



MEMOIRY

LAND

'2010'

Memories of Lower

Pollsgrove



We would like to invite you to write a short story or essay about things you remember from your time living in Lower Pottsgrove. It doesn't have to be long, something about the size of the "Golden Oldies" piece they do sometimes in the Mercury would be great. But it can be longer or shorter, however you would like to do it. It doesn't have to sound professionally written, just anything in your own words sharing with us the memories you may have of life in the area. We thought it would be nice to share these memories with each other, and also make a collection that we could hand down to future generations. Things are so very different now than most of us remember, we thought it would be a good idea to create a collective memory of what life was like in the township during the earlier years that we could preserve for our descendants and the descendants of all the new people who have come to live in our community.

We will display each of these writings here on the website for all of us to read, and if we get enough responses, maybe we could put a booklet together.

Anything you would care to contribute would be greatly appreciated. You can mail your contributions to the Chapel or you can Email them to the website. The addresses are on the "Contact Us" page. We look forward to hearing from you.





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In the 1940's I lived on N. Keim St. and graduated from sixth grade at The Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School, then went on to seventh grade at Pottstown Junior High. In 1997 graduates of LPES had a reunion where we honored Mrs. Francis Neiman Buchert, our favorite teacher from 50 years before. She was present at the reunion and I wrote this poem for the occasion that is about her and about us, the young of WWII and of post war youth .

Connection

by RONALD C. DOWNIE

We were young bright faced back then
Yet lived through each hard war year.
Seated far too long we were fidgety
Shifting again and again in our chair,
Adolescently tuned in for ring , ring ,
Recess, up and out, gulping in fresh air.

Loudly spilling out past heavy metal doors
We chose sides for macadam ball games,
High-low jumping preceded double Dutch .
Pupil pods were sprouting lifelong nicknames .
We chalked for hop Scotch, loved dodge ball,
Made fast friends long before our adult aims .

How high could a metal chain swing be pumped ?
How fast could the rickety old merry-go-round turn ?
How much climber time did we spend up side down ?
How was hard round steel hand polished smooth as an urn ?
How far out were the fields where the big kids played ?
How do we remember Miss Neiman who urged us all to learn ?

She joins with memories of cool chilling breezes sent yet
From western blue skies, mauve at late sunset, still .
She is present in our thoughts about classrooms, those of
The playground, even, out picking milkweed pods, at a fire drill .

Mrs. Francis Neiman Buchert, here today with us, is our
Connection to Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School, built upon a hill .

SUBMITTED NOV. 2, 2010





I lived on N. Keim St. the last half of the 1940's and played very much at Ringing Rocks Park with Jack and Bill Bechtel, Linwood Bieler, and Bruce Rogers. These were my reflections of our youthful experiences written forty years later.

The Park

by RONALD C. DOWNIE

Marble sized for giants - whose
Muscles lugged huge stones here ,
Epoch sung through harmonic echoes ,
Waiting with hammer and an ear ?

Glacier droppings thawed to earth
In retreat of Ice Age nights ,
Was Hudson Bay their place of birth
Under Aurora Borealis lights ?

Bare footed , shirtless , agile
Rock climbers scout to find
Cave caverns and weathered fossil
Prints of what beastly kind.

Zig zag stairs to the tower ,
Which commands a southern view ,
Potts's dream , factory power ,
Blue collar through and through .

They board to ride steel ribbons
Through fields of yellow and green ,
Their voices join track rhythms ,
Up hills , blue skies , at pleasures dream .

Round and round swiftly sweep
Four roller shoes , they in circles flow
To ebony platters etched needle deep
Of organ music for their graceful show .

People recreate at Nature's door :
Wooded oak hill of ringing rock ,
Pavilion roofed with hardened floor ,
Strengths of family from human stock .

At " This Wonder Of The World "
Which Ripley took time to note -
All the Twentieth Century unfurled -
May memories stir by this that I wrote.



SUBMITTED NOV. 2, 2010



Bridge over Sanatoga Run collapsed in 1868

by MICHAEL T. SNYDER

About one month ago, the bridge that crosses Sanatoga Run on East High Street at Cutillo's restaurant was closed to traffic for badly needed repairs. With the bridge shut down, anybody traveling along that route must make a short detour over one of several narrow roads that are nothing more than twisty old fashioned country lanes that can be tricky to navigate. However a brief article from the June 15, 1868, edition of the "Berks, Chester and Montgomery Ledger" a weekly paper published in Pottstown, shows what could happen if the bridge's maintenance was ignored.

The Ledger reported that on Sunday morning, June 13 "The large stone bridge at Sanatoga fell down with a crash into the creek below and is a perfect wreck." Even though the bridge had "been built a number of years" before its collapse, it was thought to be "perfectly secure." Fortunately nobody was on the bridge when it went down. However, one Pottstown resident had just crossed it seconds before it fell into the creek. The article didn't mention if he was on his way to church at the time, but if he wasn't, he should have driven his buggy to the nearest one and given thanks.

FROM THE "READERS' VIEWS" IN THE MERCURY, 2010





I thought it fitting on this Thanksgiving Day, with snow coming down, I would forward my memory poem about Thanksgiving remembered in a non-traditional way. Fifty to sixty years ago young men had little if any distractions tugging at them so the challenge of competition was huge and the interaction with friends very fulfilling.

Turkey Day

by RONALD C. DOWNIE

High School Football season ends officially
In towns about noon on Thanksgiving Day,
Not on Ringing Hill or down Sanatoga way .
The grunt's game began at 2 PM traditionally .

In the 1950's about 1 o'clock Turkey Day
Fellows began arriving out behind LPE School :
Young and old, in shape or not, wise or fool,
Rag tag or football wise, kick off to come soon .
R. Hill : Jack, Bill Bechtel ; Sanatoga : the Burns's,
Eddie Albert, Jack Babel, Tassy, and the Schott's .
Ringing Hill : the Spohns, Lin Bieler, the Mitch's,
And me . I played in this game for many years .

Fifty years later, memory slipping, who'd I forget ?
The Koren's for Ringing Hill ; Earnie, George for them.
Age presses up against the reality of fleeting time
To rob the picture of faces, and bodies, and play.

Rules, who worried about rules, kick off the damned ball.
No one wore pads, some wore a hat if it was windy,
But it wasn't until the shoes or sneakers came off that
A true earnestness surfaced, in barefoot, speed accelerated .

Since August some of us had practiced in full gear,
Played a full schedule of High School Football games,
Prided ourselves in wins and discounted our losses
With less fanfare, then was anticipation for this "real" game.

Up and down the wind blown field from sideline to sideline,
Men and boys played at blocking and tackling, running
And throwing, in an earnest effort or just to have some fun.
The yearly game of random intent came to forgotten conclusions.

Gone, but for memories, some still living others long dead,
The Prize, bragging rights for a short while, the true worth
As always, individuals banding together at some sort of play
Where the journey far outweighed the outcome of the contest.

*LPE - Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School on Pleasantview Road,
Sanatoga,
Dedicated to many friends, lifelong closest, Jack Bechtel and Linwood Bieler*

SUBMITTED THANKSGIVING DAY, NOV. 25, 2010

