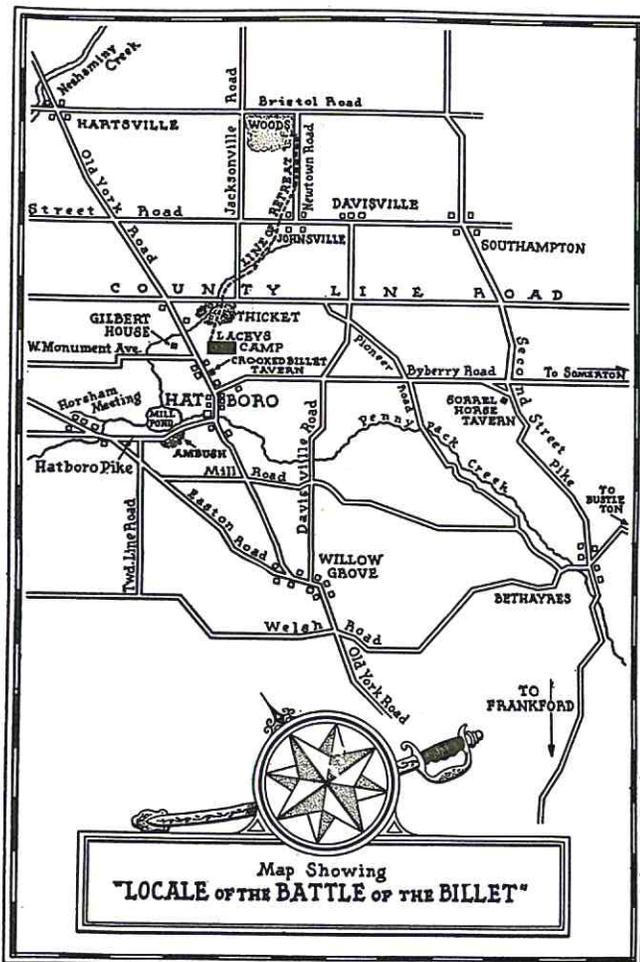
Of this total, 33 were either sick, on furlough, or had already been discharged, leaving an even 300 present and fit for duty.

Lacey took the usual precautions for the protection of his camp overnight. He appointed Colonel Watts officer of the following day, posted sentries about the camp, and detailed scouting parties to patrol the roads in the direction of

the city. [In the meantime] the British had been kept informed of the American troop concentration through their network of Tory spies in the neighborhood and were convinced that this was the opportunity for which they had been waiting. Accordingly, they sent out two columns from the city at about 11 o'clock on the night of April 30th, intending to attack Lacey at daybreak from two sides in the classic pincers movement.

One column was made up of 10 companies of the notorious Queen's Rangers, recruited largely among American born Tories in Philadelphia and commanded by Major John Graves Simcoe of the British Army. The other column consisted of 14 companies of Lieutenant Colonel Robert Abercromby's regiment of light and heavy infantry. Simcoe's force numbered about 325, and Abercromby's 525, a total of 850 officers and men.

The strategy decided upon called for Simcoe to make a surprise attack on Lacey's camp just as dawn was breaking, having circled it from the east and northeast to cut off his line of retreat into Bucks County. Abercromby was to approach from the west and lie in ambush along the probable line of American retreat, thus trapping the rebels between two fires.



[Simcoe approached Hatboro from Bethayres along Pioneer Road so that he could approach the camp from the northeast and cut off escape toward the Neshaminy. Abercromby approached by way of the Easton Road, turning right

into Horsham Road.] This was then a densely wooded section, where the road ran for some distance through a narrow defile between an embankment and mill pond of Daniel Thomas' Mill. This was the spot chosen for the ambushade.

Both columns fell behind schedule but neither knew the other was late and day was now breaking and civilians were beginning to move about. Abercromby was sighted just above Willow Grove by young Joseph Hallowell.

Abercromby became afraid that Simcoe would drive the enemy past the point of ambush before his own slow moving troops could reach it so he sent Major Crewe and his dragoons ahead. Crewe found nobody at the ambushade and patrolled down the road as far as the York Road intersection, where he was fired upon by Lacey's sentry, posted on the Pennypack bridge. According to tradition, the sentry was Abraham Sutphin of Warminster, brother-in-law of Cobe Scout. Realizing that the alarm had been given, Crewe galloped to the west end of the village where his men took their station at York Road and County Line. By this time, Simcoe was approaching the intersection of Davisville and Pioneer Roads. As soon as he heard the gunfire at the bridge, he sent Kerr and his light horse company directly across the fields to the American Camp.

The American scouting parties had not reported and the camp was not aroused until Crewe's men were almost upon it. Simcoe's men were still some distance away, however, and the road to Bucks County remained open. Without hesitation, Lacey decided to make a run for it. The County Line was about a half mile away, with a cultivated field nearest the camp. Beyond it to the right was open country to and across the County Line, but to the left was a dense thicket along Warminster Creek, on what was long known as the Goentner property.

Lacey had marched his column part way across the field when his baggage train and rear guard were set upon by Kerr's light horse from the right and Crewe's infantry from the left and rear. All the baggage wagons were cut off, and few of the guard escaped death or capture. The main column then veered to the left and as it reached shelter, Simcoe attempted a well known military ruse. Riding far ahead of his Rangers, he dashed to the edge of the thicket and in a loud voice called upon the Americans to surrender, at the same time ordering his own troops to charge. But Lacey was not deceived; instead he closed his ranks, broke through Crewe's dragoons [who had dashed up from the York Road intersection], crossed County Line Road in close formation, and plodded doggedly ahead across fields and along by-roads for a distance of a mile and a half until they reached a woodland near the Bristol Road, where they dispersed and shook off their pursuers. Their line of retreat followed the valley of Warminster Creek, crossed the Jacksonville Road, then the Street Road near Johnsville, finally taking the Newtown Road until they turned left into the woods. [These woods are believed to have been on what is now Munro Park.]

[The British failure to capture Lacey was due to several reasons, Crewe's disastrous errors in judgment being one.] After destroying the entire British battle strategy by failing to halt at the ambushade, thus causing Simcoe's plans to miscarry, Crewe had suddenly reverted to that strategy on his arrival, and by lying inactive instead of rushing the camp, and had given Lacey his chance to escape. [Lacey's youthful

daring and his knowledge of the area were another large factor in his escape.]

Lacey's casualty list, as reported in his official return, totaled 92 men, almost one third of his command. Of this number, 26 were killed, 8 were wounded, and 58 were missing.

After the tide of battle had passed, Simcoe's Rangers swept across the field and mutilated many of the American wounded. Nine bodies, some of them said to have been alive, were burned on a straw pile which stood in a field near the present monument on Jacksonville Road. This atrocity was witnessed by neighbors who flocked to the scene as soon as the British withdrew, and was attested by several prominent citizens before Justice Andrew Lang of Warminster. It was also admitted by [a British commander] Baurmeister, who attributed it to Abercromby's dragoons. Eyewitnesses said, however, that the British regulars behaved correctly, while the renegade Tories acted like savages. Several of the American dead were buried in the Noble family graveyard, and others in unmarked graves where they fell along the line of retreat.

The British claimed that their losses were seven men wounded and a few horses killed. If these figures can be accepted as even approximately correct, it must be concluded that the Americans either had no weapons, or were too demoralized to use them at any time, in an action that lasted for two hours or more. But almost all of them were frontiersmen, accustomed to firearms and it is inconceivable that they would have failed to fire their muskets if they had had them. Any suspicion of cowardice is refuted by their conduct later in the day; they reformed their lines near Hartsville and marched down the York Road back to their camp. The only reasonable explanation of their failure to offer more effective resistance is that few of them had any weapons other than their fists to fight with.

They found the campsite deserted. The British had already rounded up their prisoners, set fire to the camp, gathered all the booty they could lay their hands on and started back to the city. Most of the robberies occurred at farmhouses along the line of retreat and several residents of Warminster later filed claims for horses or household goods taken. Some citizens were also maltreated, notably the aged Thomas Craven, on whose farm the burned straw pile had stood. As he hobbled on his cane outside his doorway, returning troopers rode up and demanded his silver shoe buckles and other valuables. When he demurred, he was called a "d—d old rebel rascal" and was struck several blows over the head with a sword.

Council's reaction to the battle was expressed by Secretary Matlack in the following eulogy: "Your conduct is highly approved and your men have justly acquired great reputation for their bravery." Washington, however, was more realistic, his comment being: "You may depend that this will ever be the consequence of permitting yourself to be surprised."

Although it served no military purpose, the battle deserves a place in our history as a noteworthy local event and as a reminder of the minute scale on which operations were conducted during the Revolution, and the deplorable lack of staff work and individual efficiency on both sides, when compared to modern military standards.

While Mr. Smith treats the Battle of the Billet from the standpoint of strict history and military strategy, the present author wishes to point out that it did accomplish a purpose. Our country is very young and, in the robustness of its youth, the spirit of tradition, which is such a strong motivating force in the face of adversity such as war and depression, has had little time in which to become ingrained into us. Tradition is made by men and events and in contributing to local tradition, this particular event and these few men who fought and died for an ideal have given their small quota toward the eventual sum total of national tradition. With all its faults, this is a great country, and the ideals which inspired it are bravely shown in the courage and resourcefulness of men like those American men of the Billet.

