

The King of Prussia Gazette

Preserving Upper Merion's Past to Enlighten its Future

Volume II, Number Three

Fall 2013

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Michael Morrison

IN THIS TRICENTENNIAL YEAR

As we pass the midpoint in the celebration of our Tricentennial (actually, to be accurate according to Webster, it's *Tercentennial*) year, I'm reminded that the establishment of our community three hundred years ago was no accident, and it took the hard work of some very dedicated folks to build and maintain this wonderful place we call Upper Merion. Beyond all the events, parades, fireworks, and exhaustive commemorative items, there is our history. The one thing that we can take away from this year of *sale-a-bration* is that when all the party dust has settled, we will still have our history.



(Photo courtesy of Shirley Funkhouser.)

Michael Morrison's *History of the Inn* was presented to members of the Upper Merion Senior Service Center on June 26, 2013.

Your King of Prussia Historical Society is the gatekeeper of that history, and it is our job to continue to tell the stories of our rich past, long after this year of Tricentennial celebration. When we again breathed life into this Society back in April of 2012, we were strengthened by the unanimous consent of that hardworking Tricentennial Committee, in a vote taken on August 21, 2013, promising any and all proceeds left over after 2013 would be donated to the Society, thus giving us a much needed infusion of capital in order to jumpstart our activities. So, look for upcoming monthly programs on a variety of new and interesting topics in 2014, as we continue to uncover our history, made possible by your ongoing support.

Our efforts to save the historic King of Prussia Inn are ongoing, and we are hopeful that we can one day return this iconic treasure to the people of Upper Merion and surrounding communities, to enjoy once again. This is our greatest challenge but also our greatest resource in helping to keep our past alive, and your support, as always, is greatly appreciated.

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I would like to give special recognition in this issue to Shirley Funkhouser, who early on volunteered to assist us in our efforts to scan and protect various photos and manuscripts, so they may be enjoyed by future generations. Shirley not only does an excellent job of organizing our fledgling collection, but helps create new and imaginative ways of displaying our assortment of historic treasures. Shirley has agreed to serve as treasurer for the Society in 2014, and we thank her for her dedication and creative energy.



*The Town Crier—
updates from the Society*

OUR CHARTER MEMBERS

We acknowledge our Charter Members and thank them for their support: Emma Carson, Father James Evans, Dave and Marianne Furman, Frank Luther, Raymond Doreian, Dr. Carl Schultheis, and Van Weiss.



INTERESTED IN WRITING?

The Society welcomes articles prepared by its members. Contact Frank Luther if you might be interested in writing and sharing an article for our publication.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Check the back page for the listing of our January to June 2014 meetings with dates, times, locations, and programs.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership campaign for 2014 is now underway! New memberships and renewals will be accepted at this time. Looking for a unique holiday gift? Why not present a family member or friend with an annual membership for the King of Prussia Historical Society!

INFO ABOUT UPPER MERION

Is there a question you have about some aspect of the township's history? You can submit your question to us at info@kophistory.org and we will provide an answer in a future issue.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

As the Tricentennial winds down, special events are planned: REVOLUTIONARY CAMPAIGN: GIS STYLE with Sean Moir at 2:00 PM in Freedom Hall in the Township Building on October 6.

A Tricentennial Holiday Shoppe with the sale of commemoratives and book signings by Michael Shaw on RAILROADS OF UPPER MERION and with the authors of UPPER MERION: THE FIRST 300 YEARS are being offered at 2:00 PM on November 24 in Freedom Hall in the Township Building.

PROGRAMS AT THE INN

Interested in having a presentation on the history of the King of Prussia Inn for your group or for one of your group's monthly meetings, please contact us at info@kophs.com to arrange a date.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the King of Prussia Historical Society is to preserve and interpret the history of Upper Merion Township as relevant to its various neighborhoods of Gulph Mills, Gypsy Hills, Croton Woods, King of Prussia, Valley Forge, Abrams, Belmont, Town Center, Swedesburg/King Manor, Henderson, and Swedeland, as well as the areas of Rebel Hill, Port Kennedy, and Hughes Park. The Society's goal is to stimulate public interest and to support the township's heritage through educational programs and public events focusing on preserving the past and shaping the future.

