

History of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Ward

# East of the Lehigh

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Preface --- In 1961, the Fourteenth Ward Civic Group formed a Historic Committee to compile information about East Allentown and put it in booklet form to help celebrate Allentown's Bicentennial in EAST OF THE LEHIGH, we will attempt to give you a brief history to the best of our knowledge, as we go into the past --- some of the facts were taken from old maps, books, pictures, and additional verbal information was supplied by our senior citizens. Time and space does not allow us to go into fine detail of the areas of Clader's Division and Bridgetown in the 14<sup>th</sup> Ward and Rittersville in the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward, which form East Allentown. It is the sincere hope of the Committee that this booklet will provide pleasant reading and memories.

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Early History ---

(Editor's Update --- On March 5, 1681, one day after receiving his royal charter for Pennsylvania, William Penn wrote that he believed God would make his colony "the seed of the nation." Penn wanted his Pennsylvania to be a land where people of differing languages and customs could live together, where men and women could worship as they pleased, where men could participate fully in their government. Such a land, Penn believed, would indeed be blessed.

William Penn established the following three original counties at the formation of Pennsylvania in 1682: Philadelphia, Chester and Bucks'

the city of Philadelphia and county of Philadelphia were combined in 1854 and city and county offices merged in 1952 with a total acreage of 143 sq mi or 370 km<sup>2</sup>. It's name meaning "Brotherly love" is derived from the merger of the Greek words philos meaning ("love") and adelphos meaning "brother".

Chester County whose County seat is West Chester is named for The English city of Chester in the county of Cheshire and has a total acreage of 760 sq mi or 1,968 km<sup>2</sup>.

Bucks County whose County seat is Doylestown is named for the English county of Buckinghamshire presently has a total acreage of 622 sq mi or 1,611 km<sup>2</sup>.)

Please Note --- Northampton County whose County Seat is Easton is named for the English city of Northampton presently has a total acreage of 377 sq mi or 976 km<sup>2</sup>.

Then too --- Lehigh County whose County Seat is Allentown has a total acreage of 349 sq mi or 904 km<sup>2</sup>.

Allentown was originally named Northamptontown by its founder, Chief Justice of Colonial Pennsylvania's Supreme Court, William Allen. Allen, also a former Mayor of Philadelphia and successful businessman, drew up plans for the rural village in 1762. Despite its formal name, from the beginning, nearly everyone called it "Allen's town". Allen hoped Northamptontown would turn into a commercial center because of its location along the Lehigh River. The low water level most of the year, however, made river trade impractical. Sometime in the early 1770s, William Allen apparently gave the property to his son, James, who built a country home called Trout Hall after his father's hunting and fishing lodge. Even by the time of the American Revolution, Allentown remained little more than a small village of Pennsylvania Dutch, more properly German, farmers and tradesmen, but continued its development as a center of marketing for local farmers from the post revolutionary years into the 1920s. The U.S. Census of 1810 placed it at the heart of the largest grain producing regions in the country.)

Let's start in 1682 when Bucks County was one of the three original counties established by William Penn. On March 11, 1752 Bucks County was divided into two counties and Northampton County was born. On March 6, 1812 Lehigh County was formed out of Northampton, being named by the river which separates it from Northampton County. Hanover Township is the only Township of Lehigh County east of the Lehigh River. Originally a part of Allentown Township it separated from Allen Township in August of 1798.

One of the important roads of the period of 1730-1740 in connection with the trade of the Lehigh Valley was the Indian trail that led from Lehigh Gap to Solomon Jennings' Ferry on the Lehigh River, two miles west of Bethlehem near Central Park. Jennings possessed land on both sides of the river and located here prior to 1735. The earliest recorded road to Philadelphia from the Lehigh River is from this ferry across South Mountain. The traffic of traders and Indians as well as early settlers coursed along this way several years before the Moravians settled in Bethlehem. Early maps indicate that the Jennings Ferry was an adoption of an Indian trail crossing. Recent findings of Indian relics in Central Park on the south exposure of the hill slope, indicates a camp site or village site of long time ago.

(Editor's Update- In 1761, a road was built from the Philadelphia Road through Salisbury Township that passed by the Jennings farmhouse, crossed the Lehigh on a ferry run by Solomon Jennings, proceeded up through what was to become Rittersville and Schoenersville, and ended at the Lehigh Gap. This road was abandoned in 1825 after the road from Rittersville to Bethlehem was opened.)

In October 1755 the task of surveying the entire course of the great inter-county Kings Road was completed by David Shultze. He was widely known for his contacts with and ministrations to the people in manners of surveying roads and locating farms and town sites. He was popularly known as the "farmer's lawyer." He lived at Gosehenhoppen in Bucks County, and his diary has illustrated and preserved much of local history and lore. Shultze's survey followed the present course of Hanover Avenue in Allentown to the Lehigh River where a ford existed a short distance from the present bridge.

