

Sinking Spring
Golden Anniversary



1913 - 1963

*March 10
1913*



Jane Adair

SINKING SPRING

STORY

OF

THE INCORPORATED BOROUGH

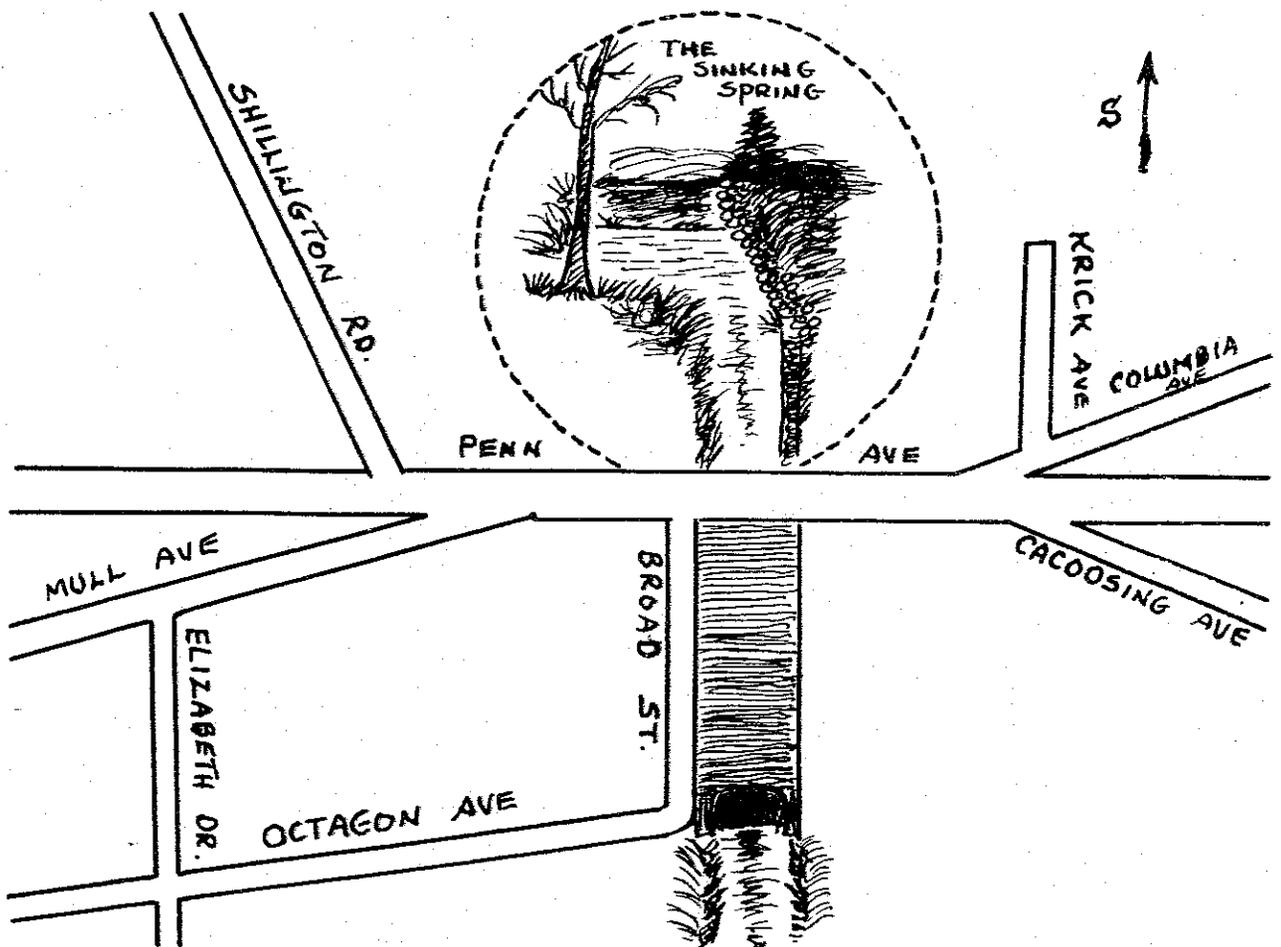
COVERING

FIFTY GOLDEN YEARS

1913

1963

IN WORDS and PICTURES



T H E S T A F F

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FOREWORD

The Borough Council of Sinking Spring hopes this—a short history of fifty years of the Borough—will serve as an aid to remembering Sinking Spring for the oldsters and maybe as a point of enlightenment and some interest in the town in which they live for the newer and younger generations. It trusts that you, as readers—new, young and old—will enjoy the following pages and maybe feel a bit of pride to be a resident of the Sinking Spring Borough, Inc.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY SEAL
OR EMBLEM**

The emblem designed and described by Stephen Andruzak is significant of early Pennsylvania Dutch influence. The heart, tulip and turtle dove, expressions of the hopes and joys of an intensely religious people, were used extensively in decoration.

The turtle dove, symbolic of peace on earth, is always shown feeding on tender shoots of a young lily and otherwise shown in a gentle manner, secure from all harm.

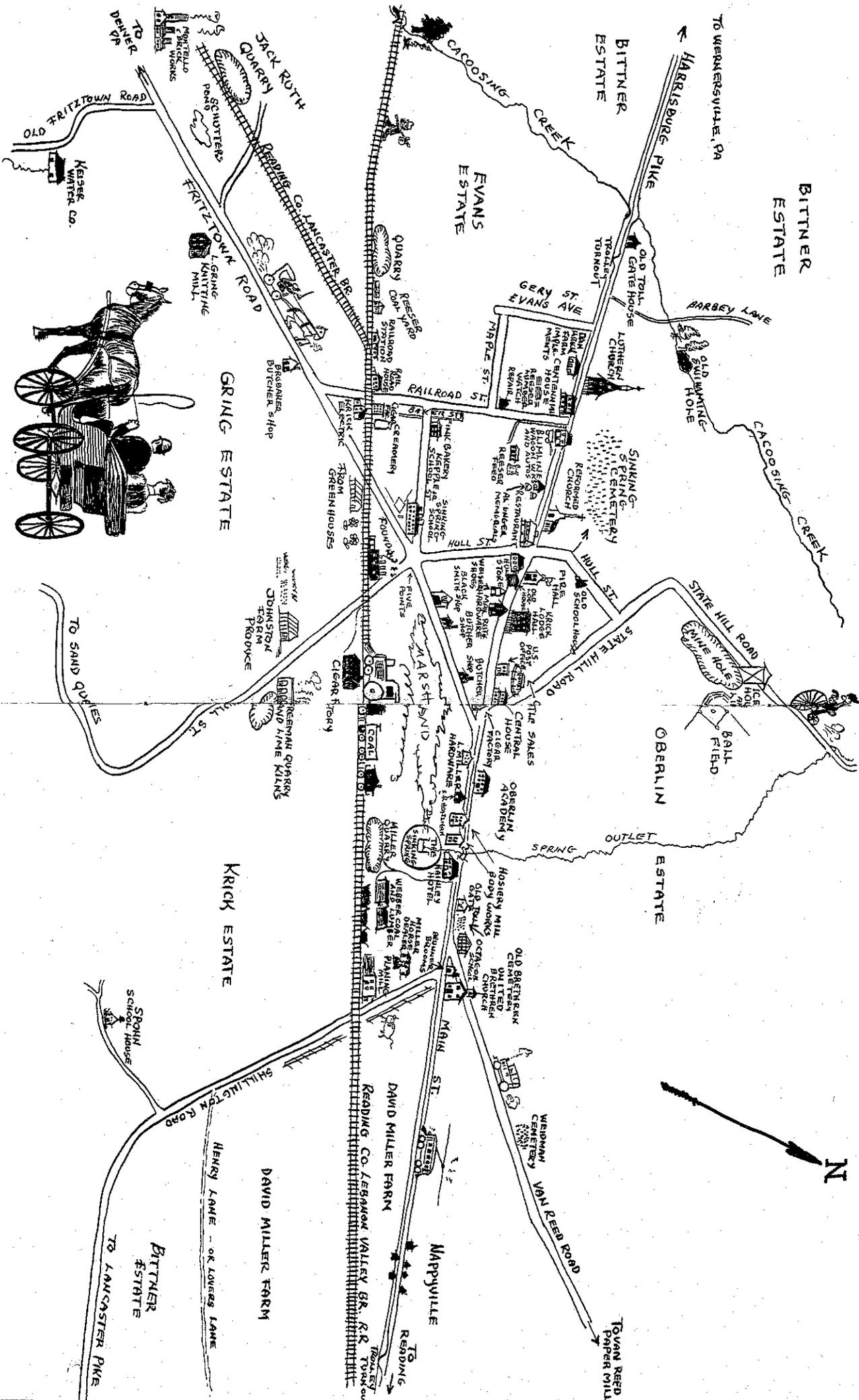
The tulip, representative of brotherhood, was used on many manuscripts.

The heart has no purely romantic significance, but rather symbolizing the all embracing Heart of Heaven.

"JUST A LITTLE STREET
WHERE OLD FRIENDS MEET
I'D LOVE TO WANDER BACK SOME DAY.
TO YOU IT MAY SEEM OLD
AND SORT OF TUMBLED DOWN,
BUT IT SEEMS A LOT TO
FOLKS IN MY HOME TOWN.
ALTHOUGH I'M RICH OR POOR,
I STILL FEEL SURE,
I'M WELCOME AS THE
FLOWERS IN MAY.
IT'S JUST A LITTLE STREET,
WHERE OLD FRIENDS MEET
AND TREAT YOU IN THE
SAME OLD WAY."