MEETINGS

Members and friends of the King of Prussia Historical Society are invited to regular meetings nine times a year. No meetings will be scheduled in July, August, and December. A topic dealing with local history will be presented following a brief business meeting. Meetings will be held at 2:00 at a designated site. An "Annual Meeting" will be held each January. The purpose of this meeting will include the election of Directors and Officers, the reporting of the business of the Society, and for any other objectives that may be deemed necessary. During this Tricentennial year, the Society's meetings are being coordinated with the Speakers Series meetings scheduled for the township's 300th anniversary celebration.

VOLUNTEERS

The Society benefits greatly by the knowledge and expertise of dedicated and capable volunteers whose efforts enable all of our varied activities, from coordinating our public programs to working with our archives and managing our publications and our website.

We are always looking for new people to step up and to take on new projects. If interested, please come to a meeting and talk to us or contact us by electronic or conventional mail.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Student/Senior (65+) | \$35.00 |
| Individual | \$40.00 |
| Family Household | \$50.00 |
| Patron | \$125.00 |
| Charter | \$250.00 |



LEWIS WALKER OF CHESTER COUNTY AND HIS DESCENDENTS

Excerpt from Priscilla Walker Streets' LEWIS WALKER OF CHESTER COUNTY AND HIS DESCENDENTS. Philadelphia, PA: Alfred J. Ferris, Printer, 1896.

The name of Walker, as appears by certain records, was so called from their anciently holding various employments in the Royal Forests, as Verderers, King's Foresters, or Walkers, having the custody of certain walks, boundaries, or allotments; but at what remote period the surname of Walker, simply, was adopted by any branch of the family as a distinguishing appellation remains a matter of doubt.

Our first ancestor whom we can call by name--- Lewis Walker---left no mention of his father's name or people. There was nothing extraordinary in this at that time. He was starting a new life in a new world, and 'Lewis Walker, yeoman,' sufficed. ...My imagination has constructed, out of the little I had, a man strong, brave, and true, who founded a family not unworthy of him,---the members of which are scattered over a great part of our country, and have been known for nearly two hundred years as the Walkers of Chester Valley.

That 'the history of a family is a history of the land,' is a recognized truth of Genealogy. ...and one of the oldest, where for seven generations one family has lived, for nearly two hundred years, Walker following Walker, can be seen in Chester Valley, and is the subject of my story.

It lies between the North and South Valley Hills, and extends to the border line of Montgomery County. The creeks that drain its fertile pastures empty themselves, after a mile or more of pleasant loitering among green willowy nooks, into the cheerful, calm bosom of the Schuylkill River. Here dwell the farmer folk, the peaceful Quakers, descendants, for the most part, of those men and women who, for the sake of a quiet enjoyment of their religion, threw in their lot with those who came to make a home for themselves and their children in the New World. Here are the old homesteads where the scattered children gather from far and near on days of family reunion, and up on the hill-top, close to where the new Quaker meeting-house looks proudly over the country side, is the old graveyard, where they are, one by one, brought to sleep with their fathers, when life is done. Let us pause a moment at this spot; it is the peacefulest resting-place, and before we have done our story all these small green hillocks will seem like dear old friends. Standing here, let us look about us. What a wide sweep of pretty country! Green pastures where the cattle graze, where yellow grain ripens

on the upland and old farm-houses nestle among the sycamores and apple orchards, their many chimneys smoking with the incense of hospitality, and through it all green country roads leading out beyond the sight to Port Kennedy, Paoli, King of Prussia, and Wayne.

On our left is the long woody range of the South Valley Hill. Beyond that are the homes of wealth and luxury, that have not yet succeeded in getting a foothold in this simple, pastoral community. To the northwest Valley Forge is hidden from view by the wooded eminence of Camp Hill and Mt. Joy. The rising ground prevents, also, a sight of the Schuylkill River to the north, not far away.