Travel by horseback was both popular and a general necessity of the day. The "Sopus Wagon" and "Jersey Wagons" made their appearance quite early on this road that soon was destined to be a pioneer avenue. There were curricles, sulkies, phaetons and Windsor Chair interspersed with the heavier units of cartage. Within a decade after the opening of this King's Road, there appeared the frigate on the land known as the Conestoga Wagon. These sturdy vehicles were the ancestors of the famous covered wagons of later years. Mounted on broad wheels with a spacious bed elevated at either end and covered with a white top, the bed being in red above and blue below, made this truly a "vehicle of empire" dressed up in true American red, white and blue. Drawn by from two to six horses, sometimes in caravans, this mighty rumbling device carried the national commerce in the days prior to the coming of the steam locomotive.

#### Clader's Division

The first settler in this area was Jacob Clader. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and before 1781, settled on a tract of 70 or 80 acres of land on the east bank of the Lehigh River which was to be known as Clader's Division. He was born February 9, 1751 and died March 25, 1832. About 1783 he kept an Inn near the east bank of the Lehigh River, and about 1795 owned the ferry across the river. Some of the early homes built in the early 1800's still stand.

Across the canal from Clader's Division is a man-made island. This came about when the canal was built in 1828. The canal cut through a piece of land that settled out into the Lehigh Rive, thus making an island (It was called "Kletor's Island" on the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Map of 1830). In the years that followed, this island became a famous resort spot in the summer. Citizens would pack up a picnic lunch and take off in their horse and carriage and carriage and would get on the island via the ferry. This island was known as "Haymaker's Island," today it is known as "Adams Island" and is part of the 14<sup>th</sup> Ward.

At the southern end of Clader's Division stands what was known as Clader's Hotel. This hotel was built about 1840 and still stands today. Clader's Hotel would be one of the stop-over points on the canal for the people coming from Philadelphia on the canal boats to see the beautiful scenery along the canal and Lehigh River. The area along the Lehigh River was talked about by everyone that would travel through-how peaceful and beautiful it was. After the railroad was built, Clader's Hotel also became a stop-over point for its passengers.

Bridgetown blocks wide and two blocks long.

What is now known as the 14<sup>th</sup> Ward in the City of Allentown had its beginning in the early 1800's.

Bridgetown, as it was called on the Northampton Map of 1860, is located along the east bank of Lehigh River. As you come off the covered toll bridge going east, you were in Bridgetown. Its boundaries on the north was Clader's Division; on the south East Union Street and on the east, South Carlisle Street. It was a village two blocks wide and two blocks long.

The land in this area along the Lehigh River was owned by Jacob Clader who lived in a stone house on the left side of the road leading to Bethlehem. In 1828 Jacob Saeger and George Keck purchased 45 acres of land from Jacob Clader, and, obtaining a license, converted the stone house into a hotel. In 1832 Saeger and Keck built a stone and brick grist mill on the back of the canal. In 1850, C.L. and A.S. Keck and William Saeger opened a lumber yard.

Some of the nicknames given to this area by the canal boat operators were "East Port" and "Snufftown." "Eastport" because the canal boats would stop at the Saeger store and sell their products --- "Snufftown" because on a hot summer day when the wind would blow in from the east they would get the odor from Mosser Tannery which was located east of Saeger's store.

#### Rittersville

Rittersville, located east of Bridgetown along the Kings Highway (now Hanover Avenue) was named after Michael Ritter. Its boundaries were from Bast Avenue (now Irving Street) to the toll gate at Pennsylvania Avenue in Bethlehem, from Schonerville on the north to the Lehigh River on the south. One of the first settlers of the area was Solomon Jennings, who located along the Lehigh River south of Central Park prior to 1737. He was one of the three walkers of the famous Indian Walking Purchase.

Other early settlers in the area before 1800 were John Sterner, and George Hoehle. Other family names occupying the area in the early 1800's include Osenbach, Fry, Knauss, Kichline, Hillman, Easing, Ayres, Zener, Brung, Bast, Keiper and McHose.

Due to the hard pan clay and granite stone in this area it was difficult to farm the land. Water would not seep into the ground. The best farm land in this area was settled on by the Sterner family prior to 1760, where the present State Hospital is now located.

Some of the interesting homes located along the old Kings Highway include the first house built (located at 1830 Hanover Avenue), a log cabin built around 1790 (1814 Hanover Avenue) and a unique square house with a chimney in the middle of the roof (1813 Hanover Avenue).

Springs from around the Central Park area fed a small creek which ran down the valley thru Clader's Division and into the Lehigh River. This existed until the city put in storm sewers and the low land was filled in.

The corner stone of the Allentown State Hospital was laid June 27, 1904. This land includes 209 acres and extends in a narrow strip from Hanover Avenue to the Lehigh Canal. It was opened for reception of patients October 3, 1912.