VILLAGE OF SINKING SPRING ----- YEAR ----- 1913

SPRING TOWNSHIP

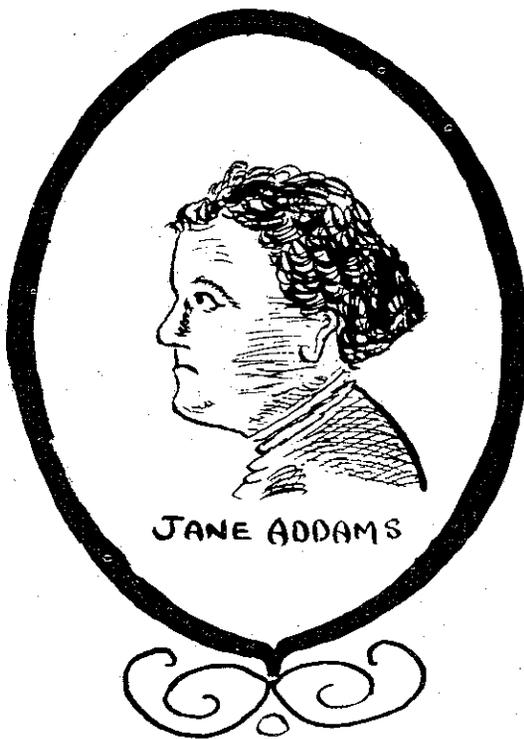


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THE LENNI-LENAPE INDIANS NAMED THE
SPRING - SUNKIN SPRING, AND LATER THE
WHITE SETTLERS NAMED IT SINKING
SPRING.



JOHN H ADDAMS, FATHER
OF MISS. JANE ADDAMS
FOUNDER OF FAMOUS
HULL HOUSE SOCIAL
SETTLEMENT IN CHICAGO
ILL. WAS BORN IN THE
HOTEL LAST KNOWN AS
THE PICCADILLY HOTEL.
NOW HOUSING THE NEW
PEOPLES CITY AND TRUST
BANK.



JANE ADDAMS



EARLY SINKING SPRING

Prior to 1913

TOLL
GATE
OPEN



It is only fitting in recording the history of the Sinking Spring Borough, to include in it, some of the history of the years before the incorporation of the Borough in 1913. We recall — the date of the beginning of the settlement which was in 1793 (six years before the death of our first United States President, George Washington (1799) — one hundred and seventy years ago — (although there were settlers in this heavily timbered area, ruled over by Indians as early as 1728) — the origin of its name “Sinking Spring” (an earlier name was “Sunken Spring” given by the Indians) so called from the periodic appearances and disappearances of a spring located at the present western edge of the new Sinking Spring Branch of Peoples Trust City Bank property—and the reason for the site (a watering place for the livestock of the farmers in the surrounding vicinity). Of course at that time there was quite an amount of water there. The farmers with their animals took the shortest routes to the water. This explains the unplanned streets of early Sinking Spring. The cow paths became streets and finally one street at that time became part of the old Philadelphia Pike (now Hull Street); another, a turnpike, “The William Penn Highway” (now Route 422 or Penn Avenue), boasting of two Toll Gates, one at either end of the little village.



Of necessity, the primary work of the village was farming. But there were other occupations, too,—such as — mining (iron ore on the former Oberlin farm on Cacoosing Ave.) — making of cigars (the present Oriole Building as one site) — making of razor blades, the making of underwear in the same building at different times— making of soap (now The Hofmann Industries, Inc., Columbia Ave.) — making of hosiery (886 Columbia Ave.) — pottery making (Shratters—now the Blandford residence, 1042 Columbia Ave., formerly the Grimes residence) — tanning of hides at (recently Worley’s office, now the Village-aire Sportswear Shop) — generating of electricity at (now Brown’s Feed Mill) — feed and flour milling (now Brown’s Feed Mill)— 1857 railroading (Sinking Spring later was the junction of the Reading and Columbia Railroads) — retailing of coal, grain and feeds, etc. (in the 500 block of Penn Ave.) — cutting of ice on the old Mine Hole, which ice was stored by the hotels and butchers for their businesses. Of course there was always buying and selling. A general merchandise store was located at 600 Penn Ave. (now Dunkle’s Appliance store, (1929) and operated by Hiram Hull and later by his son Charles B. Hull. The town had two watch and clock repairmen; one’s shop was located in the former Octagon School building at the corner of Mull and Penn Avenues and operated by Lewis Kerschner; the other shop was operated by Charles Feichtinger on Woodrow Ave. (then Railroad St., which boasted of a board walk for a sidewalk). Another example of trading can be cited in the work of Samuel G. Wenrich, who built up a large cattle trading business on Cacoosing (an Indian name meaning “Place of the Owls”) Avenue. An industry of keen interest for “children coming home from school and looking in at the open door” was the blacksmith shop run by Joseph Machemer and located on Columbia Avenue. The shop still stands and is operated under the name of “Miller Body Shop,” 575 Columbia Ave. (1945). Also a lumber business was



owned and operated by W. W. Webber (Penn Ave.); his office in the building, now, next to Sharman's Music Store—. Columbia Avenue at that time was the site of a vegetable farm (supplying fresh vegetables to people of Reading) run by William Fromm. This business later became the Miller and Fromm Florist establishment—now retailing at a store in Reading. A similar farm was located on South Hull Street, owned and operated by William Johnson. A "Billy" Grimes of Columbia Ave. was also interested in this same kind of business. At present the outstanding produce farm is the Hostetter place at the western end of the borough on Penn Ave. (1910).

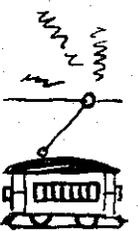
Transportation was furnished by horse and wagon, railroad (1857) and street car (1894). Communication depended largely on the Post Office. The Post Office in 1913 was located beside the hotel (Central House) on the present Blankenbiller Distributing Site (1916). The Postmaster was Charles "Lottie" Steffy, who did his work on crutches (Mr. Steffy was a paralytic). Since then the Post Office has had several different homes, located at different sites in the town—the Kintzer home, Penn Ave. — Ernie's Barber Shop, Woodrow Ave. — Penn Ave. next door to the old Fire Hall; — and also has had quite a few Post Masters. The very first postmaster was a Mr. Davenport (1827). The present site of the new Post Office (1962) is on Penn and Woodrow Avenues, with Harold G. Freeman, the twenty-second and last post master (1936-1960). He is now called a supervisor.

You might be surprised to know that at one time Sinking Spring had four hotels—the Centennial Hotel (built and so called to entertain guests who came to the centennial exposition at Reading in 1876)—the Central House — the Hainly Hotel — the Railroad House—. Now there is only one, owned and operated by the proprietor, John Flamish, since 1922. The name Railroad House is still on the glass over the door.

Wherever there was a settlement, there were schools and churches. Sinking Spring had schools at several locations, naming only three—"Charter Oak Academy", a residence at present, 425 Penn Ave. (earlier the home of the famous Oberlin Peony Gardens) — The High School on Vester Place (then known as College Street and later School Street) — The Eight-cornered School House, Penn and Mull Avenues (the early Baptist Church — no longer standing) —. A building on the opposite corner of Penn and Mull Avenues was then (1812) used as the Baptist School (later known as the Brunner House). There were Churches — Baptist (1812), Union, Lutheran (1812), Reformed (1794), United Brethren—. Since then, the Dunkard Brethren built a church on Ca-coosing Avenue (1927)—founded by a few members of the faith living in the vicinity—now disbanded. The building which housed the Dunkard Brethren is now (1963) temporarily housing St. Peter's United Church of Christ.

And, all this and more was and is protected by the Liberty Fire Company, which is celebrating its 67th birthday, by dedicating a new building to house its equipment, and its social quarters at 836 Ruth Avenue. (This ceremony is part of the activities for the week of the Fiftieth Birthday of the Borough).*

*These reminiscences have very little to do with the fiftieth birthday of the Borough of Sinking Spring; but, they are related and might give someone pleasure in recalling them.



SINKING SPRING

The Incorporated Borough



"Fifty years ago" — that is not a long time, surely not too long a time to ask—"Do you member?"— When the committee for this project (this history) met, even for the first time, the natural question in the course of the evening's business was—"Say, do you remember . . .?" This then will be a story written up with that sort of a theme or scheme in mind. And of course this would lead into the theme of—Then — and — Now.

THEN — 1913 - 1962



While the nation was having a new president (Woodrow Wilson) — Pancho Villa was rampant in Mexico and Southwestern United States — World War I was in its making — the Panama Canal was about to be opened and Henry Ford was using mass production on the Model-T Ford, Sinking Spring was a village (with a population of approximately 1,000) of dirt roads, with no sidewalks, no paved or graded streets, few or no street lights (only mentioning a few of the things lacking). Properties were fenced in and sometimes with high board fences. Most of the houses were without electricity and many were still without running water facilities. Sinking Spring was in its "Horse and Buggy Days"; but, it was soon to be introduced to the automobile, "Bosty" Blimline (father of John Blimline, former County Commissioner) possessed one of the first automobiles in this vicinity. He also maintained a garage, showroom and repair shop at the location of the present Reedy Apartments, at the corner of Penn and Woodrow Avenues. Now there is no lack of gas and service stations on Penn and Columbia Avenues. Soon there was more and cheaper electricity to bring a bit of prosperity and ease to the community.



Earlier in the story, we mentioned cigar-making as an occupation. Now, at this time it became one of the town's principal industries. One shop was located at the site of the present Sinking Spring Boro Council Hall at Penn and Columbia Avenues, operated by Pierce Steffy. However only fourteen men and women were employed there. Another, a much larger cigar factory was established on James Street in the building now occupied by the Hardesty-Quittner, Inc. Brass Works. (1955) Then there also was a Sinking Spring Foundry, located at Hull Street and the railroad. Directly behind the cigar shop on Woodrow Avenue (mentioned before) there was located a Farmers' Creamery. There the farmers of the surrounding area brought their milk supply where the cream was separated from the skim milk. The latter was taken home by the farmer and the cream was sold to be made into butter. The milk that was not brought to the creamery, was picked up by the Reading Traction Co. from platforms built along the route of the trolley car, at about 5 a.m. daily, and then taken to its destination east or west out of Sinking Spring. The milk for home consumption was peddled "loose" on the streets of the borough by horse and wagon. At a later time, the milk business became a real dairy, located on Vester Place. At the same time, the town was proud to boast of a bakery, which had been established for some time.



The trolley had become an important means of transportation.

Workers no longer needed work in Sinking Spring. They used the trolley to the industries east of Sinking Spring. Sinking Spring was now primarily residential but still rural.