COMMUNITIES OF THE TOWNSHIP

Warminster is four miles long and two miles wide. It is bounded on the west by Valley Road, on the north by Bristol Road, on the east by Davisville Road, and on the south by County Line. It contains 6,099 acres and it is the fervent hope of the author that some day a benevolent soul in one of our neighboring townships will contribute one acre to Warminster to make it an even 6,100. Odd numbers are annoying.

Wm. Penn's systematic approach to any kind of organizational project, as shown in his plan for the city of Philadelphia, extended to a great degree in his system for the ". . . casting of the county into townships . . ." wherein he attempted, wherever possible, to plan in either rectangles or parallelograms. In many cases, because of topographical contours, this was not possible. Warminster is one of the three so laid out. Bristol Road, Street Road, and County Line were part of Penn's system of Northwest lines and form the Township's main highways, with York Road bisecting the tract. Being essentially flat it has, until recently, been predominantly, a farm community consisting of the villages of Johnsville, Warminster, Hartsville, Breadyville, and Ivyland. Ivyland is not, strictly speaking, a part of Warminster, having been incorporated as a borough in 1905. However, geographically it is bordered on three sides by the township, was once a part of it, and contributed much to its history.



BABYTOWN, Southside of Bristol Road.

There was one other village in the history of the township which no longer exists as such. It consisted of six houses a half mile east of Hartsville on Bristol Road. This was Babytown, as it was known to the old timers of the area and the name was given because, as old Bill Lewis, a lifelong resident of the village, told the author years ago “—at one time [probably middle 1800’s] there were thirty-two babies between the six houses.” If this is true, I feel sad that such astounding evidence of prolificacy among our ancestors has been lost to posterity in the gradual annexation of Babytown into Hartsville, thus losing its quite unusual identity. The six houses are still there, plus quite a few more, but few remember Babytown. One of these houses belonged to my grandfather, Albert L. Taylor, and many times in my early years, after hearing the story, I looked around grandfather’s living room and speculated upon the extent of caterwauling that must have resounded from those walls with five and one-third (having just learned averages) infants in the house. The one-third probably added but little to the total confusion.

Ivyland was founded in 1873 by Edwin Lacey, on part of a tract which Thomas Hart, son of John Hart, received from Penn in 1719. Lacey had in mind the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia which was to bring thousands of visitors and the Temperance House, a large four story building with mansard roof and porches completely surrounding the first two stories, was designed to take care of some of the Centennial’s overflow of visitors. Construction work was slow, however, and Lacey began to have financial difficulties so that the hotel was not finished in time. Ivyland was incorporated as a borough in 1905. This little town, fortunately, has changed but little with the years; its clean look and shaded streets beckon one back to an era before commercialism began to degrade our byways with sweeping bulldozers and glaring signs.

Breadyville, on Bristol Road northwest of Ivyland, was built between 1877 and 1880, by James Flack for Margaret and Catherine Bready.



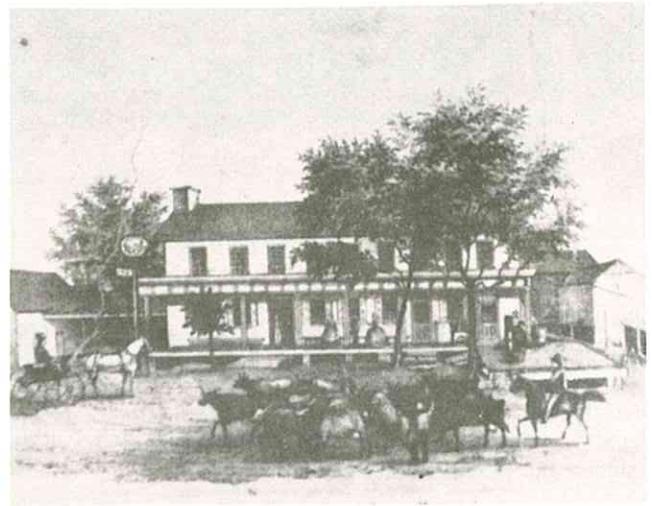
BREADYVILLE, South side of Bristol Road.

It is interesting to note that the old Speedway Inn was built at the same time as a temperance house and hotel. The Bready sisters, like Mr. Lacey, hoped to capitalize upon the

new railroad which had its terminus at Bristol Road in 1877. Breadyville was later incorporated with Ivyland.

Warminster took its name after the Township and lay in the area of the intersection of York and Street Roads. In the early days it was known as Warminsterboro and, as such, is shown on the Hughes map of 1859, which also shows a store, the tavern, a wheelwright and smith shop. The district known presently as “the Speedway,” within the bounds of York Road, Street Road, the Reading Railroad, and County Line, had been partially leveled in 1914 for the purpose of building an automobile race track — probably among the first so conceived.

“The Speedway” has an interesting history. It was originally farmland being part of the Noble grant. Because of its more or less level grade, it was ideally situated for a race track. Races, in Warminster, were nothing new; in

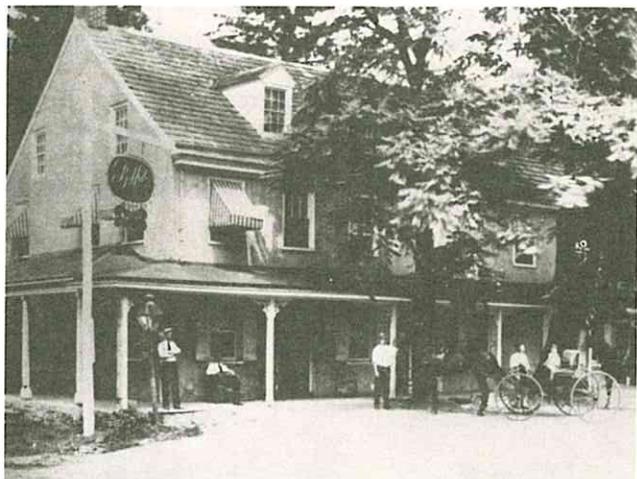


WARMINSTER MANOR INN as it looked in the year 1859.

1825, Thomas Beans laid out a beautiful one-half mile circular race track on his property behind the Warminster Hotel. Later, there was a trotting track on Street Road, between the present Madison Avenue and York Road. These were purely a community interest for sport’s sake only, and after several serious accidents, they were abandoned by popular consent. The wide, level area, however, continued to haunt sports enthusiasts for years and in 1914 a corporation was formed to build a combined automobile and horse racing tract. Sidings were to be run in from the railroad right of way and accommodations for thousands of sports enthusiasts were sought. A great amount of grading was done and, until recently, the results of that grading were still evident in great mounds of earth here and there about the area. The last of these, on the north side of Olive St. between Sunnemeade and Evergreen Avenues, was removed just recently (1985).

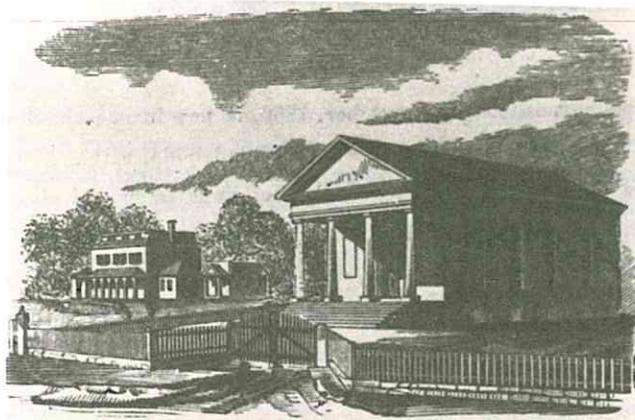
Mr. Robert Ramsey of Hartsville relates that the negroes of the area were accustomed to holding their Sunday evening meetings in a grove of oaks in the center of the track. The 1st World War and other adverse influences led to its abandonment in 1918 and it was later sold off in building lots.

Hartsville is at the crossing of York Road and Bristol Road, being partly in Warminster Township and partly in Warwick Township. Because of its location it was first called Cross Roads, and dates back to the early 1700's. The name was changed after the Hart family settled there later in the same century, becoming Hart's Cross Roads, later shortened to Harstville. The Hartsville Hotel was established by Colonel William Hart in 1780 and was known as The Sign of



HARTSVILLE HOTEL in the 1890's.

the Heart. He continued as its proprietor until 1817 and became very active in public affairs until his death in 1831. Hartsville is noted in history for the many schools that have been located there at various periods. Of these, the Log College, founded by the Rev. William Tennent is the most famous and paradoxically the most humble.



Mid-19th century engraving of Neshaminy-Warminster Church, with the Roseland Female Institute in the background, reproduced from a brochure advertising the school. The church was torn down in 1939 after the century-old ideological split was healed and the Warminster and Warwick congregations reunited. Collection of The Bucks County Historical Society.

Gideon Prior, the last survivor of the Revolutionary Army in Bucks County, died in Hartsville on February 14, 1854.



Neshaminy Lecture Room, built in 1849, where the ladies of the church packed bundles for Civil War soldiers. It is now owned by the Hartsville Fire Company. Reproduced from Turner's History.

Washington's Neshaminy encampment in 1777 was a half mile north of Hartsville, along the Neshaminy Creek. The property on the northeast side of the Neshaminy bridge, now known as Headquarters Farm is believed to have been the General's headquarters during his stay although it is known that he also leased the Moland House, presently the property of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Pennebaker, directly opposite across York Road. It was in the Moland House that Lafayette first received his commission from Washington.

