

“The Wernersville Resorts for Pleasure and Health”



TOWNSHIP HISTORIC LANDMARKS

South Heidelberg Township

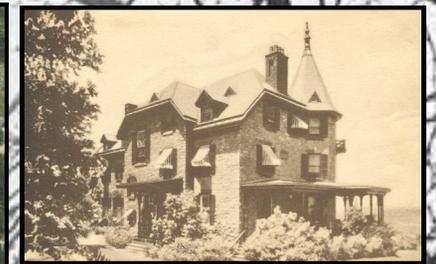
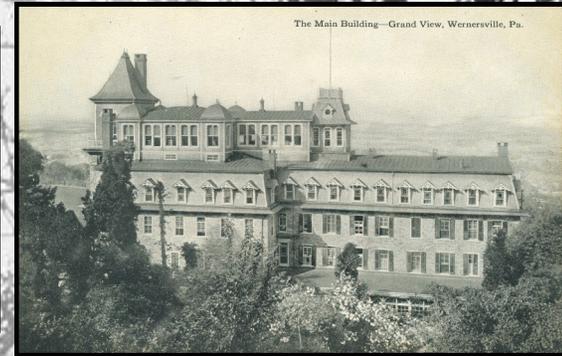
is a community rich in history, and partly known for its magnificent South Mountain Resorts which were designed mainly to attract the wealthy. Many of their guests traveled from the East Coast to the Resorts to enjoy the clean air, pure spring water and excellent cuisine. A large appeal to the area were the well-known Sanatoriums, which provided top-notch health care services. Some Resort/Hotels or Sanatoriums were splendid, castle-like buildings with property that would span miles of lush scenic views. One of the main goals of the entrepreneurs who started the resorts was to focus on their guest's health by providing exercise, the Swedish movement, electrical applications and water therapy. Great attention and expense was given to creating a relaxing and healing environment. The Resort names included; **Grand View, Walter's Park, Mountain Sunset, Preston's Sunny-side, Bynden Wood, Highland House, The Hillside, and Belle Alto.**

In the early days of the flourishing resorts, transportation to the South Mountain was fueled by good train service and horse-drawn carriages. The railroad was well known for assisting in the promotion of the South Mountain Resorts. They advertised that the Resorts were only two hours from Philadelphia, and a mornings ride from the turmoil of New York. They prospered from the success of the Resorts until the major development of the automobile. Around 1913 the Resorts/Hotels began to replace their fancy horse-drawn carriages with motor cars.

A major blow for the Resort/Hotels was the Great Depression of the 1930's.

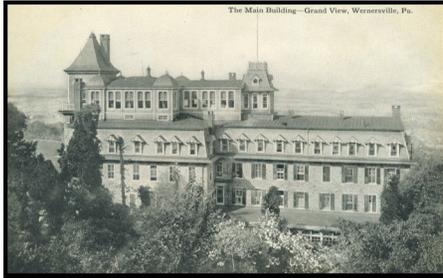
The grand estates continued to decline in popularity and were challenged with vast operating expenses. The final chapter for some of the Resorts ended in devastating fires, which erased them from our existence. The grand resorts or yesteryear are gone, but hopefully never forgotten.

The following pages provide a brief history of the major Resorts/hotels and Sanatoriums.





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GRAND VIEW (Sanatorium)

Location: Grandview Road

Size: 611 Acres

1847—Founded Dr. Frederick Leisenring named, **Berks County Cold Springs**.
1859—Dr. Leisenring died, his widow turned over management to Mr. Adolphus.
1873—Purchased—Dr. Aaron Smith **The Mountain Home** then named, **Hygiean Home**.
1879—Bankruptcy declared.
1879—Purchased—Dr. Reuben D. Wenrich & Dr. James W. Deppen, named **The Grandview House**. Later know as **Grand View Sanatorium**, and then **Grand View**.
1890—Constructed—Stone Chapel—in memory of Mrs. Reuben Wenrich.
1927—Closed.
1967—Controlled Fire.

Remains:

Elevator Shaft, Power House (Residence), Mountain Stone Chapel (Residence).

General Information:

Leased by Dr. James S. Preston for one year.

Leased by Dr. Robert Walter for several years.
 Luxurious accommodations. The Sanatorium was a self-contained community with a main building , gardens, a dairy barn, power house which was constructed to house ill patients.



WALTERS PARK (Sanatorium)

Location: Furnace Road

Size: 500 Acres

1876—Founded, Dr. Robert Walter—named **Walters Park**.
1921—Dr. Robert Walter died.
1921—Purchased—Hotel Corporation renamed—**South Mountain Manor**.
1885 -1919 — U.S. Post Office.
1913—Fire.
1933—Fire (severe damage, but rebuilt).
1945—Fire (gutted most of main building).
1963 to present 2012—Purchased—Wernersville Water Authority.

