



# MOUNT PENN

*“The Friendly Borough”*

From Early Times  
Through 1994

Compiled by John A. Becker



# FOREWARD



This History is a collection of remembrances, a review of old documents and photographs combined with an effort to separate what is factual from the misinformation that is passed on verbally over the years. The Borough's history is the result of many years of accumulating and sorting through fact and hearsay to the best of my ability.

No effort was made to be all encompassing with any subject but it is hoped that enough is present to whet the appetite so that those desiring more information will take the time and be interested enough to go back to the detailed records available of the churches, the organizations and the records of the municipality itself.

Gratitude must be expressed to those who shared their memories with me over the years and a special thanks to Paul Knoll and Florence Goodhart for their remarkable recall of events of the past. Also thanks to Penrose Christian who gave me prints of many old photographs and to Edna Green who permitted me to copy her father-in-law, Albert Green's vast collection of old post cards of the area.

It is hoped that those reading this collection of information will be willing to continue adding to it for those who will follow us. Like all documents of the past, the future may show that there are some errors but this format makes them easily correctable.

The task of compiling this information was time consuming, but a pleasurable one. It really is the act of an individual who has appreciated the quality of life in the community in which he has chosen to live.

JOHN A. BECKER

# MOUNT PENN BOROUGH

The Borough of Mount Penn is a small community in southeastern Pennsylvania with the City of Reading to its west, the Township of Exeter to the east and the Township of Lower Alsace on both the north and south borders. It is only four-tenths of a square mile in area with a population that varies around the three thousand mark. It is basically a residential community and has been so since it was founded.

The area from which Mount Penn emerged began as a land grant from the King of England to William Penn. The State of Pennsylvania was given to William in payment for a debt owed to him by the King. William granted a portion of the land to his sons, Thomas and Richard Penn, and it was Thomas who laid out the lines for the County of Berks and what eventually became the City of Reading. The Penns named the area after the town of Reading in the County of Berkshire, England from where they came.

A petition was presented to the Philadelphia County's Court of Quarter Sessions on December 2, 1744 by Jacob Spangler, Dewalt Baum, Henry Snider, Peter Smith, Hohannes Hawaracker, Phillip Hand, Michael Graul and Heinrich Gutard stating that sufficient amount of land had been settled to entitle the area to become a separate township. Since the majority of the settlers had been of German origin they requested that the name of the township be "Elsace." The area was surveyed by William Parsons, the surveyor general, who certified that the area interfered with no other township and on March 4, 1745 it became Alsace Township.

The large area was reduced constantly by the formation of the many communities of which it consists today. One example would be Reading which became a township in 1761, a borough in 1783 and a city in 1847. The local area became Lower Alsace Township in 1888.

The Borough of Mount Penn began when in 1902 the court was petitioned by a group of residents and landowners to create the Borough out of 242 acres and 166 perches of the Lower Alsace Township. On January 7, 1903 the Borough of Mount Penn came into existence as a small suburban community and has remained as such through out the years.

The first election in the Borough took place on February 17, 1903. The Judge of Elections was John A. Zeckman and the inspectors were James D. Bady and William F. Heibert. Elected to Council were George A. Levan, Dr. M. L. Bertolette, John H. Clark, David D. Nein, James D. Bady, David D. Dondore and William O. Leinbach. They first met in Dr. Bertolette's office at 2232 Perkiomen Avenue. The solicitor was E.S. Kremp who was to do all legal work for \$100 annually. Mr. Kremp was the Reading lawyer who came into the area in the late eighteen hundreds and built the estate "RAVENSWOOD". The Chief Burgess elected was George C. Hartline. Meetings were held for several years in rooms

## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH

rented from Daniel Albright whose building still stands at the Northeast corner of 23rd and Perkiomen.

The Borough since its inception was fortunate to have elected officials who were progressive in nature and concerned with the overall well being of the community. The newly elected officials in 1903 had much to do and one of the first major acts was to grant the Mount Penn Suburban Water Company the right to provide the service to the Borough on July 30, 1903. Also in 1903 the Consolidated Telephone Company of Pennsylvania was given permission to erect poles and string wires to provide phone service to the residents.

Fire hydrants were required to be maintained by the water company in 1904. Council also established locations for six electric arc lights. One was to be on Perkiomen Avenue about 156 feet West of 22nd Street, others were to be at 23rd and 25th on Perkiomen, at the intersection of 24th and Cumberland, the intersection of Friedensburg Road and Carsonia Avenue and the sixth to be located at South 23rd and Fairview Streets. The Reading Gas Company on May 21, 1905 was granted rights to supply gas to the residents. Also this year the Council recognized the newly formed Mount Penn Fire Company.

Council in 1906 arranged to purchase land and a building and on March 11, 1907 held their first meeting in the new Municipal Building which still stands at 40 North 23rd Street. The building was utilized jointly by borough officials and the members of the fire company. One of the first ordinances to regulate the responsibility of the citizens was enacted February 28, 1910 which required everyone to remove snow from the walkways for the benefit of all. Also on December 12, 1910 a contract was entered into with Metropolitan Edison Light Company to furnish lighting for the Borough. During 1911 on June 19th a small portion of 37 3/4 perches 237 feet 4 1/2 inches east of 27th Street on Perkiomen and northwest was annexed by the Borough from Lower Alsace Township.

The construction, maintenance and alterations of buildings was regulated in 1922 and in 1923 the creation of a police department took place. During 1923 the Mount Penn Fire Company dedicated their new fire hall on May 19th on the southeast corner of 23rd and Filbert Streets. Council rented a portion of it and on November 1, 1923 council met for the first time in the new structure. The Borough offices moved into the corner rooms at Filbert and 23rd which had been formerly used as a small store which sold candy, YB cigars etc. In 1924 garbage, glass, weeds etc. were prohibited from being thrown into the streets of the Borough.

A sewer district was created on November 7, 1935 and financed with local funds and money from the Public Works Administration of the Federal Government and was designed to serve not only the Borough but also portions of the adjacent communities. This was followed closely with rules and regulations by the Board of Health regarding plumbing. Up until this time the dispos-



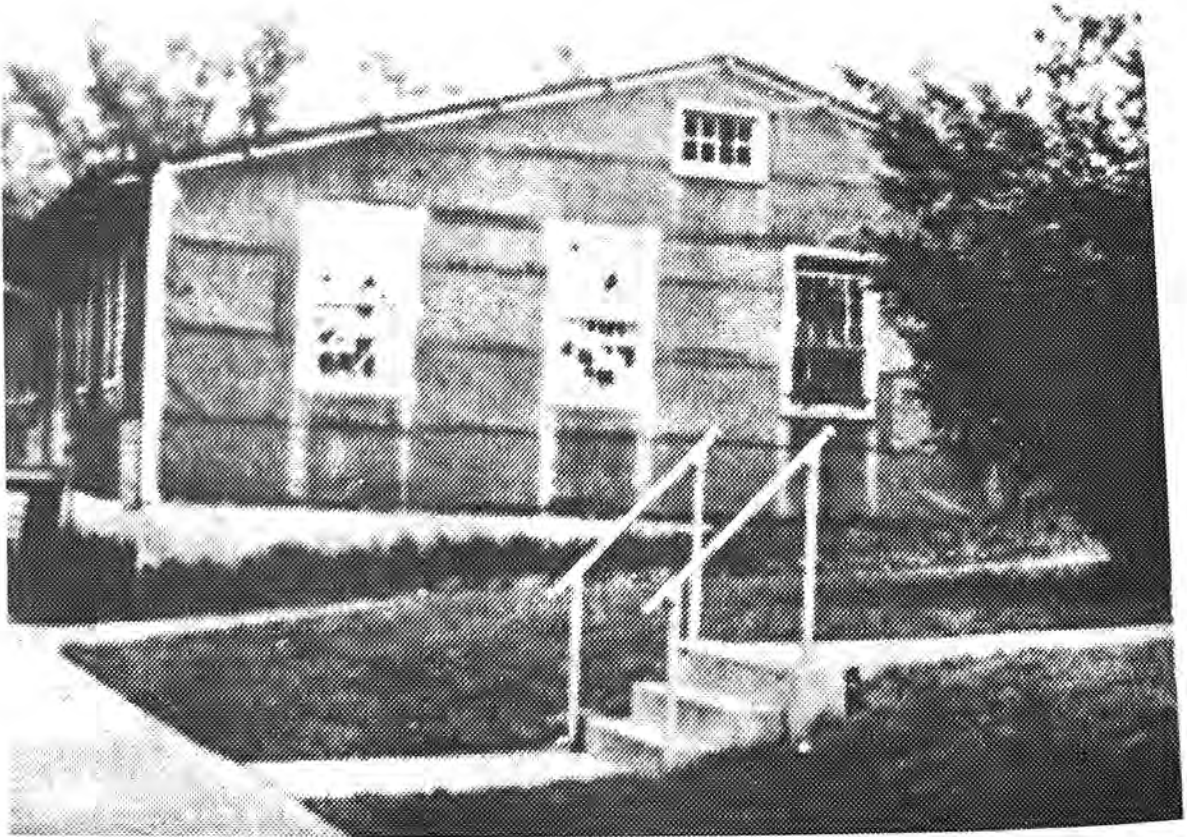
## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH

al was into cess pools. The system became a joint operation between Mount Penn and Lower Alsace Township and was changed to the Antietam Valley Municipal Authority on February 24, 1982.

An annexation of another portion of Lower Alsace Township took place in 1937 on June the 6th when a portion bounded from Butter Lane, the northwest side of Brighton, the northwest side of Philmay Terrace, etc. took place. The year 1938 saw the creation of a Recreation Board to provide activities for the children of the community during the months of the summer season, and on October 3, 1940 another portion of Lower Alsace was annexed. This area consisted of Butter Lane to High Street and the west side and south side of 27th street, etc. The Borough at this time reached the current size of 262 acres and 112 perches, approximately four-tenths of a square mile in area.

The Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority was formed on November 7, 1940 and on May 15, 1941 the Authority purchased the Mount Penn Suburban Water Company. Over the years the system has been constantly upgraded and the service improved for the benefit of the customer.

A major element in the safety of the citizens took place in 1950 when the Borough was among the first to provide 24 hour police protection for the municipality. Another big step took place on June 12, 1952 with the establishment of a Zoning Ordinance which prevents haphazard development of an area to the detriment of the residents thereof. Constantly upgrading these standards over the years has been maintained for the benefit of everyone.



**Old Knitting Mill, North 25th at Filbert, 1957. Building torn down to build the present Borough Hall.**

## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH

The expansion of community services continued and in 1957 an abandoned factory on the northwest corner of 25th and Filbert was purchased, demolished and a new Municipal Building was erected on the spot in 1958. The Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority transferred its offices from 2227 Perkiomen Avenue to the new location and the Borough offices moved from the fire company building to this building in 1959. Council held its first meeting here on June 9, 1959. The Borough offices and the Authority have jointly occupied the building ever since this time.

The operations for the community has continued in a generally satisfactory manner and over the years have been expanded to accommodate the desires of the citizens. The streets have been maintained to a high degree compared to many communities. Street lighting has been increased as a deterrent to crime so that at this time there are 251 street lights in the Borough, which is a very impressive number for the size of the area. Twice-a-week trash and garbage collections were established years ago and lately recycling has also been added to this service.

In 1993 another progressive step took place when the police department was disbanded and the Borough joined with Alsace Township and Lower Alsace Township in the creation of a regional police force. The Central Berks Regional Police Department became a reality on June 8, 1993 and has functioned satisfactorily since its inception. The re-assessment of all structures by the County of Berks resulted in a change of the tax bases throughout the area.

This re-assessment created a large difference in the property values of the community which rose to almost \$92,000,000 for 1994 compared with a little over \$5,700,000 in 1993. This resulted in a re-structuring of the tax rates from 27 mills in 1993 to 1.8 mills in 1994. This was the most radical change in the history of the community. Another big change in 1994 was the required compliance with the federal American Disability Act which required renovating the Municipal Building to accommodate the handicapped individual who might enter the premises and also a large number of alterations to the curbing at intersections where ramps will be required going into the streets.

The majority of the citizens faced with the many changes over the years continue to believe that the Borough of Mount Penn has been a good place to reside and raise a family. This is probably the reason that the area has a large percentage of Senior Citizens living within its borders.

One account in 1909 stated that the Borough had 140 dwelling units, a population of 400 persons, two churches, a two story brick school building, two carriage works, a coal yard, an organ factory, a factory to make paper flour sacks and a number of stores, shops and hotels. As you travel through the community today most people would feel that time has been kind to the Borough of Mount Penn.

# **SIGNERS OF THE PETITION TO THE COURTS IN 1902**

The petition for the creation of the Borough of Mount Penn was advertised in the Daily Eagle during July, August and September of 1902.

The following signers were inhabitants of the village of Dengler's.