Recreation was largely provided in the home or furnished by the Church and School. But, during the winter there was ice-skating on the mine hole and on Grimes' pond on Columbia Avenue. In summer there was a baseball field at the rear of the mine hole on the mine's "pitch". At this place the town's first baseball teams played under the name of "Cincos"; for the cigar maker, Pierce Steffy, at one time. Some of the best ball players in the surrounding area played on this Championship team. The basketball teams played in a compact hall on the property owned by Joel Hainly, which property now belongs to the Peoples Trust City Bank (also having a fiftieth birthday this year). In the early 1800's the property was owned by Samuel Addams, grandfather of Jane Addams (founder of famous Hull House, Chicago).* It was reported that Jane Addams visited with relatives in Sinking Spring in 1930. The Sinking Spring is on this property as stated previously. Basketball was also played later in the Gottshall Dance Hall, Hull Street—now the Bell Telephone Building.

Another source of recreation, which was the rage then, were the Medicine Shows, held at the Central House (the present site of the Penna. Power and Light building and Esso Gas Station). Behind this Central House, cattle sales were held (a sort of recreation for some folks). The cattle for these sales were driven right through the middle of the town on Main Street to the place of sale. Rodeo shows also took place there. Shooting matches (flying boards, live pigeons and later clay pigeons) were run at Hainly's Hotel. A unique recreation was the result of elections, at those times. The losing party had to take a ride to oblivion, up the "salt river". An occasion of this kind afforded great fun and pleasure to the winning party. The last "salt river" parade celebrated the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson.

CONTINUING WITH "THEN"

The first Borough Council should receive its just dues. The task of organizing a borough was rather stupendous. Streets had to be laid out, graded, named, renamed; street lights had to be considered; sidewalks had to be planned, etc. The property owners had to be persuaded to give up land so that the borough community could be laid out to the best advantage for all concerned. 1913 loomed as an important year. The Borough was incorporated officially March 10, 1913, and the first election was held in April of the same year. The organization was:

First Burgess _____ John H. Glasmyer
 First President of Council _____ Thomas J. Oberlin
 First Members of Council—

- H. L. Fisher
- A. B. Madiera
- H. C. Lambert
- J. B. Macherer
- D. G. Miller
- J. P. Reeser
- T. J. Oberlin

*Source of information—"The Berks Co. Story"—Richard Moll - 1953.





Of these members, only one, J. B. Machemer, is now living. Meeting nights were the first and third Thursday of each month, which have continued the same until the present time. The street commissioner's salary was twenty cents an hour. The first constable, Mr. Monroe Bender, received fifteen dollars per year. The President of the Board of Health was William H. Fromm. Some of the things accomplished in 1913 were—the naming of the borough streets, approved at the fourteenth meeting—resurfacing of Penn Avenue with gravel and stone at one dollar per ton—wages decided for workers of the borough . . .

In reorganizing the Council in 1914, Charles B. Hull became burgess; Thomas P. Werner became High Constable. This Council established a six-mill tax for the borough; now the millage is fourteen. Two years later the Bell Telephone Co. was granted permission to come into the borough. Fourteen signs "Danger - Run Slow" and ten signs "End of 15-mile speed limit" were purchased. In 1917 the state highway through the borough was Route No. 149.

In 1914 the town felt the pinch of anxiety for the world because World War I was on. The situation worsened until 1917, and the United States was at war with Germany in the world. In that year all Sinking Spring men in the United States government service were exonerated from paying any personal borough tax for the year 1917. Sinking Spring served well in World War I, as the monument on the school grounds testifies (first erected at Penn and Mull Avenues—1920).

Maybe the military situation in the world and country had something to do with instigating the Boy Scout movement, which was started in Sinking Spring in 1916 by a Mr. Davis. But Sinking Spring always thinks of John Fromm as the leader of the Boy Scouts in Sinking Spring. About twenty years later the Cub Scouts were started in Sinking Spring in 1936 under the leadership of Donald Ganser. Two outstanding scouts, Gary Erb (1962) and Francis Seidel III (1963) won 1st prize in Unit 156 for skill in oratory.

During this period of World Crisis (World War I) the Borough High School became a three-year high school (1916) and a four-year high school in 1920.

In a little village like Sinking Spring, world-shaking events do not reach too deeply and life with little variation goes on from day to day as a matter of course. But the "flu" epidemic (tho' also national and international) reached Sinking Spring with terrific force and took its toll in lives in 1918.

After World War I came to an end Sinking Spring could now turn to its own needs and interests. Safety for citizens began to come to the fore. There were proclamations against fire crackers, etc., May 1919—petitions for less nuisances near residences, such as cattle pens 1919—announcements against speeding through town September 1919—.

In April, 1920 the Sinking Spring Water Co. offered the borough the sale of the spring which supplied the borough with water, but no specified price was offered—the subject was discussed and it was decided to take no action on it until after a decision could be handed down by the Public Service Commission. The borough now does not own the Water Company.

RECREATION AND SAFETY WERE PROJECTS

Recreation then as now was of great concern to the community. The churches and schools provided some very wholesome pastimes, as was said before. The High School inaugurated the Lyceum Courses (1920-23). The Churches through the Men's League did their share during this period by importing noted lecturers—such as—William Jennings Bryan who lectured to an overflowing church crowd at the St. John's Reformed Church in 1921. In 1922 Senator Willets from Ohio had the honor. The next year was to repeat such an event by having Russel Conwell (founder of Temple University) lecture on his famous "Acres of Diamonds" in the new High School Auditorium (1923).

Still working in the interests for safety, the Council received a letter from the Liberty Fire Engine and Hose Co. No. 1 of Sinking Spring stating that they had several thousand dollars to be invested for fire-fighting at such a time and in such a manner as said company and the council should agree upon. The apparatus must have been purchased and at the appropriate time. For in the winter of 1921—Second Christmas to be exact—Sinking Spring received a tremendous blow. The high school building burned down. It was not entirely rebuilt until 1923 and the schools were held in the churches. Of course right after the school was rebuilt, the churches had to be repaired and remodeled.

Between 1922 and 1925, the Borough still kept on taking steps to improve the community. Sinking Spring now had a bank (1922). The Board of Trade was authorized to procure street signs for the borough streets. An ordinance was passed May 4, 1923, granting the Consumers Gas Company, the right to construct underground conduits, ducts and pipes to furnish and supply gas in the borough. In 1925, special officers for the borough were appointed by the council. They were George Gottshall, Leon Lambert, and Charles Binkley. Later that year, the Sinking Spring Board was asked to draw an ordinance for numbering the houses in the borough. The ordinance was passed in 1926. The numbering led to free mail delivery to the homes that same year.

THE ROARING TWENTIES ROAR!

During the prosperous and roaring "twenties", Sinking Spring still, as mentioned before, went about its usual business of living with little variation. But in the autumn of 1926, it was to have a jolt from this complacency. The St. John's Reformed Church (the present United Church of Christ) suffered a second building catastrophe. A hurricane blew the steeple (built in 1851) into the Church after it had been struck by lightning several weeks before (1926).

Then, during the prosperous "twenties", Sinking Spring expanded—mostly westward. New avenues were opened from Evans Avenue west. Sinking Spring was growing—but not for long. The depression of 1929 struck and struck hard. The Sinking Spring Bank had to close its doors. The bank then had been sponsored by a Reading Bank. That Bank failed and the Sinking Spring Bank closed its doors, only for a short time. Through the loyalty of its directors, stockholders and depositors, the bank was reopened for business and had become strong enough to have become a part of the Peoples Trust City Bank by 1954.

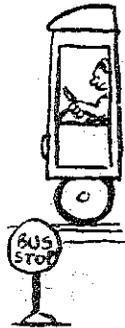
The years of the depression stopped building expansion. People





were concerned only with keeping alive. Teachers were not paid; kids in school were hungry; parents were out of work; and how many more? Those who worked often received no pay; some worked for vouchers which bought groceries. But projects (Federal and State) like the C.W.A., P.W.A., W.P.A., N.Y.A., and C.C.C. (Civilian Works Administration, Public Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, National Youth Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps) gave assistance to the needy in Sinking Spring by giving work to people who were paid by the government. Through these projects Sinking Spring was richer by a painted school house (outside and inside) and by a rain water sewer for Hull street and Penn and Columbia Avenues, and a hill-less Columbia Avenue.

During these depression years, the community was invited to use the Socialist Grove (now called Willow Glen) for picnics, etc., without charge. To give a bit more pleasure to the children of the community, the Council decided to buy and plant a spruce tree on the school grounds to serve for the annual Christmas Tree around which there was to be a party every year. By July 1936, Sinking Spring had a recreation board and a playground was opened with W.P.A. supervision.



In the beginning of the story of Sinking Spring, the community was proud to have the trolley as a means of transportation. But, in 1935 the trolley was outmoded and a petition was drawn up and sent to the Public Service Commission to abandon the Trolley Line through the borough. Buses took its place in the name of progress. In 1939 the trolley tracks were removed to facilitate the paving of route 422 which was begun in the same year. In the name of progress a snow plow (a blessing) was purchased for \$262.50 in 1936; also a lawn mower for \$10. 1936 also marked the beginning of a conference with the Highway Engineers to lay a three lane highway from East End to Shillington Road.



At this time a health problem raised its head. The drinking water of Sinking Spring tasted of gasoline. The Council requested the State Department of Health to test the water in the springs and wells of the vicinity since the citizens were not using the public system because of the aforesaid pollution. Pure water was imported to the borough by trucks. The use of the trucks was offered by Harold Webber, a lumber dealer of Penn Ave., Sinking Spring. All health problems were in the hands of the Sinking Spring Health Board until 1955, when the duties of it were turned over to the State Board of Health. This plan exists today. Incidentally did you know that Sinking Spring is one of the few communities that started and is still offering free collection of garbage and rubbish to its residents?