This encampment is also the site where the new flag of the baby Republic was first flown and from this time began the legend of Betsy Ross. Every school child knows the story of the little dressmaker but it would be interesting to have some of the details of the ceremony and the feelings of those involved at that first flag raising.

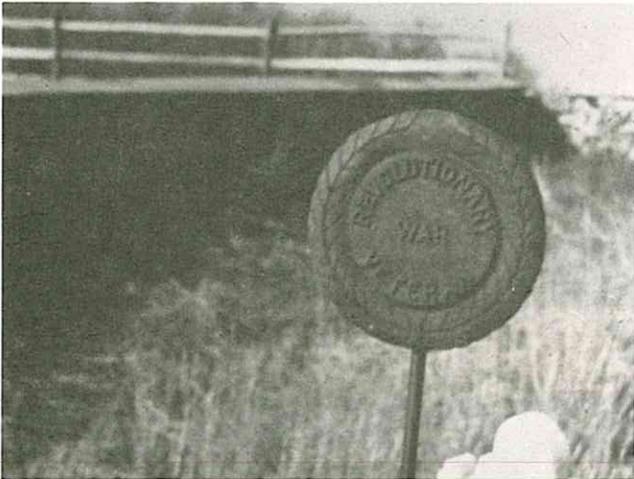
Johnsville, like Hartsville, was settled very early in the history of the area. Originally known as Upper Corner and later as Craven's Corner, it was settled in the 1680's. We have no knowledge of its name in those early days if, indeed, it *had* one. However, it is known that Newtown Road was opened by Bartholomew Longstreth from Street Road to Bristol Road in 1724 and this intersection made it a "corner." Hence it might be deduced that the name "Upper Corner" came into being sometime after 1724. The name "Craven's Corner" was given later by the influential Craven family. Later yet, James Craven built a store in 1814 for his son John and changed the name to Johnsville after his son.



JOHNSVILLE STORE AND POST OFFICE 1905. Corner of Street and Newtown Roads.



OLD VANSANT GRAVEYARD, Johnsville. Here lie the remains of the early settlers — Cravens, McDowells, Garrisons, Sutphins, Vansants, Vandikes, and others. The oldest stone marks the grave of Harman Vansant, who died in 1769, in his 84th year.



BRONZE MARKER showing burial place of a Revolutionary War soldier in the Vansant cemetery.



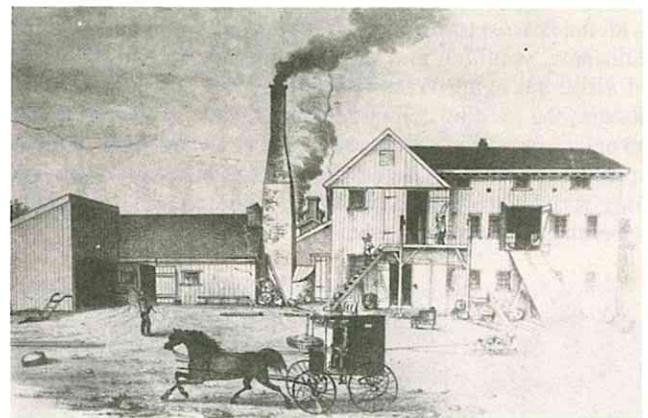
CRAVEN HALL in the 1940's.

Prior to the appointment of the original Warminster Township Historical Preservation Board by the Warminster Board of Supervisors on January 27, 1986, Craven Hall, at the southeast corner of Newtown Road and Street Road, was the only established historical entity in the Township and, as such, deserves a brief special mention in this Township history.

The rear part of the structure was built by James Jacobus Craven in the 1750's. The front section was added about 1845. The interior architecture of the newer section of the building, particularly that of the living room, suggested to the Craven Hall architect, Mr. John Dickey, that the builder might have had some connection with a group of young Philadelphia architects such as Latrobe, Strickland, and L'Enfant, who later went on to design the Capitol and other famous buildings in Washington and elsewhere.

Through a succession of owners, it finally passed into the hands of the Centennial School Board when it was used for offices and spare classrooms in the 1950's. It was put up for sale in 1977 and was in danger of being demolished by a prospective buyer because it obstructed the view to his automobile lot. A group of concerned citizens, led by a very determined Ella K. Rhoads, was quickly formed to save the building. The Citizens For the Preservation of Craven Hall finally negotiated a lease with the School Board and set about restoring the place to its original splendor. Much of the actual restoration work has been accomplished since that time and the Hall is being put to public use. A bedroom has been furnished in period and tours of the building during fund raising affairs have generated a great deal of interest. Classes from the school district are being brought in to tour the place and learn how people lived during the early years of our country. A slide show is available on the history of Warminster and its old buildings. The Hall is also being used as a meeting place for small local groups. In addition, one room was dedicated as the Ella K. Rhoads Library and houses a book collection oriented strictly toward history and Americana. A list of books is available. At present the Library is open to students and to the general public by appointment only. Craven Hall is an example of what can be done to save some of our old structures when enough public spirit and determination is put into the effort.

The most famous institution in Johnsville was the Beans Agricultural Implement Factory established during the early



BEANS AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT FACTORY. Was located diagonally across Street Road from Craven Hall. Burned down many years ago.

1850's by Robert Beans. This factory was one of the leading industrial works of the surrounding area, being a frame building one hundred feet long, with a foundry in the rear. At its height, Mr. Beans employed 50 or 60 people. It was his custom to educate by the old tried and true apprenticeship system whereby he took in boys of 16 and trained them in his art in return for board, clothing and three months schooling.

The concern specialized in all farm machinery. Beans' patented mower was one of the first on the market. He also made corn shelters, clover hullers, etc. His health failing, he sold the plant in 1868 to Mr. O. W. Minard. The factory was destroyed by fire on July 12, 1870 at a loss of \$20,000. Its location was almost directly across Street Road from Craven Hall.

One of the distinctive qualities of Johnsville is the intense pride its residents bestow upon their heritage. A number of its people are local historians in their own right and community tradition is uppermost in the minds of all. The recent desecration of the Craven family cemetery, in which many of the old tombstones were uprooted and scattered, resulted in horrified dismay among the citizens.

Warminster Heights, originally named Lacey Park, was built by the U.S. Government in 1943 to house civilian workers at Brewster Aeronautical Corporation which later became the present Naval Air Development Center (NADC). The Government sold the property in 1957 to a private owner who allowed it to deteriorate to a deplorable condition over a period of about 18 years. The property was taken over by the Redevelopment Authority of Bucks County in 1975, which undertook major improvements in the housing, streets, and utility systems.

The Warminster Heights Development Corporation was formed in 1975 to manage the property. Also in 1975, the Warminster Heights Home Owners Association was formed as a non-profit organization which took over ownership of the property as a cooperative in 1986. Over the past ten years, much has been accomplished in the revitalization of the community. As a result, Warminster Heights has become a cleaner, safer, and more pleasant place to live.

Included in the general improvement of Warminster Heights is a 188 unit mid-rise subsidized housing project for the elderly and a modern medical center.

Other communities have sprung up like mushrooms over the face of the township during the past few years. These are contractors developments and are generally identified with the nearest town although all boast a community name. This new, youthful, and eager blood injected into the veins of virile but aging Warminster has given it a new kind of stature; the existing community organizations have received an enlivening "shot in the arm" and new evidences of civic spirit are continually being shown. The old way of life has long receded into the past where, honored and respected, it belongs, in any new era.



WARMINSTER TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.

PLACES OF INTEREST IN WARMINSTER, PAST AND PRESENT

The map of Warminster included in this book contains numbered circles representing locations of the many places of interest in Warminster Township. It is obvious that not every old house can be listed but we have attempted to show most of the places on which information is readily available and the sites of some which are no longer extant. These last are listed separately.

As far as possible, the existing points of interest follow a pattern on the map so that the map may be used as a guide for personal tours of Warminster. The numbers at the left refer to locations on the map.



2) *THE DARE HOME*



3) *NESHAMINY WARWICK CHURCH*

1) **BABYTOWN** — A tiny cluster of six old houses on Bristol Road, a quarter of a mile east of Hartsville.

2) **DARE HOME** — On the southeast corner of Bristol Road and the *Old York Road*. Said to have been built by Rev. Charles Beatty. Now owned by the Dare family.

3) **NESHAMINY WARWICK CHURCH** — The first church in the Warminster area. The original building, where William

Tennent preached, was located in what is now the cemetery. The present building was built in 1745 and has been extensively remodeled since that time. This congregation was of great importance to Warminster in that many of its members were — and are — residents of Warminster and a number of its pastors started schools in Warminster. The first of these was William Tennent and his Log College.

4) WILLIAM TENNENT'S GRAVE — Located in the cemetery of the Neshaminy Warwick Church.

5) ROBERT DARRAH FARM — Situated at the south side of Bristol Road, not far from where the road makes an abrupt right turn across the old concrete bridge over the Little Neshaminy Creek. This was the home of one of Hartsville's oldest families.

6) LECTURE HALL — On the east side of the *Old York Road*. Originally built in 1849 as a public building, by the Ladies Society of the Neshaminy Warwick Church, it was used until recently to house the Hartsville Fire Co. #1.

7) POLLYHART — On the west side of York Road, diagonally across from the Lecture Hall. Built sometime before 1835 by a carpenter named Benjamin Wright. Originally the home of Jane Craven, it later belonged to Rev. D. K. Turner, a pastor of the Neshaminy Warwick Church. Rev. Turner wrote several books on area history in this house. Presently the home of Pauline Bush.