James K. Texter	Frank E. Kauffman	David D. Nein
John Ruff	I. N. Manwiller	Harry W. Barth
Herman Fisher	Harvey J. Bernhardt	Edward W. Hinnershitz
Samuel Reifsnyder	John D. Barth	Charles Brodman
James H. Hamer	J. S. Esterly	George W. Russel
Charles A. Keehn	James H. Devine	Milford H. Nein
Llew W. Hinnershitz	Samuel Steiger	Peter W. Keehn
Henry F. Lutz	Wm. H. Albright	Edward Harvey
Mrs. Ellen Trout	Wesley Burd	Peter Glaser
Daniel B. Keehn	Percival Leinbach	Chas. H. Longacre
J. W. Eyrich	James Longacre	C. H. Ruppert
John R. Folk	Geo. A. Levan	John D. Nein
Chas. O. Levan	David D. Dundore	Elizabeth H. Brown
George C. Hartline	Jacob Folk	Loyal Burkholder
Wm. H. Homan	John J. Scarlet	Wm. O. Leinbach
C. H. Kline	John B. Keehn	C. N. Leinbach
E. E. Palm	W. A. Bright	W. P. Hilbert
Antony Rudy	George B. Hartman	Henry Barth
J. F. M. Koch	Arthur G. Devine	Valentine Grof
H.S. Hinnershitz	Blausius Lighthan	Albert R. Sure
Wm. H. Gehret	Chas A. Youse	Joe Davis
Samuel Reifsnyder	D. R. Gehret	Howard B. Deysher
John Rudy	Daniel R. Quinter	D. D. Gehres
Samuel R. Nein	Reuben Moyer	Boyd V. Von Nieda
Gregory Heine	Bryon R. Dengler	Thomas Hartman
Joseph G. Rheinwald	Adam H. Schlegel	Warren D. Hartline
Charles H. Schlegel	Benjamin E. Rakee	Harvey Keehn
P. D. Lauman	Samuel N. Nein	James D. Bady
Edward S. Kremp	John F. Miller	George W. Renninger

This list is of the eighty-seven inhabitants who signed the petition and it was verified by Geo. C. Hartline, Justice of Peace on June 2, 1902. It was recorded that the petition had been properly advertised as of September 8, 1902 and was finally approved by the courts and recorded in Charter Book No. 5, Page 348 by the Recorder of Deeds for the County of Berks on January 7, 1903.

This list is followed by one listing the forty-one property owners in the



## SIGNERS OF THE PETITION TO THE COURTS IN 1902

Village of Dengler's who were also involved in the Borough's formation.

These forty-one property owners of the Village of Dengler's also signed the petition to have the courts create the Borough of Mount Penn.

Emma A. Endlich	Harry Styer	Chas. L. Jackson
Lucretia Angstadt	James H. Mohn	John M. Strunk
F. C. Kretz	H. A. Halbeisen	Henry T. Eberhardt
E. H. Christian	Edward Medtz	Elen Madary
John H. Printz	L. H. Focht	H. J. Raudenbush
Ed. P. Eisenbrown	Emma Reaser	Chas. H. Maderia
Anna A. Kremp	Mark A. Keepert	Elmer W. Deck
Magdalena Smith	Jerome L. Boyer	Geo. H. Seidel
Jonathan G. Leinbach	Wm. R. Nein	Wm. A. Arnold
Amanda D. Wentzel	A. J. Brumbach	H. M. Knaut
John F. Hodapp	Wm. R. Weidner	Chas. D. Schofer
Jacob Bingaman	Chas. F. Yiety	Louisa Lang
W. N. Hinnershitz	Henry T. Kendall	Isaiah E. Zuber
Elva L. Spencer	C. D. Styer	

It is obvious from the list of inhabitants and property owners that everyone in the area was not enthusiastic about forming the Borough. When the Court approved the petition it also fixed the date of election as February 17th, 1903 and it was to be held in the public house known as Dengler's Hotel. Probably the biggest landowner who signed the petition was Emma Endlich. There is no Dengler listed in the petition and it is probably because the name was to be changed from Dengler's to Mount Penn. It is said that Clarence Hartman was given a Bible for naming the Borough in a contest held in 1902. His sister Katherine later married George Dengler, who owned the tavern at 22nd and Perkiomen and also a cut rate drug store in Reading near Fourth Street.



# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(THE PEOPLE)**

### **BURGESS:**

GEORGE C. HARTLINE  
H. S. HINNERSHITZ  
GEORGE L. DENGLER  
HENRY R. MILLER  
GEORGE EVES  
F. H. HOWARD  
H. A. KISSINGER  
STEWART B. LUTZ  
HOMER H. GRAVER  
HOWARD D. GOODWIN  
LEROY F. CHRISTMAN  
HOWARD D. GOODWIN  
THOMAS P. STULTS

### **MAYOR:**

THOMAS P. STULTS  
PAUL J. ESHELMAN  
VINCENT W. CONDRATH  
ROBERT HARRIS  
JOHN A. BECKER  
DONALD HARTENSTINE  
D. REGINA SKRINCOSKY

### **PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL:**

DR. M. L. BERTOLETTE  
IRA J. J. REBER  
C. M. KLINE  
E. H. HOWARD  
J. C. BREIGHTHAUPT  
H. A. KISSINGER  
CLARENCE L. SMITH  
ARTHUR L. HAUER  
HOMER H. GRAVER  
H. A. SNYDER  
VERNON L. RHOADS  
C. RAYMOND SMITH  
GEORGE T. POWERS  
THOMAS P. STULTS  
JOSEPH L. MILLER  
RUSSELL E. KING  
JOHN F. MC GOEY  
RAYMOND J. O'GRATTIS  
BART B. HANNAHOE  
JOSEPH T. LYSCEK JR.  
RALPH ORLANDO  
D. REGINA SKRINCOSKY  
RALPH ORLANDO  
JOSEPH L. MILLER  
JOHN A. BECKER

The above lists are in the order the individuals served since the inception of the Borough until the current time. No distinction is made to indicate length of time in the office. The changes in the laws of Pennsylvania is the reason for Thomas P. Stults to be listed as both Burgess and Mayor.

## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE PEOPLE)**

**THE NEINS:** An early business in the area was a coal yard located at what is now 2234 and 2236 Perkiomen Avenue. It was operated by Francis B. Palm and in the later 1800's it was taken over by the Nein family, David D. and his brother Joseph D. and in 1884 it became the first post office in the area of Dengler's. It was situated in David's office and he became the Postmaster and held that position until 1904 when the office was moved and a new Postmaster appointed.

The business flourished and later the brothers added a flour, feed and grain business and a planing mill was set up in the rear of the property. The property ran from Perkiomen Avenue to Woodvale and if one stood across the street and looked up to the top of the Neversink Mountain in 1900, you would see the Neversink Mountain Hotel which was quite a landmark in the area.

Later on John Nein took over the business and finally his son, Sam. It was the Neins who built the large semi-detached homes at 2242 and 2244 Perkiomen and resided there for many years. Finally the coal business declined and in November 1967 the area was sold to William Lindgren who built a car wash here. Later it became a Health Spa and now is a gymnasium and office owned by the Community General Hospital.

**ELMER E. PALM:** Near the Western end of what would be an extension of Woodvale Avenue off of South 22nd Street stands a small building which was built in 1890 by Elmer E. Palm as a factory for the manufacture of pipe organs. This building is now used for storage by the Jack W. Evans Food Distributor.

Mr. Palm learned his trade from Samuel Bohler at 824 Court Street in the City of Reading when he went to work there in 1880. When Mr. Bohler died in 1890 Mr. Palm went out to Dengler's where he owned seven acres of land east of what is now South 21st Street extending from Woodvale to above Fairview Street. He erected his home at 2106 Fairview, six brick homes across the street and the wooden building for his organ factory.

In a short time Mr. Palm was employing eight to ten men at his organ plant. Among the local places where his organs were installed were the Hope Lutheran Church, Second Reformed Church, Christ Lutheran at Spangsville, Salem Evangelical Church, First United Baptist Church and the Trinity Reformed Church which stood on the southeast corner of North 24th and Cumberland Streets until it moved to its present location at 25th and Cumberland.

The Palm organ factory operated until the days of World War I and built about 200 church organs before it closed. Mr. Palm then moved from Mount Penn to 719 North Ninth Street in Reading until his death on November 4, 1952 at the age of 89 years.



## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE PEOPLE)

The building, according to Mr. Evans still had some pipes in it when he purchased it. Previous to this Mr. Merlin Ziegler had used it for his beer distributorship. Mr. Palm's home on Fairview Street has been converted into apartments. Mr. Ziegler's father, John C. Ziegler, had originally purchased the property on February 5, 1924.

**ALVAH O. SCHAEFFER:** Alvah, who lived at 27 North 23rd Street was employed at the frame building that stood on the Southeast corner of 23rd and Perkiomen Avenue, which served as an automotive service station. He also was an active cornetist, playing with the Ringgold Band and others. The building was originally where Daniel Albright, and later his son William, had their carriage shops. Later on, before it was torn down to make a parking lot for the Meridian Bank drive-in window, it was occupied by Raysor's Toy Store. There was also a Raysor Toy Store on the southwest corner at this time.

Alvah developed a friendship with Tom C. Hannahoe, who owned the Stars and Stripes Hotel in the 500 block of South Eleventh Street in Reading. Tom was a popular individual and was often referred to as "The Mayor of Irish Town", which in those days corresponded to what is now East Reading. Both men were devoted to the Irish traditions of that time, marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parades and Tom usually in a fine green suit. One evening the two made a pledge that if Alvah died first Tom would always put fresh plantings of green shamrocks on his grave on St. Patrick's Day and if Tom died first Alvah would play a medley of Irish songs over Tom's grave on St. Patrick's Day.

Tom Hannahoe died first and for over fifty years after midnight on St. Patrick's Day in the Catholic Cemetery at what is called Nanny Goat Hill in South Reading the sounds of a cornet could be heard playing "The Lass of Galaway" and two other Irish tunes that were Tom's favorites. Eventually Alvah's fingers became too stiff for him to play the cornet due to arthritis and a friend of Alvah's from the Ringgold Band played for him.

Of such things as this are legends made.

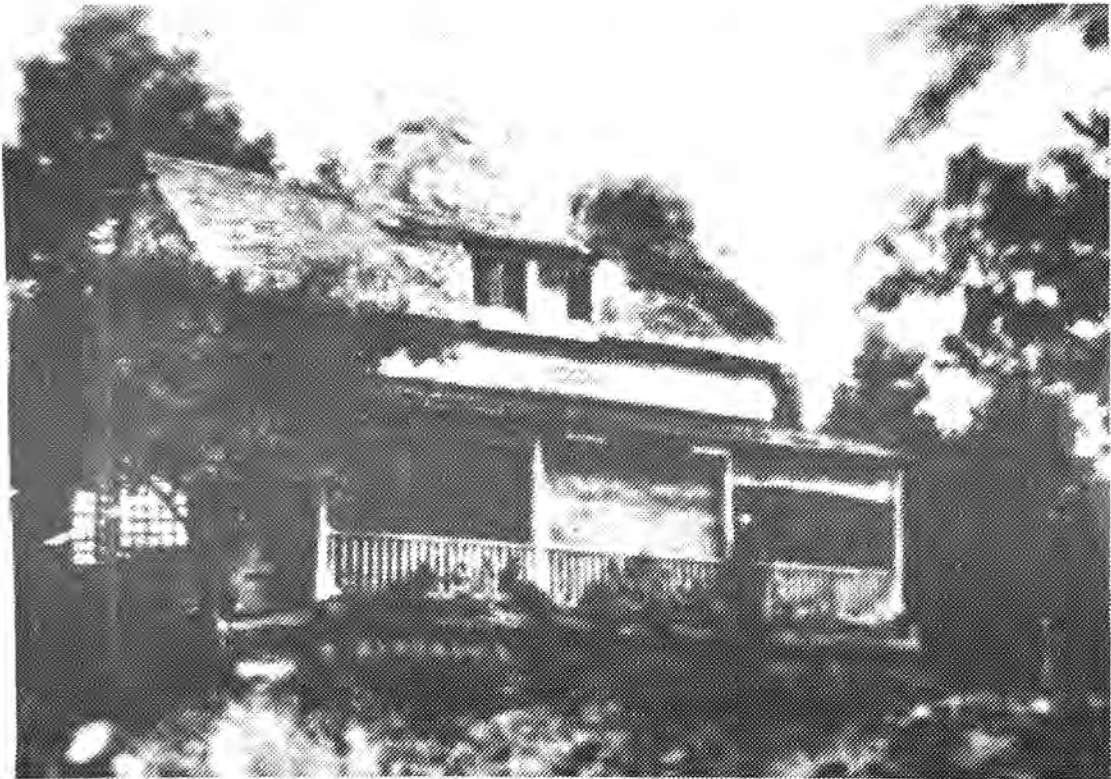
**BEN AUSTRIAN:** On the South side of the 2400 block Perkiomen Avenue, 270 feet East of 24th Street stood a log house of fairly large size, big enough to have a pool table in the one room and a balcony. This was "CLOVELLY" the home and studio of Ben Austrian who was known internationally for his paintings. Ben was not a very big man but according to those who had the pleasure of knowing him he was always a "perfect gentleman".

