

Upper Hanover Township

Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Published by the Board of Supervisors ❖ Founded 1741

Newsletter



Dear Friends,

The Upper Hanover Township Board of Supervisors is honored to extend a personal invitation to you and your family to participate in a series of fun and informative monthly events that will celebrate the momentous and historic occasion of Upper Hanover Township's 275th Anniversary in 2016.

A complete **EVENTS SCHEDULE** is included on the centerspread of this Newsletter. There is something for everyone throughout the year, including presentations by local historians on the history of Upper Hanover Township, a self-guided tour of historical Township structures and locations, a pontoon boat tour of the Green Lane Reservoir and visits to The Knoll Museum and The Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center.

These monthly events lead up to the grand finale "275TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION" main event that will be held on **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016** from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm at Camelot Park. Happenings include yoga in the morning, fire equipment and antique tractor displays, bee-keeper and master gardener exhibits, Boy Scout and Girl Scout campsite demonstrations, historical presentations and displays and much, much more, including good food and good company.

Plan on making yourself part of Township History by attending some or all of these memorable and enjoyable events and share in the good fellowship and community pride. **WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

Yours Truly,

THE UPPER HANOVER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

From left to right:
Steve Rothenberger,
Dottie Diehl,
Gene Fried, Rich Fain
and Ben Fiorito



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Township Contact Information

Office Hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
1704 Pillsbury Road, PO Box 27, East Greenville, PA 18041

Phone: 215-679-4401 * Fax: 215-679-3585 * www.upperhanovertownship.org

Township Manager E-Mail: sseitzinger@comcast.net Road Foreman E-Mail: tomluht@comcast.net

For Police, Fire and Medical Emergencies: Dial 911

Board of Supervisors

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Staff

Township Manager: Stanley W. Seitzinger, Jr.
Road Foreman: Thomas Latshaw

A Reminder...

The Township Building will be closed on the following holiday:
May 30 – Memorial Day
July 4 – Independence Day
September 5 – Labor Day

Meeting Schedule

Board of Supervisors

Regular Meeting: Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Workshop Meeting: Monday prior to each Regular Meeting at 7 p.m.

Planning Commission

Regular Meeting: First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Industrial Development Authority

Second Monday of the last month of each quarter at 7:30 p.m.

Zoning Hearing Board

Third Wednesday of each month, as required, at 7 p.m.

Parks and Recreation Committee

Fourth Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

Historical Committee

Third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.

Upper Hanover Authority

First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

All meetings are open to the public and are held at: Upper Hanover Township Municipal Building: 1704 Pillsbury Road, East Greenville, PA



A Brief History of Upper Hanover Township

Native American Peoples, probably “Lenape” of the Delaware tribe, made use of the abundant resources found in the Upper Hanover Township area along with much of what we know of now as southeastern Pennsylvania. These Native Americans were some of the first to make contact with European explorers and both benefited and sacrificed from these very early seventeenth century interactions.

According to Dr. Paul A. W. Wallace’s Indian Paths of Pennsylvania, “a path ran north from an Indian town on the Schuylkill at the mouth of the Perkiomen Creek (about a mile south of Oaks, Pa.) to the Vera Cruz jasper quarries” in Lehigh County.

The path was reported to have run up the west side of the Perkiomen Creek, past modern day Schwenksville and Perkiomenville. It was reported to have crossed the water where the Perkiomen and Macoby creeks meet in Green Lane. From there, the path crossed the hills between the two creeks and continued north along the Macoby and Stony Run creeks, through Kleinville, in Upper Hanover Township, and on to Geryville, Hosensack, and the Jasper mines at Vera Cruz.

Ultimately, the land became under control of the William Penn family who, through an aggressive settlement campaign, eventually moved the Native populations further westward.

Meanwhile religious, social and economic tensions in the Germanic city-states of Europe, particularly religious intolerance and the unrest resulting from the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), drove many German speaking peoples away from their homes. Large numbers fled to Philadelphia, induced by the promise of religious tolerance and a vision of economic opportunity. From there, some made their way to what is now Upper Hanover Township. Among the many German language religious groups settling this township were Lutherans, Reformed, Catholic, Mennonites and Schwenkfelders.

Before 1741, Upper Hanover was part of Hanover Township along with Douglass, Pottsgrove, and New Hanover Townships and the Borough of Pottstown. Upper Hanover became a separate township from Hanover Township in 1741 and, at that time, its

continued on page 3...

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A Brief History of Upper Hanover Township ...continued from page 2

boundaries also included the three villages of Palm, Kleinville, and Hillegassville, in addition to the settlements which now constitute the Boroughs of Pennsburg, Red Hill and East Greenville.

