

Come walk with me, down Main Street,

Hellertown,

U.S.A.


WORLD WAR II



P-47 THUNDERBOLT: named after the Borough of Hellertown in 1943 for having a successful War Bond drive to help the war effort.

November, 1987

Hi Cub Scouts -

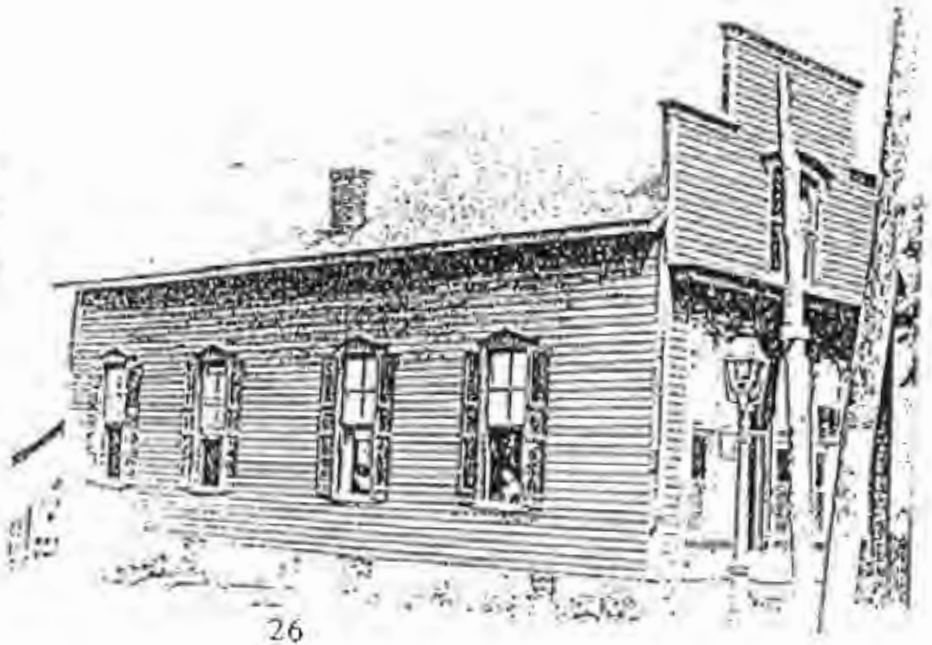
My name is Amy , and I am the little Gray Mouse who lives in the Grist Mill. Do you know where the Grist Mill is? It is on St about Street, just west of Main Street. Maybe one day you can take a ride past it & I might be sunning myself on the lawn or watching the members of the Hometown Historical Society working at the Grist Mill House or digging for treasures along the side of the mill. Do you know they have already found old chairs, old redware, nails, buttons & even an old coin. The Historical Society is working to restore the mill (that means making it look like it did years ago)!

I hope you will enjoy your little walk through Hometown - we will take a stroll

up Main Street, going North. He will start on the west side of the street at what now is called "Chesapeake Scaffold" (202 Main St. at the corner of Pine);

Look at the picture below - this is the same building - it was the First High School in Hellenwood

FIRST HIGH SCHOOL,
1896-1909. First gradu-
ating class consisted of 2
pupils. Used many years
afterward as lumber yard
office on Main Street.



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As you walk north watch the numbers on the doors - when you get to the 500 block look at the pictures on the next page & see if it looks different today. You may want to read the little story about "Main Street"

Prior to 1924, Main Street was an unpaved road. However, if the Bethlehem Daily Times is accurate in its report of February 17, 1887 stating that "The mud is hub deep in the country, but here in town, where we have cinder-macadamized streets, there is little mud," it would seem to indicate that our early borough fathers took fairly good care of their main thoroughfare.

The paving of Main Street in 1923-1924 was a project undertaken by the newly formed Hellertown Business Men's Association. At their meeting of May 17, 1921 the question of improving Main Street was discussed and a committee composed of Fred Keilman, Dr. William H. Rentzheimer, Christian Pfeiffer, Titus M. Ruch and Pliny Bergstresser was appointed to investigate the sentiment of the public in the matter.