His most popular paintings were of mother hens and baby chicks. His most familiar work is the advertisement for "BON AMI" cleanser powder which has the picture of a little yellow chick just out of its shell with the slogan "Hasn't scratched yet" on every container of the cleanser sold. A recent sale at the Flying Hills Gallery saw his painting "Mother Hen and 13 Chicks" sell for \$15,000. Ben was born in 1877 and died in 1921. He is buried in Eckland in Albany Township

## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE PEOPLE)

in Northern Berks County.

His widow later married Richard Linder and resided at "Clovelly" until their deaths. The end of "Clovelly" came in 1952 when the Sun Oil Company purchased the property and erected a gas station on the site. An effort had been made to save the property but it had deteriorated so badly that saving it was an impossible task. After the SUNOCO station it became an ATLANTIC service station and the site is now occupied by the H & S service station.



**Ben Austrian's Home, "Clovelly",** 2400 block of Perkiomen Avenue, circa 1900, built of logs. Now the site of H & S Automotive.

**THE ALBRIGHTS:** The original building of the Albright Wagon Works stood on the Southeast corner of South 23rd Street and Perkiomen Avenue. It is now a parking lot and drive-in window for the use of Meridian Bank customers. It was a large three story frame building with a bay window on the right side of the second floor.

It was here that Daniel B. Albright founded the wagon works when he came back from the Civil War conflict in 1867. He manufactured several types of wagons with great success over the years. When he died the business was inherited by his two sons, Daniel N. Albright and William H. Albright.

The partnership didn't survive for many years before Daniel moved across the street to the Northeast corner and opened his own shop. This shop was in the rear of 2311 Perkiomen Avenue which ran from Perkiomen to Grant Street. The front part of the building was apartments. Daniel's home was the building which stands at 7 - 11 North 23rd Street today. It was a large building and had apart



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ments and was also a popular meeting place because you could rent rooms on the premises.



**Daniel Albright's Wagon Works**, at 23rd and Perkiomen Avenue, northeast corner, circa 1910.

Daniel's new factory specialized in the making of ice cream wagons. One year he filled an order for more than 100 wagons for a New York dealer. He also filled a large order in 1906 for the St. Louis World's Fair. He also supplied many local dealers. Some wagons were labeled "Borden's Unexcelled Ice Cream Dew Drops". The Fire Company and the Borough Officials often met at this location in the early years of the Borough.

William at the original location dealt mainly in the manufacturing of "milk wagons". These were used by the milkmen who carried the milk in large cans and dipped it out into the containers which the housewives brought out to the wagons. This went out of existence shortly after World War I when the administration of strict sanitation laws were put into effect.

John Schlegel bought the first hose cart of the Mt. Penn Fire Company from Daniel and William. William's building became an automotive supply shop and then as used by Raysor's as a toy store before it was torn down for the parking lot. Daniel's buildings were sold and the apartment building was purchased by Constantine Mantis as a place to dine. Mr. Mantis also obtained a liquor license and opened a tavern on the corner which for many years was a very popular place for many people.

## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE PEOPLE)**

The Albrights were well to do people as evidenced by the old photos which show Mrs. Albright in her Cutter being pulled in the snow by their horse "Ted" and one showing Daniel's son Paul driving one of the first automobiles in the Borough. It was an ACME which was made in the City of Reading from July 1903 until 1911.

**WELLINGTON HINNERSCHITZ:** He was an early manufacturer in the Borough. In 1904 Mr. Hinnerschitz started a paper flour bag factory at the site which in those days was referred to as the "frog pond". The business did not prosper for many years and ceased. The area of the "frog pond" is now where the parking lot is on the east side of the Leinbach Hardware building on Perkiomen Avenue.

**THE DENGLERS:** This area's most prominent citizens in the early days were the Denglers. It seems each generation had a George Dengler to add to the lineage and care must be taken to avoid confusing one with the other. The first mention of the Denglers was noted when George Dengler purchased 55 acres of land and the hostelry which stood at the intersection of the Philadelphia and Friedensburg Pikes (now 23rd and Perkiomen Avenue) from Mr. Keehn, who had owned it for many years.

The hostelry was build in the late 1700's and served as a popular stop for the drivers of the wagons and stage coaches bound for Philadelphia. It was known as "White Bear" in those days. George Dengler's purchase of the land and hostelry in 1840 was received warmly and in a short time George became the Justice of the Peace in Alsace Township in 1855. His popularity was so great the area became known as "DENGLER'S" by those living in the vicinity. He held this position until his death in 1865.

The properties went to his son George Dengler, Jr. The Denglers' acquisition of land was to cease in 1877 when it was divided into many small lots and put up for sale. George's son Charles became the owner and operated the hotel until December 15, 1900 when he sold it to Walter K. Greisemer. Charles during this period also operated a hotel in the Glen on the southeast side of the Neversink from 1892 on.

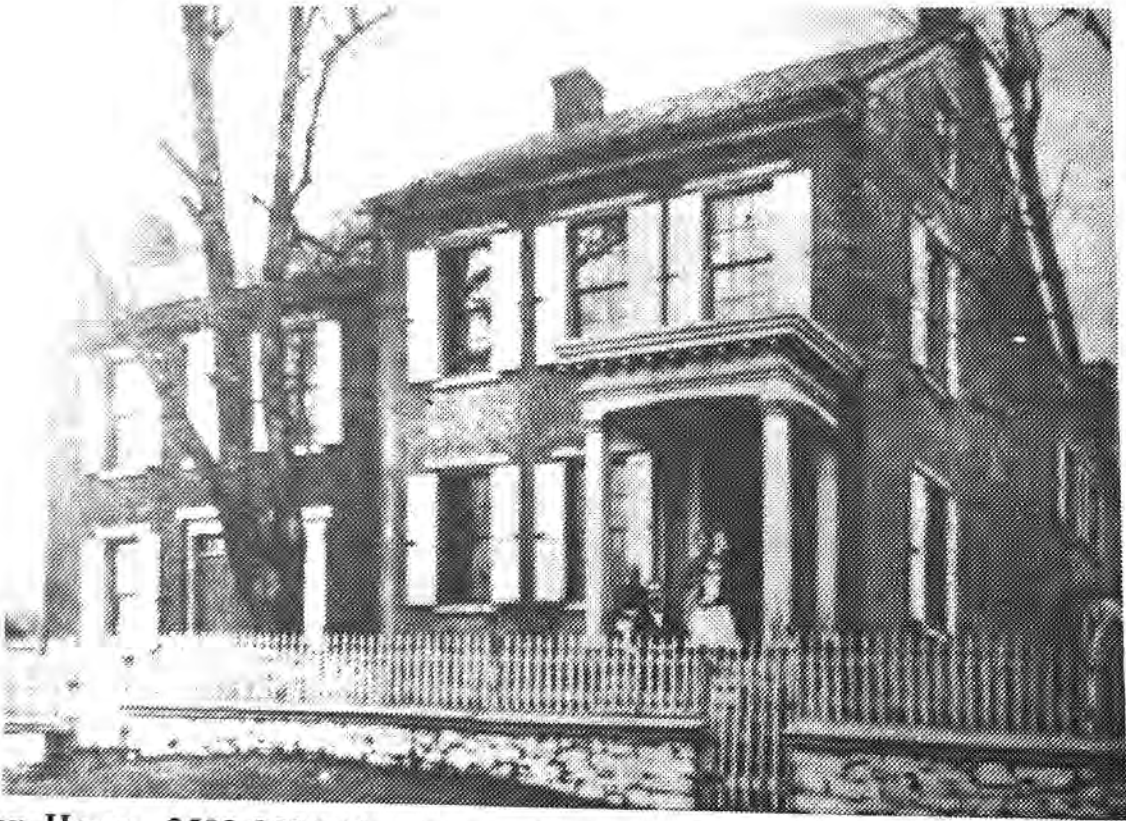
The first post office in the Village of Dengler's was started in 1884 in the office at the Nein's coal yard and remained there until 1904. The post office moved to the northeast corner of 24th Street and was named after the newly formed Borough of Mount Penn.

The tavern over the years saw many renovations and was remodeled several times; a third floor was added on one occasion. In 1921 it was remodeled for the last time and on June 28th it opened as "THE MOUNT PENN TRUST CO." It was torn down in 1928. The old bar that was in the tavern was given to the Mount Penn Fire Company in 1923 for their new building at 23rd and Filbert Avenue.



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George Dengler had a home in the late 1800's which still stands at 2502-2504 Perkiomen Avenue. Another Dengler home stood at 2458 - 2460 Perkiomen Avenue and was torn down in 1980 and a WENDY'S was erected on the spot. This was the residence of the George Dengler who owned the tavern at 22nd and Perkiomen on the northeast corner and who also had a Cut Rate Drug Store in Reading. He was married to Katherine, whose brother Clarence Hartman had won a bible in a contest in 1902 to name the proposed Borough. Their daughter Mary lived in the house until 1980. Their son George, who was the last direct descendent, died in Wyomissing in 1990.



**Dengler Home**, 2502-2504 Perkiomen Avenue, circa 1880. George Dengler, wife Catherine, daughter Katie and son Aaron. Building still standing, now being used as a doctor's office.

**A. F. REESER & KENDALL BROTHERS:** Joseph and Henry Kendall and A. F. Reeser in the late 1800's bought up large portions of the area and attempted to have the area named "WOODVALE". They sold many lots and buildings were erected. This is the reason why today the deeds of many of the properties in the borough will have a remark such as "as noted on the plans of Woodvale". In the 1890's they built the Woodvale Inn on the Southwest corner of 23rd and Fairview and it became a popular dining place for clubs and social groups for many years. The trolleys stopped at the building and the inn was filled with many out of town guests because at this time the area was actually listed as a resort community. In later years with the fading of patrons it was sold and Harry Maurer made it into apartments. It still stands today and is known as the Pennhurst Mansion.

## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE PEOPLE)**

**EDWARD S. KREMP:** It must be remembered that in the late 1800's and early 1900's the Mount Penn area was rated as a resort area in the text of the travel brochures of that time. If you had the funding, this was suburban area in which to establish an estate away from the City of Reading.

The heirs of George Dengler, during the late 1800's subdivided the land and an area west of what is now South 24th Street and between Perkiomen Avenue and Fairview Avenue was purchased by a lawyer from Reading named Edward S. Kremp in the late 1800's.

Mr. Kremp and his wife, the former Elsie Boas, had by late 1891 or early 1892 completed the construction of a large stone and frame home about halfway between Fairview and Perkiomen Avenues. Since in this time period it was customary for owners of large estates to give names to their residence, the Kremps named their home "RAVENSWOOD".

The front of the estate faced Perkiomen Avenue and a full porch ran around the West side and front of the premises. The large portion of land in front of the home had wide pathways for the carriages to drive up to the home from the avenue and this area was named "Roselawn Court."

In later years the estate was sold and became known as the "Speidel Mansion." Eventually it was resold and was converted into an apartment building and over the years slowly deteriorated. Finally the property was acquired by the St. Catharine of Siena Church and when it became too difficult to maintain it was razed in early 1983. The area nearest to South 24th Street became a parking area and the Western portion was utilized for an addition to the St. Catharine of Siena school building which had been built in 1953.

Edward Kremp's wife Elsie Boas was a great granddaughter of the Colonel Jacob Morgan who was the founder of Morgantown.

It should also be noted that Mr. Edward S. Kremp was appointed the solicitor of the newly created Borough of Mount Penn in 1903 for the fee of \$100 per annum. This was for all legal advice and services rendered.



# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(THE AUTHORITIES)**

**THE M.P.B.M.A.:** The earliest water supply through the Borough area was the pipe line from the Antietam Lake, created in 1874, and into the City of Reading where it was diverted into the filter beds at 20th and Perkiomen in 1905. The water supplies in the Borough began on July 28, 1903 when Ordinance #8 granted the right to lay and maintain water lines to the Mount Penn Suburban Water Co. which had been organized July 10, 1903 in an office of the Kraemer Woolen Mills in Stony Creek Mills where it remained until relocated to 2227 Perkiomen Avenue in 1929.

The William K. Adams farm of 35 acres was purchased and a reservoir and water lines were extended into Stony Creek and as far as the Black Bear Inn on the Oley Turnpike. Wells were drilled for more water. On May 15, 1941 all assets of the company were obtained at a cost of \$363,800 by the Mount Penn Borough Municipal Authority which had been created November 7, 1940. The officers of the Authority were Chairman Paul Williams, Vice Chairman Leroy F. Christman, Treasurer Harold Snyder, Secretary George Moore, Engineer-Manager James Mast, Solicitor John Moss, Superintendent Pierce Bechtel and Clerk Walter Klahr. Authority members are appointed by Council.

The Authority has constantly improved and expanded the system. After the closing of the Carsonia Park in 1951 the Authority purchased a 28 acre portion which included the Crystal Ballroom, the swimming pool and the lake for \$50,000. A new well was drilled on the premises. When the Antietam Valley Community and Recreation Center was formed, the M.P.B.M.A. rented the area to the organization for \$1.00 yearly and the A.V.C.R.C. maintains the premises. When the Municipal Building was constructed, the office of the M.P.B.M.A. moved from 2227 Perkiomen to the new premises on June 1, 1959. The Authority has been highly efficient and has maintained and improved the system for the benefit of their customers while holding the costs to a minimum.