DATES SET THE BEGINNING OF THE BUSINESS

(Everywhere in the Story)

Somewhere in our story above, it was mentioned that Sinking Spring became primarily residential. This, generally speaking is still true; yet when an official count was made of the businesses and industries, there was a list of seventy-three with approximately one thousand employees (including only about 250 employees that are residents of Sinking Spring). Among these (and not mentioned above) are the Hotmann Industries, Inc. (1938). Someone said that with their moving into

Sinking Spring, the community received an impetus toward growth. At first this industry was the Broom Industry, located on Hull Street. It now includes the old Sinking Spring Foundry, a very modern foundry—in fact, one of the most modern automatic foundries in the country—also the tube factory on Shillington Road, with their offices nearby; but these offices are in Spring Township and not in the community of Sinking Spring. Other industries not mentioned before are the Graffius Vault Works (1939); Sinclair Oil Company (1932); Stief's Poultry Industry (1947); Kurtz's Drug Store (1925); Weaver's Art Shop (1960); Sharman's Music Store (1959); Hirshland's Furniture Store (1960); Kohl's Roofing (1950); several hairdressing establishments (7); several barber shops (4); P. P. & L. (1930); Holtzman's Hardware Store (1920); Penn Dale Hosiery, Commerce street; Heck Texaco Distributor, Miller Builders Supply (1931), Schneck Coal Yard, Schlotcraft, all on Mountain Home Road. Then there are factories, such as—Valley Forge Flag, Cacoosing Industries Plastic, Milroy Enterprises, Ivan Hoffman Cabinets. In addition there are tinsmiths—Harting and Machemer; a plumber, Charles Reedy; several butchers—Wenrich, Furlow; one restaurant—Stoudt's (1950) in the building where a combination store and restaurant had formerly been set up in (1834); Royal Dry Cleaners; several stores not mentioned before—State Liquor, Berkenstock's, Meckley Hats, Weber Sports Leather, Matz's Boats, Walter Appliances (1958); two insurance men—George Balthaser and Brooke Stitzer; one excavating contractor, Herbert S. Stine; a carpenter and builder, Paul Reber; Degler and Whiting—school and ornamental equipment (1956); one undertaker, Francis Seidel II (1946); one warehouse, Sears; one bowling alley, Berks Lanes; last but not least, the promoter of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Sinking Spring Borough, chairman of the Golden Anniversary and the president of the Golden Anniversary Corporation—Stephen Andruzak, 1163 West Penn Ave. (1954). With the listing of all these business activities in the community—making for an industrial community for the citizens of Sinking Spring—the town is still residential and rural. The latter is proved by having farms located on the main streets of the borough—The Hostetter Farm and James' Place on Penn Avenue and the Stief's Grandview Acres on Columbia Avenue.

CULTURE — 1913-1963

Enough of industries, businesses and such, for a while. Time and space must be devoted to the so-called finer and higher things of life. By this is meant things of religion, culture, professions, social affairs, education, institutions of culture, etc. Sinking Spring is only a small community. Progress of this kind was and is slow. Only when people have leisure time, it is possible to expand into a finer civilization. As long as work to exist is the main object of living then there is very little time for dreaming. There must be time for sitting and thinking. The result—new things or better things.

CHURCHES AND MUSIC

The churches have always been the champions of culture and learning. To accomplish anything in this activity there must be leaders, which usually are the ministers of the gospel. In this category may be named the reverend Messrs. Lazarus, Atkinson, Sowa, Jentsch, Kershner,





Rhoads, Stoudt, Harwick, Fridinger (1913) the first U. B. Minister, Miller, Romig, Fortna, Beamsderfer, Luckers, Sheetz, Hostetter, Smith, Mentzer, Snyder (and eight other supply and student ministers). In the church there was always musical training through choirs, choruses (glee clubs). These activities were usually in the care of the Choirmasters, namely—Mrs. Katie Saltzer, Charles Specht, William Unger, Carl Seltzer, Russell Sterner, Mrs. William Ehst, Pastor Jentsch. Then all churches boasted of libraries which later became part of the Public Library located in the school house on Vester Place. Now there is no public library in the town, because there was no room available in the school and all books worthwhile were given to the High School Library.



While reminiscing on musical activities, one must not forget to boast of Sinking Spring's Paul Specht, an orchestra leader, who played for the crowned heads of Europe and traveled the world with his new kind of syncopated rhythm music. Maybe the height of his career was playing at two of the inaugural balls of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

SCHOOLS



The function of a school is disseminating learning and culture, which is required of it as its primary function. Learning must be promoted by leaders also, as in the church. Among these leaders may be named B. H. Weidman, Russell Hunter, Harry Sowers, A. D. Steckel, Roy T. Merkel, Norman Hopp, Sidney Stocker—all supervising principals or principals with assistant principals—George Weida, Clarence Yenser, Wayne Kinsey, Robert Gates, Paul Freed, Mrs. Maybelle Y. Lambert, Robert Fisher. Speaking of teaching and learning, the town must be reminded of the Latin Grammar professor (the first president of Sinking Spring Borough Council) Mr. Thomas J. Oberlin, who took up botany as a hobby. He became so proficient in his hobby that the Herbarium which he composed is now on exhibition somewhere in the Reading Museum in West Reading. Very much later, Oberlin and his son Reuben made one phase of this hobby (peony propagation) their life's work. On the death of the Oberlins this work—propagation of tree peonies—was continued on a very small scale by one of Oberlin's workers, John R. Lambert. He is persuing this peony work as a hobby.



In addition to the school being the center of promoting education, it became the center of the community for plays, minstrels, operettas, chautauquas, lyceums, lectures—all dispensing culture—very high or very low. At one time the town could boast of a band called "The Sinking Spring Cornet Band", and a glee club—"The Clef"—directed by H. Augustus Meyers.



In this story of culture, the doctors and dentists are members of professions to be mentioned also. In our community these names have been and are esteemed—Drs. Schearer, Gaul, Binkley, Herbein, followed by Hain, Matterness, Hain (son of the former Hain), Scholtes, Lessig, Huntzberger, Wummer, Loder, Scholtes, Reigel, Bernheimer and Driesbach (the latter four, dentists).



May social affairs be listed in the category of culture? If so, mention may be made of the Lion's Club and its auxiliary, of which William T. Embree was the first president in 1932. Of the Charter members of the club, Charles G. Reedy, has had a perfect attendance record for twenty-five years. Mention, too, may be made of church societies,

the lodges (at one time five of them—then), the auxiliaries to the various organizations, the social clubs (Orioles, 1924; Fire Company Club, 1933; The "Vets" 1946; Athletic Clubs, etc)—all items of local interest.

As mentioned before, a small community's life is very narrow and selfish, but off and on, World shattering events do touch the town. In 1941 the town faced such an event—World War II. It brought business and prosperity to the community as it did to the whole nation, but it also brought great sorrow and a few hardships. To honor our men in the armed forces, a Roll of Honor, sponsored by the Lion's Club was erected at Penn Ave. and Hull Street on the Reformed Church property. In the fight the town lost good citizens as casualties of the war. To commemorate all the War Dead, the Memorial Park and Marker were placed by the Lion's Club (1946) and is maintained by the community on Penn Ave.

When World War I ended, Sinking Spring went wild with celebration, but when World War II ended, a drum and a drummer and a few followers paraded the streets. Was the event too sacred? (1945) Well, the spirit of solemnity, sacredness and respect was carried over into putting up the Municipal Memorial Park between St. John's Lutheran Church and the United Church of Christ. The land was donated by the Reformed Church and the transaction of property cost one dollar. (1946). To this park was added a 57 mm. gun on carriage—costs for which were borne by the Lion's Club. Did you know that the Valley Forge Flag Company has donated all the flags used thus far in Municipal Park?

Sinking Spring was interested in the site where the sinking spring is located and asked the owner of the "Blue Lantern" (Hainly's) to preserve the spring. From an interview with the owner, it was reported that the SPRING was to be closed. (1948)

PEACE TIME FOR GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

After the war, Sinking Spring became interested in itself again. Protection was a project again which was illustrated by the erection of a light on the Reedy Apartments roof to protect the police when directing traffic on Penn and Woodrow Avenues. (1949) This light is still used. Again thinking of safety, the school board engaged a Frank Becker to be school guard three hours per day at the eastern end of the borough at the bank (1953). In the same year the problem of automatic gates at the railroad crossing of Woodrow Ave. was also considered. The gates became a reality in 1959. Writing about safety projects and problems, now and then a tragedy occurs which cannot be controlled by man. In the winter of 1954, the community had a scare such as it never experienced before. During the night of January 14, 1954, an earthquake shook up Sinking Spring. The town was not damaged, but frightened because the residents were helpless against an act of God. The town realized it could have been lots worse and were thankful it was not. There were several other tremors, but not very severe in the weeks following.

Somewhere in the story of the Borough, it was noted that there was a period of expansion in building, etc., but was suddenly stopped by the depression of 1929. Now, since the end of World War II there has been a population explosion and Sinking Spring had to take care of its part in the explosion, so building developments sprang up on the outskirts

RATION
STAMP
NO. 1



WAR
RATION
BOOK





of settled Sinking Spring. Milbeth and part of Wilshire are examples of this expansion. But expansion to the west and south ends also took place. With the population growth, also came an educational problem. The schools had to be enlarged. Sinking Spring schools jointured with the Wilson School District of Spring Township in 1954. A jointure of this kind assured the residents of the borough that their children would have better educational advantages in a larger system. The school is now called "The Wilson Joint School System".



Maybe it was noticed that throughout the story of the borough, the underlying theme was one of improvement and achievement. By the proper interest, loyalty and perseverance, a goal was partially realized when Sinking Spring received recognition for outstanding achievements in local projects "during the past year" (1956), by receiving two checks of two hundred fifty dollars each and a bronze plaque for fourth place in a state-wide contest in Class C for communities under 2,500 population. This contest was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce. But not only one recognition was received for one year (1956), but for a year before that in 1955 and two years after that in 1957 and 1958. The recognition of the years '55, '57, and '58 were certificates of achievement with honorable mention. Speaking of growth the population had increased from 1270 in 1920 to 2244 in 1962. Not only in population, but in other phases of borough life, improvement was noticed all round.