At a special meeting held on June 14, 1921, Ambrose J. Welker (who later in 1923 became Chief Burgess) presented blank forms to Borough Council, furnished by the State Highway Department,

which were then executed by the proper borough officials asking for state and county aid for the improvement of Main Street. The matter was brought up at every meeting from that time until May 16, 1922 when a committee consisting of Welker, G. A. Keck, H. G. C. Hoffert, T. M. Ruch and V. S. Wagner were appointed to see that all preliminary arrangements for the work were carried out. Shortly after this time a contract was signed by the proper borough officials for the paving of the road and the work of the Hellertown Business Men's Association in the project was ended. On November 8, 1922 the citizens of the town endorsed the improvement at the polls by voting 351-22 to increase the borough's indebtedness by \$60,000 to pay the town's portion of the cost. Work was begun in the summer of 1923 and the entire project was completed in the spring of 1924. Later in the same year the highway was paved farther south to the Bucks County Line.



MAIN STREET: 1905, unpaved, looking north in the 500 and 600 block. Notice newly laid trolley tracks and tree growing through roof over sidewalk.

Can you find 610 Main St? Years ago it looked like the picture below & was a store. Aren't the people in front of the store dressed funny?



RUGH'S—610 Main St.

Now look for 618 Main St - I'll give you a hint - it is a Jewelry Store - Heilmann's - that's right. This is what was in this building some years back.



Yes, a bank!

do you see Gacey Garden on the corner of Main & Water Street? This was Stern's market until a few years ago - but before that?? It was Deemer's Store & that is where the first telephone switchboard was