#### Annexation

Principals involved in the annexation of East Allentown included Robert Bankhard, Frank Sensenbach and Dr. Klotz. In 1911 more than 1200 signatures were secured for incorporating the section east of the Lehigh River to Irving Street to become part of Allentown. On December 1, 1911 --- 660 acres which is now the 14<sup>th</sup> Ward became annexed.

Robert Bankhard built many homes in East Allentown, having moved to E. Walnut Street in 1885. As a young man he became a contractor and in 1909 he started in partnership with Frank Sensenbach, and together directed building operations in East Allentown.

Dr. Robert Klotz arrived in Rittersville in November 1894. Through his efforts residents of the Rittersville section petitioned the City of Allentown for annexation and on February 15, 1920 the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward was formed. This area went from Irving Street to Central Park consisting of approximately 1500 acres.

To Dr. Klotz goes the credit for the present Union Boulevard originally named Klotz Avenue. Early in his career as a real estate developer, he suggested a road to parallel Hanover Avenue, then known as The Kings Highway. He desired a wide, straight roadway and purchased farms on its route for this purpose. He succeeded in his wishes as far as Eaton Avenue. (Eaton Avenue is the original route of the Kings Highway built about the mid 1700's) Trees were planted in the center of Union Boulevard by Dr. Klotz in 1906 and the Boulevard was opened in 1912. With the Construction of the Tilghman Street across the Lehigh River, the peak of Dr. Klotz's triumph was realized and the East Side was more closely connected with the main part of Allentown.

Another of the boulevard type streets for which Dr. Klotz receives credit is Jerome Street, from Hanover Avenue south to e. Hamilton Street.

#### People

Some of the important people of Bridgetown around 1862 were the Keck, Mosser and Saeger families. The Kecks owned a lumber yard, built in 1850, which covered two square blocks and was located just east of the Hamilton Street Bridge. The Keck homestead was located just off the bridge, now occupied by an Atlantic Gas Station. The lumber yard now is the present site of the East Side Memorial Little League and the Reeves-Parvin warehouse.

J.K. Mosser whose homestead and tannery covered two square blocks was located south of Keck lumber yard on E. Walnut and from S. Aubrey to S. Ann Streets. His tannery, built in 1859, was located on the west end of the property. Just east of the tannery the Mosser mansion was built in 1860, a big three story house standing on top of the hill overlooking the tannery, the Keck lumber yard, Saegers Mill, the Canal and the Lehigh River. This home burned down in 1889. Undaunted, he rebuilt it became the first home in East Allentown to have electricity. A line was run from the tannery where they had a steam

engine driving a direct current generator. The Mossers lived in this house until 1900 when Mr. Mosser moved into his new home he had built at 455 Hamilton Street. He lived there until his death in 1905. His big white mansion in EAST Allentown was torn down in the early 1930's.

The Mosser and Keck homesteads were the only two homes in Bridgetown that had running water and bath tubs. The water supply to these two homes came from the spring house which was located on what is now known as the Mosser School and was carried by underground lead pipes. This springhouse was in use by the people in that area until 1915.

The Saegers owned most of the land along the Lehigh River, south of Hamilton Street and raised wheat and corn. The Saeger Mill was built and was south of the Hamilton St. bridge, between the canal and the Lehigh River. One of the oldest remaining buildings intact at the Bridgetown days in the Saeger homestead located at E. Union and S. Arndt Streets.

### Early Industries

One of the first to burn lime was Jacob Clader who owned "Lime Hill" located along the east bank of the Lehigh River from Claders Division to the Hamilton Street Bridge. He sold quite a bit of land in that area to Jon Trexler around 1850. In 1913 they sold the upper half of the quarry to the New Jersey Zinc Co, The Trexler family continued to burn and quarry limestone until 1924.

Brick was first introduced in this area as early as 1800. The Downing Brick Factory was established in 1873 and located along the canal at what is now known as the Allentown Convention Co. Salaries ranged from .05 an hour for boys to .13 an hour for men.

The Mosser Tannery was built in 1859 and carried on a very extensive business for 40 years. The annual production was about 30,000

Hides and employed between 50 to 75 men. The working men lived in a company owned row of houses that Mosser had converted from a large barn located in the 200 block of E. Walnut St. After Mosser moved in 1900, the DeJourno Soap Factory occupied these premises.

The Dannecker Brothers Freight Line, started around 1900, was located at 266 E. Hamilton Street. They owned two stables using 12 horses to haul local freight between Allentown and Bethlehem and were in business until the late 1920's when trucks overtook the freight hauling business.

Ernest Ashley located in East Allentown in 1910 when he built a florist hot house. It is located at 500 Hanover Avenue and still in use as a flower shop and greenhouse.

Kaltenbach and Stephen Silk Mills, Inc. built a large mill located on So. Carlisle Street in March 1907, addition being built in 1909, 1910, and 1914. They were famous for the blue ribbon which was distinctively used by Pabst Brewing Co, of Milwaukee.