Remains:

Property.

General Information:

Grand castle-like health Resort blessed with abundant springs of clear, pure water.

Property was initially purchased from iron-masters who operated in 18th century Berkshire Furnace.

1920's and 30's also became a popular site for numerous conventions with distinguished visitors.

Advertisement:
 "No malaria, no mosquitos, no dew."

Treatments regimens included pure air, fresh water, exercise, the "Swedish movement," massage, and electrical applications of one kind or another.



MOUNTAIN SUNSET (Resort)

Location: Galen Hall Road

Size: 200 Guest Capacity

1876—Constructed—Mr. Francis Grosch (Stone Mason).
1914—1939—Purchased—George S. Gaul (known as an experienced Hotel Manager on South Mountain) Named **Sunset Hall**.
1943—Bank foreclosed mortgage (Sunset Hall posted for sale \$35,000).
1943—Purchased—Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Named **Villa Maria**.
1962—Purchased—Oblates of St. Francis de Sales.
1890—1919—Post Office.
1987 to Present— Purchased—Caron Foundation (Needed to expand to accommodate chemically dependent adolescents on the Chit Chat campus, located across road).

Remains:

Building.

General Information:

Built the same year as Walter's Park.

Sunset Hall—It had all the accommodations of a first class hotel reputation, and its cuisine was considered excellent. Gaul continuously made improvements for the guests. Some were year-round residents.



GALEN HALL (Resort)

Location: North Galen Hall Road Area

Size:

1913—Founded—Galen Hall Co. Atlantic City, NJ.
1880—Built—Stone House Dr. James S. Preston.
1882—Renamed by James Hall Preston, **Preston's Sunnyside**.
1907—Renamed—**The Preston**.
1911—Purchased/renamed **Galen Hall**. F L Young, J L Nelson, Howard M. Wing, Theodore C. Brooks.
1912—Built—Mountain wing, Golf Course.
1930's—Purchased Emanuel Burack.
1963—Fire (Destroys Hotel)
1965—Purchased (Golf course) 900 acres. Galen Hall Corp. Tom Masano, Bruce Masano, Eli Martin, William Evan, John Yocum.
1971—Galen Hall Country Club Corp. Eli Martin.
Year? - Galen Hall Holding Corp. Robert Fisher, Fred Fisher, Brian S. Stiefel, Anthony F. Miller Sr.

Remains:

Golf course, Chalet Restaurant, Kitchen, Pool, and Bungalows.

General Information:

The only Resort built on the South side of the mountain. Galen Hall Company enlarged the Resort considerably. Emanuel Burack turned Galen Hall into a modern first class hotel which outlasted all of the other Resorts.

Slogan: If you golf, Go Galen!"



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HILLSIDE (Resort)

Location: N. Galen Hall Road

Size: 20 Rooms

1895—Constructed, Peter and Ida Gerhart (Private Residence) but was never occupied by them.

1913—The Hillside.

1913—Miss Katherine Gerhart.

1920—Mr. and Mrs. Dallas Gerhart.

1921—Mr. and Mrs. Harry Aulenbuch.

Miss Katherine Gerhart (Apartments).

1938—Home for the elderly.

Remains:

House.

General Information:

Guests came to Hillside due to no occupancy at the Grand View Resort.

The Hillside grounds were very attractive, cool, and restful. All food served was strictly homemade.

Brochure copy for Resort: "A place of quiet charm among sweet scented woods and natural surroundings. A moment's walk takes one to enchanting foot paths that lead to scores of places of rare, restful and scenic beauty."

"The table is supplied with fresh fruits and vegetables in season; the best of butter and eggs; everything served is strictly homemade."

Advertisement: "Here toil shall cease and



BELLE ALTO (Resort)

Location: Point Road

Size: 60—70 Guest Capacity

1894—Constructed Resort, (Mr. E Yenney), but was not very successful in its operation.

1898—Purchased, Mr. Samuel B. Keppel. Also unsuccessful as a Resort.

1905—Purchased by Mr. Cummings (President of Stetson Hat Factory.)

1939—Purchased by Mr. James Sisk of Reading.

Purchased two farms in Valley and established Belle Alto Dairy Farm.

Remains:

Building.

General Information:

Resort name can be translated (from French derivations) as "Beautiful Height".

Bello Alto became a successful dairy farm with purebred Guernsey cows.