But before us and behind us, as far as we can see, the land, with few exceptions, belongs to the Walkers, or to their kinsmen. If they are not of the family, they have married into it. At one time, less than fifty years ago, there was scarcely an exception; but several families have been obliged to leave their paternal acres for other homes, and their land has passed to strangers. Directly in front of us, between the four roads, and still the property of the family, is the original Walker land, where our earliest Pennsylvania ancestor lived and died. The first settled part of this section of the country was where Joseph Walker now lives, whose house and barns lie nearest us, the walls of which are partly the same that were erected nearly two hundred years ago. Here, before 1708, came Lewis Walker and his wife, with their family of little children, to make a home for themselves on virgin soil."



PICTURE THIS!

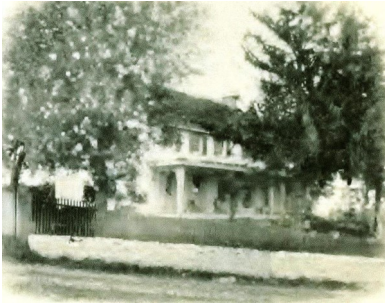


Photo courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. George Jeitles

This dwelling was located on DeKalb Pike, Route 202, in King of Prussia until it was demolished in 2013. It served as a family home and as a site for a veterinary practice. The stone from a quarry Billy Walker owned at Abrams was used to build the house and Billy Walker had it built for \$9,000.00 by an Amish stone mason from the Lancaster area. Where was this Building?

(See answer on page 7.)

RECOLLECTIONS OF SKIP YEAKEL



Walker Farm House at Rehoboth in Treddyffrin from Priscilla Walker Streets' book, LEWIS WALKER OF CHESTER COUNTY

Main Line News published an article, "Burials on the Richter Tract?" by Alan Thomas on February 5, 2013. In the article, Thomas noted that some local historians figure that perhaps as many as 300 Continental Army soldiers who died during the Valley Forge encampment of 1777-78 were buried by Quakers in an area surrounding a Quaker meeting house on Old Eagle School Road in Treddyffrin Township. The big question, Thomas asks is "Where are they?"

"Quaker and other historical records relating to the township have been compiled and there is certainty that Lewis Walker, regarded as Treddyffrin's first settler, allowed Quaker burials on his property during the 1690's. It was Walker who bequeathed the Quakers their graveyard, although his will doesn't specify where the three-quarters of an acre were to be.

As a possible historical site, Rehoboth, the name Walker gave to his home and farm, is slightly better known than the meeting house perhaps as it was the headquarters of Gen. Nathaniel Greene, Washington's second-in-command and the army's quartermaster during the winter encampment. Today there are locally-quarried stones from the house remaining around the site, 1981 marking the date of either a collapse or the demolition of the structure.

In all, Quaker records, preserved at the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College, indicate 1,573 known burials in or around the meeting-house cemetery. It seems hardly possible that all of them are inside of the present cemetery's stone walls. In fact, it's more likely that the soldiers and all other non-Quaker "strangers," as the Quakers would have called them would have been buried outside of the cemetery proper."

In replying to the Rehoboth/Valley Friends article, Skip Yeakel, a descendant of Lewis Walker and grandson of

Billy Walker, noted that the story connects in spots with stories he had heard over the years of buried soldiers and mass unmarked graves, one of which was Lewis Walker's himself and that of his manservant.

"What continues to sadden me was the ransacking and subsequent demolition of the old Walker (later Hires Root Beer) family homestead. As I may already have related to you, one of Pop Pop (Billy) Walker's countless stories told to me was his contention that Princess Grace Kelly was one of the two final bidders for Rehoboth which he claimed the Hires family sold at auction. Pop Pop said Princess Grace Kelly intended to restore Rehoboth to its glory days and keep it as her 'Philadelphia' (area) home for whenever she would visit. He noted her bid lost to Richter's bid and Richter simply and sadly let the place go to rack and ruin. Little of the Lewis Walker legacy remains---save one old and huge sycamore tree near the old homestead.

