

# The PIONEER



UPPER·MERIDON·HIGH·SCHOOL  
...1936...

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## History Of The Upper Merion Schools

As far back as 1796 we have records of a school in Upper Merion. It was the Gulf School, located in Gulf Mills. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Gulf School had been fully established and served the country round about.

The next school house of which we have any record is the Old Camp School house erected at Mount Joy, which is now Valley Forge Park. According to Burke and Penny-packer, this building was erected in 1705. It was of the usual log construction. This building was not only used as a school but also as a hospital and smith-shop.

In 1735 another school house was built in Swedesburg at Rev. Hesselius' suggestion. The structure was a one-story building and until it was abandoned a few years ago, it had the distinction of being the only permanent frame school structure in Montgomery County. When the building was abandoned, it taught grades 1 to 5.

According to records, the Union School at King of Prussia is the oldest of present day buildings. It seems as though the early Welsh settlers in this district were anxious in educating their children. The first school erected by the Welsh was in 1740 in Matthew Robert's woods on the present State Road, (DeKalb Pike). It was made of logs and was used for about fifty years.

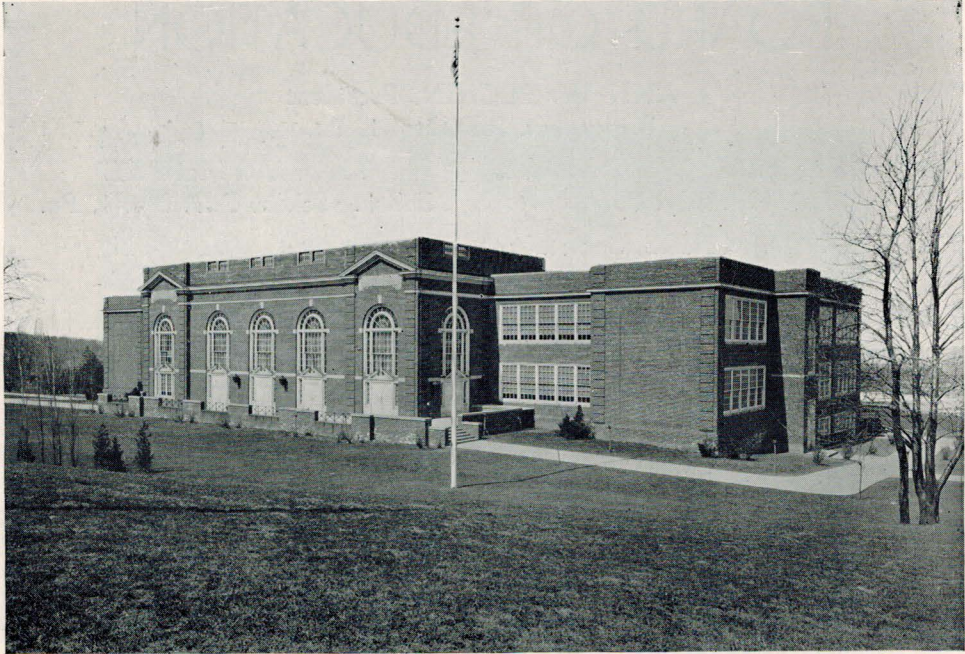
"Flint Hill" was an old Upper Merion School in the village of Matsunk, now Swedeland. This building was abandoned when other schools attracted its pupils. It was used as a dwelling place by Silas Supplee, a soldier of the Revolutionary War.

The Henry School, another Upper Merion Public School stood between Port Kennedy and Valley Forge. It was abandoned about 1884, when the Camp and Evergreen Schools were built. This school was a one-room building, but later a second floor was added.

There are two buildings standing in the site of what is called the Evergreen School. The older structure is a two-story, two-room building standing close to the road, bearing the date of 1869. In 1912, a one-story, four-room brick building was erected in the woods behind the former building. The four room building was discontinued in 1930, along with six other buildings. However, the school population so increased that in 1931 the building was remodeled, inside water and toilet facilities and electric lights were installed, and the grounds improved. Today, the building houses the pupils of grades 1, 2, 3, 4, of what was formerly the Union and Evergreen area.

The Bird-in-Hand School is located near what was the Bird-in-Hand tavern of pre-revolutionary times. It is a two-room stone structure, placed on a rather spacious playground, with beautiful trees surrounding it.

The Flint Hill School was a forerunner of the present Swedeland School. Directly preceding the present buildings the school district operated a school on Flint Hill Street in Swedeland.



## History Of The Upper Merion Schools

The building in use at the present time, houses all the pupils from Swedesburg and Swedeland of grades 1 to 6, as well as a class of orthogenically retarded pupils collected from all parts of the township. It has nine full-sized rooms with two activity rooms.

The first step toward the plan to improve school conditions in this township was started about 1924 by Thomas A. Bock, director of the Bureau of Field Service, of the Department of Public Instruction of Harrisburg. The board worked untiringly on the project, carefully studied the reports and readily realized the necessity of the consolidated Junior-Senior High School. Finally after many controversies they decided to locate the school at Henderson and Montgomery Avenue where they purchased a tract of ten acres for the sum of \$20,000.