**THE A.V.M.A.:** The Antietam Valley Municipal Authority had its beginning on November 7, 1935 when the Borough Council created a sewer authority and under the right of Eminent Domain, secured land in the Borough of St. Lawrence on which to erect a sewerage treatment plant. The cost to the Borough was to be \$60,000. Other funds were procured from the Federal Government under the Public Works Administration. This action not only provided Mount Penn with a sanitary disposal system but also allowed connections to be made over the years to parts of St. Lawrence, Lower Alsace, Exeter and Reading. Due to gravitational problems an agreement with the City of Reading was reached for the City to accept sewerage from the area West of 22nd Street. Council at this time were J.C. Breithaupt, Albert Schlegel, Arthur Hauer, Paul Reeser, Harold Snyder, J. Dean

## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE AUTHORITIES)

Kitchen and Burgess Stewart Lutz.

The usual disposal systems until this time were cess pools and as the sewer system expanded over the years it became mandated to connect if your cess pool overflowed or filled to within one foot of the top. It was not until 1968 that it was required for all properties to sewer connect. Over the years the treatment plant was constantly expanded and modernized and has been a splendid asset to the Borough and the surrounding communities.

In 1982 a jointure was formed with Lower Alsace Township and the system became known as the Antietam Valley Municipal Authority. Two members, John Leinbach and Lou Fiorini were representatives on the Authority from Lower Alsace and the three from Mount Penn were Joseph Miller, John Skrincosky and Dennis Swartz. This Authority is a very progressive minded one when community service is involved.



**The "Stichler" Home** on the S.E. corner of Perkiomen Avenue and Pennwyn Terrace. Torn down for a Gulf gas station in 1952. Now the location of a Turkey Hill store.





# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(THE FIRE COMPANY)**

**THE MOUNT PENN FIRE COMPANY:** There has always been some confusion because the use of "MOUNT PENN" by businesses and organizations prior to the creation of the Borough itself. This has often led to misconceptions as to whether or not something was a part of the municipality. This is especially true when it comes to the Mount Penn Fire Company. In East Reading on July 25, 1897 there was organized a Mount Penn Fire Company and in the same area on September 16, 1897 the East End Company was also organized. There was a great deal of rivalry between the two "outlaw" companies who responded whenever they felt they should. Neither was recognized by the Firemen's Union. On March 18, 1898 a merger was proposed and negotiated by other companies and after much debate they combined and became known as the UNION FIRE COMPANY. This company was recognized by the Firemen's Union on February 17, 1902 and was housed at 13th and Muhlenberg Streets in Reading.

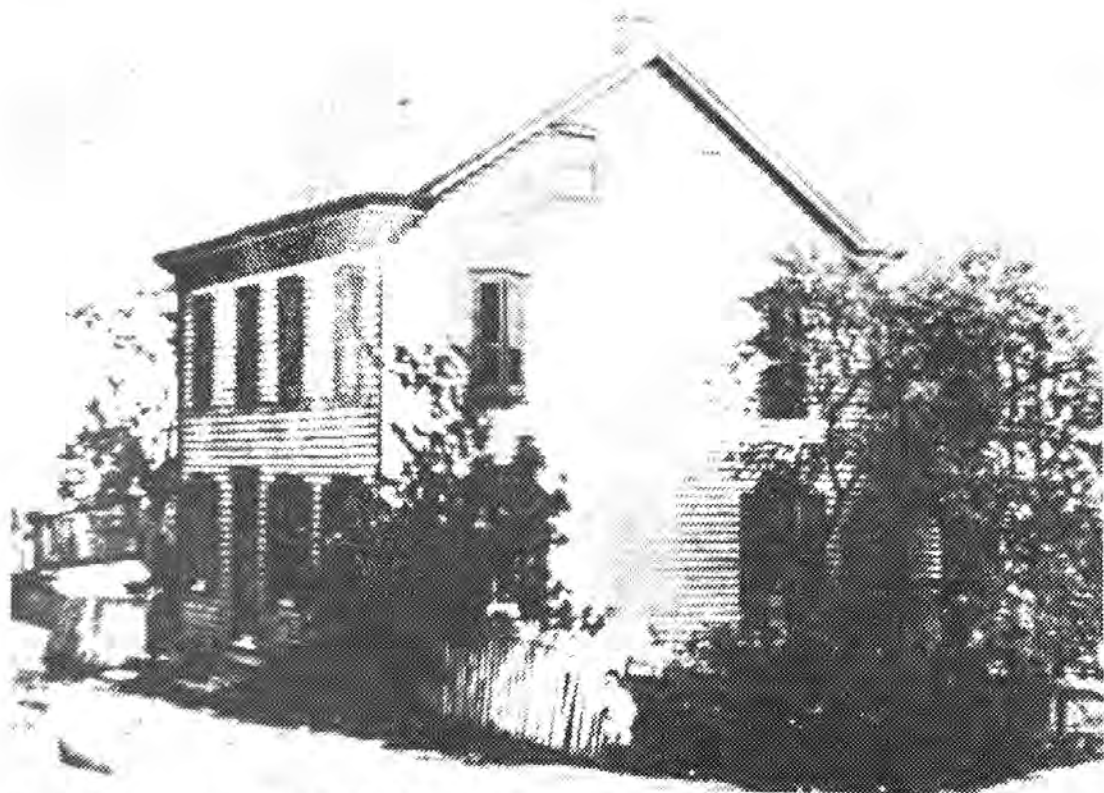
A fire company came into being in the Borough of Mount Penn on May 5, 1903 when the bylaws of the Community Fire Company was approved by the Borough. This was a group of young men who had yet to reach maturity. They met at 2234 Perkiomen Avenue and their butcher wagon with 500 feet of 2 1/2 inch hose was stored at Daniel Albright's carriage shop at 2311 Perkiomen Avenue. Horses were obtained from any passerby such as the milk man, as permitted by law. The young men involved were Mason Bright, Reuben Leisewitz, Edward Reifsnnyder, John S. Rudy, George Halbeisen, Samuel Lutz, William Hoyer and William Witman.

On April 25, 1905 an older group formed what is the present Mount Penn Fire Company. The younger group sold their butcher wagon to the West Reading Fire Company at the price of \$400 and there it was operated by Urias Klein and his two horses, Bill and Dan. It was in operation until 1918. The new group rented two rooms from Albright for \$6.00 monthly on May 29, 1905, and on June 22, 1905 the new charter was signed. The following signed the new charter: H. S. Beitenman, M. L. Bertolette, Lew Bloom, George T. Brown, William S. Levan, John N. Schlegel, Charles H. Hinnershitz, William H. Bush, H. S. Hinnershitz, James D. Bady, Charles A. Miller, Llew Hinnershitz, J. S. Esterly, Daniel D. B. Beaver, M. A. Keyport, Charles H. Schlegel, J. R. Dickenson, and Wm. P. Hilbert. John Schlegel became the first president of the company.

On January 6, 1906 a hose cart with two 15 foot ladders and two chemical tanks were purchased. On February 15, 1908 a hand truck with a 35 foot extension ladder, two 12 foot ground ladders and 2 chemical tanks of 35 gallons capacity were put into service. The cart was stored in the garage at the head of Cumberland and N. 23rd Streets. On January 3, 1914 a four wheel hand apparatus with the two chemical tanks and a two wheel hose cart were put in service.

## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE FIRE CO.)**

May 1919 saw the first mechanized unit. A Ford Model T fire truck mounted with the two chemical tanks was put into service. The 35 gallon tanks contained a baking soda and water mixture and at the fire scene a carboy of sulphuric acid was dumped into the tank. The crank at the end was turned rapidly to mix the solution and the pressure generated would spray the mixture onto the fire scene. During this time the Fire Company shared quarters with the Borough at the Borough building at 40 North 23rd Street.



**Eaches Farm**, circa 1914-1915, southeast corner of N. 23rd Street and Filbert. Site of former Mount Penn Fire Company building.

Looking for other quarters, on September 2, 1921 the fire company purchased the lots on the southeast corner of 23rd and Filbert from George Weis, who in August had bought it from the Borough, and planned to erect a new building to serve as a social quarters and a place for their apparatus. The new building was dedicated May 19, 1923 and had two bays for vehicles, an auditorium, meeting rooms, and social quarters.

Over the years there were changes in the use of the building. In 1939 the auditorium was converted into a movie theater and remained so for many years. The Borough offices were moved into the northwest corner section and remained there until 1959.

On May 15, 1925 a Hahn pumper, a deep burgundy in color, was put into service at the cost of \$6,125. The pumper was rebuilt in 1935. In 1941 a Peter Pirsch



## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE FIRE CO.)**

constructed Diamond - T truck was housed in September. These two units provided fine service during the years of the World War II. Next came the purchase of a new Mack Pumper with a Hale Pumper with a Hale pump. This unit was housed in May 1948.

The company has always been progressive as evidenced by the use of radio communications in 1952 and the installation of a base station in 1953. The radio base station served as a communications center for a large portion of the fire companies east of Reading for many years. The company also initiated the hiring of a paid driver during the daytime hours. This position was eliminated in 1979.

The year 1953 also saw the purchase of a Willy's Overland Jeep with a booster hose and tank which was used primarily to aid the neighboring fire companies in the fighting of brush and forest fires. Since the company had only two bays the Jeep was housed in a rented garage at 2411 Filbert Avenue and the Mack and Diamond - T in the fire company bays. The Diamond - T was used as a rescue unit for many years.

In 1961 a Mack pumper, which also served as the rescue unit was placed in service and the Diamond - T was sold to the Berkshire Heights Fire Company. It was this 1961 unit which in 1967 demonstrated automotive rescue techniques at the Berks County Fire School. The results were so impressive that the following year the County Fire School initiated the first class in automotive rescue work taught by Mount Penn personnel. The classes became a regular feature of the curriculum.

The year 1963 saw a major alteration of the building. The large windows in the theater and elsewhere were bricked in as a fuel economy measure and an additional two bay structure was added to the building. One of the earliest Snorkel type units, other than the City of Reading's was housed in 1972 by Mount Penn when a Ford chassis with a Hi Ranger Snorkel unit was put into service. A new GMC pickup was added to replace the Jeep as a brush truck in 1979. A Mack 1000 gallon per minute pumper was housed in 1984 and the old Mack was sold to private parties. The GMC was converted by the men into a rescue unit and then in 1994 a Swab Heavy Duty Rescue unit with crane hoists was purchased. This unit is one of the most advanced type in service enhancing the reputation of the company as a Rescue Service.

The company had been renting the bays for the apparatus since they sold the building in 1989 and finally in 1994 the final steps were taken for the construction of a new quarters in the 2700 block of Grant Street. The building was completed and the company moved into the new quarters on November 29, 1994. The corner stone was laid on December 20, 1994 during a reception and open house for the citizens. This is now the site from which the company will continue to serve the citizens of the area for many years to come in the tradition of the well-trained, progressive service which the Mount Penn Fire Company has provided for many years.

# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(TRANSPORTATION)**

Transportation through the Mount Penn area varied over the years. One of the earliest means was the stage route that Martin Hausman started in 1789 to carry mail and passengers to and from Reading and Philadelphia. In 1828 the route was extended to Harrisburg. The first toll gate on this Philadelphia Pike was located at what is now 18th Street and Perkiomen Avenue. In 1896 it was located at 19th and Perkiomen then moved to the east end of the Aulenbach Cemetery. In 1902 the toll gate was abolished. Another stage route through the area was the Reading, Pottsgrove and Philadelphia line which was started by William Coleman around 1800.

Along this route on October 1, 1794 George Washington stayed at the Black Bear Inn which was located where today is the juncture of the Old Oley Turnpike and Perkiomen Avenue on the Northwest side. In 1800 at what is now 23rd and Perkiomen Avenue, was a hostelry called the "White Bear". The tavern was owned by a Mr. Keehn who in 1840 sold it and 55 acres of land to George Dengler. This had always been a popular stage stop.

The stage lines began to falter with the beginning of the railroad running between Philadelphia and Reading by December 5, 1839, carrying mail, freight and passengers. In May 1889 East Reading Electric Railray Company ran a line from Perkiomen Avenue out South 14th Street to Fairview and then over to Woodvale Junction, now 23rd and Fairview Avenue. The Woodvale Inn which still stands as an apartment building on the southwest corner was a popular dining place. On the northwest corner still stands the building that housed the substation for the electric trolley lines. The trolley then extended to Black Bear and went south over the Neversink Road to Gibraltar, then eastward to Birdsboro. During 1890 the system was extended from Fairview over 23rd Street and Carsonia Avenue to Stony Creek Mills.