NOW — 1962-1963



Beginning in 1962 and completed in 1963, Sinking Spring had a rash of things happening. To mention some—a new post office—new additions to the Lutheran Church and the United Church of Christ—a new church congregation (for the present meeting in Sinking Spring)—a Weiss Store—a renovated elementary school—a new bank—Boscov's—Acme Market—a new Fire Hall—Weber's Leather Goods Store—two new mushroom industries—the Village-aire Sportswear—Furlow's celebrating forty-three years in business, etc.



On February 21, 1963, it was announced in the Reading Times and Reading Eagle that the Sinking Spring Borough Council completed negotiations for the purchase of Peoples Trust City Bank, Sinking Spring branch property at Penn and Columbia Avenues. The council anticipated completion of the alterations to have the hall dedicated on its fiftieth birthday celebration June 16-23, 1963. That was to be home for the Council. The job has been accomplished today. The Sinking Spring Borough Council has its own home at long last in the community. Their old place of meeting for the last fifty years was the old Fire Hall on Penn Avenue. Very near this same time authorization to apply for a grant of \$163,370 for planning and constructing a sanitary sewer and treatment plant was given by the Council to the borough authority, showing there was an eye for progress and for improvement always.

Thus ends the saga of the community of Sinking Spring—a story of the benefits of living under the organization of a borough government—up to June 23, 1963.

May this story help everyone always to be MINDFUL of, RESPECTFUL of, APPRECIATIVE of, THE PAST—but yet—EAGER for, HOPEFUL for, ZESTFUL for, ENERGETIC for, and DEDICATED to—THE FUTURE, making for a *positive attitude* for living and reach for a *maturing wisdom* in THAT LIVING, making everyone — AMERICANS in ACTIONS.



PRESENT COUNCIL

EARL R. FOX, Mayor
RICHARD MILLER, President
LUTHER BATZEL, Vice President
ELMER LONGENECKER
IRVIN BORTZ
B. E. TALBOTT
JAMES SMITH
R. LEWIS WENRICH
CATHARINE E. GERHARD, Secretary
appointed May 22, 1940 and
still holding office.

Council Committees

Street—

L. Batzel, Chairman
E. Longenecker
B. Talbott

Trees—

I. Bortz, Chairman
E. Longenecker
L. Wenrich

Lights—

E. Longenecker, Chairman
J. Smith
L. Wenrich

Water—

B. Talbott, Chairman
L. Batzel
J. Smith

Law—

L. Wenrich, Chairman
B. Talbott
I. Bortz

Finance—

J. Smith, Chairman
I. Bortz
L. Batzel

Present Police Department

John L. Angstadt—Chief
Jack K. Brady—Patrolman
John A. Schlenner—Patrolman
Thomas P. Werner—Special School Policeman

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

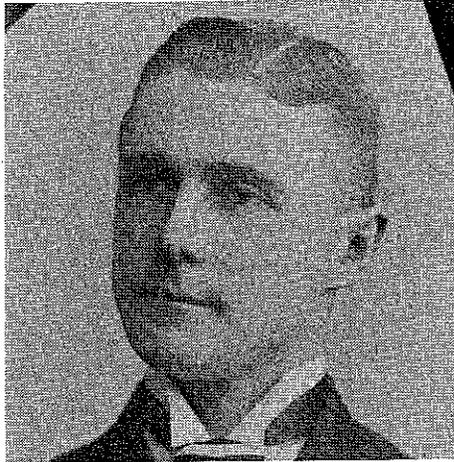
The Committee responsible for this story wishes to thank everyone who was so very willing and cooperative in supplying data to make the story possible.

Remove not the ancient landmark which your fathers have set.—Proverbs 22:28.

Time consecrates; and what is gray with age becomes religion.—Johann Schiller.

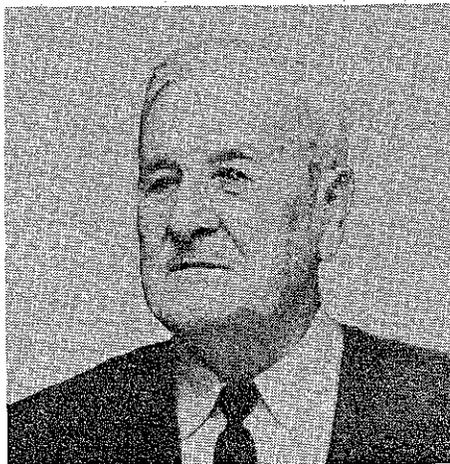
A NOTE OF APOLOGY

The committee makes an humble apology for all errors, misrepresentations, discrepancies and omissions in the story. The time element was against the committee in research and writing. Not weeks—but months — of time should go into work of this kind.

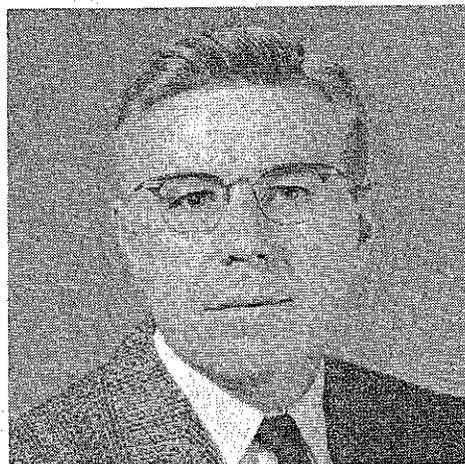


First Burgess

JOHN H. GLASMYER



Only Living Member of the First
Borough Council
JOSEPH B. MACHEMER

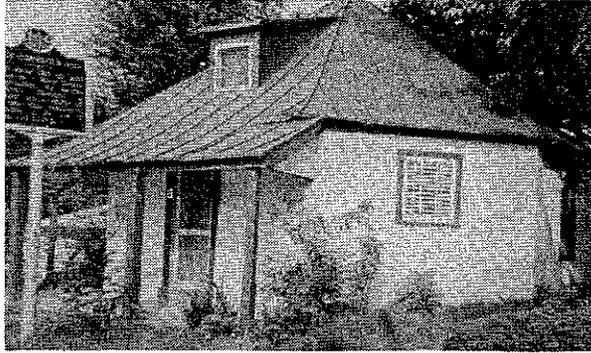


Last Burgess

CLARENCE J. NOECKER

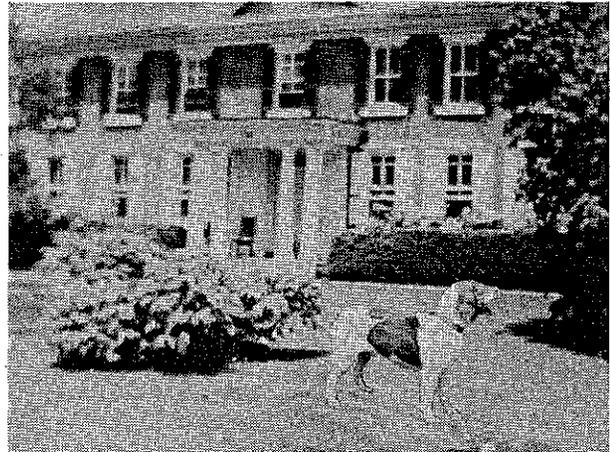


Present Mayor
EARL R. FOX



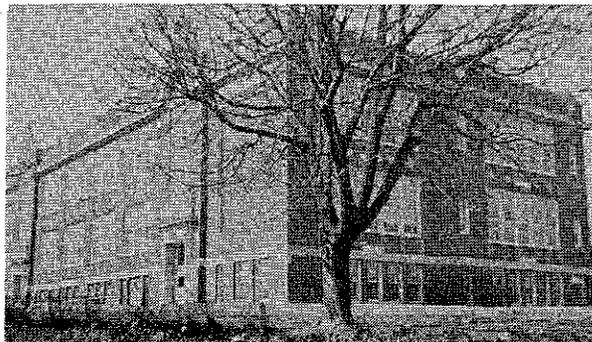
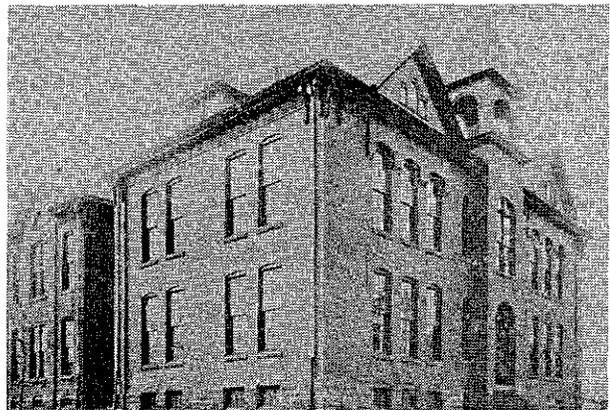
At one time located at Penn and Mull Aves. No longer standing. Once a Baptist Church (1812), after that a school. Before it was razed, it had become a residence.

The home of the Charter Oak Academy, later the Oberlin residence, home of the famous Peony Gardens—now a residence, at 425 Penn Ave. The picture of the dog, the guardian of the place in the days of the Oberlins.

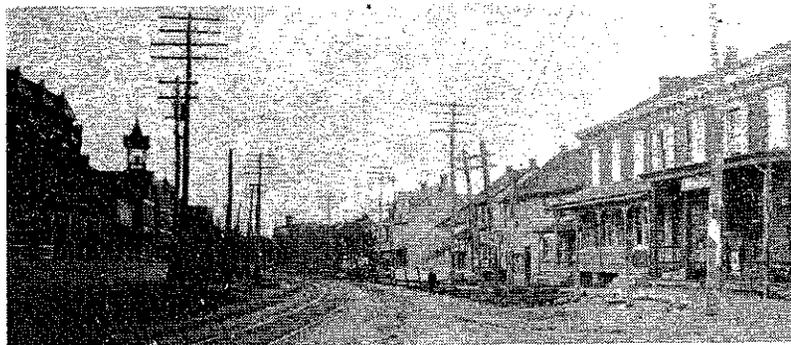


Before the fire in 1921—
facing Vester Place ▶

The rebuilt High School and elementary grades — recently remodeled on the inside for the elementary grades. Facing the railroad and Columbia Ave. ▼



Elementary School (inside) Mr. Stocker and Mrs. Wachter.