It would be wonderful if modern forensics science could find Revolutionary War Soldier remains or, for that matter, even Lewis Walker's grave! Given that he was the original settler of Treddyffrin Township and builder of Rehoboth, it would be "altogether fitting and proper" (cousin Abe Lincoln's words) that his remains be located and documented. The reported fact that he was 6' 4" tall when he arrived in Philly from Wales in 1687 should make his skeleton stand head and shoulders above any others of his burial time. As noted, I really lament the fact that the oldest and original home in Treddyffrin Township was allowed to be ransacked and sadly and surprisingly to me demolished but I know that Matt Forester and I would be grateful if even the old date stone from Rehoboth could be found. I have both photos and memory of that date stone which had three dates carved into it---1699, 1799, and 1899 along with Lewis Walker's and subsequent Walker family member initials. As best I can figure, the Walker women must have decided to enlarge the home every 100 years until it became the grand mansion that it was in 1899, since its original completion or expansion in 1699. Bottom line, it is an historical tragedy for Treddyffrin Township that perhaps scientifically located skeletal remains can become the last vestige of documented fact to speak for the time that tried men's souls at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777-1778."



REMEMBERING WILLIAM WALKER

(This article is based on an edited taped interview conducted by Jack Burke, Head of the Wolfsohn Library, and Bill Kiel, an Upper Merion Building Official, on October 27, 1971; they reminisced with Billy Walker, a longtime resident of Upper Merion. This tape and all of the others in the collection have been digitized and are located in the Local History section of the Township Library.)

From the interview, we learn that William Walker was born in New Centerville in Chester County on January 12, 1888. Among the seventh generation of Walkers who had lived on that land, he lived there until he was eighteen, when his father sold the property. For almost two years, he lived in Norristown and then moved to his Grandmother Weber's farm in Jeffersonville. Walker bought cattle in West Virginia and southern Ohio for Ivans Walker, for whom he was working.



Helen and Billy Walker

After wandering around the country for a few years, he went back into the butcher business, having started as a butcher at the General Wayne Headquarters when he was twelve years old. He sold meat in Berwyn and down to the valley.

Billy spoke of Mr. Bummer who owned the Port Kennedy Hotel. Mr. Bummer asked him one day if he was going into the butcher business and Billy responded, "Yes, sir!" He said that Mr. Bummer gave him a piece of advice: "Don't hold your fist too tight shut; leave it a little open so people could put something into it." Billy thought that this was good psychology.

Already married, Billy moved in 1910 from his Grandmother Weber's place to Mrs. Pechin's farm, opposite the Valley Forge Golf Course. He butchered there for eight years. After his home burned down, Mrs. Pechin's son-in-law, Fred Anderson, moved into an addition built onto the Pechin house. He and Billy worked together, driving cattle around, butchering a little bit, and eventually going into the hide and tallow business. They picked up dead animals around the countryside, processed them, and sold the tallow, suet, and hides. One of their best customers for the hides was the Sloboda Family in Philadelphia that processed leather for baseballs. According to Billy, they made more leather for baseballs than all other companies combined. Dur-

ing the First World War, Billy and Fred sold the horse grease to the Sun Ship Yards where they used the grease to slide the ships down into the water.

By 1918, they were butchering as many as fifty to sixty calves a week at the Pechin Farm, many of them being sold to the American Stores. Billy noted that by 1918 he had saved up enough money to buy his one hundred and fifty-two acre farm where Brandywine Village and the Valley Forge Shopping Center now stand. He paid one hundred and fifty dollars an acre.

When asked if the Jonathon Roberts Cemetery was on the site, he noted that it was. Jonathon Roberts, who was related to the Walkers always claimed that there was oil on the property. Billy never found any, but he pointed out that there were *acres of diamonds* that he shoveled up.

Reference was made to the caves underneath the barn on the farm. Bill Kiel explained that there was always the story that Jonathon Roberts harbored slaves there as they were moving north. Walker explained that he was told the story also. He pointed out that there were two hidden potato cellars at the end of the barn. There was also a large opening that went in under the front porch of the main house, which Billy speculated was used to stow away the slaves as well.

Children from various families in the area came to milk the cows. There were enough children in the area that eventually each family was assigned a different week to perform the task.