George Weisel Marble and Granite works located at the corner of Pike and Church Streets, Rittersville (now 2004 Hanover Avenue) This was established in 1900.

The Klotz and Bregenzer Silk Co. was organized by Dr, Robert Klotz which was located just to the west of Central Park. It grew to the point where at one time it was recognized as the largest narrow ribbon mill in the world.

### Bridges Across the Lehigh River

Soon after laying out the public road between Easton and Reading in 1754, a ferry was established near what is now the Lehigh dam. Abraham Rinker was the first navigator of the ferry across the Lehigh and he was followed by Caspar Weaver who ran the ferry until Jacob Clader took over ownership. The ferry continued in use until 1814 when the first bridge was built across the river.

Many efforts had been made to erect a bridge but money seemed to be the drawback until Dr. James Jameson an enterprising citizen finally succeeded to raise the initial funds.

On May 14, 1813 Jacob Clader sold land for construction of a bridge. During the next two years at a cost of \$15,000, a chain bridge was erected. The bridge was 530 feet long, 32 feet wide and 22 feet above the water. It consisted of two loops and two half loops and was suspended by four chains. It had a double driveway until damaged by fire on March 13, 1828, when an entire section burned, including Dr. Jameson's stable on the west end of the bridge. It was again damaged during the building of the canal and dam when one of the chains was broken by a large rock from blasting operations nearby, Afterwards it was a single driveway. It was swept away by the flood of January 1841 and once again the ferry was in use until December 1841.

A covered, wooden toll bridge was erected in December of 1841. It was washed away by the flood of January 4, 1862 and a temporary structure was erected which served until 1867, when a new iron bridge was built.

On February 12, 1867 at a cost of \$75,367, an iron bridge was opened to the public. The bridge was in use until February 28, 1902, when a flood weakened the structure and floating debris caused the bridge to be washed away.

With this disaster and with the help of Mr. Keck, the local lumber dealer, a flat bottom ferry was built. With the use of steel cables they pulled themselves back and forth across the river until a temporary wooden structure was built in June 1902. Again floods proved the adversary and this bridge too, was washed away, to be replaced with a second wooden structure which again was washed away by an angry river.

Then in 1907, at a cost of \$125,000, a steel bridge was built. This was the first bridge to go above the Lehigh and Susquehanna Railroad built in 1864. The bridge was able to contain the swollen flood waters but was condemned as be unsafe for modern day traffic, and as a result, work was begun on a new concrete structure costing \$1,600,000 on June 26, 1958 and completed December 14, 1959.

Other bridges across the Lehigh River were the Terminal Bridge (which went from Central R.R. yards to Kline's Island) originally built in 1897. On march 3, 1902, in the morning, the east span of the bridge fell into the Lehigh River. It was rebuilt in 1903.

Not too far below from the Terminal Bridge stood the Lehigh Iron and Steel Co. Cinder Bridge which went from the Cinder Dump to Aineyville (So, Allentown). The middle section fell into the Lehigh River on March 1, 1902 as a result of the flood waters. It was built in 1884, rebuilt in 1904 and torn down in the early 1940's.

North of the Hamilton Street bridge, in May of 1928, the Tilghman Street Bridge was started. It was a concrete bridge and was completed in September 1929 at a cost of \$900,000.

North of the Tilghman Street Bridge, a wooden bridge of 3 spans was erected in 1851 crossing the Lehigh River near the Allentown Iron Works in the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward. It was swept away by the 1862 flood and never rebuilt.

A short distance north of the Tilghman Street a railroad bridge was built about 1895. It crosses the Lehigh River from Canal Lock No 6 to the cinder dump of the old Allentown Iron Works.

#### Bridges Across the Canal

At Lock No. 6 located north of the Tilghman Street Bridge, a railroad bridge was built in 1864 and rebuilt 1903.

Just south of Lock No. 7, located at the Hamilton Street Bridge, a covered bridge built in 1832 went across the canal to Saegers Mill.

At Lock No. 8, located at the south end of the Allentown Converting Co., are two bridges across the canal. One is a railroad bridge built in 1897 and rebuilt in 1916. The other was for pedestrians and vehicular use built in 1829 and rebuilt in the early 1900's.

#### Floods

##### Flood of January 1841

The mountains had been covered for days with snow, and on December 30, 1840 rain began to fall, presently turning to sleet. There was incalculable destruction on all sides, the waters tearing off great portions of earth and hurling it into the stream.

The valley people, in their fear and horror, stammered that never had the wide little stream been known, even in all the legends about it, to rise to the height of a flood.

##### Flood of 1862

On June 3, 1862 there fell a gentle rain, falling continuously for 30 hours. The High Locks located near Mauch Chunk, of which Josiah White had been so proud, were the principal factor contributing to the disaster.

##### Flood of 1920



The worst flood in the Lehigh River history was in 1902. The winter was a hard one in 1901 and a lot of snow had fallen.