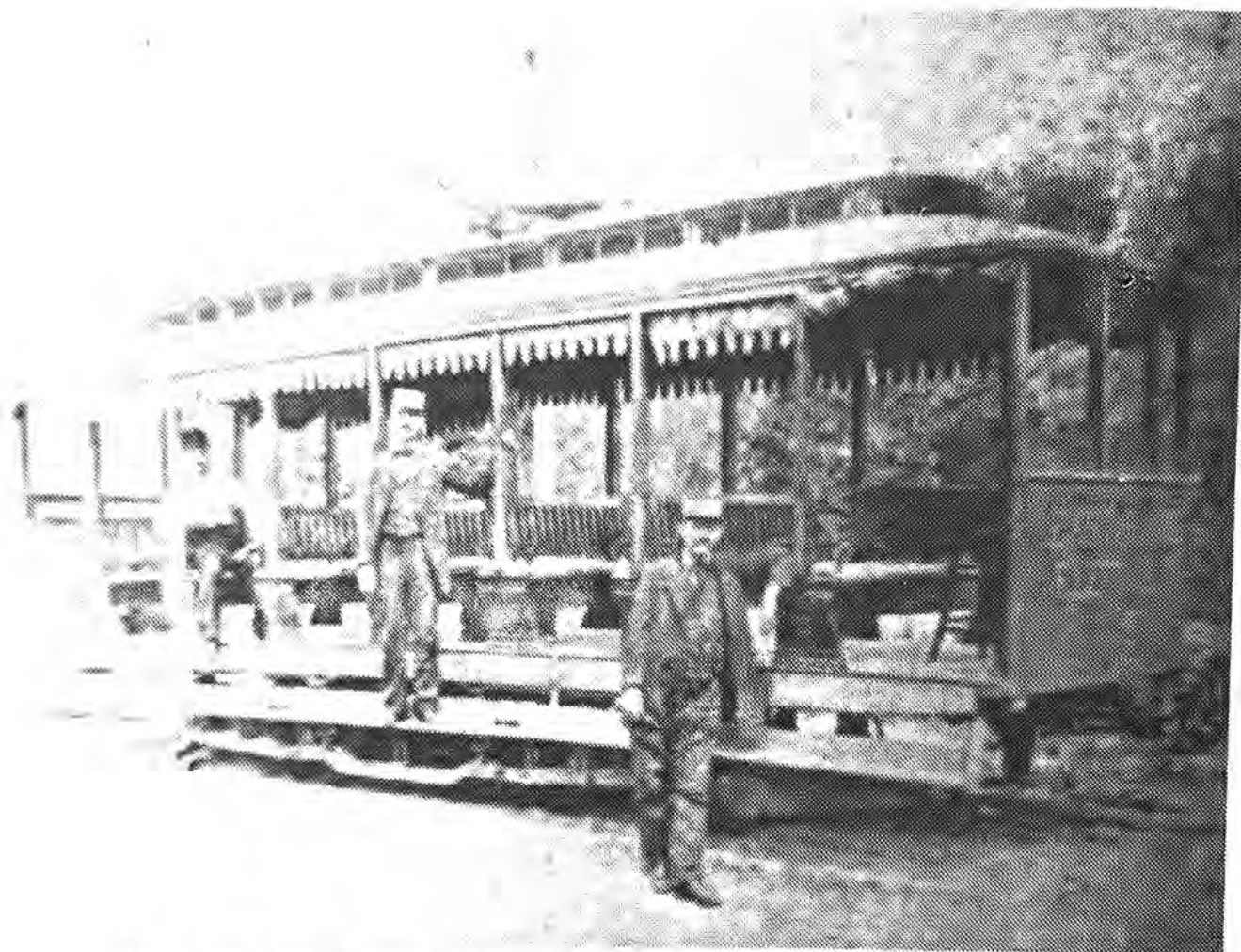
Development in the area was spurred onward partially by John Rigg of the United Traction Company purchasing the 145 acre farm of William Schweitzer and creating the Carsonia Park in 1896. By 1897 tracks were built from 19th and Perkiomen Avenue eastward to tie into the Stony Creek Mills line at 23rd and Perkiomen. The Fairview line was abandoned in 1910 and by 1935 some buses were substituted for the trolley cars. But when World War II began the trolleys received a new lease on life because of the gas shortages. On July 13, 1946 full bus substitution began in earnest and the last of the trolleys were terminated on Monday, January 7, 1953. The last tracks were removed on Fairview Avenue from 23rd to east Borough line in October 1961.

There were two sets of tracks on Perkiomen, 23rd Street and on Carsonia Avenue, but people were so enthusiastic about the trolleys coming into the area



## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (TRANSPORTATION)**

that the trolley companies had no trouble obtaining the rights of way. The trolley combined with the popularity of the Carsonia Park was a tremendous influence on the settlement of the Mount Penn and Lower Alsace areas.



**East Reading Electric Railway Trolley on Fairview Avenue, circa 1895.**

# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(THE MAJESTIC)**

The Majestic Theater was a local landmark for many years and was very popular with the residents of the community. Many activities were held here by various organizations which used the movies as a fund raising activity. Christmas shows for the local children were sponsored by various civic groups. The children's matinee on a Saturday was always a pleasant adventure for the children. It was located in the former Mount Penn Fire Company building at 23rd and Filbert Avenue.

The building was built in 1923 and the auditorium served as a basketball court as well as a place for various functions. This changed in 1939 when the Wilmer and Vincent Theater chain leased the auditorium from the fire company. They placed a new floor over the basketball court by raising it on wooden trestles of various heights in order to have the patrons' seats slope downward from the rear of the theater toward the screen.

The theater opened for the first time on Friday, November 10, 1939 and the first movie to play here was "The Rains Came" with Tyrone Power and Myrna Loy. The screen was fairly large, approximately 16 x 27 feet and the theater's capacity was 512 seats, including the balcony. Wilmer and Vincent had also opened a theater on Penn Avenue in West Reading and there has always been some speculation that the marquees had been mixed up. It was always thought that the marquee "PENN" was destined for Mount Penn. Instead, the "MAJESTIC" marquee was placed over the box office and the "PENN" went to West Reading.

Harry Freeman was the first manager of the theater and operated it for many years. In 1955 Wilmer and Vincent withdrew and Eugene H. Deeter leased the theater from the fire company. The Wilmer and Vincent group had also operated the Embassy, Rajah, Capitol and Orpheum theaters in Reading.

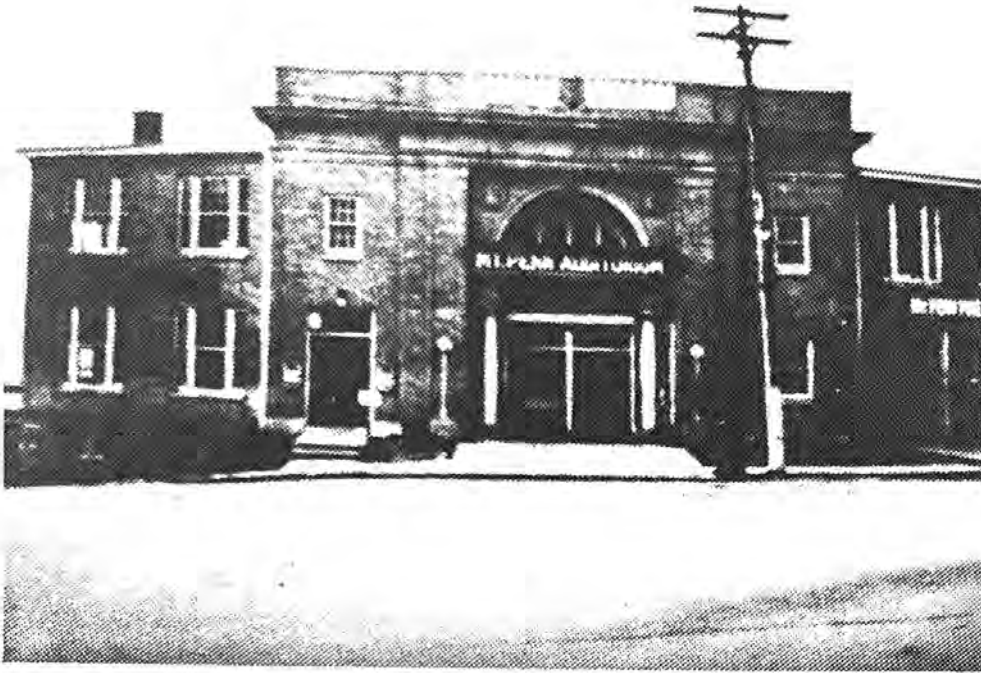
During the years that Eugene Deeter operated the theater it was a family affair. His mother sold the tickets, his father Harrison along with his son Raymond served as projectionists or did whatever tasks were necessary. Eugene Deeter continued until February of 1984 when he could not renew the lease due to the cost. The last picture shown was "To Be Or Not To Be" starring Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft.

The closing was the end of the privately managed and operated motion picture theaters in the Reading area. Many citizens purchased assorted nostalgic items including the box office which stood under the marquee.

Joseph Maurer Associates purchased the building in 1989 and removed the trestles and the theater floor exposing the old basketball court. There were exten-

## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE MAJESTIC)

sive renovations to the building which was modernized into an attractive hall for banquets, weddings and other social events. The area which was the fire company's social quarters is now occupied by a nursery school. The fire company remained, leasing the area housing the apparatus until their new building in the 2700 block of Grant Street was built.



**The Majestic Theater**, circa 1930, when it served as an auditorium. Note the Mt. Penn Fire Company on the right.



**The Majestic Theater**, circa 1953. Patrolman Dick Deeter stands by the Borough police car. Borough offices are to the left of the theater.



# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(THE STREETS)**

The streets of Mount Penn over the years have changed names, disappeared or never really existed, except on the plans of an optimistic developer whose ambitions were never realized. It must be remembered that the area changed from part of Alsace Township to part of Lower Alsace to finally the Borough of Mount Penn and each time there were changes of the areas designated streets. The passage of years, of course, resulted in more and more streets being added and more changes taking place.

The names of the streets will be reviewed and only those whose names have been altered over the years will be documented as to the changes that occurred.

**ALSACE AVENUE:** An early designated street in the area which ran from the present Perkiomen Avenue northward toward Alsace Township and now is called North 23rd Street and Carsonia Avenue.

**APPLE LANE:** Ran from North 23rd Street, past Filbert, in a northwesterly direction to a junction with Oak Terrace and 24 1/2 Street. Later Oak Terrace, which ran from the northern end of Apple Lane, east to North 25th Street, was renamed Hill Terrace. At the same time Apple Lane and the portion of 24 1/2 Street which ran from what now became Hill Terrace to Endlich Avenue was renamed Oak Terrace. It must be remembered that when Apple Lane existed, Filbert Avenue did not extend to North 23rd Street as it does today, but stopped at North 24th Street. There was a flight of steps to get up to 23rd Street and a railing ran from North 23rd Street down the east side of Apple Lane.

**BUTTER LANE:** A very early road which exists today as it did years ago. The old reason given for the name was that the old German wagon drivers, who called it "DIE BUTTER LEHN", claimed it was such a bumpy road that it turned their loads of milk into butter.

**CARSONIA AVENUE:** This street on some of the old maps was referred to as Endlich's Lane because most of the land East of this point was owned by the Endlich family. The road became Carsonia Avenue after the Carsonia Park began in 1896 in Lower Alsace Township. The popularity of the park extended the name to the road which went to its entrance. The name Carsonia Park came about because of a contest to name the park and the winning entry was Carsonia after Robert A. Carson, an official of the Reading Street Railway which was instrumental in the creation of this popular amusement center.

**CHESTNUT AVENUE:** The hill to the west of North 23rd Street was known as "CHESTNUT HILL". The Chestnut Hill Garage was erected and extended from what is now Dengler Street to Howard Boulevard and the street which ran alongside the building became known as Chestnut Avenue. The garage itself was

## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE STREETS)**

operated by John Schlegel who sold the Cleveland and the Chandler automobiles.

**CEMETERY HILL:** was the local name given to the portion of Perkiomen Avenue which ran alongside the Aulenbach Cemetery which was established in 1851.

**COTTON STREET:** Ran from 19th Street to 21st Street and, like several others, was an extension of the street in the City of Reading. In 1906 the Borough Officials desired to change the name of the street. The brothers Gregory and Joseph Heine suggested it be named Terrace Street. The name Cody was also suggested. After some thought it was decided that since the Kendall Brothers and A.F. Reeser, who had planned in the late 1800's to create a large development called "Woodvale" in the area, that the name of "WOODVALE" would be an appropriate designation. It should be noted that a small street running south in the 1900 block of Woodvale, from Woodvale toward Fairview Avenue on the Borough line, was named "HEINE STREET", and another closer to South 20th Street which extended south toward Fairview was called "GREGORY STREET."

**DIAMOND STREET:** Originally ran from North 25th to North 23rd Streets. The section between North 23rd and North 24th was eliminated when Filbert Avenue was extended to North 23rd Street.

**ENDLICH AVENUE:** Named after the Endlich family who owned most of the land area east of North 23rd Street. Judge Endlich was a prominent figure in the Berks County area.

**EAST HIGHLAND AVENUE:** Ran from east of South 20th Street to South 21st Street and later became a portion of the present day Highland Avenue.