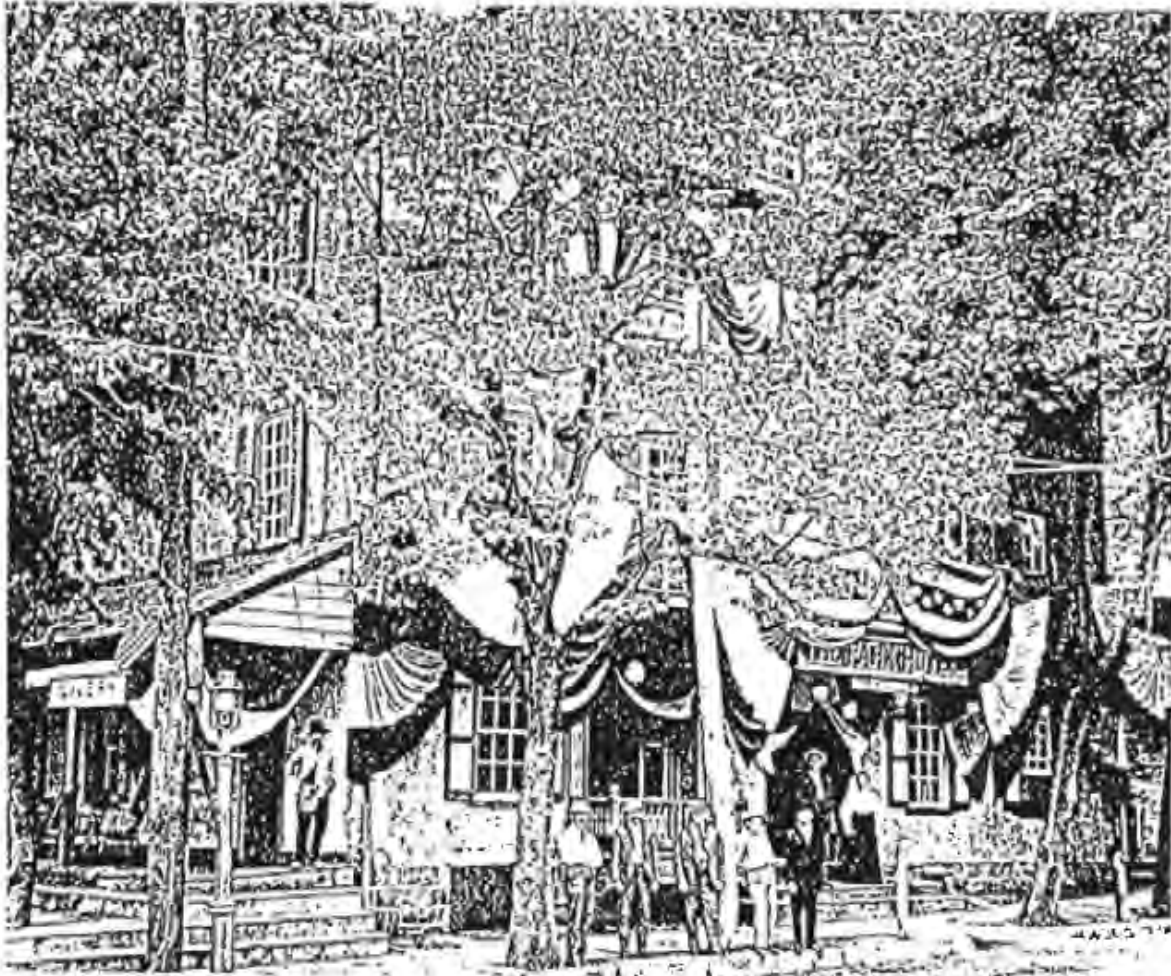


TELEPHONE SERVICE

Before direct dialing came to Hellertown in 1938, all telephone calls were placed through an operator. The first switchboard in town in the 1890's was at Deemer's Store (now Stern's Market). Later in 1909 or 1910 it was located in Ruch's Store further south on Main Street. The photograph (left) from Bell Telephone News, 1916 portraying an unidentified operator was captioned "At Hellertown, Pa., the wallpaper and surroundings give an atmosphere of home. Titus M. Ruch is the agent." For over 20 years Mrs. Elsie Bergstresser was the local switchboard operator. Her operating capabilities always included a close personal relationship with the community, local happenings, where "so and so" could likely be reached, and how to handle emergencies. The number of telephones in 1930 numbered 248 and currently stands at 3,542.

How we will cross Water St - we will go past the pizza place & right past where Mr. Murray sells his cars - do you see the parking lot where Mr. Murray has more

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cars? Do you know what once stood on this
parking lot? A beautiful hotel, built in 1908, its
name? "Park Hotel"! Isn't it wonderful?



PARK HOTEL, 1908: Owned by Harvey F. Myers, standing with wife on doorsteps. Hotel was formerly called the Hellertown Hotel.

Now look for 758 Main St, this house is
reported to be 200 years old! A little further
north we will find 766 Main St - what do
you see? A Beauty Shop? A Barber Shop?
Yes, but look at the very top of these
shops - do you see stone on the right? Now

next picture shows how this building looked around 1797. Read the little history of this house - the "Boehm House".



THE FIRST HOUSE BUILT IN TOWN

Rev. John Philip Boehm, the first Reformed minister in Pennsylvania, came to America in 1726 and acquired some land holdings in Whitpain Township, Montgomery County, where he preached and built a church which bears his name. At an early date he acquired a few hundred acres of land along the Saucon on which quite a part of the town now stands. He gave his land in the valley to his son Anthony who built a log structure on it about 1747. Here Anthony lived for some time and his father often stopped when he came to this area to serve the several churches. In 1797, the son-in-law of Philip Boehm III built the stone portion to it. The Betsy Ross Club held ownership of it for some years and in the Second World War it was considered a potential building for a memorial library to those who served in the wars. The project did not materialize and later the building was sold by the club. The outer structure of the building has been changed and renovated, however its interior is still there. Several businesses now occupy the building at 766 Main Street.

Are you enjoying your town so far? Your feet aren't getting too tired are they? I just love showing you some of the special places in this small but lovely little town.

Come along, up the street, I want to show

you what Prosser's Drug Store looks like now -
 did you find it? Yes, right on the corner of
 Main + Depot St. Ahem here is what it looked
 like some years back. Shouldn't you like to
 take a rest on those chairs on the side of the
 building?



PROSSER'S DRUG STORE

Are your toes & hands a bit cold? Why not
 go inside Prossers - maybe "Bud" Prosser will be

We are walking south & are passing Keystone
Savings Association, now who can spot the
Kohler Gas Station. Good!

Look at the picture below - do you recognize
the water fountain? But look, there is a clock
there now! I am sure you have all been
reading in the Globe Times about how the clock
was restored & put in this clock tower - if not,
for your next meeting, you find out & report on it.



Now cross Easton Rd., be careful, this is a bad
street to cross. Now do you see the building to the
right on the picture - spire standing in front of it -
now it is beautiful with its stone. On the south
side of the building (facing Water St) is where the
paternosters are (there is also a jail inside, a friend
of mine was a policeman & he showed it to me). I
bet if you knocked on the door they would show

you the jail too - they are nice people. The mayor of Hellertown also has his office in this building & this building also has other Borough offices - it is called Borough Hall. This is what it looked like in early years - it has a wonderful history!