During the months of January and February heavy snows struck the valley and knocked out most of the communications. In late February a heavy warm rain fell which melted the snow, and huge ice packs started down the river. The river rose quite rapidly and on Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, reached its peak between 9 and 10 in the evening. This flood was two feet higher than any other flood recorded up to this time. The men at the Lehigh Valley Traction Co. Power House measured an 11 inch rise in one hour. By the next day, the water had receded to almost normal level, but the damage had already been done.

High water and floods have always been a worry for the people living in the low lands along the Lehigh River. On September 11, 1958 work was begun on the Federal Flood Control Project to eliminate the flooding in this area, and was completed two years later at a cost of 1.3 million dollars.

### Transportation

In 1819 stage coach runs were introduced between Easton and Reading by way of Bethlehem and Allentown over the King's Highway

Before 1806, William Turnbull had constructed an "ark" 20 feet long and 16 feet wide with which he could transport a load of 30 bushels of anthracite coal. This "ark" was the basic design for river boats used up to 1831. Improvements of navigation on the Lehigh were the result of Messrs. Josiah White and Erskine Hazard. On March 20, 1818 they obtained from the Legislature an act authorizing them to commence operations. White and Hazard realized the folly of competing with the coal companies for traffic on the canals and that competition between them could cause bankruptcy. With this thought in mind they merged the Lehigh Coal Co. and the Lehigh Navigation Co. on April 21, 1820. In 1829 the canal was opened for traffic and was in use till 1935.

A charter was granted by the Governor of Pennsylvania April 18, 1876 to the Allentown Bethlehem Turnpike Co. for construction of a turnpike road leading from Allentown to Bethlehem by way of Rittersville. It was constructed during summer and fall of 1876. The total cost was \$26,000 and was four miles long. There were three toll gates – one at Hanover Avenue and E. Hamilton Street; one at Rittersville, and the third near Monocacy Creek, operated until 1907 when it was condemned in court proceedings. The turnpike started at the east side of the Lehigh River and followed the public road east to Rittersville to the west side of the Monocacy Creek at Bethlehem. Trolley tracks were laid in July 1891. The first trolley cars along this route were horse drawn. Bus service was established in the city in 1926.

Central Railroad of New Jersey was built along the east bank of the river in 1867, passing through Catasauqua and Hanover Township, a distance of eight miles to Bethlehem. In 1871 it was leased to the New Jersey Central Railroad Co.

The huge Central Railroad yards located in East Allentown were started in 1897, and are now 4 ½ miles long and 64 tracks wide.

## Schools

The first schools were parochial in nature and followed on the heels of the log churches that were built in abundance by the early settlers. German was the language of the schools until 1909. At Rittersville a school was erected about 1812 and kept their irregularly until Hanover Township accepted the school law of 1834. A school house was built which served the purpose until 1850, when a two story brick school was erected in 1907 (Tacoma Street). It was rebuilt at a cost of \$35,000. A school house was also built about 1845 near the home of Peter Kichline and was known as "Kichline School House." This was located north of the Bethlehem Turnpike and northeast of Rittersville (North West Bethlehem).

Bast School, a story and a half stone building, was built in 1838 and was originally located on the north side of the Turnpike. On July 1893 a lot was purchased from Jacob Bast on the south side of the Turnpike (now Our Lady Help of Christians Church) and the school was established there. An addition was added in 1910.

Keiper's Schoolhouse was located on the old Allentown road east of Rittersville. Ground was donated by Sammel Keiper on June 21, 1894 and a one story brick school house building was erected (now known as 1825 W. Market Street, Bethlehem).

Little is known of the school house located on the Bethlehem Pike around the year 1867 (on E. Hamilton Street, between Brook and Carlisle Streets).

On December 20, 1843, Jacon Saeger, Charles Saeger, William Keck and William Saeger gave to Jacob Reichart, who was the head of the School Directors, a tract of land which is located at S. Carlisle and E. Union Streets. In 1869 a four room school house was built on this land. In early 1900 this school was torn down and on the same foundation a new school was built at a cost of \$28,148. It was opened in the fall of 1904. This was known as the East Allentown Grammar School, and it consisted of four rooms. In 1907 two more rooms were added. Soon after that a temporary wooden structure was added due to the overflow of children. The school term was only six months a year. In 1915 the new J.K Mosser School was opened. The building cost \$245,356 and the land cost \$16,576. From 1915 to 1917 the East Allentown Grammar School was closed, reopened in 1918, and stayed open until 1958 when it was closed as a school and is now in use as a warehouse for the Allentown School District

(Editor's Update --- Now used as an apartment for Senior Citizens)

In the year 1921 the Pilgrim College had its start. It crystallized from the founding of the Beulah Park around 1900 in Rittersville.