The township's rich soil attracted excellent German farmers who settled in the area. Industrial activity was second only to agriculture in importance during this early period. The primary industry was building construction. Utilizing granite boulders, provided from the Hosensack Hills, facilitated this. Waterpower was also available from the Perkiomen Creek and propelled water wheels for five gristmills and four sawmills.

In 1851, the Goshenhoppen and Green Lane Turnpike (today known as Route 29 or Gravel Pike) was completed. The Geryville and Sumneytown Turnpike, finished in 1865, also crossed the eastern portion of the township.

The Perkiomen Railroad, aided by the Reading Railroad, constructed and opened a rail line from Collegetville to Upper Hanover Township in 1873. The line was extended to Emmaus in 1874. By 1878 mail service, via the railroad, reached the train stations in Upper Hanover Township.



Livestock arrived on the rail cars for the large, public auctions in the Township. Lumber, coal, and raw materials to supply the local factories arrived by train. Finished goods, milk, and vegetables were shipped to the city in the same way.

With the railroad, travelers were able to enjoy a much easier commute to the popular township recreation destinations.

The railroad also brought the ice industry to the township. The close proximity to the exceptional waters of the Perkiomen Creek and access to the railroad made ice making a major industry between 1890 and the early 1920's.

The largest icehouse built in Upper Hanover Township was the structure erected in Palm by the Hancock Ice Company. Built in 1897, it was 311 feet long, 90 feet wide and 42 feet high! The coming of electric freezers made the ice industry obsolete and the flood of 1935 wiped out almost all of the ice dams on the Perkiomen Creek that had once supported the ice industry.

During World War II many of the valley's workers traveled to industrial centers (i.e. Pottstown, Allentown, Lansdale, etc.) outside the valley to find employment in the war effort.

In 1950 a fierce controversy gripped the valley. The Philadelphia Suburban Water Company wanted to impound three billion gallons of the Perkiomen Creek's water to supply municipalities at the eastern end of Montgomery County. Valley residents felt their water rights were being confiscated. The citizens of the valley organized, took the issue to court, and lost. Construction on the dam started in 1954. The reservoir and its surrounding parklands are now an important landmark and recreation area for the valley.

In 1948, Upper Hanover Township had a total of nine schoolhouses. Though it had been discussed on numerous occasions, the formation of the Upper Perkiomen School District was still several years away. Schools in East Greenville and Pennsburg were growing, but student enrollment in Upper Hanover was waning. Five of the schoolhouses, one dating back to 1855, were sold in 1948.

The Upper Perkiomen Valley School District was formed in 1954. Red Hill, Pennsburg, East Greenville, Green Lane, Marlborough, Upper Hanover, and Hereford Township in Berks County merged to better serve school needs in the valley. A multimillion-dollar high school was constructed, spanning part of Red Hill and Upper Hanover Township.

Over the next few decades major growth and changes occurred in Upper Hanover Township. Industries such as Knoll, Inc., Brown Printing and Blommer Chocolates located their business in the Township. Housing development flourished in the early years of the 21st century and boosted the population to 7,124 residents by 2016. A major shopping center, The Shoppes at Upper Hanover, opened for business in 2006. Despite the recent growth, Upper Hanover Township has maintained its rural character through active coordination with the Montgomery County Open Space Program and the Farmland Preservation Program.



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TOWNSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS AND FUN FACTS

- Founded: 1741 • 2016 Population: 7,124
- Population Density: 60th out of 62 Montgomery County municipalities at 319 persons per sq. mile.
- Area: 21.03 square miles – 4th largest in Montgomery County
- Permanently Preserved Farmland: 1,503 acres – 2nd most of all Montgomery County municipalities.
- Road Miles: 53.24 Local and 15.29 State
- Assessed Valuation: \$494,554,427 • Households: 2,818
- Median Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units: \$282,100
- Per Capita Income: \$34,700
- Median Household Income: \$81,989
- Government Type: PA Second Class Township
- Governing Body: 5-Member Board of Supervisors elected at-large.
- School District: Upper Perkiomen School District
- Police: Pennsylvania State Police
- Fire Protection: East Greenville, Pennsburg, Red Hill and Eastern Berks Fire Departments
- Ambulance: Upper Perkiomen Valley, Bally Community, Harleysville Area EMS and Red Hill QRS
- Parks and Recreation: Camelot Park, Centennial Park, Macoby Run Park, Mill Hill Preservation Area and Green Lane Park.
- Before 1741, Upper Hanover was part of Hanover Township, along with Douglass, Pottsgrove, New Hanover and the Borough of Pottstown.
- In 1741, Upper Hanover contained the three villages of Palm, Kleinville and Hillegassville in addition to the settlements that now constitute the boroughs of Pennsburg, Red Hill and East Greenville.
- The 1871 Township Road Map divided Upper Hanover Township into 11 districts: Palm, Bethesda, Croll, Schwenk, Hillegassville, Reed, Kleinville, Wanner, Greenville, Pennsburg and Church.
- Upper Hanover shares boundaries with 3 counties and 11 municipalities.
- Built in 1835, the 301-foot long Knight Road Bridge (“The Kissing Bridge”) was once the longest and only remaining wooden covered bridge in the County prior to its demolition in 1956 as part of the Green Lane Reservoir Project.
- Six creeks run through the Township, including the Perkiomen Creek, West Branch of Perkiomen Creek, Hosensack Creek, Macoby Creek, Molasses Creek and Stony Run Creek.
- The highest geographical point in Montgomery County is located in Upper Hanover Township at the Mill Hill Preservation Area at 715-feet above sea level.