Looking east on Main Street: On the left, the Krick home—now Dunkle's Apartments, and Matz's, the old Fire Hall and several homes east of the hall. On the right, Hull's Store, now Dunkle's; the Hull

residence, the Burgner residence and barber shop (earliest house in S. S.); a small house; Matternes Log House; Jessie Ruth's house; the Ruth home (early).



Looking east on Main Street: On the left, the old St. John's Reformed Church. On the right, "Bosty" Blimline's wagon and carriage shop, Railroad and Main Sts. The present Brehm home; Brooke

Stitzer home; Krick home (now Dr. Wummer's); Gottshall's barber shop; Binkley's residence (now Yenser's); Dr. Hain (Gottshall's); the restaurant; Hull's Store; Burgner's. Notice stage coach at left.



Looking east, Main Street: On the left, Hoffman residence (now Webber's); Ruth residence with trees; old Toll Gate house (Weidman's, then Furlow's, no longer standing);

eight-cornered school house; U. B. Church.

On the right: Hainly's Hotel (now the Peoples Trust City Bank).



Looking west from Oberlin Estate, 425 Penn Avenue — On the left, Levi Miller home and store; a row home (3), owned by George Peiffer, then by Wharen's; entrance to Columbia Ave.; homes

owned by Pierce Steffy.

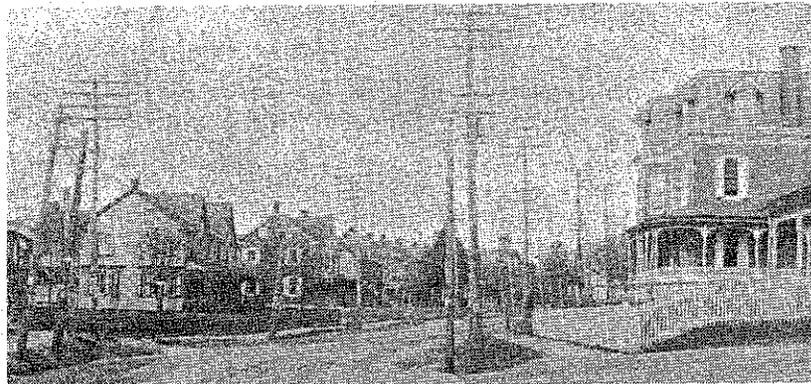
On the right: Hauder residence; Dr. Schearer home, fence and wall, now the Seidel properties; Beidler estate, now the Spatz residence.



Looking west at Cacoosing Ave. On the left: Pierce Steffy's cigar factory; Levi and Emma Bohn house (now Plowfields); Dan Ruth's home;

Ed. Schrack (one of the bur- gesses) home.

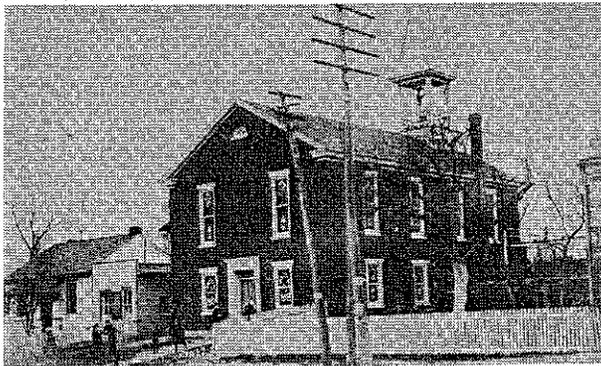
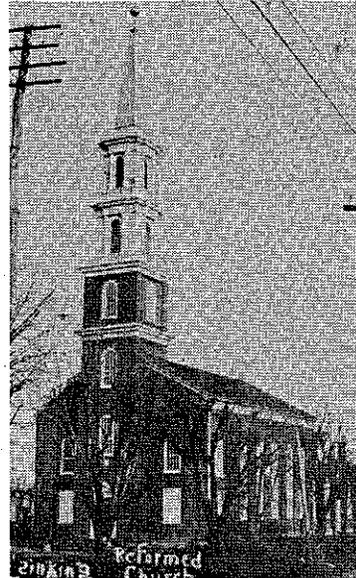
On the right: Esterly Hotel; old Post Office, now Blank- enbiller's.



Looking west on Main Street at the old Fire House. On the left: Hull's Store (now Dunkle's); Louis Gottshall Restaurant (now Stoudt's); Dr. T. Binkley home (now Yenser's); Dr. Herbein home, then Henry Clouser's (now Harvey Moyer's); Francis

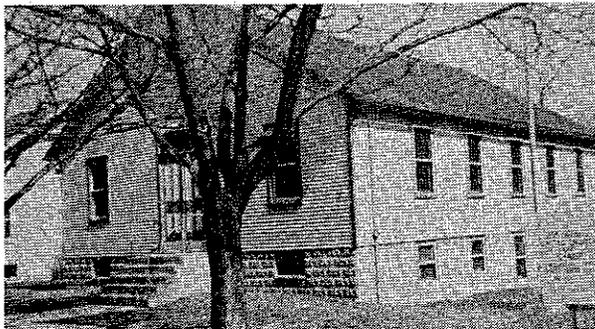
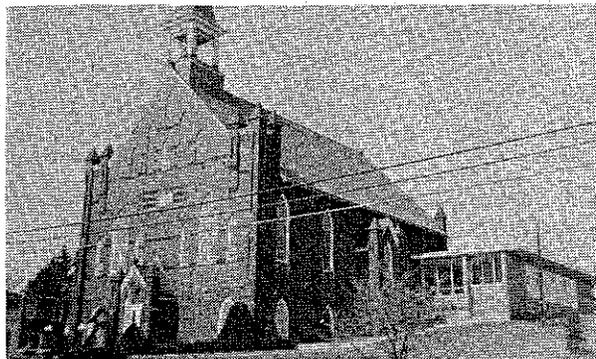
Krick home, then Moses Hart- man (now Moyer's); Sarah and Hannah Krick home (now H. G. Snyder); Gottshall home (now occupied by Mil- lers and Wessners); Al Unger home (now Lebo's); Jacob Krick home (now Dr. Wum- mer's); Centennial House.

The old Reformed Church (St. John's), built in 1794, with the high steeple, built in 1851—also the present building.



The old Baptist Church School, 1812—later the Brunner House and The United Brethren Church, Penn Avenue.

St. John's Lutheran Church, on Penn Avenue, with a recent new addition.

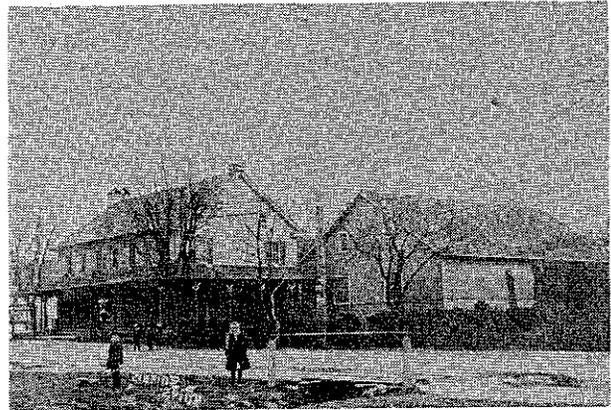


Dunkard Church, now St. Peter's United Church of Christ—Cacoosing Avenue.



Esterly Hotel or Central House—now the P. P. & L. and Esso gas station.

Old Hainly Hotel, and Dance Hall—now Peoples Trust City Bank, Sinking Spring Branch.



Old Centennial House — now the site of the new Post Office.



Flamish Hotel — only hotel in Sinking Spring.

Old Fire House and its social quarters.



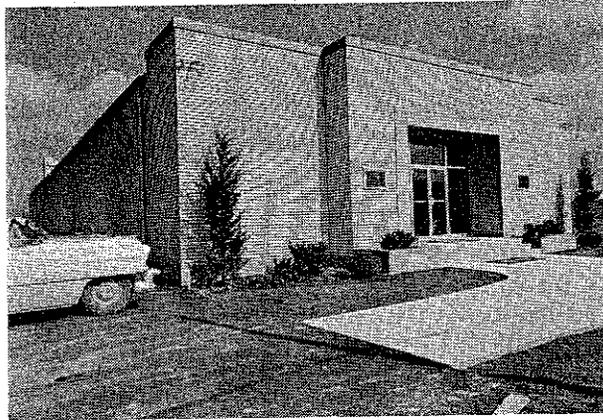
Old Post Office—now Blank-
enbiller's.



The Electric Plant — now
Brown's Mill site.

The Railroad Station





The Hofmann Industries, Inc. Offices (1956). Now not in Sinking Spring, but in Spring Township. The industries are in the borough.

Hirshland's Furniture —
Penn Ave.

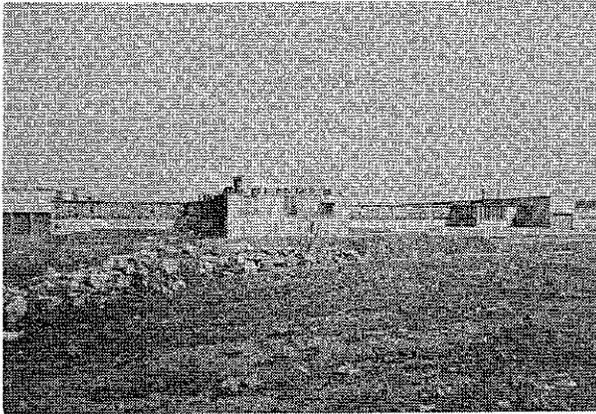


Furlow's Food Market —
Penn Ave.

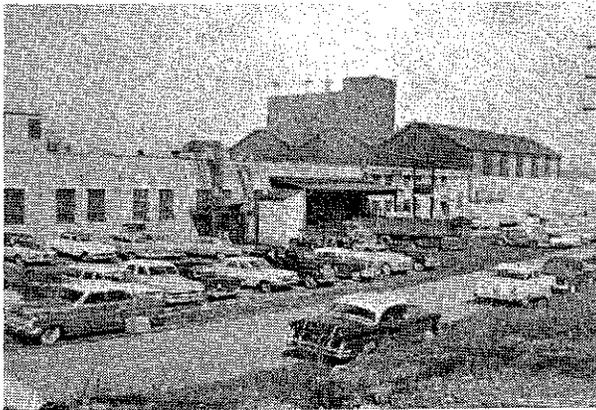


Dunkle's Appliances — Penn
Ave. and Hull St.