Billy was remembered for his generosity during the depression. Many people would come from all over, even walking to the farm on a Sunday and would leave with meat, potatoes, and other stuff.

The Walker Dairy Farm also delivered crates of half pints of white milk and chocolate milk to the different schools every day. Billy remembered that during the Depression, he was operating six farms: four in Chester County, one in Pottstown, and the one in King of Prussia. He discussed how he bought the farms when the bottom was out during the Depression and how he sold those farms years later. He remembered how the Pottstown farm was developed after he sold it and eventually he went to visit the site and found that there were now beautiful houses and two large lakes on the property.

Billy Walker was involved in Upper Merion Township government as a township supervisor for eighteen years. At first, he filled the unexpired term of William West who was in his nineties when he died, and then Billy went on to serve three more terms.

Bill Kiel and Billy recalled the many bass, catfish, and eels that they used to catch in the nearby stream and in Pancoast's meadow. Billy remembered when the water sank into the sinkhole. He followed it all the way down to the river, but the water never came out again.

When Billy tore down the old barn, they found a date stone. Emma Roberts, a descendant of Jonathon Roberts, had Billy take the stone to the old Roberts School where it was placed on exhibit in the Roberts Museum at the school.

The trio recalled the mills at Gulph Mills and Mancill Mill near Valley Forge. Billy remembered that as a young boy, the family took the wheat to the Mancill Mill where it was ground into flour which his mother used to make bread. Six loaves were sold retail for a quarter and five cents was charged for a loaf.

They talked about the old sawmill at Martin's Dam in Colonial Village. Billy's father would sell logs to old Billy Hughes who would saw the logs into planks. He remembered that as a little boy he was thrilled to see that "huge circular saw just walking right through those big logs". The outer part with the bark would be used in fireplaces.

The farm at King of Prussia was bought for \$150.00 an acre right after the First World War. Shortly after the Second World War, part of the farm was sold off and became what is now Brandywine Village. Billy sold forty acres at \$1,000.00 an acre. Every two years for ten years, he would sell off the sod on the land for \$150.00 an acre. The land would be enriched with the blood from the butchering and the manure from the chickens. Billy Walker also owned the land where Mother of Divine Providence Church and School would be built.

Billy also owned the stone quarry at Abrams where a swim club would be located later. The stone from that quarry was used to build Dr. Church's house, the house on DeKalb Pike next to the Burger King. As Billy remembered, the house was built for \$9,000.00 by a wonderful Amish stone mason from the Lancaster area.

The marble quarry on Croton Road was also recalled. At the time of the interview, the operation was filled with water but Billy remembered when it was in full operation, producing marble tombstones.

Billy also shared stories about all of the watercress he used to cut at the old Henderson Spring. His sister Isabelle would prepare the baskets of watercress for him to sell. He also remembered gathering watercress at the springs over at the Owens' property off of Moore Road. He joked that he had never seen so

much watercress in his life.

Once when he went to sell the watercress, he met Sam Todor and little Joe Abrams at the farm at Abrams Run. Little Joe Abrams had had a number of chickens stolen a couple of times. Billy fixed an alarm up at the chicken door and a couple of months later, the alarm went off in the morning about 1:00. Joe saw him and went down and slammed the chicken doors shut. Joe didn't shoot the prowler; instead he shot his revolver up into the air. However, Sam Todor shot one and they caught him. They took him down to the city hall at Norristown. Some shot was taken out of the prowler and he did serve some time.

Billy recalled an incident from 1910 when he pastured a lot of cows and spinners near the Moore Road Bridge which crossed over the creek and ran down to the river. He explained that a spinner was a pregnant cow. On one occasion, Miles Weber who was connected with the Board of Education in Philadelphia came up and spent a week of his vacation with Billy. They fished the creek religiously. Billy claimed he caught the largest trout he ever caught in his life. It was four pounds, two ounces. His father remarked, "Billy, if I had never seen it, I wouldn't have believed it!" Bill Kiel noted that he caught many trout at that area, but that was before progress came to the area! Billy went on to describe how the creeks were straightened and narrowed when Cabot, Cabot, and Forbes came. Now the fish had nowhere to hide. "All those good fishing days are gone with the wind!" Billy sadly observed. Billy explained that Trout Run began in Paoli and ran down to the river.