Tony Borger and Ben Galandio from the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission recently reinstalled a refurbished historical market at the New Goshenhoppen Church in Upper Hanover Township.



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Grand Total:			

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_____ Please ship this order to me.

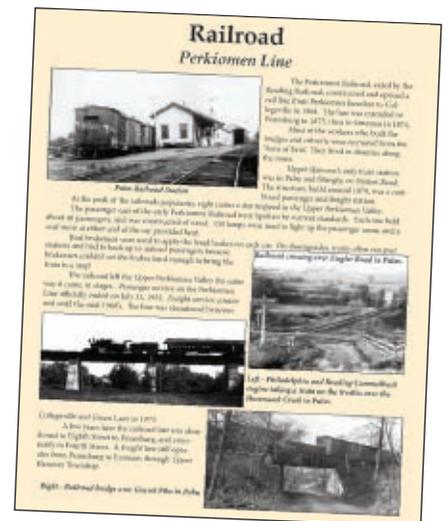
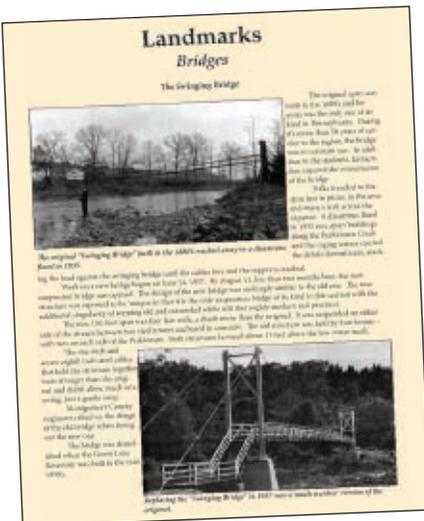
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Memorial Park Bench Program



Residents may purchase a 6-foot Memorial Park Bench with a 2.5-inch by 10-inch Corian Plaque In Honor Of or In Memory of a Family Member or Friend or Associate. The benches will be placed at either Camelot Park or Macoby Run Park.

The cost for each bench is \$660.00. Order forms are available on the Township website at www.upperhanovertownship.org or by calling the Township Office at 215-679-4401.

275th Anniversary Committee

Marlene Bieler
Dave Conrad
Dottie Diehl
Bill Fenley
Cathy Fenley

Catherine Hummel Fried
Gene Fried
Becky Putera
Stan Seitzinger, Jr.
Nancy Stevens

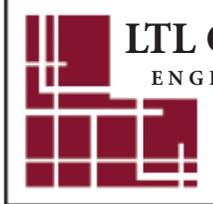
HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Larry Roeder - Chairman
Dave Conrad - Vice-Chairman
Greg Albanese
Bob Borneman

Dennis Harpel
Kim Jacobs
Henry Whittaker



THANK YOU to Township resident Rachel Koder for her creativity in designing the 275th Anniversary logos. You can contact Rachel at rkoder@gmail.com to discuss your future design needs.



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275th Anniversary EVENT SCHEDULE

APRIL

Event: Upper Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce Community and Business Expo

Date and Time: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Where: Upper Perk YMCA, 1399 Quakertown Road, Pennsburg, PA 18073

Description: 275th Anniversary Committee members will be available at a table in the lobby area to provide information and answer questions about the upcoming 275th Anniversary events scheduled in 2016. Please stop by our table then plan on attending the Community and Business Expo in the YMCA gymnasium.

MAY

Event: "A History of Upper Hanover Township" - Presentation by The Upper Hanover Township Historical Committee

Date and Time: Sunday, May 22, 2016 from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Where: Upper Hanover Township Municipal Building, 1704 Pillsbury Road, East Greenville, PA 18041

Description: Noted local historian Larry Roeder, Chairman of the Upper Hanover Township Historical Committee and Publisher/Editor of The Town and Country newspaper, will present an overview of Upper Hanover Township history. Historical Committee members will also be on hand to answer questions and chat further about the Township's first 275 years. Light refreshments will be provided.

JUNE

Event: Self-Guided Tour of Historic Structures and Locations in Upper Hanover Township

Date and Time: You can take the tour at your convenience as your schedule allows.