Weiss Markets —
Shillington Road

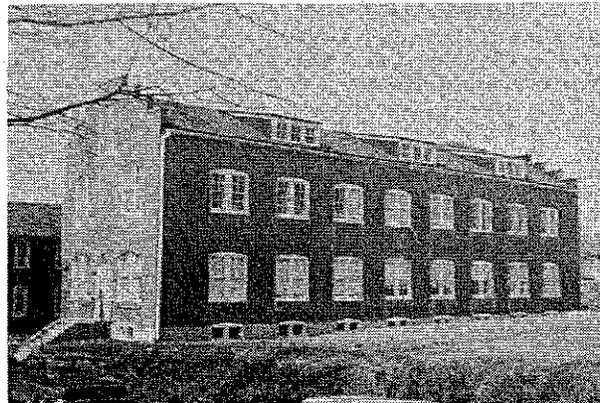


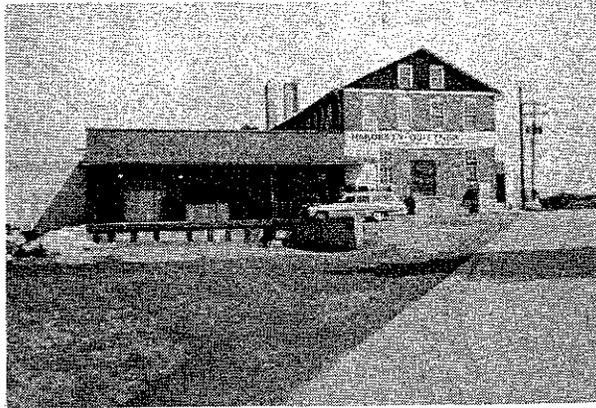
Hofmann Industries, Inc. —
Shillington Road



Hofmann Foundry —
James Street

Flag Factory —
335 Hull Street



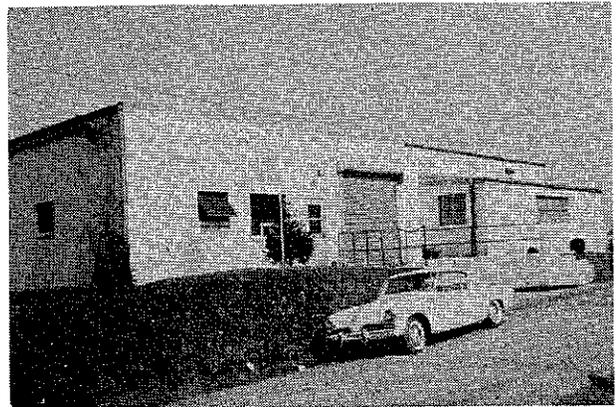


Hardesty-Quittner Brass —
James Street

Sears Roebuck Co. Warehouse
— Queen Street



Cacoosing Industries —
333 Hull Street



Reedy Apartments —
Woodrow and Penn Aves.

New Post Office —
Woodrow and Penn Aves.

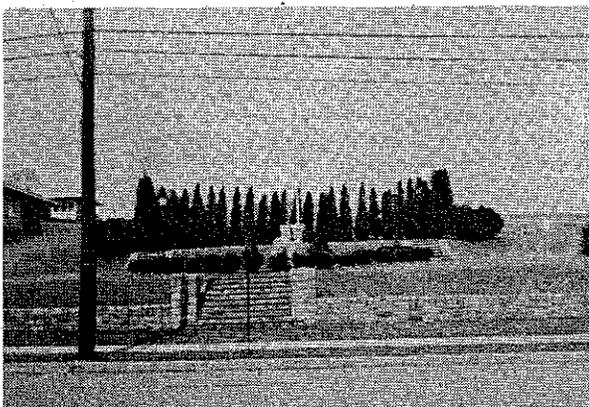


Stoudt's Restaurant —
Hull Street and Penn Ave.



World War I Memorial —
School Grounds

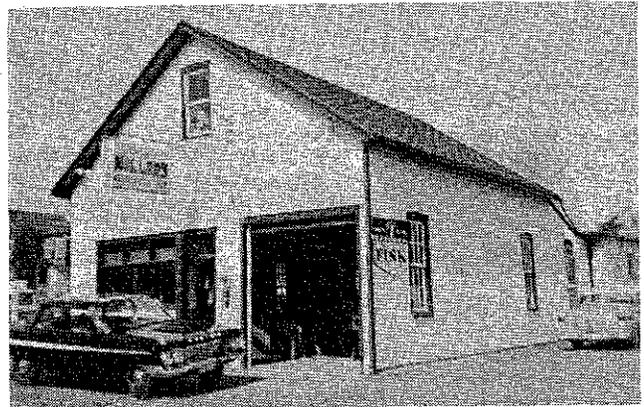
World War II Memorial Park
—Municipal Park, Penn Ave.



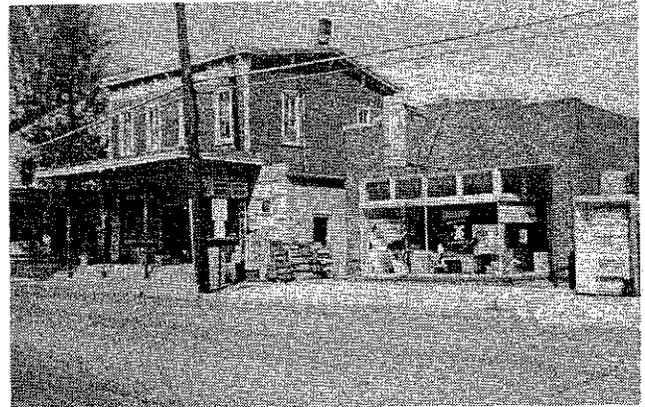


Old blacksmith shop, owned and operated by Joe Mache-mer (only surviving member of the first Borough Council). Inside of the building, then.

Charles J. Miller Auto Body Shop, 575 Columbia Avenue. Same building as old blacksmith shop—outside of the building today.

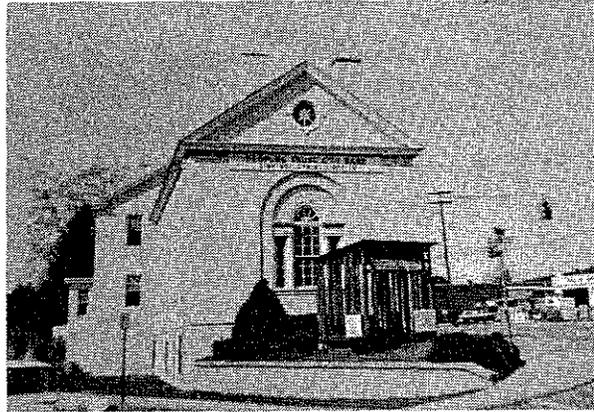


Pensylvania Power and Light Offices, Penn Avenue; also Blankenbiller's Distributing Agency—today.

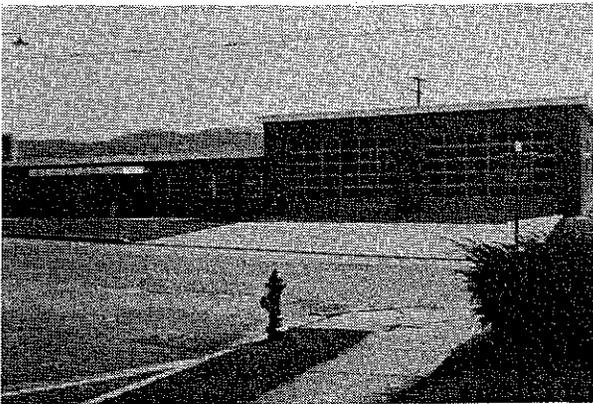


Supermarket — The Acme Store, Penn Avenue, opened very recently.

The old Sinking Spring branch of Peoples Trust City Bank—Penn Ave. at Columbia; also the jail belonging to the Brothers of the Brush Club (organized for the duration of the celebration of the 50th birthday of the borough of Sinking Spring). Here the incorrigibles of the Brothers were to be incarcerated.



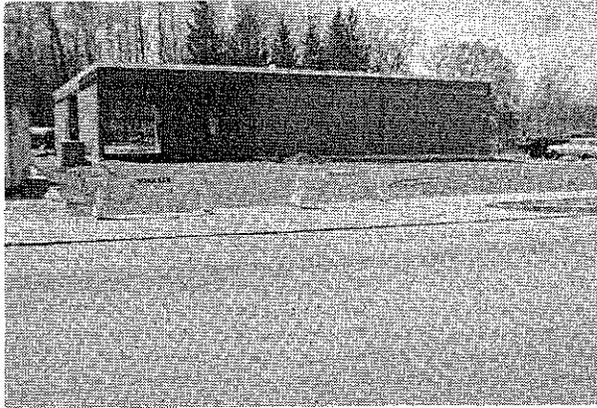
Boscov's West — Penn Ave., opened in the latter months of 1962.



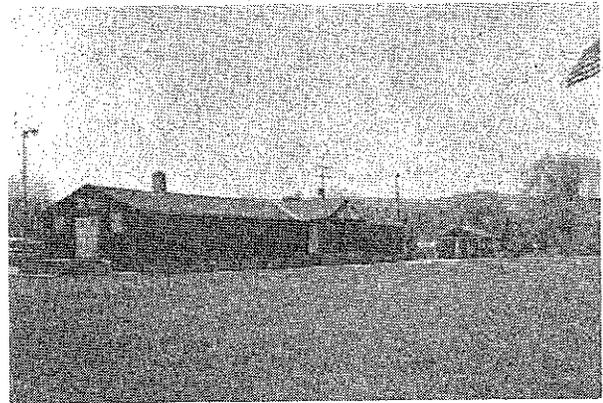
The new Fire Hall, 836 Ruth Ave., begun in 1962 and finished in 1963. The housing of the fire fighting equipment is taking place this week—June 16-23, 1963.