On May 8, 1924 the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward residents invited the school board to a meeting which was held in the Hanover School in Rittersville, to discuss their plans for a new school. Only one school district showed up. The next day a committee of ten from the Rittersville area went to the school board meeting and presented their plans. Results were favorable. In 1926, a sixteen room school known as the Ritter School was opened. It was filled to capacity the following year. The land cost \$19,081 and the building cost \$433,420. An addition of four rooms and a cafeteria was completed in 1955.

Our Lady Help of Christians School groundbreaking ceremonies took place on April 29, 1929. While the combination church-school was being erected, Father Mathis made plans to open a parochial school in the chapel of what was the old Bast School. The children used kneelers for seats and the pew seats as the desk tops. On December 3, 1928 students transferred from the chapel to the second and third floors of the new church school building. The combined cost to the church-school was \$241,000.

Midway Manor School started in 1947 at a cost of \$11,977 for the land and \$170,420 for the building. An addition of six rooms and an office were added and completed in October 1955 at a cost of \$121,768.

Ground was broken in 1956 for a new high school in East Allentown. Located next to the Irving Street Park it was completed in 1960 at a cost of \$3,083,159 for the building and \$60,965 for the land. It was named Louis E. Dieruff High School and has a student body of approximately 950.

## Church

No institutions are of greater service to their city than the churches, spiritually and materially for the betterment of the community.

In the year 1867, spiritual work was begun in Hanover Township. Sunday School was conducted in East Allentown by the people of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in the school house on the Bethlehem Pike between Brook and Carlisle Streets. This was carried on for only one year by St. Peter's.

Situated on Third Street, a Sunday School was organized by students of Muhlenberg College and interested Christians also carried on their work for a number of years. The congregation was organized in 1888 and came to be known as St. Joseph's Lutheran Church of Hanover Township. A frame building was erected under the direction of a building committee consisting of George Mosser, Sr., Jacob Dannecker, Sr. and Oliver Deily, and dedicated August 2, 1888. The plot of ground was donated by William Saeger. Rev. J.S. Renninger served as supply pastor until Rev. Pharon P. Wisser was called to serve the regular pastorate. In November 22, 1933, Rev. Edward G. Schmickel, II was elected as the church's eighth and present pastor, The 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the congregation was observed in 1953.

The early pioneer Catholics of East Allentown founded Our Lady Help of Christians Church. Father Joseph L. Mathis was selected by Cardinal Dougherty on June 16, 1927 to organize a church in the East Allentown section and to serve as Chaplain for Catholics at the State Hospital, Allentown's Bast School was the Chapel of Our Lady Help Christians Church. Besides serving as a church with a seating capacity of 220, It was also the schoolroom for the Catholic students in Rittersville. On pril 28, 1928 groundbreaking ceremonies were held for the new church-school and the cornerstone was placed December 16, 1928. The Sisters of Christian Charity were appointed by the Cardinal to serve as Instructors.

In January 1842, a meeting was held at the home of Michael Ritter where the matter of building a church at Rittersville was discussed. Land was purchased for a price of \$30.00. The cornerstone was laid May 8, 1842. The first Lutheran pastor was Rev. Joshua Yeager and the first Reformed pastor Rev. J.S.

Dubbs. Both pastors received an annual salary of \$40.00. In 1893 each congregation adopted a constitution governing its own affairs and joint rules. The St. Peter's Union Sunday School was organized on May 13, 1860 and remained as a union school until January 1906 when it was unanimously resolved to organize two schools, a Lutheran and a Reformed. The present pastor of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church located at 1925 Hanover Avenue is Rev. Verne E. Snyder; the present pastor at St. Peter's United Church of Christ located at 675 Tacoma Street is Rev. Daniel Davis.

Mizpah Grove was established by the Executive Board of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ of the Pennsylvania Conference in April 1910 by the purchase of six acres of land at 5<sup>th</sup> and Lawrence Streets. The twenty-one ministers of the conference cleared off an appropriate spot on the northwest corner and set up 154 tents for camping members for the meeting in July. The dining hall was built in 1910, additions in 1911 and an auditorium in 1912.

The Eastern Pennsylvania Classis met in Easton on May 30, 1911 and action started to see after the interest of the Reformed members of East Allentown and report on the advisability of organizing a Reformed congregation in that area. On September 18, 1911 an agreement was made with Lehigh Classis to secure the pastor of St. Marks Church of South Allentown, and on April 20, 1912, Rev. J.P. Bachman entered into his work serving the members of St. Paul's Reformed Church in East Allentown and St. Mark's Reformed Church in South Allentown. Worships were held in the old Mosser School. The Sunday School was organized May 10, 1912. Later, worship and Sunday School were held in a chapel built at Hamilton and Carlisle Streets at a cost of \$1200 and dedicated January 16, 1913. In addition to being used as a church, the Chapel was also being used as a community center for the city. Today, various groups of young people use the Chapel for meetings, and social affairs. The ground for the present church was broken December 1916 and dedicated June 23, 1918. Reverend J.B. Bachman served as pastor until August 1, 1915. On December 1, 1915 Rev. Elmer Sensenig accepted the pastorate and its pastor emeritus of the church. The present pastor is Rev. George H. Yoder.