Where: The self-guided tour of historic structures and locations follows a description and location map prepared by the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center that starts at Leshers Mill then continues across the Township to 17 interesting locations.

Description: You can obtain your copy of the Self-Guided Tour Description and Location Map at any of the 275th Anniversary events, at the Township Building or online at the Township website at www.upperhanovertownship.org.

Special Note: We ask that you respect the privacy of the owners of the tour site buildings by remaining on sidewalks or roadways when viewing the sites.



JULY Two events are scheduled in July:

Event #1 Pontoon Boat Tours of the Green Lane Reservoir

Date and Time: Saturday, July 16, 2016 and Saturday, July 23, 2016 from 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm. The one hour tours will depart on the hour at 12:00 noon, 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm. Passengers should arrive 15 minutes before their scheduled boat departure.

Where: Green Lane Reservoir Boat Launch at 2821 Hill Road, Green Lane, PA 18054

Description: The guided tour on the 12 passenger pontoon boat highlights historic locations at, by and under the Green Lane Reservoir. Constructed in 1954, over 90% of the reservoir water lies within the township boundaries.

Pre-registration Required: Participants must pre-register by contacting Green Lane Boat Tours at 215-234-4863 or by filling out the contact form online at www.greenlaneboats.com. Registration will be verified by email from Green Lane Boats.

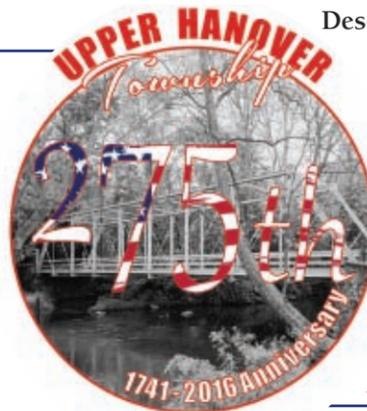
Cost: Cost of the tour is \$15 per adult and \$10 per child (15 and younger). Payment is due at the boat launch area on the day of the tour via cash or Visa/MasterCard credit cards only.

Special Note: Children under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. Life jackets are provided for all passengers and all children 13 and under must wear a life jacket for the duration of the tour. Participants are required to sign an indemnity release for Green Lane Boat Tours and Upper Hanover Township prior to departing on the pontoon boat tour.

Event #2: An Evening at The Knoll Museum **THE KNOLL MUSEUM EVENT IS CANCELED**

Date and Time: Wednesday, July 27, 2016 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Where: The Knoll Museum, 1235 Water Street, East Greenville, PA 18041



Description: Spend an enjoyable evening touring the award winning design collection at The Knoll Museum and learn about the history of this local success story. Headquartered in Upper Hanover Township, Knoll, Inc. is a design firm that produces office systems, seating, files and storage, tables and desks, textiles and accessories for the office, home and higher education settings. Knoll uses modern design to connect people with their work, lives and world. Over 40 Knoll designs can be found in the permanent design collection of The Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Light refreshments will be provided.

Pre-registration Required: To pre-register send an email to the Township Manager at sseitziinger@comcast.net or call the Township office at 215-679-4401, extension 0. Please provide the full name of all attendees along with your contact information. Attendance is limited to the first 50 registrants. **THE KNOLL MUSEUM EVENT IS CANCELED**

Special Note: Attendees must check in at the main Knoll security gate located on Water Street upon arrival.

AUGUST

Event: "Back Porch Seminar" at The Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center

Date and Time: Sunday, August 21, 2016 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Where: The Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center, 105 Seminary Street, Pennsburg, PA 18073

Description: Spend an entertaining and informative afternoon hearing from local historian Larry Roeder and a panel of local history experts at a "Back Porch Seminar" detailing the history of Upper Hanover Township while also enjoying the fascinating exhibits on display at The Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center. Light refreshments will be provided.



SEPTEMBER

Event: 275th Anniversary Celebration Day

Date and Time: Saturday, September 17, 2016. Yoga in the Park at 8:00 a.m. All other events from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm (Rain Date: Sunday, September 18, 2016 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm)

Where: Camelot Park, 1124 Church Road, East Greenville, PA 18041

Description: This is the main event and the grand finale of the year-long 275th Anniversary Celebration. Make yourself part of Township History by sharing in the good fellowship and community pride of this memorable and enjoyable occasion along with your family, friends and neighbors. Food service is available throughout the day.

Scheduled Activities:

8:00 am – Yoga in the Park – Bring your yoga mat to the Camelot Park soccer field and start out the day with a good yoga work out led by trainers from the Upper Perk YMCA.

1:00 pm – Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard Military Service Seals Dedication Ceremony at the Veteran's Monument

3:00 pm – Time Capsule Dedication – The Board of Supervisors and the Historical Committee will dedicate a time capsule containing historical memorabilia that will not be opened until the Township's 300th Anniversary Celebration in 2041.

