

Fall 2018

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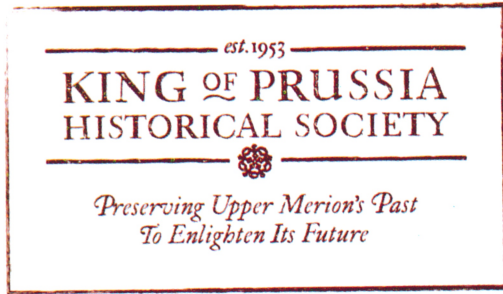
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THE VILLAGE THAT VANISHED

The following is an excerpt from the Fall 2018 issue of the *King of Prussia Gazette's* feature article written by Russell Rubert. The *Gazette* is the quarterly publication of the *King of Prussia Historical Society*. All members receive a copy. To receive your own copy - so you can read the rest of the story - join the King of Prussia Historical Society today.



The Village of Port Kennedy was founded in Upper Merion Township in the early 1800's and was named for Alexander Kennedy. His youngest son John Kennedy was the most extensive lime dealer in the local area. In 1842 he bought the lime works which he managed for the next thirty-five years. He died in 1877 at the age of sixty-one.

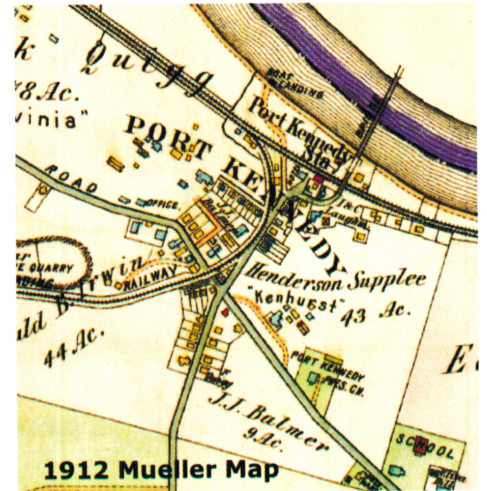
By then the village had grown to include a large three-story hotel, a blast furnace with stone works, a general store, a post office, a train station, dozens of homes and businesses. The hotel, once located right next to the train station, was last owned by Miss Isabella Loughlin. ...

... through its power of eminent domain, Pennsylvania condemned much of the main portion of the town. The land and buildings had been purchased from their owners and turned over to the Valley Forge Park Commission. When the buildings were removed, together with the debris, the commission graded the land and added it to the [Valley Forge State] park. The Village of Port Kennedy was essentially dead.

When Route 422 was built in the mid 1960's, it divided the regraded park section from the small still occupied section on the far side of the First Presbyterian Church of Port Kennedy with a ribbon of highway that led to the "Singing Bridge", a steel floored structure traversing the Schuylkill River. Over the decades, bits and pieces of the village remained. Several



houses were occupied by park rangers while the former John Kennedy Mansion "Kenhurst" transitioned from a family home to an Inn or boarding house to finally a restaurant called the "Kennedy-Suplee Restaurant". ... The remaining remnants on the park side of the all but vanished village were briefly spruced up with repairs and a coat of paint for the American Bi-centennial. But ... what had once been a ribbon of highway was now a massive cleaver slicing the dismembered Port Kennedy into even tinier pieces.



Today, the site of the once thriving village is even further being snipped at as Route 422 is once again being widened and renovated to accommodate increased traffic. But if you stand on the Route 23/Valley Forge Road overpass and look down on 422 you can see

the Kennedy-Suplee mansion on one side and the First Presbyterian Church on the other and realize that once things had been different. That once there had been a town there. That once there had been a village. Now vanished.

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