Billy concluded the interview with the thought that times gone by are taken with a grain of salt and related that during the Revolutionary War when General Wayne lived in the area, there was a Tory by the name of Beaver who complained to General Wayne that soldiers were stealing his vegetables and his milk. General Wayne told Beaver that if he saw anyone else stealing, he should shoot them. A report came down that Beaver had shot a soldier and buried him up along the pear orchard. Years later, William H. Keebler had old Chris Eisener digging posts for a fence. Digging a post hole, Eisener dug into human bones. He continued to dig around and soon found revolutionary soldier brass buttons. The bones and buttons were placed in a wooden box and took them up to give to Reverend Herbert Burk, the founder of the Valley Forge Washington Memorial Chapel. Reverend Burk buried the remains opposite the church with a marker to the grave of an unknown soldier.



THE MATURING OF KING OF PRUSSIA

by Barbara McCabe, special to *The Inquirer*, August 4, 1988

Howard Walker had a wistful look in his eyes as he reminisced about growing up in King of Prussia. The son of a dairy farmer, Walker, now 68, talked fondly of helping out at his father's farm market, situated right on the farm, on the north side of Route 202 near what is now The Court at King of Prussia. People would come from all over to buy milk from Billy Walker's farm or meat from his slaughterhouse.



Walker Milk Bottles
1940

"We used to sell milk for 10 cents a quart, three quarts for a quarter," recalled Walker. "Our slogan was, 'You can't beat our milk, but you can whip our cream,' " he said, beaming. "We had the best hamburger you could get and it was only 25 cents a pound."

But that was before 1950. Before the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Before the Schuylkill Expressway. Almost from the moment those two high-speed highways intersected with then- rural Route 202, King of Prussia's days as a sleepy village were numbered.

Today, it is a major urban center which, during the workweek, can swell to a daytime population of 100,000. It is home of the country's largest shopping mall and is the axis of a transportation hub that plays a vital role in the regional economy.

"Once the turnpike came through, it would never be the same," ruminated Walker, as he sat recently on the screened-in porch at his home on the corner of South Gulph and Brooks Roads.

It's not just the old-timers who shake their heads at what King of Prussia has become. The boom times of the last few decades have brought both good and bad. Upper Merion Township, which envelops King of Prussia, has a tax base that any public official would envy. The many businesses in the township carry a large share of the load, and developers, eager to locate in Upper Merion, are willing to ante up additional sums for roads and other public improvements.

Yet King of Prussia's prosperity is levying its own tax: serious traffic problems, increased crime, a shortage of affordable housing and a lack of open space.

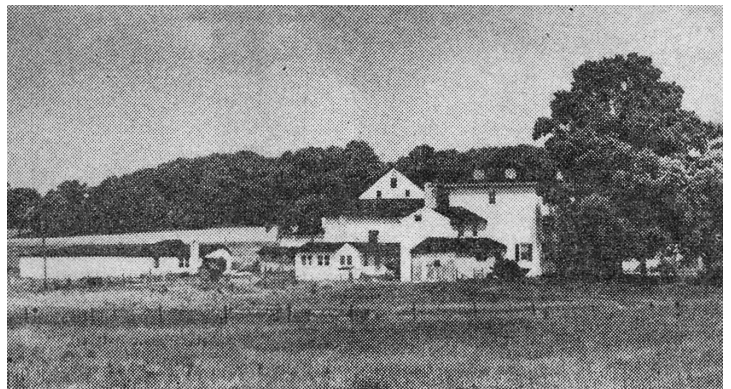
As a result, many people are now beginning to say

what hasn't been heard in King of Prussia to date: "Enough!" That was the sentiment expressed when the 18-acre YMCA property on Valley Forge Road went on the market and residents begged the supervisors to purchase the site to keep it from being developed. The issue still hasn't been resolved. Nor has the future of the 12-acre Billings tract in Gulph Mills where neighbors have rallied to keep cluster townhouses off that wooded site.