8) HARTSVILLE INN — Located on the west side of the intersection of the old and new York Roads. Built by Rev. James P. Wilson in 1832 as a classical school for boys. Later, in 1850, it became a school for girls under Rev. Jacob Belville.

9) KLINE HOME — West side of the intersection of York Road and Norristown Road. Property once belonged to Rev. Matthew Wilson, who married a young lady from Georgia and, in deference to her southern tastes, erected the pillared facade on the front of the building. Was once the home of Dr. John Beans Carrell, a well known area historian. This beautiful showplace is now the property of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kline.

10) TENNENT HOUSE — Located on the west side of York Road just north of Christ's Home. Said to have been the residence of Rev. William Tennent while he was pastor of the Neshaminy Warwick Church and while he taught at Log College.

11) LOG COLLEGE MONUMENT — On the west side of York Road at the Tennent House. It was erected in 1927 by area Presbyteries to commemorate the site of the Log College building. Its bronze tablets enumerate the 64 colleges and universities that trace their roots to Log College. When the new York Road was put through, it ran to the *back* of the monument so that the back faces the road. It is hoped that it can be turned to face the road, during this 275th Anniversary celebration.



5) ROBERT DARRAH HOME



6) LECTURE HALL



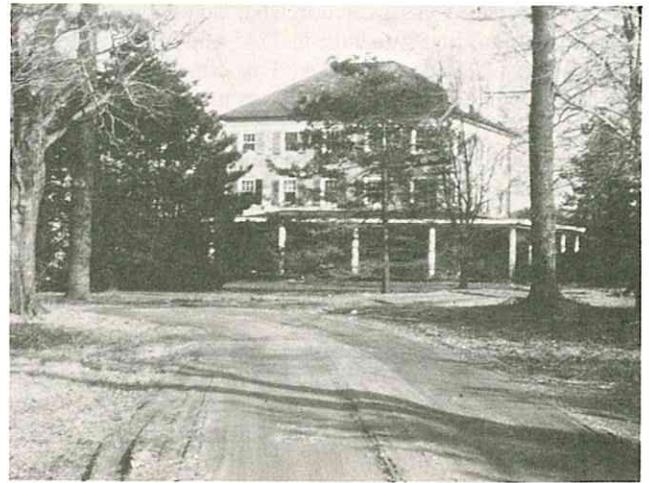
7) POLLYHART



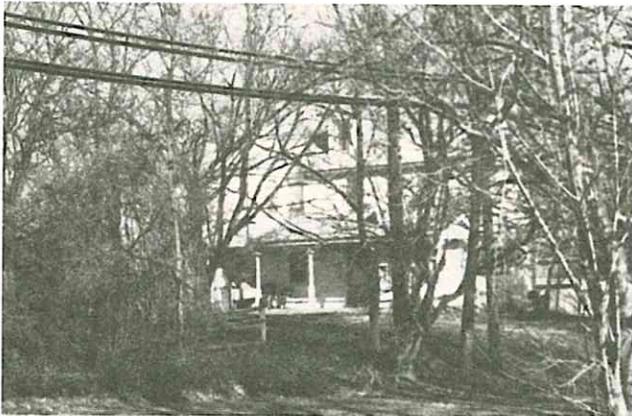
8) HARTSVILLE INN



9) *KLINE HOME*



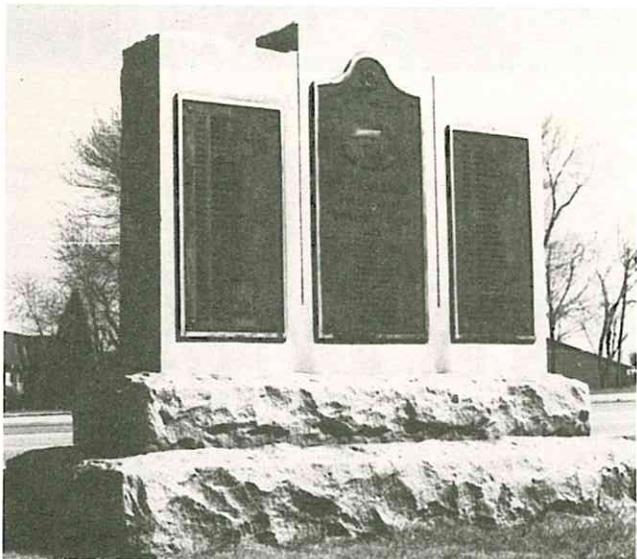
12) *MAGOFFIN MANSION*



10) *TENNENT HOUSE*



13) *CHRIST'S HOME*



11) *LOG COLLEGE MONUMENT*



14) *FITCH MONUMENT*

12) MAGOFFIN MANSION — Located far back from York Road and north of Street Road. Originally part of the Todd tract, the present building was built by Rev. John Magoffin. According to Mr. Robert Ramsey of Hartsville, during World War I, detachments of local recruits were trained by an Army officer named George Ross in the fields of this property which, at that time, extended to the corner of York Road and Street Road. Now the property of the Catholic church.

13) CHRIST'S HOME — The entrance to Christ's Home is on the west side of York Road, about a quarter mile north of Street Road. A home for neglected and homeless children, it was started in Philadelphia by Dr. and Mrs. Albert Oetinger and Miss Katherina Krausbach on October 1, 1903. It was moved to Warminster in 1907 on ground purchased from the Ezra Carrell estate. The aged building at the entrance lane is known as the Todd House and could be one of the oldest houses in Warminster.

14) FITCH MONUMENT — Located on the northeast corner of Street Road and York Road on a small plot of ground donated for the purpose by the Haboro Federal Savings and Loan Association. It marks the corner where John Fitch first conceived the idea for a steam driven vehicle.

15) WARMINSTER HOTEL — Located on the west side of York Road, a couple of hundred yards south of Street Road. Until recent times, it was the only public house in Warminster. According to Gen. Davis' "History of Bucks County", one Thomas Lintner petitioned the court in 1730 for a license ". . . to keep a house of entertainment for man and horse." The property of 154 acres passed through a succession of owners until 1791, when Isaac Beans bought it and installed his son, Thomas, as proprietor. Thomas was a noted sports enthusiast and constructed a race track at the rear of the Hotel. Picture was made in 1940's.

The drafted men in the area, during the War of 1812, assembled at Beans Tavern on Sunday, September 18, 1814 and marched, en masse, to Philadelphia.

16) JOHN BEANS HOUSE — Situated between Brown and Bloomfield Avenues, near 10th Avenue. The older part of the house was built in the late 1700's. The added section — probably added by John Beans — has a date stone bearing the date 1847 and initials "J.C. and E.Y. Beans" — John C. Beans and Elizabeth Yerkes Beans, his wife. Mr. Beans had built a schoolhouse on the property at one time, one of several built on private property during that period.

17) NOBLE HOUSE — Situated on the northwest corner of York Road and 5th Avenue. The original building probably consisted of the rear part, having a kitchen downstairs and one room upstairs. This part was built prior to 1734, according to Mr. Philip Reeves, a former owner, who had located an old deed on the property. The deed conveyed the house and 140 acres from Abel Noble to Job Noble. The Noble family is discussed in an earlier section of this book.

18) REVOLUTIONARY WAR MONUMENT — On the east side of Jacksonville Road between Van Horn Drive and Potter Street. Marks the spot where, during the retreat of the Battle of Crooked Billet, nine Americans, some of them still alive, were burned on a straw pile by the pursuing English.



15) *WARMINSTER HOTEL*



16) *JOHN BEANS HOUSE*



17) *NOBLE HOUSE*



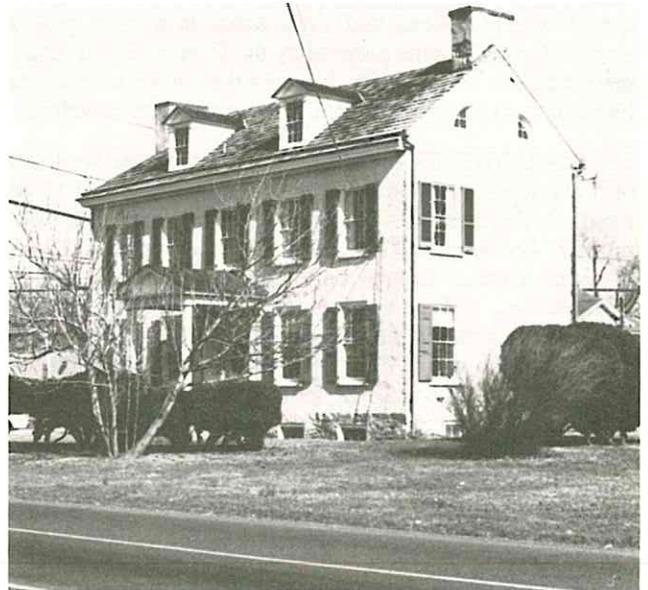
19) JOHN HART HOUSE



24) FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE



20) JOHN HART, III HOUSE



25) CRAVEN HALL



21) MUNRO HOUSE



26) CRAVEN CEMETERY

19) JOHN HART HOUSE — Located east of Jacksonville opposite Ivyland's Gough Avenue at 1145 Charter Road in the newly-built Woodlands development. Typical of old Pennsylvania manor homes. In the double west gable is a date stone inscribed "1750 — J.E.H." (John and Eleanor Hart). John was the son of John Hart the elder who received a grant of about 1000 acres from Wm. Penn in 1681. The Hart house is now the residence of Mr. Donald Brennan and Ms. Dorothy Rose-Brennan. More on the Hart family in the chapter "Warminster Pioneers."