The Municipal Building is a restoration of the original homestead of the pioneer physician Dr. Henry Detwiller, first homeopathic physician in Pennsylvania. The walls and framing are the original materials. When work was installed, it was made in conformity with original colonial lines; and all trim and furnishings were carried out to preserve the purity and charm of the fine architecture of our early pioneer settlers.

Erected in 1818, the building was occupied by Dr. Detwiller until 1852 when he moved to Easton, Pa. The property was acquired by one of his sons, the late Dr. William F. Detwiller. During his tenancy he purchased additional property, including what is now Detwiller Plaza, and made extensive alterations and additions to the original homestead, adding a hotel wing and livery stables. The property then became known as the Central Hotel, serving the public until 1918.

The hostelry was well known throughout the Lehigh and Saucon Valleys. Social and civic meetings were held there and banquets were numerous. One of the town's biggest annual social events took place here, the banquet of the Hellertown Horse Company—a mutual company protecting its members against horse thievery. It is notable that this event continued long after the advent of the automobile.

Upon the death of Dr. William F. Detwiller in 1907, the Central Hotel property passed to Dr. Henry D. Heller, a nephew, who maintained the premises as a hotel until prohibition became effective in 1918. After the hotel business ceased,

the property was for a time used as an A&P Store.

The property was purchased by the Borough from the widow of Dr. Heller in 1939. The northern third of the building which had been added in the mid-1800's to establish the hotel area was removed, thus returning the building to its original design. As can be seen in the accompanying photograph, five dormers are visible on the old building whereas the present Municipal Building has only three. The building was completed in 1940 and the entire Municipal Center area was dedicated July 4, 1942.

The new call it Borough Hall

CENTRAL HOTEL—1900: later converted to present Municipal Building.



He will cross State St & pass Meridian Bank -
 who can find a church? What is its name? St. Paul's
 United Methodist Church. That is right! Do you know
 what once stood on this very spot? The very
 first school house in Sillerytown built in 1839 -
 this is what it looked like