PICTURE THIS! ANSWER

The house pictured on page 3 was located at 560 West DeKalb Pike. It was built by Billy Walker for Dr. Church. See the details in the **REMEMBERING BILLY WALKER** article found in this issue. Since 1956, the house was the site of the King of Prussia Veterinary Hospital. In Spring 2013, the building was demolished to make way for the expansion of the Burger King franchise. The veterinary hospital has moved to Beidler Road in King of Prussia.



The Walker Farmhouse and Outbuildings.

PROPERTY OF WILLIAM W. WALKER AND HELEN B. WALKER

The property was located NWs of DeKalb Pike, 259' NE of Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Upper Merion township, Montgomery county, PA.

In a correspondence dated November 5, 1953 Roland Rodrock Handall of Philadelphia noted that they examined and appraised the property and issued a final certificate of value as of the date of taking, March 4, 1952. Prior to the taking, the value was listed as \$192,700.00; subsequent to the taking, the value was listed as \$47,300.00.

The purpose of the appraisal was to establish the fair market value of the property prior to the taking by the Pennsyl-

vania Turnpike, the date of taking being March 4, 1952.

William W. Walker was listed as the legal owner of the property which he acquired by deed dated May 8, 1918 and recorded May 18, 1918 in Norristown in Deed Book 769, page 70 and by deed poll dated September 29, 1938 and recorded on October 13, 1938 at Norristown in Deed Book 1269, page 258.

The original purchase by the owner consisted of 151 acres more or less, however, from time to time, the owner sold off various tracts along DeKalb Pike and along Allendale Road, leaving a net area of approximately 44.681 acres in 1952.

The farm location was identified as a white residential and farm section. Over a period of a few years many of the acres had been subdivided and developed into building lots. Northeast and adjoining the Walker property is Brandywine Village consisting of 179 homes built in 1950. Adjoining Brandywine Village is the Candlebrook development consisting of 120 houses built in the Spring of 1954. Opposite the Walker Farm, alongside the southeast side of DeKalb Pike, are the Valley Forge Homes, a development consisting of 202 houses completed in 1951 and an additional 52 houses built in 1953.

The property, prior to the taking, consisted of 44.681 acres of farm land with building improvements. The land was irregular in shape and was relatively level ground, rolling down slightly to a stream known as Abrams Run and a tributary of Abrams Run which flows through the center of the property. The property had a frontage of approximately 849 feet in the center line of DeKalb Pike. There was also a forty foot wide entrance from Allendale Road to the rear southwest portion of the property. The northeast boundary line extended approximately 1,560 feet from DeKalb Pike and adjoined Brandywine Village and Candlebrook.

The buildings and improvements consisted of a three story stone and stucco farm dwelling, tennis court, stone and frame barn which included a slaughtering room, a butcher store and grocery store, a dairy building, automobile and farm implement shed, twenty ton outdoor scale, corn crib, and frame out toilet. Other improvements consisted of a concrete swimming pool, frame bath house and out toilet, and a frame pump house. The farm dwelling on the west side of Abrams Run was accessed over a driveway and a bridge that spanned Abrams Run.

Other improvements on the property included a two story modern stone dwelling with an attached garage and an outdoor stone barbeque.

Originally built in 1804, the farm dwelling was a three and

two story and basement stone and stucco detached dwelling with a one story addition. The dwelling was described as having stone foundations, cement basement floor, stone walls, stucco exterior, wood joint construction, wood floors, plastered interior walls and ceilings throughout, double hung wood sash and frames, wood doors, wood stairs, tin and composition roof. Also found were electric lights throughout, hot water heat, a Freed coal fired boiler, domestic hot water supplied by a sixty gallon Pemco automatic electric heater, sewerage disposal by cesspool, water supplied from a well with an electric driven pump.

The basement was divided into five rooms by foundation walls and a frame enclosed coal bin. The first floor had a front open frame porch and a side screen enclosed frame porch. The entrance hallway led to the living room with a marble fireplace, a dining room with a marble fireplace, hardwood floors, a kitchen with linoleum flooring, a sink, a coal range with a twenty gallon hot water storage tank, a gas range (bottled gas), and a rear frame shed. There were floor radiators. The interior walls and ceiling were papered throughout. Two stairways led to the second floor.