20) HOME OF JOHN HART III — Located on the south side of Kirk Road on what is now Navy property. The stone section was built in 1817 by a later John Hart, the frame part being added at a later date. This house is said to have been a station of the underground railroad, during the Civil War, while it was the property of Charles Kirk, where escaped Southern slaves were secreted until they could be taken on to the next "station" to freedom.

21) MUNRO HOME — Located on Newtown Road, a short distance south of Bristol Road. The earliest deed records the sale of the property to James Vansant in February 1734. An existing deed shows the sale of the house and acreage from Richard Robb to R. Hart in April, 1842. Lately the property of the late Mrs. Virginia Munro, who sold the acreage to the Township. It is now the site of Munro Park.

22) TEMPERANCE HOUSE — Situated at the corner of Gough Avenue and Penn Street in Ivyland, it was built by Edwin Lacey in 1873 to absorb visitors to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, then in the planning stage. Being but an hour away on the Northeast Pennsylvania Railroad (later, Reading R.R.) it was hoped that the hotel would pick up the overflow from the mid-city hotels. Due to financial difficulties, however, the Temperance House was not finished in time to accomplish its purpose.

While you are in Ivyland, take a ride through its shaded streets and absorb some of the beauty of its well kept old homes.

23) BREADYVILLE — A tiny cluster of old homes on Bristol Road just west of the railroad. Built by James Flack for Margaret and Catherine Bready.

24) FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE — On the north side of Street Road, a short distance east of Jacksonville Road. Built in 1840, the building is now used by the congregation of the Assembly of God Church.

25) CRAVEN HALL — Located on the southeast corner of Newtown Road and Street Road. Its original building dates to middle 1700's, while the newer part, facing Newtown Road was added about 1845. More on Craven Hall in the Johnsville part of the chapter "Communities of the Township."

26) CRAVEN CEMETERY — Located on the border between the Fox Run Apartments and the athletic field of the old William Tennent High School. Sixty-four people are buried here, including at least five Revolutionary War soldiers, possibly from the Battle of Crooked Billet. The

cemetery has been completely vandalized, during the past two decades, to the extent that not a single stone was left standing. Some stones were carted away; the remaining pieces are stored at Craven Hall.

27) FITCH HOUSE — So called because John Fitch supposedly boarded here while living in Warminster. Owned by Charles Garrison at the time, it is located at the southward bend of Centennial Road, a few hundred yards from County Line. More on this house in the chapter on John Fitch.

28) JOHN LONGSTRETH HOUSE — Located on Navy property near the end of Newtown Road. John was the son of Daniel Longstreth. The date on the datestone is somewhat obscure but seems to be 1787. Later this became the home of the Walker family.

29) BARTHOLOMEW LONGSTRETH HOUSE — At the end of Schoolhouse Lane, on McGlynn Road. Built by Bartholomew Longstreth in 1713 or 1714 and has undergone a series of additions and alterations since then. The books of the Hatboro Union Library were stored in the attic of this house during the Revolutionary War. More on the Longstreth family in the chapter on "Warminster Pioneers." A grandson of Bartholomew, Daniel Longstreth, had a boarding school at this home, about 1840's.



27) *FITCH HOUSE*



28) *JOHN LONGSTRETH HOUSE*



29) *BARTHOLOMEW LONGSTRETH HOME*

There are still more of the old homes left in Warminster. Those mentioned here are structures on which information is readily available, in addition to having — in some cases — unique or historic value.

PLACES OF INTEREST THAT ARE NO LONGER EXTANT

The following list is included simply to demonstrate what we have lost over the past 30 years. It must be realized that demolition is unavoidable in some cases, such as the widening of the Township's two main traffic arteries, York Road and Street Road. Such is the price of progress. Illustrations of some of these places listed here appear in other sections of this book. Numbers at left refer to map location numbers.

30) VALLEY ROAD BRIDGE — Demolished in the widening of Valley Road. Located on Valley Road where it crosses the Little Neshaminy Creek.

31) JOHN DARRAH FARM — Demolished to make way for the Hartsville Park development. Approximate location was on Gorson Drive, between Little Lane and Cathe Lane.

32) HARTSVILLE HOTEL — Demolished and replaced by a gasoline station in about 1960. A famous stage stop in the old days. The original proprietor, in 1744, was John Baldwin. It was kept by Col. William Hart from 1780 to 1817. The stage coaches from New York to Philadelphia always stopped at the Hotel for a fresh team of horses and tradition has it that, on their way south, when the driver reached the top of Carr's Hill — sometimes referred to as Kerr's Hill — about a mile distant, he gave a long blast of his horn as a signal that a fresh team be made ready. Benjamin Franklin often rode the stage and stopped at the Hotel when he was Postmaster General, since the coach was the main mail delivery between New York and Philadelphia.

33) HARTSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH — Demolished in 1939 by order of the Presbytery. Was situated on the west side of the *old* York Road next to the property of the Hartsville Inn. This church was built in 1842 as a result of a withdrawal, by a part of the congregation, from the Neshaminy Warwick Church due to differences in the selection of a pastor. A beautiful old building, it might have been used as a library, or put to some other such public use.

34) JOB NOBLE HOME — Burned to the ground a few years ago. Was located on the northeast corner of York Road and Beech Street and was more recently known as the Fireside Inn. It was the home of Job Noble, son of Abel Noble, one of the earliest settlers in Warminster. More of the Noble family in the chapter on "Warminster Pioneers." The corner is now a small shopping center.

35) YERKES FAMILY HOME — Demolished for industry. Was located on Street Road across from the NAVAL AIR DEVELOPMENT CENTER on the site now occupied by



30) *VALLEY ROAD BRIDGE, Formerly Mud Lane, Valley Road crosses the Little Neshaminy Creek at the north west corner of Warminster.*



31) *JOHN DARRAH HOME. Another branch of one of Hartsville's very old families. Demolished when Hartsville Park was built.*

the Hurst Corp. The west end of the house was built in 1762 by Harman Yerkes, the first of his family in Warminster. The eastern section was added in 1810. The house was the home of generations of the Yerkes family until the death of Elizabeth and Louise Yerkes in 1951. Tradition has it that a soldier from the Battle of the Billet was given refuge in the house after the fight, then Mrs. Yerkes took him out and found a hiding place in a pile of straw in a nearby field. The pursuing British invaded the house, thrust their bayonets into the mattresses and up the chimneys. It is said that they actually stabbed at the haystack, but fortunately missed him. A Revolutionary bayonet was found on the property when one of the succeeding Yerkes was digging a post hole.

36) YERKES FAMILY HOME — Jacksonville Road. Demolished for industry. Was located on the west side of Jacksonville Road, about a quarter mile south of Street Road. This was built in 1859 by Alfred Yerkes.

37) HOME OF MRS. MARY DOYLE — Demolished. This fine old Victorian mansion stood on the north side of Street Road, between the N.A.D.C. parking lot and the railroad tracks. Replaced by bank and office buildings.

38) ISAAC BEANS FARM — Demolished when the Brewster plant — now N.A.D.C. — was built. Located on what is now the Street Road side of the Navy parking lot.

39) SOBELMAN FARM — Demolished for industry. Formerly Joseph Carrell Farm. Located far back on the east side of Mearns Road, between Ivyland Road and Street Road. Lately owned by a Mr. Sobelman, of a New York shipping business.

40) WALTON FARM — Demolished for development of Glenview Park section. Located on the west side of Mearns Road, north of Penrose Lane.

41) WILLOW DALE SCHOOL — Demolished in the widening of Street Road. Stood at the southeast corner of Street Road and Norristown Road. Built in 1840.

42) OAK GROVE SCHOOL — Demolished in the widening of Street Road. Situated on the south side of Street Road, opposite Catherine Street. Built in 1840.

43) JOHNSVILLE SCHOOL — (also known as Prospect Hill School) — Demolished. Located on the south side of Street Road, just east of Centennial Road. Built in 1840.

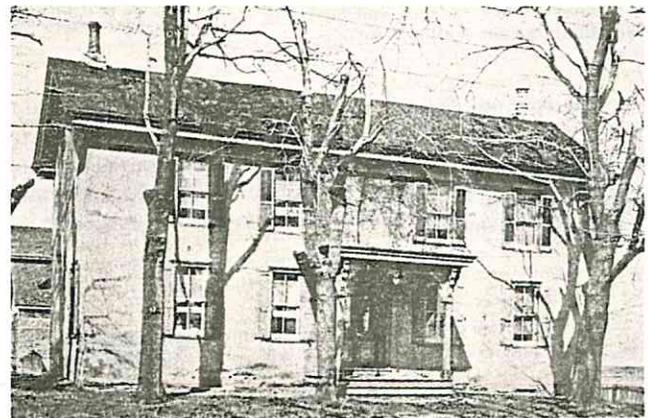
44) JOHNSVILLE STORE AND POST OFFICE — Demolished to make way for an automobile lot. Located on the southwest corner of Street Road and Newtown Road.

45) NOBLE FAMILY CEMETERY — Fallen into ruin because of lack of maintenance. Located on the hill back of Wolverton's welding shop, on the north side of County Line, between Park Avenue and Madison Avenue. Revolutionary soldiers were buried there.