**GRANDVIEW COURT:** Is now known today as Pennwyn Terrace.

**HALBEISEN COURT:** Ran between South 24th Street and Pennwyn Terrace. It was named after an early land owner and in 1923 was renamed Woodvale Avenue.

**PINE STREET:** Was a 20 foot wide street which originally extended from Perkiomen Avenue to Cumberland Avenue. It ran alongside the old Woodvale Primary School at 2319 Perkiomen Avenue. It no longer exists, but the portion between Grant Street and Cumberland Avenue is now called Beech Street.

**LAUREL AVENUE:** Although this street runs from Ochre to Summit, at one time the old deeds show it to have extended over to Perkiomen Avenue. Its location today would be between the Meridian Bank and the J.W. Leinbach Hardware store.

**ROSELAWN COURT:** Ran westerly from South 24th Street for a distance of approximately 100 feet. It was almost halfway between Fairview Avenue and

## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE STREETS)**

Perkiomen Avenue and today is part of the parking area east of the St. Catharine of Siena School.

**TIMOTHY STREET:** Ran from Friedensburg Road to the north side of Ochre Street and in 1957 was renamed as a portion of Endlich Avenue.

**TWENTY-FOURTH AND A HALF STREET:** was divided by the land of the Mount Penn Tennis Association's property on North 25th Street. The southern part is now called Penn Terrace and the northern section became the part of Oak Terrace that is closest to Endlich Avenue.

There are streets which existed in name only on maps of the past and never became an actual part of the community. They are included because they do show up in some of the old deeds.

**SERVICE STREET:** Ran between Laurel and North 23rd from Clover into Summit.

**RIDGE ROAD:** was on the upper portion of the Borough line on Dengler's Hill above Laurel Avenue.

**SPRING STREET:** was located above Hill Avenue North of Ochre Street but was almost entirely within the limits of the City of Reading.

**WARREN STREET:** Ran between Grant and Cumberland and later became part of North 24th Street. It was removed from the Borough maps in 1967 to make room for the extension of the new Elementary School.

**WILLOW STREET:** Can be found on old deeds only and was part of a developer's plans. It was to run between Cumberland and Filbert and was located 180 feet east of North 24th.

This is probably more about the streets of Mount Penn than most people are really interested in. However, for those who might be searching old records, this list of the streets that have been recorded is included.

APPLE LANE  
BEECH STREET  
BRIGHTON AVENUE  
BROOKE STREET  
BUTTER LANE  
CARSONIA AVENUE  
CEMETERY LANE  
CENTER STREET  
CHESTNUT AVENUE  
CLOVER STREET  
CUMBERLAND AVENUE  
DENGLER STREET  
DIAMOND STREET

LAUREL AVENUE  
OAK TERRACE  
OCHRE STREET  
ORCHARD LANE  
PENN MAWR COURT  
PENN TERRACE  
PENNWYN TERRACE  
PERKIOMEN AVENUE  
PHILMAY TERRACE  
PINE STREET  
RIDGE ROAD  
ROSELAWN COURT  
SERVICE STREET



ENDLICH AVENUE  
 FAIRVIEW STREET  
 FERN STREET  
 FILBERT AVENUE  
 FRIEDENSBURG ROAD  
 GLEN TERRACE  
 GRANDVIEW AVENUE  
 GRANDVIEW COURT  
 GRANT STREET  
 GREGORY STREET  
 HALBEISEN COURT  
 HEINE STREET  
 HIGH STREET  
 HIGHLAND AVENUE  
 EAST HIGHLAND AVENUE  
 HILL AVENUE  
 HILL TERRACE  
 HOLLYWOOD AVENUE  
 HOLLYWOOD COURT  
 HOWARD BOULEVARD

SUMMIT AVENUE  
 TIMOTHY STREET  
 WARREN STREET  
 WEIMOR COURT  
 WILLOW STREET  
 WOODVALE AVENUE  
 NORTH 22ND STREET  
 NORTH 23RD STREET  
 NORTH 24TH STREET  
 NORTH 24 1/2 STREET  
 NORTH 25TH STREET  
 NORTH 27TH STREET  
 SOUTH 20TH STREET  
 SOUTH 21ST STREET  
 SOUTH 22ND STREET  
 SOUTH 23RD STREET  
 SOUTH 24TH STREET  
 SOUTH 25TH STREET  
 SOUTH 26TH STREET  
 SOUTH 27TH STREET



**Dengler Street**, circa 1910. Eastward from Howard Boulevard. Chestnut Hill Garage on right. Street opened in 1913.

# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(THE CHURCHES)**

The Borough of Mount Penn, although a small community of only four tenths of a square mile in area, is the home of four churches within its boundaries. The churches are the Trinity Evangelical and Reformed, Saint Catharine of Siena Roman Catholic, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Faith and the Pennside Presbyterian Church.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Faith is the earliest established church in the area. It began as one of the three mission churches founded by the Trinity Lutheran Church of Reading. The three missions were the "HOPE" in Riverside, the "PEACE" in Reading and the "FAITH" in the section of Alsace Township known as "Dengler's."

The early 1870's were a time when the Lutheran and the Reformed congregations held joint classes in the area. Some classes were held in the Wentzel Public School at the intersection of Carsonia Avenue and Friedensburg Road. This combined participation continued for several years until the Faith Congregation purchased land on the southeast corner at the intersection of Cumberland Avenue and North Twenty Third Street. A chapel was begun and the corner stone was laid in place on May 28, 1885. The chapel was completed that year at the cost of \$2100. There were thirty-two charter members. Judge Gustave Endlich's sister Emma bought the first organ for the chapel and a bell was given to each of the three missions by Mr. W. M. Boyer. The chapel's dedication took place November 14, 1885 with Assistant Pastor Reverend Luther J. Bickel of Trinity Church in Reading presiding on this occasion. After the congregation organized in April 22, 1887 Reverend L. J. Bickel was the first pastor. A parsonage was built adjacent to the Chapel around 1922.

The present location of the church at 210 North Twenty Fifth Street was purchased from the Mount Penn Tennis Association in 1928 and the original chapel and parsonage on North Twenty Third Street were sold. The new building was dedicated for worship on Sunday, October 14, 1928. During 1934 a basement area was excavated and added and in 1944 an addition was constructed for an organ chamber, both projects done by men of the church. During the 60th Anniversary a Fritche pipe organ was installed. Organ chimes were added in 1951. New pews were installed in 1949 and new windows in 1952.

The congregation, during the 65th year, voted to become an independent, self-supporting church and on September 15, 1953 separation was completed. An extension, in line with the original structure, was added in a westerly direction in 1954.

The church was constantly being improved, and major renovations took place in 1987 during the one hundredth year after the congregation had organized. The

## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE CHURCHES)**

renovations included the construction of a bell tower to house the original bell from the old chapel. It had been sealed in the unused fireplace in the basement of the new location ever since the fireplace had been closed off to conserve the heat loss in the building. The bell was removed from the fireplace in November 1986, cleaned and refurbished. Mr. Wayne Phillips, who as a young man, had rung the bell in the old Chapel, offered to pay the cost of the bell tower as a gift to the congregation.

The bell has an inscription which reads "May these tones cheer the faith of all who hear them". During the year of 1994 a parking area was provided for the parishioners on the west side of the Church. The Church has had a nursery school established on the premises for several years, and will continue to serve the community for many years to come.

During the 1870's the Reformed group had a mutual agreement with the Lutherans in the area and conducted Sunday School services jointly. The Borough did not exist until 1903 and Lower Alsace did not come into existence until 1888 so this area was known at that time as the portion of Alsace Township known as "Dengler's".

They met jointly with the Lutherans at the Wentzel Public School and from 1885 to 1890 in the Lutheran's Chapel at 23rd and Cumberland Avenue. In 1890 they organized their own Sunday School and met in the Woodvale Primary School at 2319 Perkiomen Avenue. The Sunday School flourished for seven years and on June 1897 Reverend Mabry L. Herbein, who was pastor of Spies Reformed Church began to organize a congregation. Services were conducted in the Grade School at 24th and Grant Street. Permission to organize a congregation was granted after fifty two individuals petitioned the Classes of the Reformed Church of the United States on October 18, 1897. On December 7, 1897 the Berks County Courts granted a charter.

The congregation purchased a property on the southwest corner of 24th Street at Cumberland Avenue and the corner stone for the Trinity Church was laid on March 13, 1898. The church was dedicated that year on June 19th. Cost of the building was \$4,256.00 and was a very successful venture. Shortly after, the Sunday School expanded to such a size that the basement was divided into three rooms for different classes, a Junior, a Primary and a Beginner group.

The organ, which had been installed when the building was built, was replaced in 1924. In 1926 a Church School Annex was erected due to overcrowding in the basement. The home at 2316 Cumberland Avenue was purchased for the Sexton's residence. Trinity became an independent on July 1, 1945, separating itself from the Olivet Congregation. The Fiftieth Anniversary was celebrated during 1947, climaxing on December the 7th.

The Church properties were renovated frequently and on January 10, 1952 the lot on the northwest corner of 25th and Cumberland Avenue was purchased from

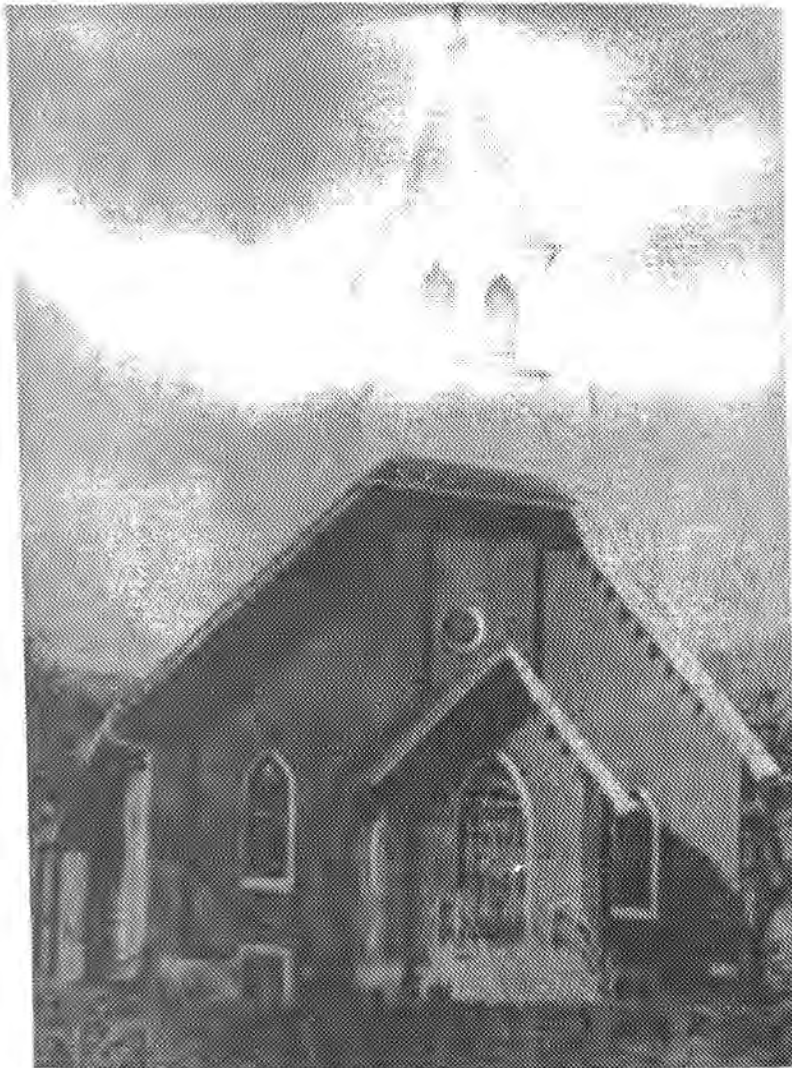


## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE CHURCHES)

the School District for \$5,000. The construction of the new Trinity Church began here in 1957 and the western section was added and the corner stone was placed in September 1962.

The old Church and the Sexton's home was demolished in 1967 to make way for the erection of the new primary school in 1968. The activities of the Trinity United Church of Christ have been many over the years and include the purchase of the home at 2445 Cumberland Avenue and the purchase of the former school building at 705 Friedensburg Road as a Learning Center for young children.

The congregation of the Trinity United Church of Christ is the second oldest church group in the Borough of Mount Penn.



**Trinity Church**, circa 1940. Built in 1898, dedicated June 19, 1898 at 24th and Cumberland, demolished in 1967 for the elementary school and rebuilt at 25th and Cumberland.

The Pennside Presbyterian Church at North 25th Street and Endlich Avenue is the third oldest church group within the Borough of Mount Penn. It had its beginning with the members and Reverend William F. Klein of the Presbyterian Church at 1700 Perkiomen Avenue in the City of Reading during the year 1916. A review of the Mount Penn and Pennside areas was conducted and the opinion

## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE CHURCHES)

was reached that there was a need for a Presbyterian Congregation in the area.

