

Mark your Calendar

Be sure to come visit us at these upcoming events in Ridley Park!

Ridley Park 3rd Thursdays

Thursday, September 19

6pm - 9pm

Ridley Park Business District

Main Streets Fall Festival

Sunday, October 13, 2024

12pm - 5pm

Ridley Park Business District

Is your home over 100 years old??

Century house plaques are available to Ridley Park homes and structures that have reached the ripe old age of 100. If you are looking for a special gift or tribute to acknowledge that milestone—here's your opportunity!

Of all the questions we receive from residents, discovering the age and history of their home is the top question. The easiest way to research the age is online at the county's website: www.delcopa.gov/publicaccess/index.html and select the "Real Estate Tax System" tab, or log in as guest on the "Recorder of Deeds" page. You can search by address to find the information on your house.



If you have a few hours, you can also visit the Government Center Recorder of Deeds department and search back in time to the very first deed. You'll be surprised at all you can learn.

The cost of the 6" x 6" solid bronze plaque is \$250.00. Turn around time will vary depending on when it is ordered. For an additional fee of \$25, the Historical Society will research the history of your home for you.

Please mail a check with the application form and information about your home to us at: **Ridley Park Historical Society, PO Box 264, Ridley Park, PA 19078**. The application form can be found at www.ridleyparkhistorical.org/century-house.

We have a new home!

If you're looking for a blast from the past, stop by the Historical Society's new space in Borough Hall. We have quite a collection of maps, old photos, newspaper clippings, Ridley Park yearbooks, and many other artifacts from Ridley Park's history.

The office door is to the right of the Borough Hall side entrance.

Stay tuned for updates on appointments to visit.

Ridley Park Historical Society P.O. Box 264 Ridley Park, PA 19078

Phone: 610-521-9136 Email: rphsinfo@ridleyparkhistorical.org Website: www.ridleyparkhistorical.org

Interested in becoming a Member?

By becoming a member you acknowledge that history is an integral part of Ridley Park's future.

Your membership affords us visibility and recognition in government decisions that have the potential to affect historic preservation.

To learn more about membership please email rphsinfo@ridleyparkhistorical.org

News of the Ridley Park Historical Society

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Ridley Park in the Victorian Age

The term *Victorian Age* refers to the time between 1832 and 1901, the years that Queen Victoria ruled England. England was the central world power at that time and, although America had been free from England's rule for almost 50 years when Victoria took the throne, Britain maintained a strong influence on world culture.

When the Ridley Park Association was incorporated in 1871, America had defeated the British in two wars, abolished slavery, built a railroad that spanned the country, and reunited after a civil war. American inventions like the sewing machine (Howe), milling machine (Whitney), steamboat (Fulton), and telegraph (Morse) were transforming production, communication, and transportation.

The improvements in these vital industries created countless small business opportunities and skilled trade jobs. The resulting growth in average income increased demand for houses and consumer goods. Indoor plumbing was becoming prevalent, the electric light bulb was on the horizon, and, for those buying a house in Ridley Park, life was good.

Technology made the development of the middle class economically possible, but the American belief in equality changed the culture. The desire for a society without strict class designations was



the impetus for the Revolutionary War and, after throwing off the English king and medieval system, Americans were determined to dismiss rank and class in favor of control over their own destiny.

Along with self-determination came the expectation of self-control. The new social order valued thrift, reliability, and a strong sense of duty. Citizens of Ridley Park were expected to be competent, trustworthy and morally upright. Much of the emphasis on morality came from the dominant Protestant religions of the day. According to some accounts, Isaac Hinckley and his cohorts offered land and money to nearby Protestant congregations if they agreed to move to Ridley Park. Christ Church Episcopal, Ridley Park Baptist, and Ridley Park Presbyterian all took the offer and held services at the train station until their new churches were completed.

The middle class in America grew rapidly during the Victorian period, full of the promise of freedom, respect, and a comfortable life. Ridley Park was created in that promise.

Victorian Architecture Styles of Ridley Park



Gothic Revival
1840 - 1880



Second Empire
1855 - 1885

The Ridley Park Association was incorporated in May of 1871 at the height of the Victorian era in America, a time of great social and economic change. Innovations in technology sparked the Industrial Revolution and the resulting growth in transportation and manufacturing quickly expanded the middle class. Average Americans were able to own their own homes because building materials were less expensive and more readily available. New building styles and ornate fixtures predominated the architectural design of the time. That influence shows in the buildings throughout our town.

The industrial age also revolutionized home furnishings. Just as machines made "gingerbread" decoration available for houses, elaborate wooden furniture and lavish fabrics could be created in a factory. Items like delicate filigreed cabinets and rich brocade curtains became ready-made and sold in stores at reasonable prices.

Clothing was commercially produced by 1871 as mass production of sewing machines and the introduction of synthetic fabric dyes began in the 1850s. Clothing styles were in steep contrast to the fancy houses and furniture. The Victorian Age in America was marked by an emphasis on strict moral standards and middle-class apparel reflected those conservative ideals. Acceptable attire for both men and women featured dark colors and modest design.

Pictured here are examples of some of the predominant Victorian style homes that we see here in Ridley Park. Can you match your home to its Victorian style?



Stick Style
1860 - ca.1890



Queen Anne
1880 - 1910



Colonial Revival
1880 - 1955



American Foursquare
1890 - 1930



Shingle Style
1880 - 1900