46) BEANS AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT FACTORY — Burned many years ago. Situated on the north side of Street Road, at Newtown Road, opposite Craven Hall.



37) *HOME OF MRS. MARY DOYLE. Next to N.A.D.C. parking lot on the north side of Street Road. Now a bank and office complex.*



38) *ISAAC BEANS HOME. Was located on what is now the Street Road side of the N.A.D.C. parking lot.*



40) *WALTON FARM. On the west side of Mearns Road just north of Ivyland Road. Demolished.*

47) **MONTANYE HOME** — Demolished in the widening of Street Road in 1960. Was the home of Samuel Montanye, who married Clarissa Yerkes. The house was about 200 years old when it was torn down. According to Miss Amy Yerkes, this home was contemporary with the Noble place on York Road and 5th Avenue.

48) **FINNEY FARM** — Burned in 1983. Located at the east end of Warminster Heights, a few hundred yards north of County Line. Home of Thomas Craven during the Revolution.



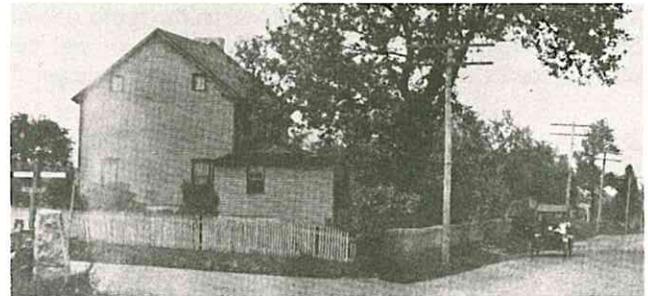
48) **FINNEY FARM.** At the east end of Potter Street in Warminster Heights. Burned down in 1983.

Many more of these old structures have been lost over the years, some of them being swallowed in real estate developments, some being unavoidably destroyed. If we are to retain even a little of what is left of our heritage, it would be to our advantage to enact some type of legislation to

control the demolition of our old buildings. Building lots in Warminster are costly these days, but, surely, in a large development, a small plot of ground could be put aside for the protection of an old relic of our past. Heritage is something that is passed on down to us. It seems almost sacrilegious to throw it away. The people of Warminster can be proud of the fact that they live in a Township having so much of the kind of background that has made a world power from a wilderness in the space of less than three centuries.

Today, we take for granted the power, freedom, and good living that are ours, forgetting that these gifts were bestowed upon us by those early pioneers, who fought the wilderness, the Indians, the English and the French for the right to survive as a nation. We are wont to proclaim that “we” surmounted and overcame those early tests of national “guts.” Let’s just keep in mind that it was our forebears who did the surmounting and hope that we can somewhat approach being their equals as men.

Paul C. Bailey



49) **CORNER OF YORK ROAD AND STREET ROAD** in about 1905 to 1910. Looking north on York Road at right.

Warminster Township

TOWNSHIP SEAL

The Township seal is familiar to all of us. It’s on our flag, police cars, and all Township official cars; it is an identifying symbol.

Do you know the significance of the symbols? We would like to share this with you.

- ELM TREE:** This represents the place that William Penn and the Indians signed Penn’s Treaty.
- DOMINO FORM:** William Penn’s mark (in those times, everyone had his own identifying “mark”).
- LOG CABIN:** The famous Log College (the predecessor of Princeton University).
- CORN:** Symbolizes an agricultural area
- LAUREL:** State flower.

This seal was designed by George Stoner.

WARMINSTER STATISTICS — 1986

POPULATION — 32,702, as of 1984-85 school census.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS —

- Chairman, William Davis
- Vice Chairman, Christopher Staub
- Secretary-Treasurer, Carl J. Messina
- Members, Raymond Regan, Thomas Lisowski

GOVERNMENTAL DEPARTMENTS

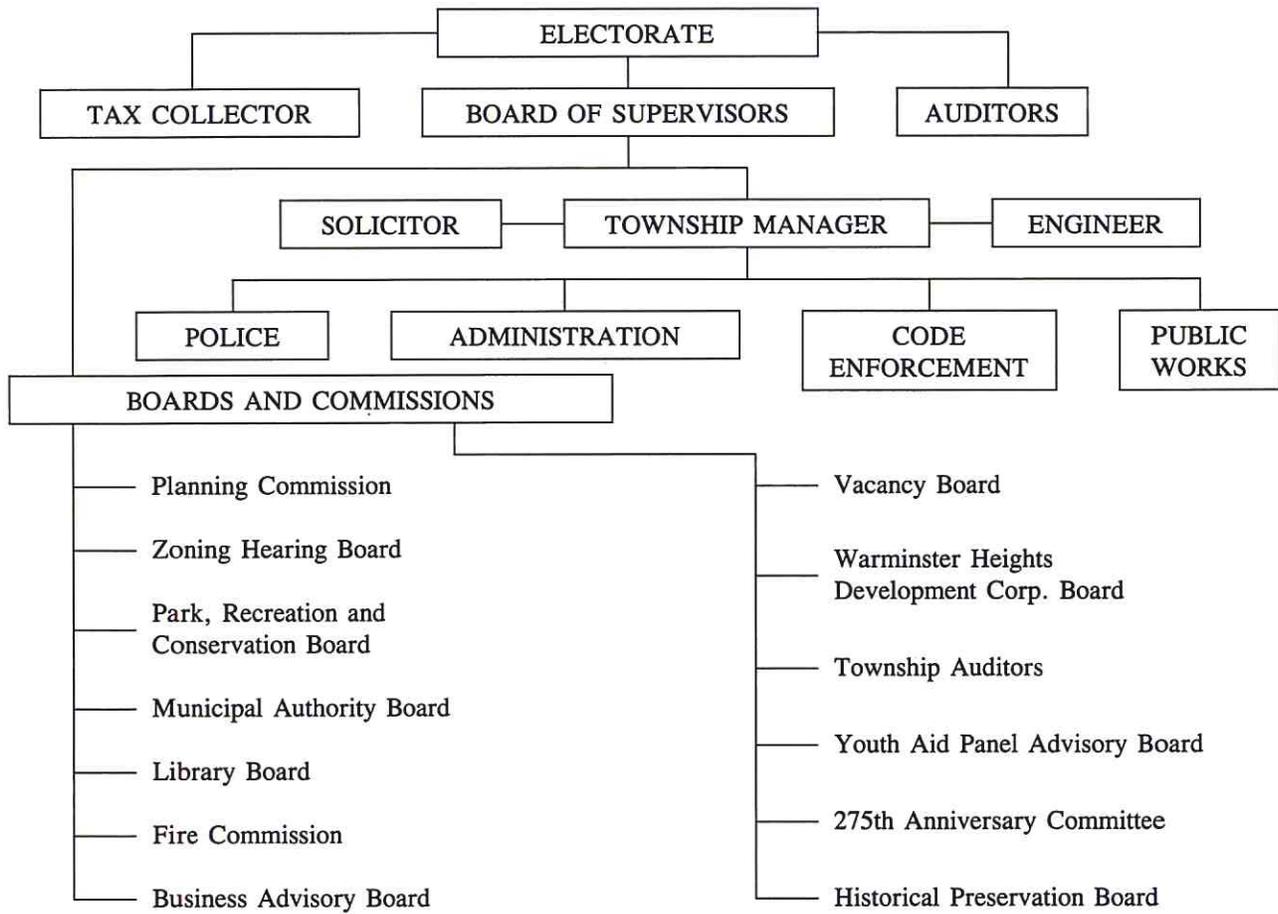
Administration

- Township Manager, LeRoy J. Fetterman
- Finance Officer, Evelyn Preiksats
- Bookkeeper, Joan Russell
- Licenses and Inspection, Joseph Knox
- Zoning Officer, Louis DiEva
- Tax Collector, Kathleen Hodgkinson
- Recreation Director, Karen Whitney
- Library Director, Caroline Gallis
- Public Works Director, William Hess
- Township Engineer, Harry Barford
- Solicitor, Richard Molish

Public Safety

- Chief of Police, Elmer P. Clawges
- Fire Marshal, Karl R. Lewis

WARMINSTER TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE



WARMINSTER TOWNSHIP PARK FACILITIES

PARK AND RECREATION BOARD — Under the Director of Park Maintenance, William Hess, and Recreation Director, Karen Whitney. Has authority over Township parks and recreational facilities. Parks and their locations are shown below:

	Acreage	Baseball Fields	Basketball Courts	Fitness Trail/Ct.	Football/Soccer	Hiking Trails	Horseshoe Courts	Nature Areas	Picnic Area	Parking	Picnic Pavilions	Playgrounds	Restrooms	Restrooms	Softball Fields	Street Hockey	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts
BARNES PARK Log College & Gorson Drives	14				•		•											
CROOKED BILLET GREEN Downey Drive	8.2	•		•		•		•	•		•			•				
IVY WOODS PARK Kirk Road, off Jacksonville	12																	
KEMPER PARK Valley & Sinkler Roads	30		•		•		•	•	•	•	•		•#	•				
LOG COLLEGE PARK Log College Drive	26.6	•*			•#	•	•#		•	•	•				•		•*	
MAPLE STREET PARK Maple Street	.6	•									•							
MEADOW RUN PARK Wallace & Woodland Drives	2.9								•		•							
MUNRO PARK Newtown Road, off Bristol	36	•	•#	•	•*			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•*	•*
SZYMANEK PARK Street Road	10.8	•	•		•*			•				•#		•		•		
WERNER PARK Kirk Road, off Jacksonville	6.8				•*			•	•	•		•	•	•*	•			

• Indicates facility available

* Illuminated

To be completed by Oct. 1986

WARMINSTER MUNICIPAL WATER AUTHORITY.
Created in 1953 with a loan of just a few hundred dollars from the Township, it now has assets of \$21,000.000. Manager, Joseph Butch.