With the two hallways, the second floor consisted of three bedrooms, two with fireplaces, hardwood floors, and wide board flooring, two bathrooms, one with modern fixtures, a tub on legs and the other bathroom had a tub only.

The third floor had the two hallways, four bedrooms, and wide board flooring.

The large frame barn was also built in 1804 and had two floors. The first floor contained seven large pens and five box stalls, a slaughtering room, a cold storage room insulated with four inch cork, a retail butcher shop, and a retail grocery store. The second floor was used for refrigerating equipment and hay and farm implement storage. The main part of the barn was under a tin roof, a portion under an asbestos shingled roof, and the store portion under an aluminum roof. The building had electric lights and the water supply came from Abrams Run.

The right of way for the turnpike divided the property into three separate parcels. Some of the property was also taken for the widening of DeKalb Pike and the channel change of Abrams Run a tributary to Abrams Run. The taking not only included the land but also the residence of the owner, shade trees and shrubbery, tennis court, weighing scale, the private bridge over the creek, a water pipeline from Abrams Run, portions of the parking area, and the driveway entrance from DeKalb Pike.

SCENES FROM TIME PAST FROM THE WALKER FARM

King-of-Prussia, Pa., Jan. 24, 1913.

M r. E. B. Cassatt,
To WILLIAM W. WALKER, Dr.
 WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALER IN
ALL KINDS OF MEATS
 Bell Telephone 375, Port Kennedy.

| | | | | |
|----|----|-------------------------|------|--------|
| 13 | 27 | Beef forward | | 136 59 |
| " | 30 | 10 1/2 lb steak @ 20 | 2 10 | |
| " | " | 30 " Pork chops @ 20 | 6 00 | |
| " | " | 19 " Ham @ 18 | 3 42 | |
| " | " | 30 " Beef steak @ 23 | 6 90 | 18 42 |
| | | Dec's bill in full | | 155 01 |
| 14 | 3 | 10 lbs steak @ 23 | 2 30 | 20 |
| " | " | 12 3/4 " Pot Roast @ 22 | 2 81 | |
| " | " | 10 3/4 " Roast @ 18 | 1 94 | |
| " | " | 17 lb Pork @ 20 | 3 40 | |
| " | " | 20 " chops @ 20 | 4 00 | |

WALKER'S
 DAIRY and MARKET
 King of Prussia
 Pennsylvania
 Phone: Norris. 2752



Walker's Retail Market.



The Walker Farmhouse and Outbuildings.



Shed and Scrapple.



Kids at the Walker Farm Pool.



Walker Dairy Processing.

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP IS CELEBRATING ITS TRICENTENNIAL!
See page two for the remaining programs for 2013.

**The King of Prussia Historical Society Meeting Schedule
for January-June 2014.**

Saturday, January 11: Business Meeting: Upcoming Programs/Speaker: Michael Shaw: *Railroads of Upper Merion*
Location: Christ Church Old Swedes Church Hall at 2:00 PM.

Saturday, February 8: Business Meeting/Speaker: Sheilah Vance: *The Road to Valley Forge*
Location: The King of Prussia Inn at 2:00 PM.

Saturday, March 8: Business Meeting/The History of Chocolate featuring Zwahlen's Ice Cream and Chocolate Company
\$10.00 per person. (This is a fund raiser for the Society.)
Location: Christ Church Old Swedes Church Hall at 2:00 PM.

Saturday, April 12: Field Trip: Sheep Shearing Day at the Peter Wentz Farmstead
Location: Worcester, PA at 10:00 AM.

Saturday, May 10: Business Meeting/Speaker: Kate Hammond from Valley Forge Park
Location: The King of Prussia Inn at 2:00 PM.

Saturday, June 14: Business Meeting/Program: Digging into the Upper Merion Archives followed by the Society Picnic
Location: Christ Church Old Swedes Church Hall at 2:00 PM.

Check out the King of Prussia Historical Society website at www.kophistory.org.
And follow us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/kophistory



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