Under the direction of Harvey Laudenslager, e. Michael and Victor Werley, the Lehigh Park Sunday School was started in 1919. In 1919, land was purchased at Jerome and Gordon Streets and a white frame building was constructed in December 1920. This church was to be later known as St. John's Congregational Church. Its present pastor is Rev. Harry Schuster.

#### Central Park

In 1868, J. Frank Reichart laid out a race course north of the Allentown-Bethlehem turnpike (Hanover Avenue) which was opened for trotting and pacing from May to August. In 1872 the Rittersville Park Association was organized. The park was enlarged to 16 acres and was known as Manhattan Park.

When the Lehigh valley Traction Company took owner-ship of the area it was called The Greater Central Park. Included in the park was a menagerie with quite a collection of animals, including elephants. About 1898 the menagerie closed and the owner of the Manhattan Hotel bought two monkeys from the zoo keepr. Much to his dismay, one of the monkeys set fire to the hotel. It was rebuilt the same year. The new Manhattan Hotel was a place for the latest fashions to be seen by the great crowds that would

come from as far away as Mauch Chunk and Philadelphia to the park which had one of the biggest outdoor theatres in Pennsylvania.

The outdoor theatre could seat thousands of people under roof. Charles Chaplain's Road Company was one of the big attractions which came from New York. The same show costing \$3 to \$4 in New York could be seen at the park for 35 cents. Tickets had to be purchased in advance three to four weeks because of sell out crowds. After the show, people wait in line for a ride on the large Merry-go-around as this was the only ride operating at the time.

In 1922 the Manhattan Hotel was torn down and in its place the Manhattan Auditorium was built. An attempt was made in 1933 to establish the first supermarket in this area, but was unsuccessful. It was used for marathon dancing, later for auto shows, home shows, roller skating, to name a few.

Central Park with its famous cyclone ride, and other amusements, was known far and wide. It began to lose its attraction and fires started to take their toll of the buildings. Today only foundations remain from an era that will never be seen again.

#### Organizations

The East Allentown Fire Company was organized in 1897 in the Cottage Inn on the Bethlehem Turnpike, a half-mile east of the Lehigh River. The first headquarters was in a small building which was the Smith Candy Store. Meetings were held there until larger quarters were needed and then meetings were held in the East Allentown Grammar School at S. Carlisle and E. Union streets. The Fire Company was instituted July 24, 1901 and its first president was Lovely Moll.

In 1902, Jacob Saeger presented the volunteer fire company a lot of ground, situated on the northwest corner of S. Dauphin and E. Walnut Street, a 20' x 110' tract of land which included a one story frame building. A two story brick building was erected in 1911 at a cost of \$4,200. The fire company became a part of the Allentown Fire Department in 1913 and the city purchased the building in 1914.

In December 1905, the Rittersville Fire Company was formed after a tragic blaze ruined a row of houses on the north side of the 2000 block of Hanover Avenue. P.H. Biegley was their first president. Their first building was a wooden building built in 1906 and in 1913 a two story brick building was erected.

The east Allentown and Rittersville Fire Companies were in operation until 1953 when a new centrally located station was built at Irving and E. Green Streets.

The Riverside Fife and Drum Corps which is known as "The Drummies" had its start in Clader's Division in 1903. It was reorganized and relocated in April 1909. The land is known for its New year's Day serenades.

The Rittersville Band had its start about 1895 and was organized by William Kichline and Frank Osenbach. At their peak they had about 20 pieces in their band. They disbanded about 1915.

## Sports

Under the management of Mr. DeJurno, a team known as "East Allentown" was organized. In 1910, they built a baseball field a short distance south of the Hamilton Street Bridge near the DeJurno Soap Factory.

The Hunter's Club which located across the street from the old Mosser School on Carlisle Street also had a baseball team.

The Allentown East Ends organized in 1920 with Harry Hucke as President, was active in baseball, football and basketball. Their field, owned by John Trexler, was located where Hanover Acres Housing Development now stands. Some of the pioneers of sports in the 20's and 30's included Julius Schwab, Harry Hucke, Herb DeWalt and Doc Rogers to mention a few.

Back around 1895 next to the Manhattan Hotel and across the street from Central Park, was the baseball park where "King Mike Kelly" and his famous baseball team played. The Hanover A.A's also played on the field from 1920-23.

The Rittersville A.A. was organized in 1923 with Sam Pudliner, Manager. Central Park, built their field just east of the Central Park picnic grove. In their last year of play, 1931, they won every game.

The Beth-Allen Orioles were organized in 1929 Gus Kostos who had the First Iron Store, built the Orioles field just east of the store, adding a grandstand in 1931 and bleachers in 1934 and 1935. In 1935 the Beth-Allen Orioles played two games against Martins Creek of the East Penn league. An interesting highlight of these games was the fact that the Orioles had a triple play in each game, but lost both games. In 1936 the Allentown Bethlehem Gas Co purchased the field.