SCHOOLS. The Centennial Joint School System divides the schools between Warminster and Southampton. Locations are shown below:

William Tennent High School
Centennial Road, south of Street Road

Log College Junior High
Norristown Road, north of Street Road

Willow Dale Elementary
Next to Log College

Everett McDonald Elementary
Street Road and Reeves Lane

Longstreth Elementary
Roberts and Marian Roads

Alta S. Leary Elementary
Henry Avenue at Victoria Road

Joseph Hart Elementary
Little Lane and Barness Drive

Archbishop Wood Parochial High School
York Road, north of Street Road

St. John Bosco Elementary
County Line, east of Jamison Street

Other schools in the Centennial Joint School System are located in Southampton:

Eugene Klinger Junior High
Second Street Pike, south of Bristol Road

William H. Davis Elementary
Maple Avenue and Hi View Drive

Frederick J. Stackpole Elementary
Strathman Drive and Mill Creek Road

HOSPITAL. The Warminster General Hospital is a division of United Hospitals, Inc. and opened its doors on May 27, 1974, with 68 beds. The Hospital is now licensed for 200 beds and its staff of 250 doctors and 700 employees provide a full range of inpatient and outpatient services, all dedicated toward the goal of providing high quality health care to the community.

CHURCHES.

Warminster Presbyterian
Madison Avenue and Nemoral Street

Nativity Of Our Lord R.C.
Street Road, east of York Road

Church Of The Nazarene
866 West Bristol Road

Peace Chapel
Street Road and Norristown Road

Johnsville Reformed
Street Road and Newtown Road

Johnsville Assembly of God
105 Street Road, (old Friends Meeting House)

Bible Baptist
Park Avenue and County Line

St. Andrews United Methodist
999 York Road

St. John Bosco R.C.
235 E. County Line Road

St. Philip's Reformed Episcopal
220 Norristown Road

Warminster Heights Community Church
6 Evans Avenue

Warminster Baptist
709 Norristown Road

United Church Of Christ
785 W. Street Road

Seventh Day Adventist
Greene Road and County Line Road

Kingdom Hall, Jehovah's Witnesses
401 Madison Avenue

St. Mark's Orthodox
124 Kipling Drive

TRANSPORTATION.

SEPTA's northern railroad terminal of the Hatboro-Warminster line is located on Park Avenue, south of Street Road. Due to the determined efforts of Albert W. Beyer, Township Supervisor at the time, this station was finished on May 22, 1970, the first station to be built by the old Reading Company since 1922. The line runs directly into center city Philadelphia.

SEPTA bus line, Route 22 runs on York Road, Street Road, and Jacksonville Road, connecting at Willow Grove for points south into Philadelphia.

WARMINSTER FREE LIBRARY.

Founded in 1960 by the Federated Women's Club, the Library was first housed in a small room in the Township Building. After several moves over the years it finally came to rest in the beautiful building at 1076 Emma Lane in October, 1977. The Library Board is appointed by the Township and funded primarily by the Township. Its total inventory comprises about 86,000 volumes.

WARMINSTER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Started in 1927 and chartered as Warminster Fire Company #1 in 1929, it became the Warminster Fire Department on the 50th Anniversary of its charter in 1979. Supported by a local fire tax, the Township is now protected by four well equipped fire houses:

Central Station at Madison Avenue and Ivy Street.

West End on Norristown Road midway between Street Road and County Line.

East End on Centennial Road between Street Road and County Line.

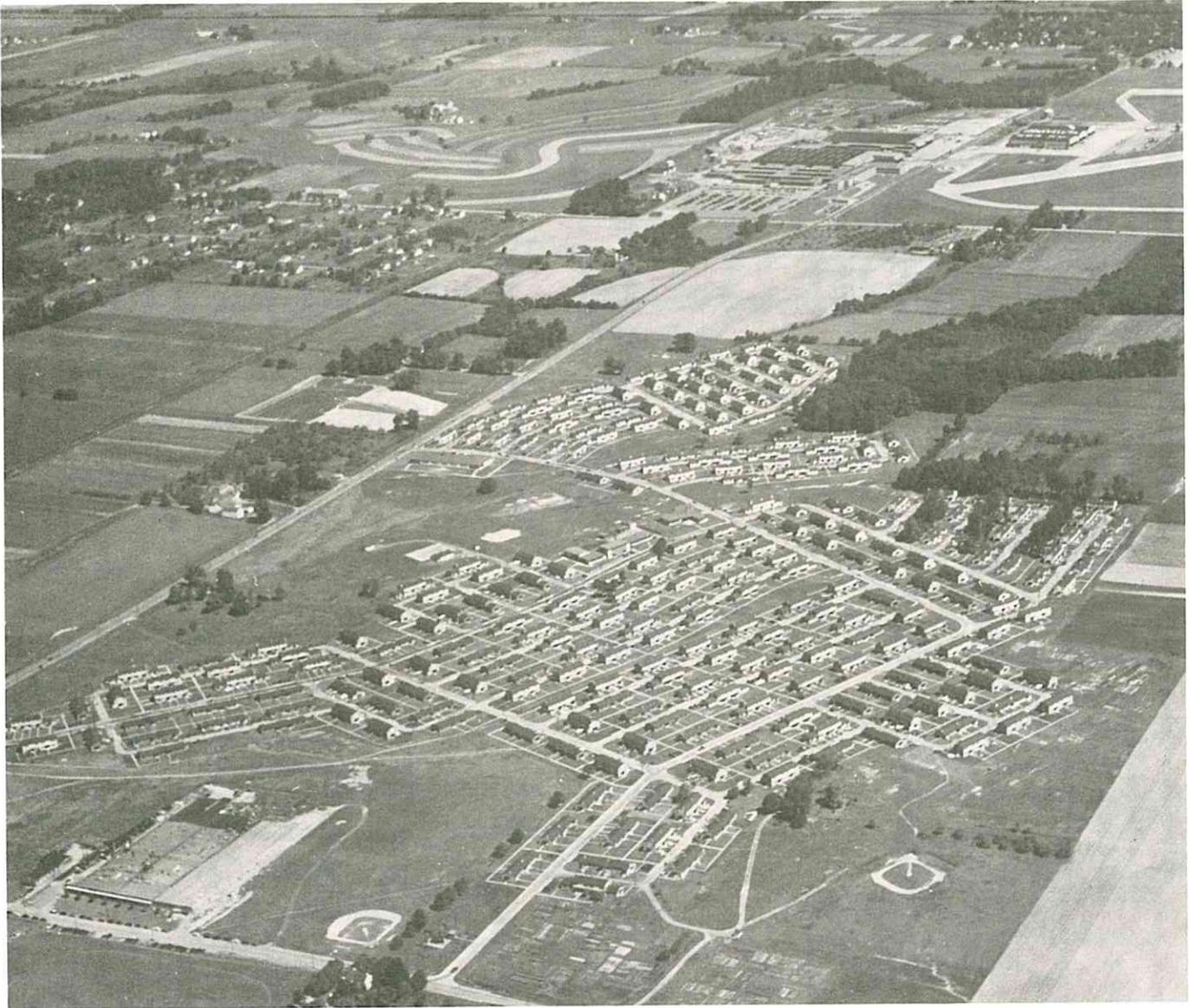
Harstville Fire Company #1 on the new York Road south of Bristol Road.

WARMINSTER VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE CORPS.

Formed in 1960, due in part to the efforts of Albert W. Beyer. The first ambulance was a used vehicle that was housed at the firehouse. The Corps was incorporated in 1976 and now occupies a beautiful building on Evergreen Avenue, south of Nemoral Street with four ambulances and about 85 active personnel.

SENIOR CITIZENS ACTIVITY CENTER. At present located at the Firehouse at Madison Avenue and Ivy Street. Open five days each week, it provides meals, crafts, and entertainment for the Seniors of the area. A new Center is in the planning stage and will, hopefully, be completed in about two years.