Sinking Spring Playground—the land for which was acquired by the Fire Co., developed by the Fire Co. and the Recreation Board.





New Bank, Penn Avenue

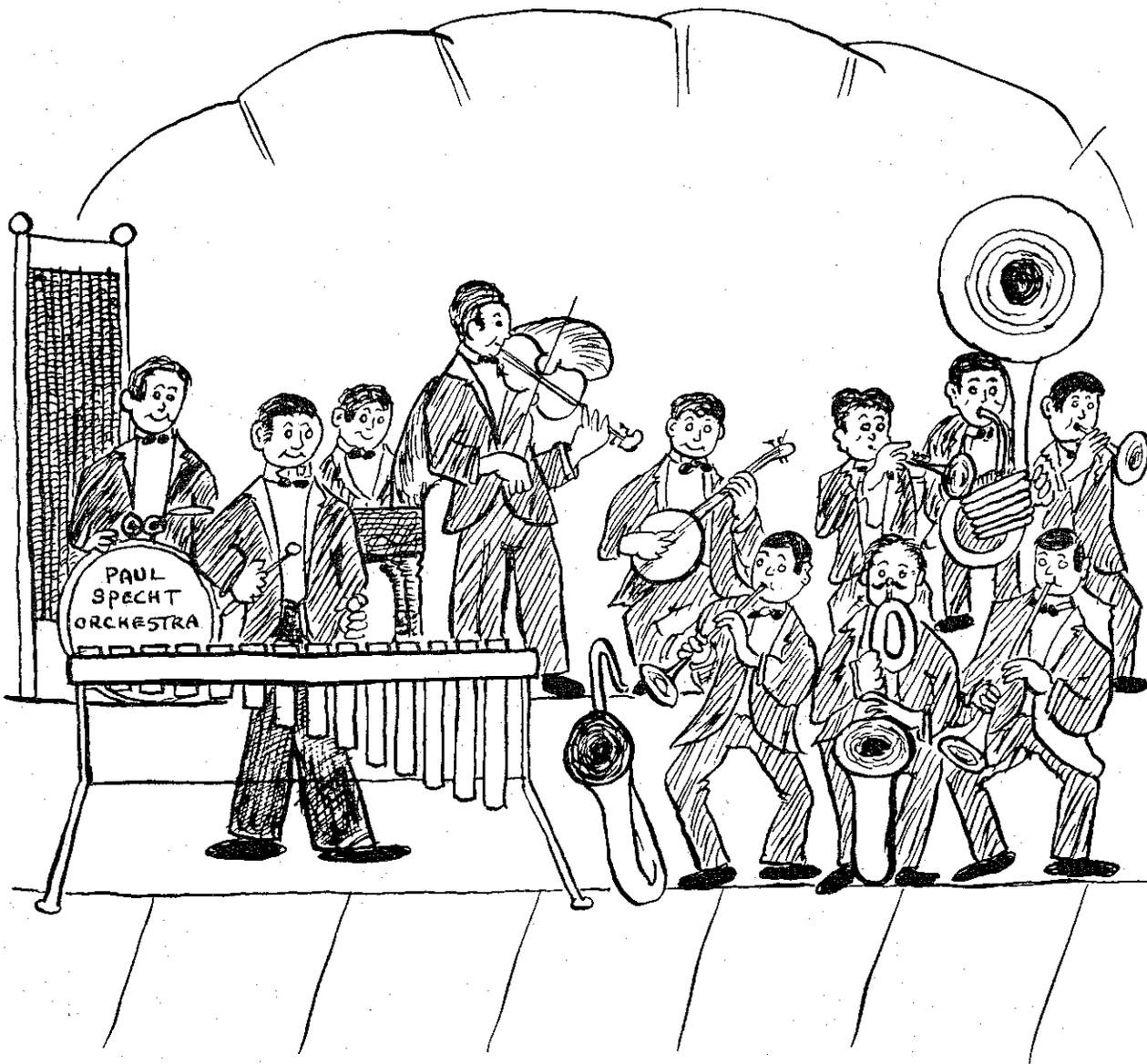


Vets' Home, Columbia Ave.



Seidel's Funeral Home,
Penn Ave.

PAUL SPECHT'S ORCHESTRA PLAYING ONE OF HIS FIRST JOBS AT THE ALAMAC HOTEL N.Y. 1923. AND LATER PLAYED TO THE HIGH CROWNS OF EUROPE, AND MANY OF OUR PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION BALLS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. PAUL WAS A NATIVE SON.



MIDWAY



50th ANNIVERSARY



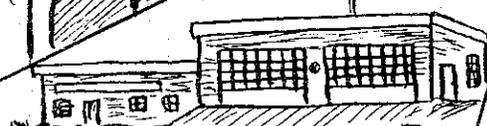
BROTHER OF THE BRUSH
GOLDEN BELLE



BABY PARADE



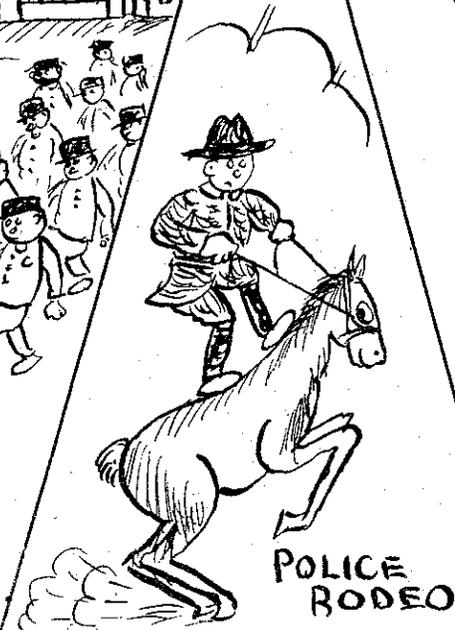
KANGAROO COURT AND-



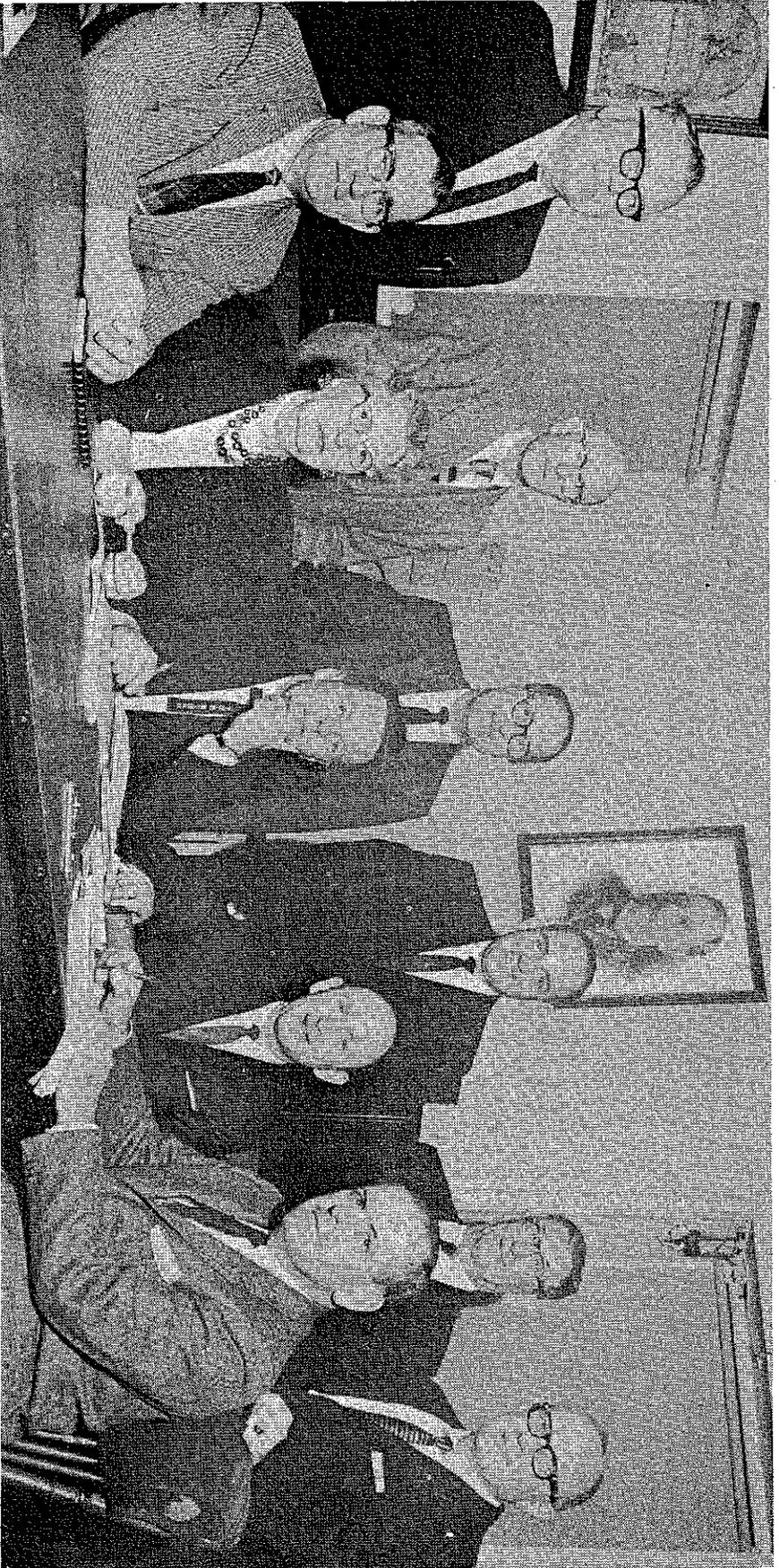
BROTHERS OF THE BRUSH JAIL



FIREMENS PARADE



POLICE RODEO



SINKING SPRING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Front Row (Left to right)—Bernard Talbott, Kathryn Gerhard, Secretary, Earl Fox, Mayor, Richard Miller, President, and James Smith.
Back Row (Left to right)—John Ruth, Solicitor, Richard Brady, Engineer, Luther Batzel, Luther Bortz, Elmer Longenecker, and R. Lewis Wenrich.