The new school building is of traditional colonial architecture that predominates in Montgomery County, having an exterior of red brick and white trim. It accommodates 750 to 800 pupils, ranging from grades 1 to 12 inclusive.

The grounds are beautifully graded, and upon them is laid out one of the most complete athletic fields of any school of its size in the suburban section. Football, baseball, track and tennis activities can be carried on simultaneously.

The building is well equipped throughout with movable seating, complete household arts departments, general art, shop, a very excellent science laboratory, etc. Every room has its own electric clock, house telephone, and a loud speaker connected to a building system of radio receiving and building broadcasting unit.

In the year 1934, just one hundred years after the beginning of the Public School in Pennsylvania, its first Senior Class out of its newly organized high School was graduated.

Upper Merion Township, one of the oldest educational centers in Montgomery County, has had a rather fascinating period of growth. From the one-room little "Red School House" it has grown to a place where it can feel proud that it is offering to its youth the best there is in opportunities for growth and development of well-integrated personalities.



## FACULTY

Mr. Robert R. Strine (Ursinus A. B. and Bucknell M. S.) is principal of the Junior-Senior High Schools and teaches Biology.

Mrs. Ethel Diehl (Keystone Normal B. A.) has classes in Special Music, English, and History. She also sponsors the Junior High Glee Club, and coached the speaking parts in "Pickles."

Miss Marjorie B. Foley (Penn B. S.), Girls Coach, teaches Girls' Physical Education and dancing for special programs.

On Mr. Henry Frankenfield (Penn State B. S. & M. A.) rests the responsibility of art supervision for all grades, the painting of scenery for plays, and preparing prints for the year Book.

Besides teaching Latin and English, Miss Pauline E. Grove (Ursinus B. A.) prepared the makeup for the operetta and plays.

Mr. Owen L. Helfferich (Gettysburg B. A., Syracuse M. A.) tutors English and French and coached the Annual Play, "Seven Keys To Baldpate."

The business end of our plays, operettas, and other activities, usually is taken care of by Mr. Herbert L. Hensinger (F&M B. S.), who also teaches Mathematics and is business manager of the year book.

Mr. Howard E. James (Gettysburg B. S.) teaches a variety of subjects—Chemistry, Latin, Algebra, and Arithmetic.

Mr. Charles P. J. King (Lehigh B. S. Penn M. S.) teaches Mathematics in its higher forms, and several Jr. High Classes.

Miss Mary McCrone (Dickinson Ph. B.) teaches Commercial subjects and sponsored "The Upper Merion Typist" this year. Miss McCrone also supervises Banking in the school.

Our library is taken care of by Miss Marie Martin (Elmira B. A.), our English Teacher, who coached our Senior Play, "Who Wouldn't Be Crazy?", and Commencement.

Mrs. Sarah E. Marwood (West Chester) teaches Social Science to Jr. High Classes, and is the school's Home Visitor, as well as taking care of the attendance records.

"Pickles" was directed by Mr. George Messick (Temple B. S.), the Music Supervisor, who has charge of the Glee Club, the Orchestra, and the Special Senior Chorus.

Mrs. Mildred E. Miller (Penn B. S.) teaches Geography to Junior High Pupils.

The Boys' Junior High Coach is Mr. Frank F. Rathmell (Penn State B. S.), our Industrial Arts teacher, who takes care of stage properties and directs the Rifle Team.

Coach of Major Sports and Golf is Mr. Norman E. Raub (Temple B. S. & M. S.) who teaches Boys' Physical Education and General Science.

The teacher of Senior High Social Studies, and the Faculty Sponsor of the year book is Mr. Albert S. Thompson (Ursinus B. A. Penn M. A.), who also coaches our Tennis Team and acts as Senior Advisor.

Miss Marjorie E. Witman (Cedar Crest B. S.) teaches Household Arts, made the costumes for "Pickles," and is in charge of the Cafeteria.

To Mr. Paul Zuck (Temple B. S. & Master of Education) goes the honor of developing our fine Band. He also teaches Junior High Social Studies.

# RIFLE CLUB

A new addition to the school activities is the Rifle Club, formed last fall by a group of boys from the Junior High School. The membership is low when compared with that of other schools, but is slowly increasing. The shortage of members meant a shortage of money so a benefit was held at the Norris Theater in Norristown. The club was quite successful in the benefit and purchased two club rifles and a spotting telescope. The benefit furnished something else—the much-needed publicity. Due to this publicity the membership has more than doubled. The membership to date is eighteen.

The properties of the club are two .22 caliber Mossberg number 35 rifles, a spotting telescope (a ten power telescope on an improvised stand), two gun racks, a gun cabinet, a box for carrying targets, bullets, a cleaning outfit and two ranges—one inside and one outside. The former was made last fall by eight members of the rifle club.

The leading team members are: Harrison Daub, Richard Fogarty, Walter Jarmon, Julius Ashton, Elizabeth Stewart, Howard Walker, William Brittain and William Forth. The Coach and Instructor is Frank Rathmell.

The scores of this year's four matches are:

Upper Darby .....	548	Upper Merion .....	425
Norristown .....	1019	Upper Merion .....	950
Lower Merion .....	1315	Upper Merion .....	1361
Radnor .....	1417	Upper Merion .....	1465