HIGHLAND HOUSE (Resort)

Location: Galen Hall Road

Size: 35 Guest Capacity

1890—Founded, James Schaeffer.

Highland House.

1896—Richard Hassler.

1916—Howard Fries—Wernersville.

1935—John L. Lowney.

1959 to present (2015) Chit Chat Farms now Caron Treatment Center.

Remains:

Building.

General Information:



BYNDEN WOOD (Various)

Location: Cushion Peak Road

Size: 60 -70 Guest Capacity

1869— Founded and purchased by John Tolbert for summer home.

1889—Alfred Fafel, Wm. Luden

1905—Dr. Octavia Krum operated the Sanatorium until Miss Mary Morton used two years as a summer residence.

1932—1947— became a summer resort.

1947—Wyomissing Foundation purchased the property and presented it to the Y.M.C.A. in Reading.

Presently (2015): Conrad Weiser/Bynden Wood Y.M.C.A.

Remains:

Bynden Wood Lodge, Roadside Cottage, Terrace Cottage, Pool, Pet Graveyard.

General Information:

Known as a favorite dining and vacation spot.

A 1952 advertisement from the "Y" described Bynden Wood as "an island in the sky."

Eventually, under Y.M.C.A. management the decision was made to tear down the mansion, contending it was too expensive to maintain.



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GREEN TERRACE (School)

Location: Galen Hall Road

Size: One acre lot.

1899—Constructed by Dr. Reuben D. Wenrich. Early years known as the **Mountain Sunset School**. Creation of the school: Dr. J. Donald Moyer, Resort hotel man of the **Mountain Sunset House**, and Secretary of the Lower Heidelberg Township School Board.

1931—School Closed.

1931—Sold to become a Tavern.

Date? - Private Home.

Date? - Apartments.

Remains:

House.

General Information:

Green Terrace School was destined to become a shining example of efficiency for all other elementary schools in Berks County.

Eli M. Rapp, Berks County Superintendent of Common Schools was a man preoccupied with standards.

He devised a demanding "test" for all county schools, if passed the school would be awarded a "diploma". This diploma was regarded as a high honor for schools to achieve.

Clarence D. Deppen became a famous and dedicated school master at the Green Terrace School. He served fifty years as a teacher. He died in 1975.



GREEN TERRACE (Hotel)

Location: Galen Hall and Preston Road

Size:

1865—Founded, Sebastin Hassler—bought from William & Rebecca Werner (13 acres). **1883**—Franklin Wike called **Tavern Stand** (6 acres).

1886—Emil Frantz (1 acre 74 peches).

1891—Edwin B. Weigand (for 5 days).

1891—Catherin Wike, W. F. Stuber.

1892—Abraham Boyer **Green Terrace Hotel**

Four generation of Boyers ran business.

1924—Isadore—Jimmie Kramer.

1924—Charles Rolland.

1925—Paul Orth.

? - Amanda & Tobis Ochs.

1940—Sheiff sale, vacant for three years.

1943, A. Jeanette Marshall **The Marshall Home** (Rest and Care Facility).

1953—**The Bechtel Home**.

1964—John W. & Mary Muffley—Called **Sunset House** for the Aging.

1970—Ann E. Frazer **Ann's Guest House**.

1985—Daniel and Juanita Davis and Kenneth and Carolyn Nichols. **Danken House**.

1991—Nancy and Fred Wheeler, Licensed as Assisted Living.

1995—Paul and Kathy Leonardo.

Remains:

Building.



GLEN TILT MANOR (Residence)

Location: Galen Hall Road

Size: 17 acres.

1885—Founded George Pomeroy. Bought farm (17 acres/\$4000 from Samuel Harnish).

Pomeroy died in 1925 and the property was gradually sold piece by piece.

1989—**Glen Tilt Manor Apartments**.

Date? - Chit Chat Farm (**Caron Treatment Center**).

Remains:

Building.

General Information:

Land once owned by Samuel Harish, who was a pioneer settler.

George Pomeroy purchased 17 acres of land for Glen Tilt, and eventually would own 45 and 85/1000 acres, all in the original Harnish tract.



WERNERSVILLE STATE HOSP.

Location: Huntzinger Road

Size: 500 acres.

1891— Founded.

General Information:

Building started in 1892 to accommodate 800 patients.

Asylum for the Chronic Insane.

Original site had a Stone Grist Mill and Sawmill. Six owners sold land to construct Wernersville State Hospital.



South Mountain Station:

The first passenger train ran on the Lebanon Valley Railroad in 1858. The line was bought by the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company that same year.

Service for the new South Mountain station was officially started July 13, 1893.

It was removed sometime in the 1950's.



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