Ongoing Activities

The following activities will be held concurrently at various locations throughout Camelot Park starting at 10:00 am:

★ Food, food and more food!

★ Time Capsule Message Book – Sign in and get your name and message included in the 275th Anniversary Time Capsule.

★ Boy Scout and Girl Scout campsite demonstrations.

★ Face painting. ★ Miniature motorized train rides for kids and adults. All aboard!

★ Enjoy a remarkable miniature vehicle display, including a cement mixer, fire truck, school bus, tractor trailer and 57 Chevy.

★ Bee-keeper Presentation (10:00 am to 2:00 pm)

★ Master Gardener Exhibit (10:00 am to 2:00 pm)

★ Antique tractors ★ Fire Trucks.

★ Township Snow Plow Trucks and Equipment

★ Historical Photo slide shows and displays.

★ A special edition 275th Anniversary chocolate bar from Blommer Chocolates will be available for purchase.

★ Copies of the "Upper Hanover Township, Celebrating 275 Years of History – 1741-2016" history photo book will be available for purchase.

Township History Articles

The following is a collection of the popular Township history articles that have graced the pages of the Upper Hanover Township Newsletter over the past decade. Written by noted local historian Larry Roeder, Chairman of the Upper Hanover Township Historical Committee and Publisher/Editor of The Town and Country newspaper, these wonderful articles memorialize people, places and events that helped to make Upper Hanover Township the great place that it is today. **HAPPY READING AND ENJOY!**

The Millside Amusement Park

Upper Hanover Township was once the home of a well-known, regional amusement park known as The Millside Amusement Park. Located in Palm, the popular resort actually encompassed both sides of Route 29, including both the property of the current day American Legion and the Carriage House Restaurant (Old Millside Inn).

Amenities included a swimming area, a water slide, games, rides and excellent food. A dance hall augmented the fun times at The Mill-Side Amusement Park, attracting large crowds from Berks, Bucks, Lehigh and Montgomery County on Fridays and Saturday nights.




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Two Historic Mills Along The Perkiomen

Now is a good time to take a look at two of the mills along the Perkiomen Creek that played a vital part in the early history of Upper Hanover Township. Both are located near Palm; they were once known as Leibert's mill and Snyder's mill.

Leibert's mill was a 2 ½-story stone structure, measuring about 35 feet by 45 feet. The miller's house was located across the street; today it houses the fine dining of the Carriage House Restaurant. Remnants of the dam that channeled the Perkiomen's water through the millrace and powered the mill's wheels are still visible just north of the old mill.

According to the Philadelphia publication, *The Miller's Review*, the mill business at Leibert's actually dates to 1726. It had several different owners until Luther M. Leibert took over the business after his father died in 1891. Luther was just 20 years old and had to take full charge of the operation, including a debt of \$8,000.

Leibert produced his well-known *White Sponge* brand of flour. In addition to being a local favorite, Leibert was producing enough of the white stuff to send the excess to Philadelphia and New York. The American Legion Post 184 occupies the building today.

Snyder's Mill still stands near the banks of the Perkiomen Creek on Peevy Road, near Water Street. The impressive 35-foot-by-55-foot, four-story structure is made of fieldstone and brick. The building standing there today was built in 1891, but it by no means was the beginning of milling operations at that site!

Jacob Schultz built a log structure there in 1789. He operated a gristmill and sawmill there until it burned down in 1817. Schultz rebuilt the wooden mill but it burned down in 1849. That forced another re-building effort by Schultz that ended in destruction by fire again in 1888 while under the ownership of Monroe Snyder. The final reconstruction effort called for bricks and mortar.

The operation passed through a string of owners after Snyder. Among them were Joseph Krauss, A. S. Mumbauer, Ray Ritter, P. Cassera, and Herbert Kuhns. The mill operated under several names including Mumbauer's Mill, the Perkiomen Roller Mills, and Hellman & Bieler.

By 1938, the mill was empty and in disrepair. Most of the milling equipment was removed back in the 1960's. Like the rest of the water-powered mill industry, modern factories and machines replaced both of these reminders of a once thriving Upper Hanover industry.



Celebrating
Upper Hanover's

275TH
ANNIVERSARY

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Spotlight on History: Milltown

The small village of Milltown was located about a quarter-mile west of Perkiomen Heights, in Upper Hanover Township, on the Perkiomen Heights-Layfield road (today we know it as Route 663).

It began as a single log cabin back in 1731 and is listed on the 1770 W. Scull map of Upper Hanover Township as Hillegas's. The village was, in fact, officially known as Hillegass and reportedly named after an early settler named Jacob Hillegass.