Following the decision that there was a need in the area for a church to be used for those of the Presbyterian inclination, a piece of land on the southeast corner of North 25th Street and Endlich Avenue was purchased from the Endlich family. Until a church was constructed, meetings were conducted in the homes of local residents. Sunday Schools were conducted by Reverend Kline. Beginning on Sunday, October 15, 1916 the first Sunday School was organized in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Gingrich. There were a total of thirty one present at this organizational meeting. Sunday School continued to be held in the Gingrich home until the family moved from the area. Then it was held in the very large garage of Mr. and Mrs. Sailer's home at 245 Carsonia Avenue. Later the Sailers permitted the use of their home for the services. This continued until the church construction was completed at a cost of \$11,233.45 which included \$1,000 for the plot of land. Mr. Sailer served as superintendent of the Sunday School at this time.

The first service to be held in the church was on October 7, 1917 with sixty persons in attendance. On June 9, 1919 the Pennside Presbyterian Church was organized by a delegation from the Presbytery of Philadelphia North. Among the delegates were Reverend William White, Reverend Harry S. Ecker, Reverend Irvin F. Wagner and the Reverend Dr. F. Kline. There were twenty nine charter members. Three men of the congregation were elected as elders. They were Royal M. Barton, Wm. Naile, and J. G. Shumway. Some records list DeWitt Mould as an elder instead of Wm. Naile.

On October 25, 1919 the Reverend Dr. F. Kline presided at the dedication of the church and Reverend John T. Faris of Philadelphia conducted the first sermon. In 1929 a manse was purchased at 409 Carsonia for the minister, but difficult financial conditions required it be sold at the onset of the depression in 1932.

During the 1930's the Young People's Fellowship Club was formed and the church membership grew to double its former size. A Ladies' Auxiliary of the church began in 1921. The Women's Association began in 1952. The men's organization was called the Men of Pennside. The capacity of the auditorium and ample room was provided in the basement for Sunday School, church dinners and other activities when the church was enlarged in 1946. During 1948 the property at 241 North 25th Street was purchased as a manse.

The congregation has continued to grow and the church was again enlarged in 1954 and the last improvement was an additional 40 feet by 42 feet area added to the Northside of the building in 1969. The nursery school became active in 1962 and the church is the meeting place of the oldest Boy Scout Troop in Berks County. Constant renovations have continued, resulting in the fine facilities available today for the members.

The church celebrated its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary in 1942. The Fiftieth was celebrated in 1969 and the Seventy Fifth Anniversary was celebrated on October

## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE CHURCHES)**

16, 1994. The discrepancy in dates is due to the Twenty-Fifth using the year of the building of the church in 1917 and the Fiftieth and the Seventy Fifth used the year of the organization by the Presbytery in 1919.

Following the end of World War I in 1918 there were a number of Catholic families in the area east of Reading and His Eminence Dennis Cardinal Dougherty was petitioned to create a new parish. He delegated Reverends Thomas J. McCarthy, Joseph A. Hayes and Leo G. Fink to search the area for a desirable location in which to begin a new parish. They searched the locale and in 1925 the plot of land where the present church stands was purchased.

The parish of St. Catharine of Siena was founded December 16, 1925 and Reverend Hayes was the first pastor. The first Mass was held in the auditorium of the Mt. Penn Fire Company on December 20, 1925. The house which had been purchased at 2411 Perkiomen Avenue, was used for services the first time on Palm Sunday in 1926. A later addition provided room for 200 persons to attend services. Reverend Sullivan was appointed to replace Father Hayes who died in 1935. The need of a parochial school was realized and the former residence of Charles H. Schlegel, a local contractor, at 2328 Perkiomen Avenue was purchased for this purpose in 1938. School attendance grew and by 1942 there were eight grades with a total of 276 pupils. The building at 2427 Perkiomen served as the rectory.

Under the guidance of Father Sullivan the parish continued to grow during the years until in 1950 His Eminence, Cardinal Dougherty authorized the erection of a new church for the parish. With this approval, ground breaking ceremonies took place on October 2, 1950. The architects were Henry D. Dagit and Sons and the contractors were Joseph R. Farrell Inc. The new church had the capacity to seat a total of seven hundred and twenty-five parishoners. On December 25, 1951 the new church was first used for public worship and the cornerstone laying took place on the Feast of St. Catharine of Siena, April 30, 1952.

The children of the parish had a playground on the southwest corner of South Twenty-Fourth Street and Perkiomen Avenue established for their use. In 1953 the cornerstone was put in place in the new school building which had been erected on the southwest corner of the property owned by the parish. Alterations and an addition on the eastern side of the building took place in 1988. This was necessary because of the increase of enrollment in the school.

Another facility was erected in 1963 to provide an auditorium and activity center at 2318 Perkiomen Avenue. This building was named Sullivan Hall after the much admired Father Sullivan who had served the parish for so many years. A large parking area was provided east of the school building so that the buses could discharge the students in safety.

The present church has been altered and improved over the years, but growth of the parish resulted in the decision to erect a much larger structure in an area



## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE CHURCHES)

east of Reading on Route 562 in the year 1994. Upon its completion, the original church will have the number of services reduced considerably.



**Sullivan Hall**, 23rd Street and Perkiomen Avenue, erected in 1963. Social Hall for Saint Catharine of Siena Parish, named after the second pastor of the parish - Msgr. James P. Sullivan. Above photo taken in the 1980's.

# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(THE SCHOOLS)**

The public school system began in this area when the land at the intersection of what is now Friedensburg Road and Carsonia Avenue was donated to Alsace Township by Jesse B. Wentzel in the late 1860's. The school became known as the Wentzel Public School.

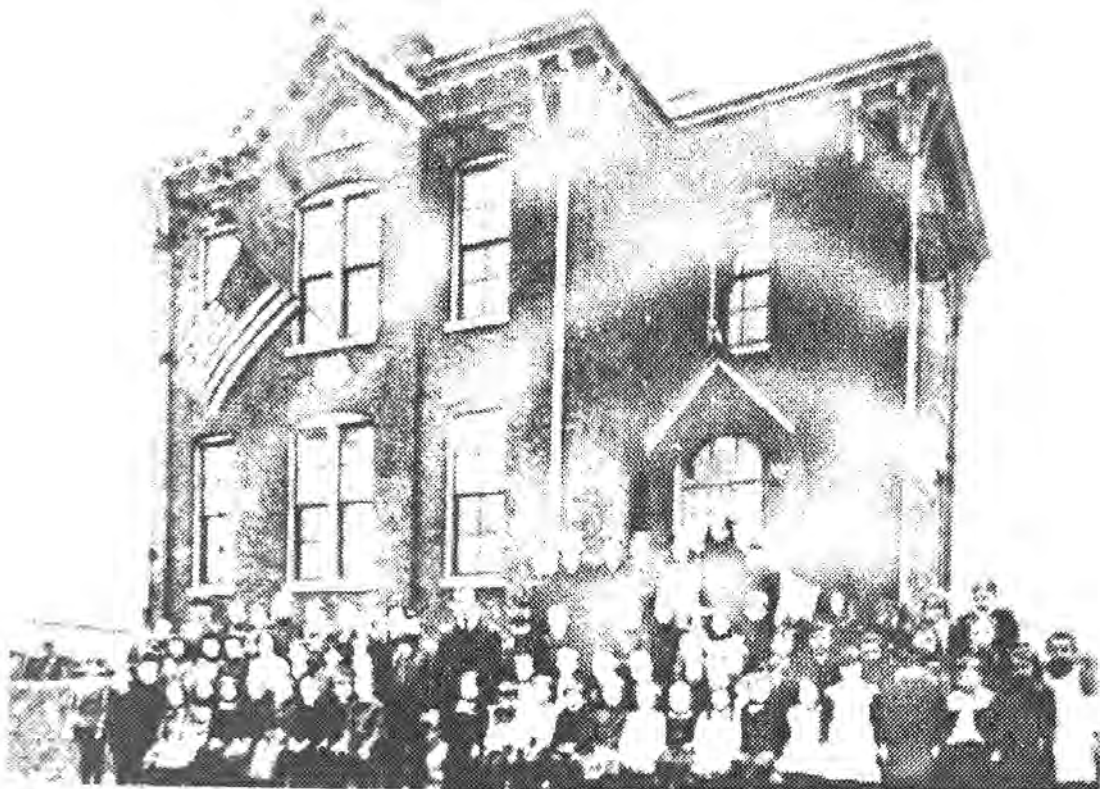
During the 1880's the Wentzel School was vacated after the construction of the Woodvale Primary School at 2319 Perkiomen Avenue. In 1895 the Lower Alsace Board of School Directors had erected what would eventually become the southside of the Elementary School building on the northwest corner of Grant and Twenty-Fourth Streets. Later an addition was added to the west side of this section of the building.

When the Borough of Mount Penn became a reality in 1903, the Borough created its own School Board. The first school directors were George C. Hartline, Francis Palm, Elmer Palm, John S. Esterly, George Hartman and D.D. Dundore. The first teachers were Edwin F. Palm, William P. Hilbert and J.M.F. Koch. The first class to graduate in 1904 consisted of Edna Folk, Howard Palm, Warren S. Manwiller and Emma Leinbach. The prominent local land owner Judge Gustave A. Endlich gave the commencement address.

In 1907 the grades were established for a two-year high school course in the building at 24th and Grant Streets. The staff consisted of William Smith, Principal and two teacher. The first High School graduating class was in 1909. The three members of the class were Ammon E. Nein, Joshua Hartline and Esther S. Palm. In 1908 the school board established a four-year curriculum for the high school students. An addition was added to the building at 24th and Grant Streets by adding a northern section to the structure in 1915. By 1923 there were eight elementary grades and four high school grades with 270 pupils in the elementary classes and 70 in the high school. The staff consisted of eight elementary teachers and four high school teachers; there were also provisions for special teachers in arts and music. These and four elementary grade teachers were on a part-time basis. The first kindergarten in the school district was established in 1924.

The high school classes were transformed from the school at 24th and Grant Streets to the new high school at 25th and Filbert Avenue in January 1924. At this time the new building facing North 25th Street consisted of a principal's office, four classrooms, a room for the school directors and a gymnasium, along with shower rooms for the girls and boys. A four year high school program in academic studies were now offered.

## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE SCHOOLS)



**Elementary School** 24th and Grant, circa 1910

The building was added onto the Filbert Street side in 1928. It added two more classrooms, a library, a science room, laboratory and a commercial room. Due to increased enrollment the school was constantly being enlarged. By 1931 thirty teachers were employed by the district and the High School had 371 students. A major asset for the district was obtained in 1938 when the field at Byram and High Streets was purchased for \$11,000 for the use as an athletic field for the students.

A combination auditorium and gymnasium along with three additional classrooms were put into use in 1939. There were continued improvements and additions over the years until the building was closed in 1989 and sold in 1993 for \$90,000.

When the Mount Penn and Lower Alsace School Board combined and became the Mount Penn and Lower Alsace Joint School Board the district then also had the Pennside School at 705 Friedensburg Road and Woodrow Wilson School on Antietam Road. The joint efforts finally resulted in the formation of the Antietam School District.

The School District had purchased the homes which were on Cumberland Avenue and Grant Street on the north and west sides of the Elementary School as well as the old Trinity Church which stood on the southwest corner of North 24th Street and Cumberland Avenue. A new elementary school was constructed around the old elementary school at North 24th and Grant Streets and upon



## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE SCHOOLS)**

the completion of the new structure in 1968 the old elementary school was demolished.

The new building extended along Beech Street and from North 24th to Beech on Cumberland Avenue. The old playground area was renovated at the same time this was taking place. In 1989 an addition which extended from Beech Street eastward to North 24th Street was built. This proved inadequate over the years and in 1993 three modular units were placed in what was the parking lot as temporary classrooms for use of the students.

In 1975 the Woodrow Wilson School was replaced on Antietam Road by a new structure which at that time was referred to as the Middle School. It was only used a short time and then closed. When the Antietam School Board decided the High School at 25th and Filbert would be too costly to repair and maintain, the Middle School was renovated and reopened in 1989 as the Junior - Senior High School and the old high school was placed up for sale. The Pennside School was also sold during this time period and is currently serving as a learning center operated by the Trinity Church of North 25th Street and Cumberland Avenue.

The Antietam School District has a good scholastic reputation and is currently making plans to renovate and expand the facilities during this 1994 - 1995 school semester.



**The old Mount Penn High School, built in 1925. Photo taken 1928.**

# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(THE ORGANIZATIONS)**

In the past one remembers that there seemed to be many more local activities in the community then there are today. One which stands out in most memories is the parades that were held on the Fourth of July for many years. Another big event locally was the movies for the local children at Christmas time in the Majestic Theatre. Over the years there have been many organizations which have contributed to the quality of life in the Borough. Here is a partial list of them and their beginnings.

The Mount Penn Women's Club really started in 1922 when a few ladies organized a private kindergarten class in the Lutheran Church at 23rd and Cumberland Streets. They operated a kindergarten here until 1924 when the School Board established one in the Elementary School at 24th and Grant Streets. It was these women who in 1928, on May 1st, applied to the State's Federation of Women's Clubs for membership. It was this group that was the first in Berks County to participate in the bringing of the City of New York's children into the area for summer vacations under the City's Fresh Air Fund program.