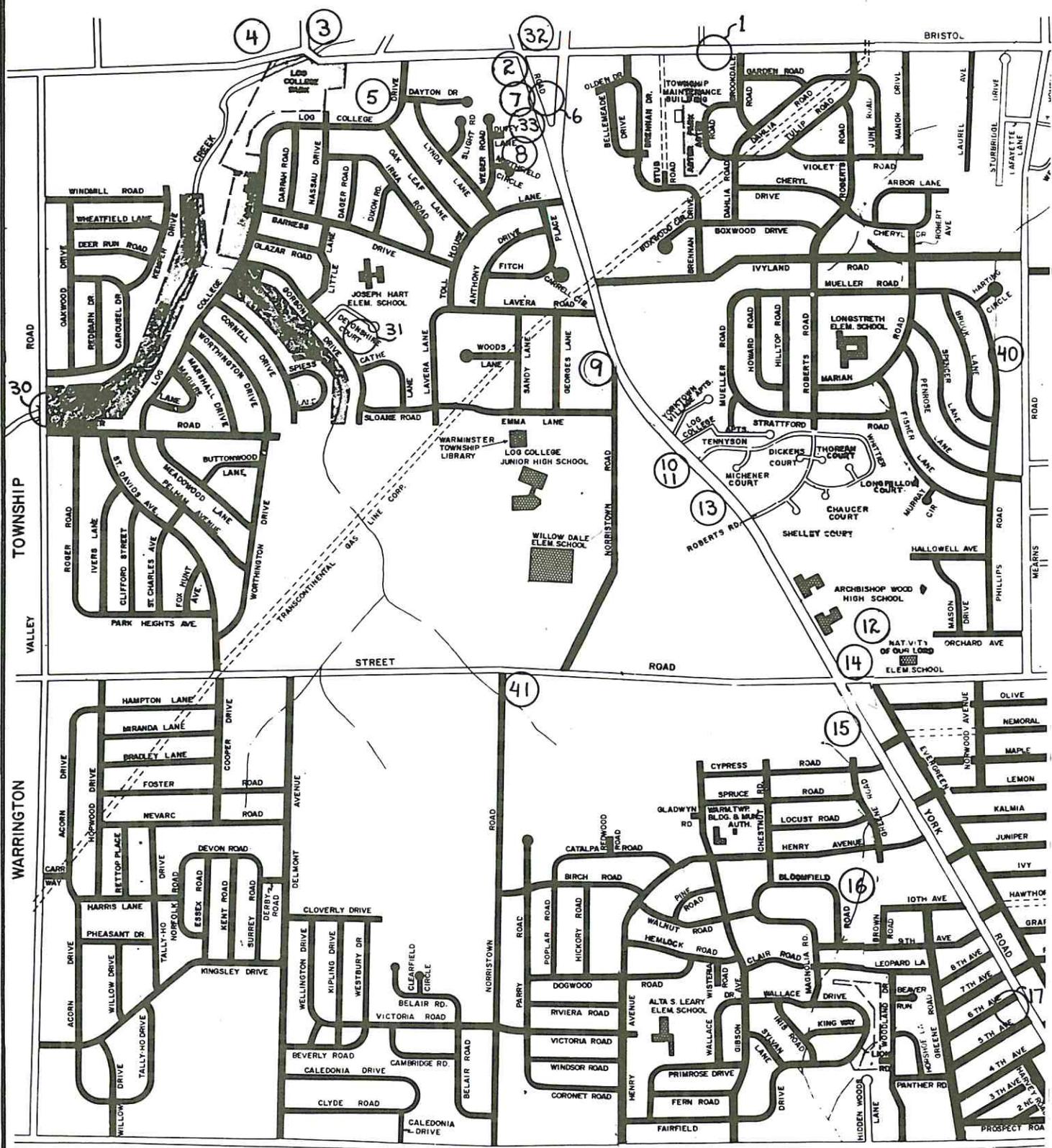
SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS. The Kiwanis, Jaycees, and Rotary all have chapters in Warminster. And one very venerable group, the Warren Horse Company, over a hundred years old, still meets once each year under President Albert Beyer.



In 1948, much of Warminster was still farm land. Lacey Park, later Warminster Heights, in the foreground. (Courtesy Today's Spirit)

WARWICK

TOWNSHIP



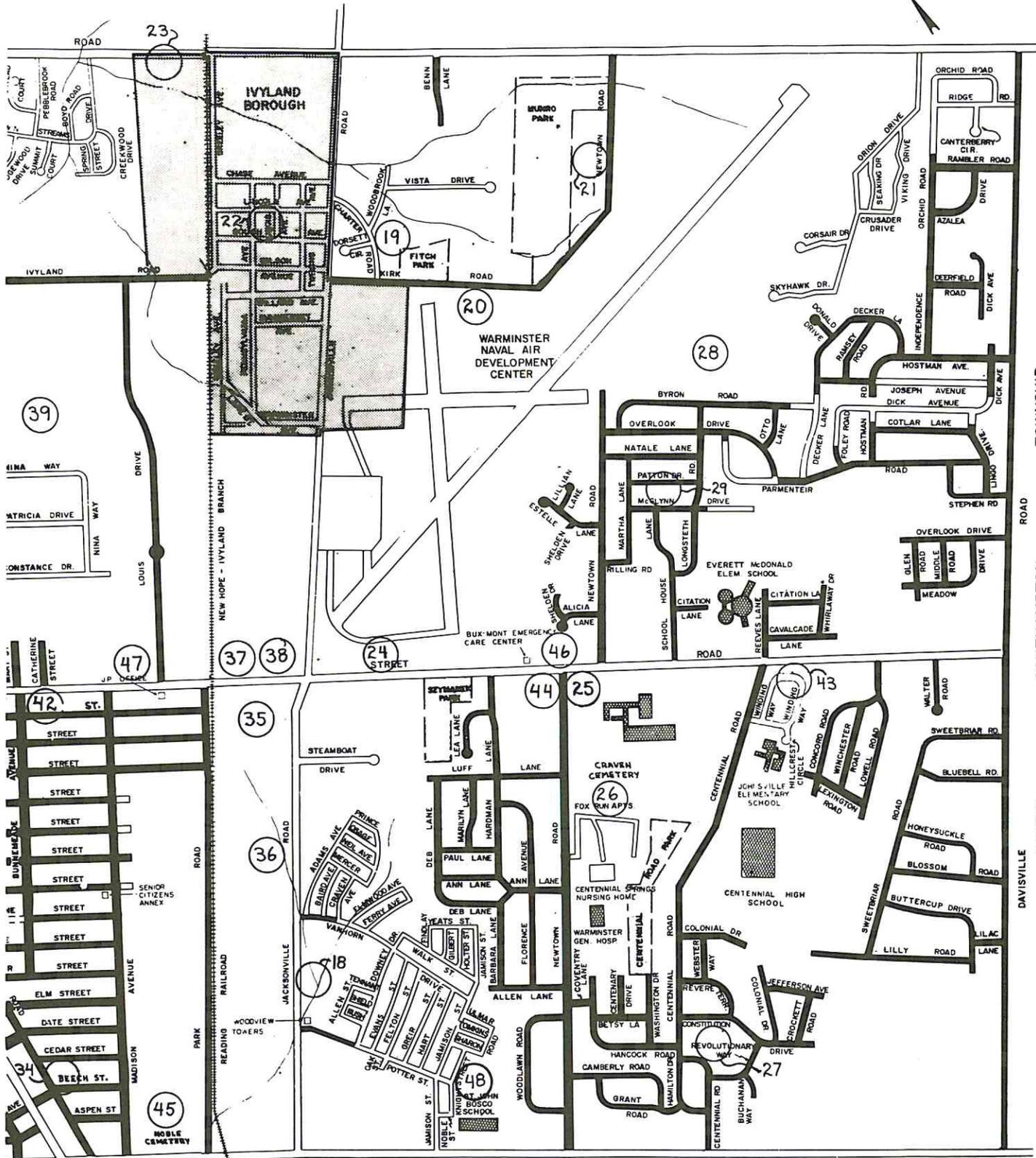
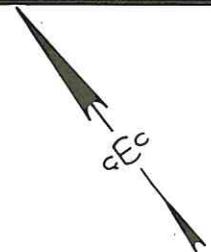
HORSHAM

TOWNSHIP

WARMINSTER TOWNSHIP - ROAD MAP

LINE
UM
CT

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP



TOWNSHIP SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP UPPER

PER RELAND OWNERSHIP BOROUGH OF HATBORO



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Vail P. Garvin D.P.A.
Executive Director

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— Art. 3 — Sec. 3 —

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A.C.F.

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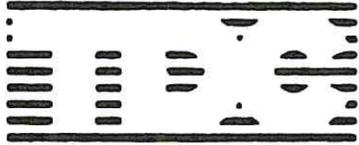


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Lansdale, Pennsylvania

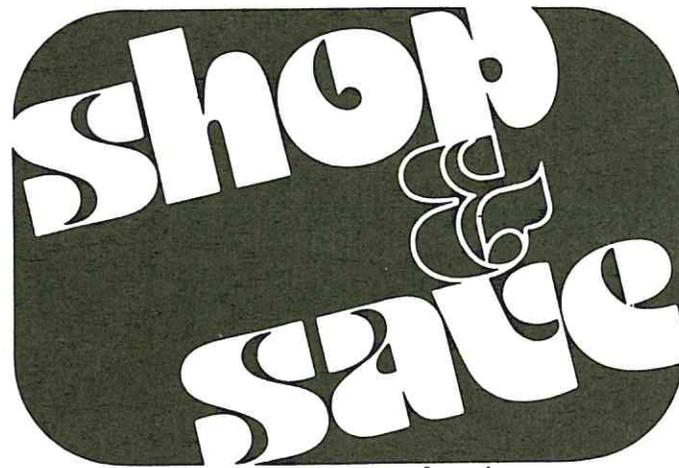
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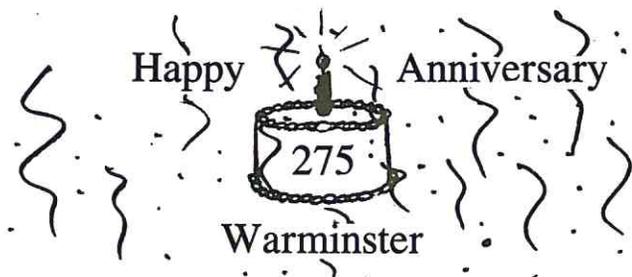
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