The first organized sports for girls in East Allentown, was in 1927 when the Quota Club organized a basketball team consisting of working girls.

The Allentown Tennis Club was formed by Mr. Ernest Ashley, who was a great tennis player and who served as the Superintendent of Recreation for the City of Allentown for many years. This club was built in the early 1920's and located just south of his greenhouse on Hanover Avenue. The Tennis Club used this court until 1935.

The Lehigh County Club was formed in 1911 on a farm Tract located along Club Avenue and Union Boulevard. This was the first Golf Club, with a nine hole course in this area of the Lehigh Valley. The land was used as a golf course until the early 1950's even though the club house was destroyed by fire in the mid 30's. In 1928, the Club moved to a larger tract of land west of Allentown.

## Li'l Bits of History

Did you Know ....

The name Lehigh is derived from the Indian Lechaweki or Lechauuekink meaning "where there are folks"?

Street lighting and electricity for home use came across the Lehigh River via the Hamilton street Bridge about 1892?

Sammuel McHose who lived in the Rittersville area was Allentown's first mayor from 1867-1869?

You could travel from Northampton to Central park for only five cents via trolley around 1900?

The East Side Reservoir started in June 1936 and completed January 1937 has a 10 million gallon capacity>

H.C. Smith Hardware Store at 326 E. Walnut Street is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and is still operating at the same store he opened in June of 1912?

The Allentown Housing Authority opened Hanover Acres on December 2, 1939. It was built on the site of what was known as "Lime Hill" in the mid 1800's?

A bank was located in Bridgetown at 8 Lehigh Street (E. Hamilton Street) from 1861-1864?

A great-great granddaughter of Michael Ritter, Mrs. Henry C. Rice, is presently living in the Rittersville area?

Lawrence F. Nadig claims to have built America's first automobile around 1890 and built a horseless carriage in 1889? Trial runs of the horseless carriage were held from Hamilton Street to Linden Street along 4<sup>th</sup> Street. For many years Henry Ford sent agents to Allentown to purchase this car for his museum at Dearborn, Michigan but the family refused to sell.

The present bridge across the Lehigh River at Hamilton Street is the 8th bridge to be built since 1813?

In 1850 East Allentown boundaries were from the Jordan Creek to the Lehigh River and what is now the 14<sup>th</sup> Ward then known as East Port?

The route of the famous Liberty Bell came through East Allentown along Hanover Avenue in 1777?

A pottery factory was located in the Midway Manor area from 1890-1895.

In the late 1880's a blacksmith shop employing only two men was located in Rittersville and was considered to be one of the first industries in the area?

The 15<sup>th</sup> Ward covers more territory than any other ward in the City of Allentown?

Bethlehem Motor Corp. was established in East Allentown in 1916 and produced the Bethlehem Star Truck. This was later taken over by the Hahn Motor Truck Corp. and in the late 1930's produced fire apparatus and buses under the name of Selden-Hahn Motors?

One of the early industries in the 11<sup>th</sup> Ward was the Merkel Bobbin Co.?

Do you remember .... The Klondike Hotel?

## Our Bi-Centennial

In Seventeen hundred sixty-two,  
This town of ours was quite new,  
Two hundred years an era of time,  
We grew and prospered along the line.  
A new Court House, and City Hall in sight,  
Modern building will be just right.  
Urban renewal and soon a new look,  
Might be in a future centennial book,  
Brothers of the Brush, a score or more,  
Be –whiskered knights their wives adore,  
A kiss or two can ruin a romance,  
But listen girls, will shine real bright,  
Marching in the parade, a glorious sight,  
Bonnets and ruffles, the dress of the day  
All perk and pretty the Bi-Centennial way  
A Governors' Luncheon, A Bi-Centennial Ball,  
A Beauty Queen to lead them all,  
A shopper's night, a County Day, of our Liberty Bell,  
The history of which we all know well,  
Fireworks with a big display,  
A competition of Bugle and Drum,  
Should be exciting and make things hum,  
A preview of Lehigh Valley's Fine Art,  
A community chorus at West Park,  
A baby parade with a youthful spark,  
Dedication of the Shrine of the Liberty Bell,  
The history of which we all know well.  
Our replica Bell, a symbol of war and strife,  
Has a permanent place in Allentown's way of life.  
From April to June, fun for all,  
If you're old, young, short or tall.  
Come to Allentown from far or near,  
Help us celebrate Bi-Centennial year.

Elizabeth Rothrock

"1962"

We dedicate this poem to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our city



The toll charge on the Bethlehem Turnpike in the year 1889 was five cents for a one horse carriage and ten cents for a two horse carriage?

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Price 35cents

The cove picture depicts the bridge of 1867 superimposed on the new concrete bridge built in 1959 looking east.