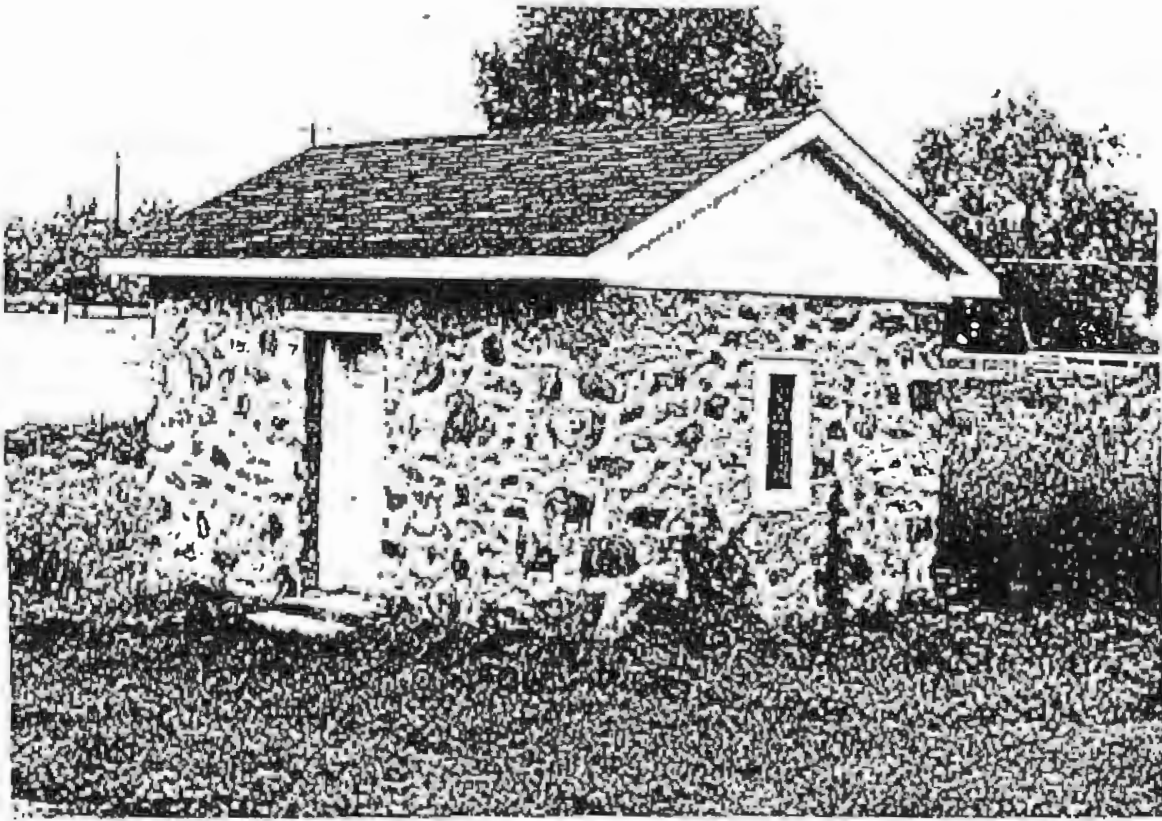


FIRST SCHOOL HOUSE—1839; built on land
 now occupied by St. Paul United Methodist
 Church. Remodeled for a church for the Evan-
 gelical Association in 1870. Demolished in 1882.

Across the alley you will see "Carson's Hardware"
 On the front of the building read the plaque - yes
 this was a carriage house. Wouldn't you like
 to take a ride down Main Street in a horse drawn
 carriage all curled up under blankets, maybe the
 horse would have bells on that would jingle as

you ride along.

Next you come to another little alley - right before
Lannon Valley Realty - lets take a quick walk down
this alley (we are making a left here) Look to
your right - do you see this building?



FIRST JAIL: Recently restored, it is located between Main and Northampton Streets along Silver Creek. Built in 1872.

Yes, it is the first jail house. The Historic Society now owns this building. It was donated to us by Elizabeth Hens. You can get a closer look at this sometime, now we are going to retrace our footsteps & come back to Main Street.

Can you find 605 Main St? That is the name of this building? The Original Tavern House - that is right. Years ago it was called the "Pennsylvania Hotel" & looked like this



PENNSYLVANIA HOTEL

By the way do you know what Main Street was called years ago? The King's Highway. Do you know that in 1777 the Liberty Bell was moved from Philadelphia to Allentown where it was hidden under the floor of the Zion Reformed Church, and do you also know it was transported on a farm wagon & went right up the very street you are looking at - Main St or the King's Highway.

I have enjoyed being with you today & I hope you have learned a little bit more about Hellertown.

There are many more places of interest & I will picture a few more on the following pages. Maybe during another meeting you can take a ride & find these places, it can be a "Historic Treasure Hunt"!

Happy Holidays - Come see me at the mill -

THE LIBERTY BELL COMES NORTH

'Twas the trek route by which the Liberty Bell came north
On the wagons of Mickley and Leaser drawn by horse.

The time was September, 1777. Colonel Flower of the American Army commandeered the empty farm wagon of John Jacob Mickley and Frederick Leaser, farmers from Lehigh County, as they left the Philadelphia Market after unloading their grain. The objective was to take the Liberty Bell and other church bells north to Allentown, so they would not fall into the hands of the British. A number of days later the wagons, loaded with the bells and escorted by several hundred soldiers, passed through Hellertown on their way to Bethlehem. While in Bethlehem the rear wheel of the Mickley wagon, bearing the Liberty Bell, gave way. Leaser's load of bells were unloaded and the Liberty Bell transferred to his wagon, which took it to Allentown. There it was hidden under the floor of the Zion Reformed Church, located on Church and Hamilton Streets. It remained there for almost a year before it was returned to Philadelphia. Today a beautiful shrine at Zion Reformed Church commemorates the visit of the Liberty Bell to Allentown.



