

## East Falls Past--Indian Queen Lane

*The Fallser*, May 2008, by Wendy Moody

As a prelude to our walking tour of Indian Queen Lane on Saturday, May 15, we uncovered some intriguing facts in the historic Chadwick Papers:

In the 1936 article *Why Two Queen Lanes?* (Volume #11), author Alex Chadwick writes: “Strangers to the Falls of Schuylkill, especially deliverymen, often find it confusing to properly locate Queen Lane. And the condition is due to nothing short of foolishness on the part of those who had charge of naming the city’s thoroughfares. The “Queen Lane” of time-honored tradition, properly known as “Indian Queen Lane” received its name from a Revolutionary period inn of the same title, which was located at the Germantown end of the old road. The road ran from what is now Germantown Avenue and Queen Lane to the Schuylkill River, giving access to a ferry which permitted travelers to cross the stream ... into inland Pennsylvania. Today its western terminus is at Ridge Avenue.



Indian Queen Lane takes a bend to the northeast and ends at the Queen Lane Filtration plant. Prior to the building of the of the water basins, the road ran over to the Queen Lane railroad station, and then made another bend directly east and continued on to the Germantown road.

The building of the basins forced vehicles to make a circuitous route around the reservoir, but pedestrians could still walk directly by way of a footpath between the two basins. When the northern basin was converted into the filtration plant, even the shortcut was eliminated. Soon afterward the remaining portion of the original “Queen Lane” east of the basins to the railroad station was closed to traffic.

The newer street – Queen Lane – was, for many years, an ungraded street that ran from the railroad westward to north 35<sup>th</sup> street (Conrad). When real estate men opened up the surrounding fields for development, they believed the street to be – or knowingly appropriated the title – Queen Lane, and named the locality “Queen Lane Manor.” All of which resulted in confusion – the adding the old time “Indian” in front of the older street, Chadwick said, was hardly sufficient to prevent errors. He suggested changing the name of the newer “Queen Lane” to something that would better designate its location.

What unique historic features did Indian Queen Lane once have?

- 1) A long private entrance road, near the head of Scott’s Lane, to the mansion house called *Abbottsford*. The land is now occupied by the Medical College of Pennsylvania.

- 2) A small fenced Revolutionary burying ground, located between the mansion and the southeast corner of the reservoir, where one of the stones indicated that Captain Sims of the British army had been interred there, along with Hessian soldiers who died of yellow fever.
- 3) A log cabin, near Henry Avenue, which was used to isolate British military who were stricken with contagious diseases.
- 4) Hohenadel Brewery and the mansion "Plush Hill," home of Dr. William Smith, the first provost of the University of Pennsylvania, no longer stand, but Indian Queen Lane is still home to the Baptist and Methodist Churches, and Old Academy, the oldest community center in Philadelphia. Built in 1819 and erected by public subscription, Old Academy was long used for religious and educational purposes, among them being the first home of the Falls Library.