The name Milltown was the local reference attributed to the number of mills that once dotted that area. In later years, the Hillegass Post office was established in the general store.

Over the years the village grew to include two farms, a general store, sawmill, gristmill and a creamery. The waters of the West Branch of the Perkiomen Creek turned the wheels of the mills.

The creamery, operated by Almoran Reed, began operating around 1875. A few homes dotted the village. One, an 11-room stone house, was once reputed to be the showplace of the Upper Perkiomen Valley. It was built in 1874 and was among the last

of the dwellings to disappear.

The General Store of John G. Hillegass was built in 1851. It stood near where Layfield and Wild Run Roads intersect today.

The mill was equipped with three sets of stones. Only two were used at a time, while the other was being sharpened. The main business at the mill was to grind whole-wheat flour for the farmers from their own sheaf.

The sawmill was located on the opposite side of the millrace from the gristmill operation. Both mills were powered by 18-foot turbines. A cable ran across the road to a nearby barn for threshing and fodder cutting.

The Perkiomen Heights Layfield Road bi-sected the village and remained little more than a "dirt" road until 1929 when it became a concrete highway.

Milltown began its decline in the early 1900's, but the death knell for what was left of the village was sounded in 1955 when the last of the properties was sold to the Philadelphia Water Company to make way

for the new reservoir.



Looking west from the top of the hill at Perkiomen Heights, the Village of Milltown, as it appeared around 1875. On the near-left is the creamery. In the far left background, the saw and gristmills can be seen.

Township Exhibit at The Schwenkfelder Library

The Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center at 105 Seminary Street, Pennsburg, PA – adjacent to The Perkiomen School – in recognition of the Township's 275th Anniversary has organized a special exhibit all about Upper Hanover Township. This remarkable and interesting exhibit will be in place from June 5 to October 2 and will include a wide variety of historical photos and artifacts – quilts, fraktur and Native American artifacts, to name a few. Library hours are 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 9:00 am to 8:00 pm Thursday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm Saturday and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm Sunday. Admission is free, but donations are encouraged. Try to work a visit to The Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center into your summer-time plans and enjoy the fun. Visit www.schwenkfelder.com for further details.



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Spotlight on History: Camp Minnehaha

The banks of the Perkiomen Creek were quite a vacation attraction in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Vacation resorts and summer camps dotted the water's edge from Palm to Collegetville. Most of the nearby camps were started to give young people an outdoor education and a chance to experience the camaraderie and fun that camping brings.

One such camp was known as Camp Minnehaha. The name is said to be Native American for Laughing Waters.

Kehl Markley, Jr. first opened the camp in June 1922. It was located directly north of the longest covered bridge in Montgomery County, and across the creek from one of the earliest mills in our region.

The land was known as the Markley property and there where two houses located on the site back then. It included a 14-room stone house where Kehl lived, and another house where Asa P. Markley resided. Asa operated the Minnehaha Chopping Mill at the time the camp was started. But the mill business at that location dates back to 1727 when German immigrants George and Margaret Welker built the first one there!

In the early years, many of the campers were boys from the Perkiomen School. Most of them were from other states. Some were from other countries! Usually 30 or so youngsters, age 8 to 16, would spend time together at the camp and enjoy tennis, baseball, basketball, boxing, wrestling, swimming, rowing, fishing, and many other games and events. Friendly, but spirited, competition added to the fun.

Living quarters for the boys consisted of tents with wooden floors and iron spring cots. The Spartan living quarters provided a suitable and exciting adventure for the youth. In a newspaper article one of boys was quoted as saying, "Sleeping is great here ... and we're always glad for a blanket."

The day started around 6 a.m. for the camp and councilors.



Before breakfast, each camper took a dip in the crisp, clear waters of the Perkiomen. After the morning meal, the activities and fun began. Sometimes that fun included bus trips to Valley Forge, Crystal Cave, and other nearby spots.

Kehl Markley Jr. and his out-of-town boys at Camp Minnehaha formed a Boy Scout troop in 1923. Markley served as the Scoutmaster and campfire meetings were held every Friday evening. The Minnehaha Scouts also spent time with other local troops engaging in a variety of scout activities at the Pennsburg Boy Scout cabin on Mill Hill.

Camping by the Mill and Bridge in Upper Hanover Township also had its dangerous moments. One of the most severe occurred on July 24, 1925. The event was characterized as a "24-hour period of one continuous thunderstorm." According to an account in the Town and Country, "around noon the downpour assumed unusual severity and resembled a cloudburst."

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Hosensack dam broke sending a wall of water racing down the Perkiomen creek. Upon finding out that the dam upstream had been breached, Kehl and his assistants gathered the campers from their tents and herded them to the high ground of the camp cottage as the creek waters carried their bed linens and other belongings downstream.