The Junior Women's Club of Mount Penn had its inception July 9, 1934 and joined the Federation of Women's Clubs in 1942. They used to meet in "The Pines Tea Room" which was located in the Pennhurst Mansion building at South 23rd and Fairview Avenue and later on met in the Social Quarters of the Mount Penn Fire Company Building at North 23rd and Filbert Avenue. They were actively involved in fund raising for many selected projects over the years.

The Mount Penn Civic Association was created during World War II in 1944 and annually sponsored many local activities, both alone and with other groups, such as Halloween and Christmas Parties, Easter Egg Hunts, etc. They also supported the Mount Penn "PAGODAS", an American Legion Junior Baseball Team in the 1950's.

The local Boy Scout organizations began locally when a troop met in the Trinity Reformed Church in 1914 and 1915 but the real beginning was when Troop 1 of Mount Penn was sponsored by the Trinity Reformed Church in 1924. This same troop since 1948 has been sponsored by the Pennside Presbyterian Church. This troop today is known as Troop 307 due to redistricting by the Boys Scouts of America. Boy Scouts Troop 2 had its beginning February 2, 1946 when it was organized and sponsored by St. Catharine of Siena R. C. Church. This troop has also been most beneficial for the young men of the area.

The Girl Scouts of Mount Penn had their inception when organized in the home of Mrs. Herbert Henry at 255 Friedensburg Road in December of 1946.

## **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (THE ORGANIZATIONS)**

Later Brownie Troops and Senior Girl Scouts were added. The Senior Troop was first registered in November of 1949 and the Brownie Troop was first registered in January of 1952.

The Antietam Valley Lions Club was chartered September 28, 1951 by the international Association. The group has sponsored various events in the local community and like all Lions Clubs its primary projects always dealt with sight conservation.

Mount Penn Rotary Club was sponsored by the Reading Rotary Club and was organized on May 11, 1949. The Club encompasses the areas of Mount Penn, Exeter Township, Stony Creek Mills, Jacksonwald, Reiffon, Lower Alsace and Alsace. The Club's first President was Paul S. Reinsel. The Club fosters high ethical standards in professions and business and encourages the "IDEAL of SERVICE" and international understanding. It has participated in and served as co-sponsors for various groups throughout the area.

The Mother's Club of Mount Penn Public Schools began on September 20, 1945 when it was organized by a kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Dorothy Hoffman and the Mother's Club of St. Catharine's School was begun on February 18, 1946 when Father Sullivan and Father Walsh, his curate, invited the mothers of children in the Catholic School to meet with them in the social quarters of the Mount Penn Fire Company at 23rd and Filbert. The purpose of both groups over the years has been to provide financial assistance to the schools for the benefit of the children.

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Mount Penn Fire Company was organized January 17, 1928 for the purpose of assisting the men in social affairs and they were very successful over the years in providing financial assistance to the Company. In later years, when the Fire Company opened its membership roster to the women, the Auxiliary became a thing of the past.

The Camp Fire Girls in Mount Penn began in April 1931 at the local High School under the direction of Miss Laura Kready. Since this inception there have been many groups such as the Blue Birds and the Horizon Club formed. The Horizon Clubs are for the senior members. The local churches also formed other groups of Blue Birds and Camp Fire Girls. St. Catharine's group started in March 1947. The Faith Lutheran's group began in April 1951 and the group of Trinity Reformed Church began in 1952.

All these various organizations have provided a great service in making the community of the Borough of Mount Penn a finer place to live and raise families than it would have been without them. The only rewards the leaders received were in the satisfaction of performing a service for the benefit of others. The community should be grateful to these individuals for the fine examples they set.



# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(TOURING)**

When one enters the Borough from the City of Reading on Perkiomen Avenue, above Nineteenth Street, on the left side is the Aulenbach Cemetery which was founded in 1851 and is the third oldest in the County of Berks. Many Civil War Veterans are buried here. A little further on, at Twentieth Street on the right side, are the filter beds which were an integral part of the water system of the City of Reading years ago. The water which entered the beds came from Antietam Lake which was created in 1874. It was connected to the filter beds by a twenty inch pipe line which is gravity operated and runs underground through Lower Alsace and Mount Penn. The line ran directly into the city's water supply lines on Perkiomen Avenue until the filter beds were operational in 1905. Double trolley tracks ran up the avenue years ago on the northside.

At the corner of South Twenty-First Street is the Lutz Funeral Home. It was founded in 1885. If one goes back behind the parking lot of the funeral home, there is a small frame building now used by the Evans Food Distributor. This was the site of Elmer E. Palm's Pipe Organ factory. He employed about eight men, and it closed around the time of World War I after the production of close to two hundred pipe organs which found their way into many local churches.

When one reaches Twenty-Second Street, on the northwest corner is a building which was built in 1952 when the Post Office for Mount Penn was re-established after the Borough had been without one since 1920. This closed after the current Post Office was erected at 2223 Perkiomen Avenue. It was near this intersection where the last toll gate in the area on the Philadelphia Pike was located. The toll gates were eliminated in 1902.

At 2232 Perkiomen Avenue was the home of Dr. M. L. Bertollette where the first Council meetings of the newly created Borough of Mount Penn took place in 1903. The doctor's office was at 2228 Perkiomen. At 2234 & 2236 was the location of the Nein Coal Yard and Feed Stores. Also in this location was the hardware store of Joshua W. Leinbach, who purchased the business from John Folk in 1921. In 1947 the new J.W. Leinbach building was built at 2239 Perkiomen Avenue. If you had been here in the year 1900 and looked directly up the Neversink Mountain, behind the coal yard at the top of the mountain, where the radio antenna is today, stood the Neversink Mountain Hotel. It was a large structure and a popular resort at the time, but burnt to the ground in 1905.

Where the present bank building and hardware store stand was the location of George Dengler's barn and hostelry for the stage coach runs to Philadelphia and a popular meeting place. In 1921 the building was converted into the Mount Penn Trust Company and after many changes and much construction the location is now occupied by the Meridian Bank. The small triangular plot in the inter-

## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (TOURING)

section has the Memorial Clock dedicated to the Veterans who served during war time. It was dedicated on July 18, 1949.



**Intersection of 23rd Street and Perkiomen Avenue, circa 1953**

Crossing Twenty-Third Street on the right where the bank drive-in is located stood Daniel Albright's wagon shop. It later was an auto supply store where Alvah Schaeffer worked. He is the Schaeffer whose agreement with Tom Hannahoe became a county tradition. The last occupant of the premises was the Raysor Toy Store. Across the street at 2311 was Daniel Albright's carriage shop. Daniel also owned the building on the corner which is 7 - 11 North Twenty Third.

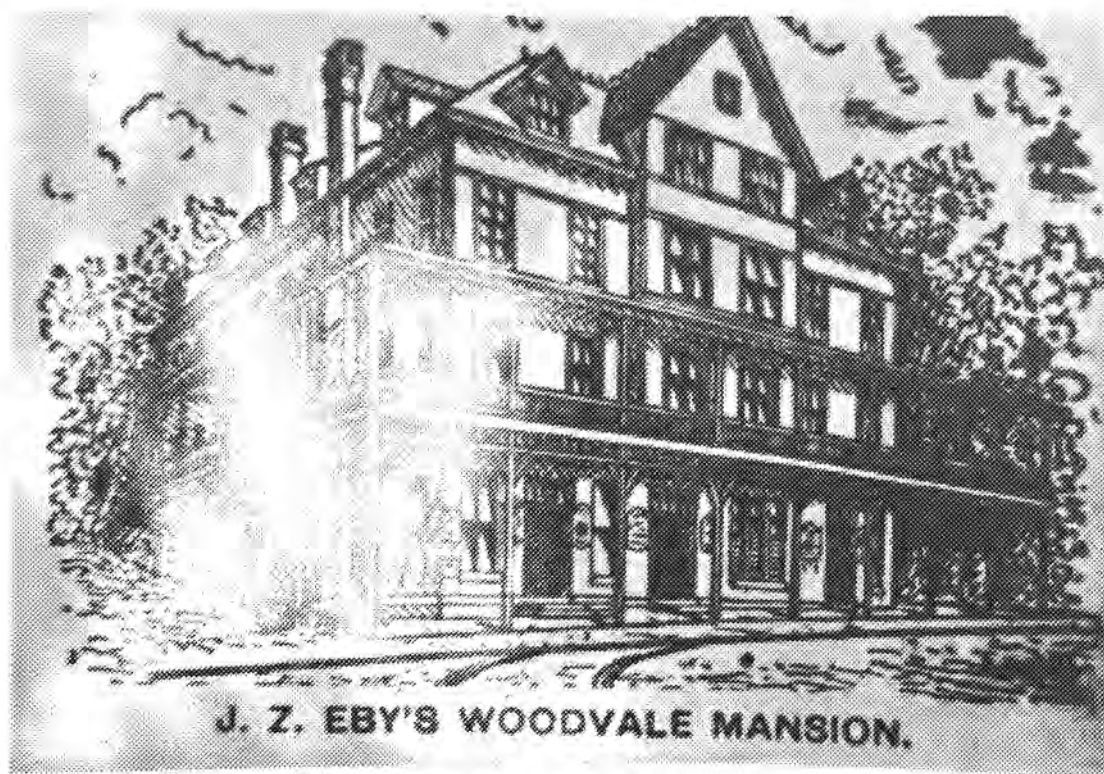
At 2319 is the building which originally was erected as the Woodvale Primary School in the late 1800's. Across the street is the Sullivan Hall erected by the St. Catharine of Siena Catholic Church in 1963 and in the rear is the school building which began in 1953. The original school was the large residence next to the playground which was the home of Charles Schlegel, a local contractor. Across the street is the church which was erected in 1952.

The building at 2401 served as the post office of the Borough after it was moved from the Nein property location where David Nein had served as the first Postmaster in the area. When a new Postmaster was appointed in 1904 the office moved to 2401 and remained there until 1920 when the postal service decided a post office in the area was not needed. There was no post office in Mount Penn until another opened at 2147 Perkiomen in 1952.

## MOUNT PENN BOROUGH (TOURING)

The H & S service station at 2420 Perkiomen Avenue was the location of "CLOVELLY" which was the name given to the large log house which originally stood there, by the famous painter Ben Austrian whose paintings of chicks and chickens are highly prized by collectors. It was demolished in 1952 by the Sun Oil Company to erect a gas station in its stead. The location of the Wendy's building at 2458-2460 was the home of George and Kate Dengler in the early 1900's. Their daughter Mary, who was the last of the Dengler line to live in Mount Penn, stayed here until 1980 when the Wendy's was erected on the site. Their son George, who was the last surviving Dengler in the area, died in Wyomissing in 1990. Next at 2502-2504 Perkiomen is the home of the early George Dengler who began the Dengler families activities in the area around 1840. There is a succession of Denglers all named George which makes sorting them out difficult.

When one arrives at the mini mall at 26th and Perkiomen it might be of interest to note that when it was created the three homes which faced Perkiomen Avenue were moved up the hill and are now 2537, 2539 and 2541 Fairview Avenue.



**"Pennhurst Mansion"** Southwest corner of S. 23rd Street and Fairview. Later converted into apartments and shops. (From a postcard)





**The Elmer Palm Pipe Organ Factory** Now the Jack Evans warehouse near S. 21st Street and Woodvale. (From a 1900 photo reproduced on a 1907 postcard.)

# **MOUNT PENN BOROUGH**

## **(BITS AND PIECES)**

The following entries are for those whose interests are more inclined toward miscellaneous data about this area in which we live.

There were some gas street lights remaining in the area as late as 1910.

Heaviest snow fall on record – February 12, 1983 - 23 inches.

The Borough's size is 262 acres and 112 perches.

There are 9.98 miles of streets in the community.

Average Winter temperature is 31.3 degrees Fahrenheit.

Average Summer temperature is 73.2 degrees Fahrenheit.

First white settlers arrived in the area in 1748.

Highest population recorded was 3965 in the year of 1950.

Population according to the 1990 census is 2883 residents.

The School District in 1971 had 1551 students registered.

Cows still roamed where Endlich Avenue is in the 1920's on the Endlich Farm.

Judge Endlich's first name was Gustave.

Our storm sewers must handle 6,800,000 gallons of water for each one inch of rainfall.

Over thirty percent of the value of the properties is tax exempt.

According to the 1990 census 33.4 percent of the residents are 65 or older.

Unfilled cess pools are still being found in the community.

Ben Austrian's painting "Mother Hen and Thirteen Chicks" sold in 1989 for \$15,000.

Many underground springs exist, a large one is north of Philmay Terrace in the 2500 block.

John Schlegel, first Fire Co. President, sold Chandler and Cleveland autos at the Chestnut Hill garage on Dengler Street.

There are still trolley tracks on South 23rd Street under the macadamed surface.

Property owners in the area after the Civil War were James Lee, John Endlich, the Babst family, John Esterly, Charles Dengler, George Dengler, and the Brobst family.