Many of the items were later found downstream clinging to the Swinging Bridge. The low hanging footbridge had acted like a net and captured many of the lighter items washed away by the raging water.

Markley's bridge, the Minnehaha Chopping Mill, Camp Minnehaha, and the houses and barn of the Markley property passed into history when they became casualties of the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company Reservoir construction in the mid 1950's.

History Lesson: The Perkiomen Paper Company

The Perkiomen Roll Mill existed on the Perkiomen Creek just west of Pennsburg as early as 1871. In its early days it was used as a saw-mill. By 1893, it expanded to include a saw-mill and gristmill.

In 1909 local dentist, entrepreneur, community service leader, race-horse owner, and journalist Dr. Charles Q. Hillegass was in his tenth year as owner and publisher of the Town and Country newspaper. Hillegass bought the mill that was part of a farm complex, located between Pennsburg and the village of Hillegass (Perkiomen Heights), which included the mill, two residences, a Swiss barn, and several outbuildings. Hillegass entered into a partnership with his brother-in-law, William H. Siegfried, and together they formed the Perkiomen Paper Company and manufactured trunk and suitcase boards. An addition was soon added where more than 50-tons of paper product could be stored.

In 1917, motorized fire trucks were still a few years away for the Upper Perkiomen Valley. Fire protection for the large paper mill consisted of buckets of water strategically placed on each floor, with a large tank of water nearby. On Sunday May 13, 1917 a young boy who lived near the mill saw smoke coming from the window and summoned his father. In turn, the father notified the tenant of the farm, John Weaver. The plant was idle that day. Weaver and some of the workers who lived on the farm used fire buckets to attempt to extinguish the fire. Dr. Hillegass was notified and rushed to the mill from his home in Pennsburg. By the time he arrived, the flames were shooting from the third- and fourth-floor windows. Volunteer firemen from Pennsburg and East Greenville Fire Companies arrived but it was too late to save the building. They formed a bucket brigade from the millrace to the house closest to the mill's engine room. They frantically poured water onto the roof of the house to cool it from the intense heat generated by the mill fire. The large barn was threatened several times by burning embers as the mill and its contents continued to burn throughout the next day. The heroic efforts of the volunteers and Hillegass' employees kept the fire from spreading. According to a report in the Town and Country the fire that destroyed the mill was believed to have started "by mice eating at matches carelessly thrown into a wastepaper basket which found its way into the bale of paper.



The Perkiomen Paper Company.



The Perkiomen-Lehigh Path

If you've lived in Upper Hanover Township for any period of time, you most likely heard stories of farmers and others finding arrowheads or other Native American relics while plowing their fields or digging a new well.

There are many fine Indian artifact collections in area museums, many of which were collected near the Perkiomen Creek in Upper Hanover Township. But little is known about a major path used by Native Americans in another area of the township.

In an article written in 1906, "well-known Allentown archeologist" D. N. Kern was reported to have one of the most valuable collections of Indian relics in Eastern Pennsylvania. Among his collection was a 28-pound jasper sledgehammer from the Vera Cruz mines.

Kern also found "three medallion portraits made of brown jasper, two of them representing the heads of men and the other that of a women." These medallions were very rare and the only other one known to exist was in Lebanon County.

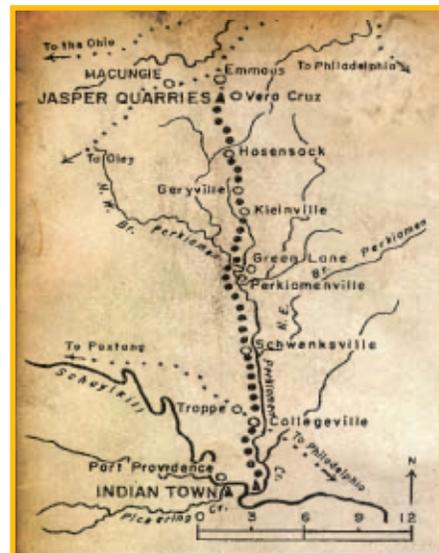
Native Americans worked the jasper pits and quarries at Vera Cruz, as well as others in Lehigh and Bucks Counties back in the early 1700's. As a matter of archeological record, they worked the quarries some 12,000 years before that!

The quarries at Vera Cruz, in Lehigh County, were just a few hundred yards west of the town. It is one of many sites reported on the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission's National Register Listed Eligible Properties.

According to the Commission, the earliest Native Americans quarried and shaped the jasper "for tool making as early as ten thousand to twelve thousand years ago. Their descendents continued to quarry and work this stone until the time of their first contact with Europeans in the 17th century."

Researchers claim that the Jasper from Vera Cruz was traded into New Jersey, Delaware, and Western Pennsylvania. This sparked some interest in the various routes of travel used and Upper Hanover Township lies right in the middle of a major trail once used by Native Americans on their travels on their way to the Jasper mines.

According to Dr. Paul A. W. Wallace's *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania*, "a path ran north from an Indian town on the Schuylkill at the mouth of the Perkiomen Creek (about a mile south of Oaks) to the Vera Cruz jasper quarries." The path was reported to have run up the west side of the Perkiomen Creek, past modern day Schwenksville and Perkiomenville. It was reported to have crossed the water where the Perkiomen and Macoby creeks meet in Green Lane. From there, the path crossed the hills between the two creeks and continued north along the Macoby and Stony Run creeks, through Kleinville, in Upper Hanover Township, and on to Geryville, Hosensack, and the Jasper mines at Vera Cruz.



*The dark spots on the map mark the location of the Perkiomen-Lehigh Path as it wound from the banks of the Schuylkill River to the Jasper mines in Vera Cruz. Map is from Dr. Paul A. W. Wallace's *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania*.*

The Last Covered Bridge

Much has been written about Markley's Bridge over the years. We know it today as the "Knight's Road Bridge."

Built in 1835 at a cost of \$2,500, it was an impressive covered bridge that stretched for 301 feet to carry the Philadelphia-Kutztown Road (known as Knight's Road today) across the Perkiomen Creek in Upper Hanover Township. The structure sat upon four piers made out of red stone that was quarried in the nearby hills. It served travelers at that location for 121 years.

Among other names, the long, dimly lit passageway was known as the "kissing bridge." It is remembered best as Markley's Bridge, the name affixed to it in 1874 when the Markley family took ownership of the nearby mill.

It was a sound structure that contained much of its original wood when it was demolished. It seemed to be able to survive whatever man and nature could throw at it.

For instance, in 1920 a dump truck carrying 5 tons of logs to the Boyertown Burial Casket Company crashed through the bridge as it attempted to cross and in 1925 when the Perkiomen Creek rose 16 feet above normal during one of the worst floods of our areas history.

A dam in Hosensack and another in Palm broke under the tremendous pressure of the rising Hosensack and Perkiomen Creeks, sending a raging wall of water toward the Markley Bridge. Acting like a dam itself, the bridge stood strong against the flow

and slowed the waters preventing devastation downstream.



The coming of the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company's (PSWC) reservoir eventually sounded the death knell for the old bridge, but not until several efforts were made to save it.

The reservoir would raise the level of the water under the bridge by 20 feet. PSWC preferred not to have to raise the road above the level of the water, and petitioned to have Knight's Road vacated. PSWC offered to disassemble the bridge piece-by-piece for reassembling in the Montgomery County Park near Green Lane.

The Montgomery County Commissioners were in favor of that, but they also wanted the PSWC to raise Knight's Road, keep it open, and help pay for a replacement bridge. Many local folks favored keeping the bridge where it was, but raising it to a point safely above water level.

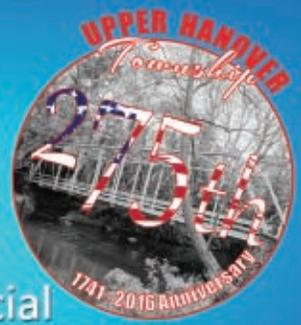
Keeping the bridge and raising it 20 feet was not feasible and engineers advised against it. However, the courts ruled that PSWC needed to keep Knight's Road open, and raise it 20 feet. Montgomery County and PSWC officials were able to come to a compromise about sharing the cost of a new bridge, but now faced with a share of the cost of the building a new span both sides faced shortfalls for preserving the old one and in 1956 the longest covered bridge, and last remaining of its type in Montgomery County, was razed.



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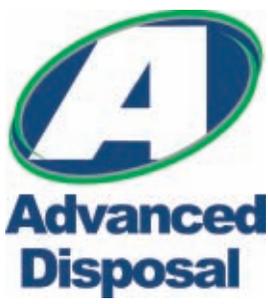
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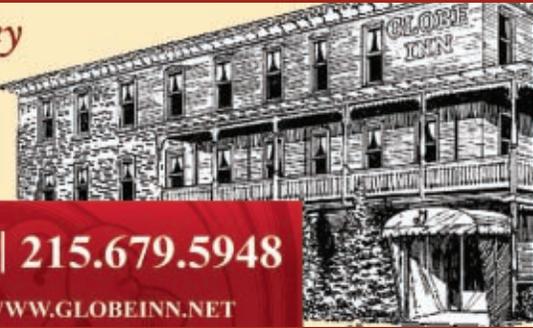
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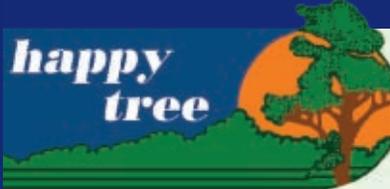
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