EDWARD H. ACKERMAN POST



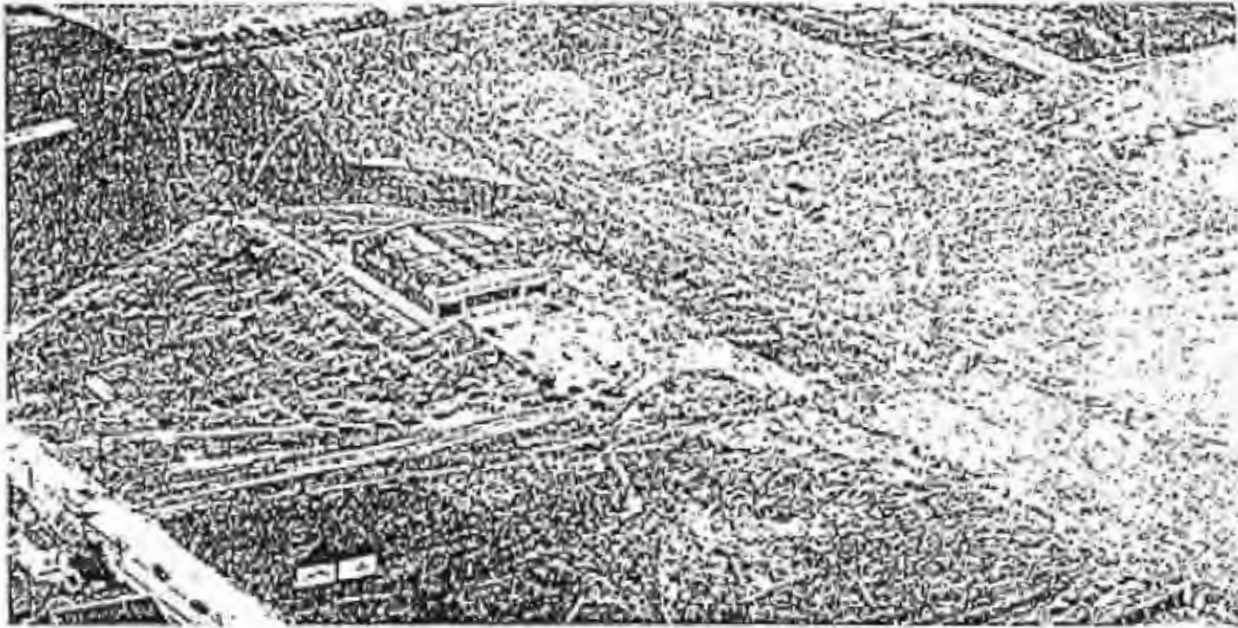
*Main St
 Chestnut St*

EDWARD H. ACKERMAN POST No. 397. Building erected in 1927. Machine guns pictured were scrapped during World War II. "Movies" sign brings back memories when second floor was Hellertown's motion picture theatre for several years.

Magnolia & Northampton Sts



HELLERTOWN GRAMMAR SCHOOL, 1870-1910. Two room brick structure built where Reinhard School now stands.



The site of one of the nation's early airports was along the northern boundary of Hellertown, north of Cherry Lane. Many of our town's residents remember spending Sunday afternoons there watching the daring young men in their "flying machines."

From 1929 to 1932 the airport was operated by Lancaster-Bethlehem Airways, Inc. Operations consisted of charter

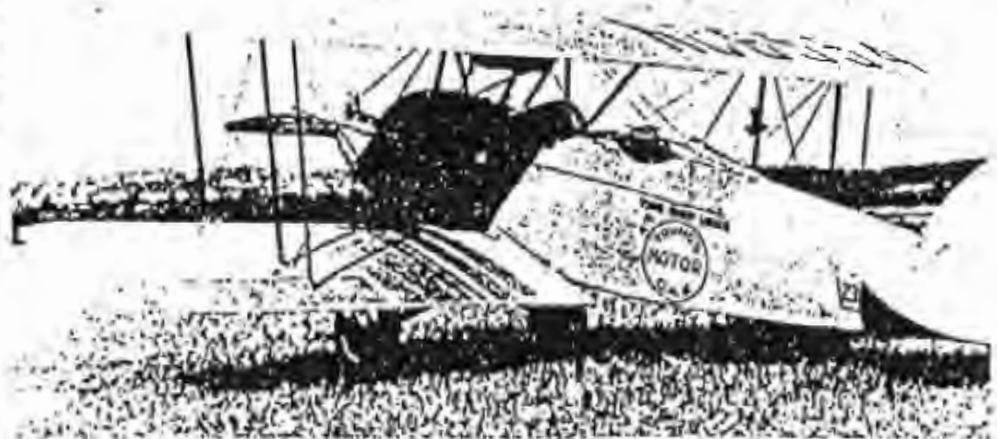
flights, student training, engine over-hauls, aerial advertisement and sales and service.

In August of 1932 Saucon Valley Skyways was organized with Stanley M. Keck, President; Rodney R. Clark, Secretary; Frank Banko, Treasurer; and Amber Siefert as mechanic. The services consisted of passenger flights, aerial advertising, student training, aerial photography and banner towing.

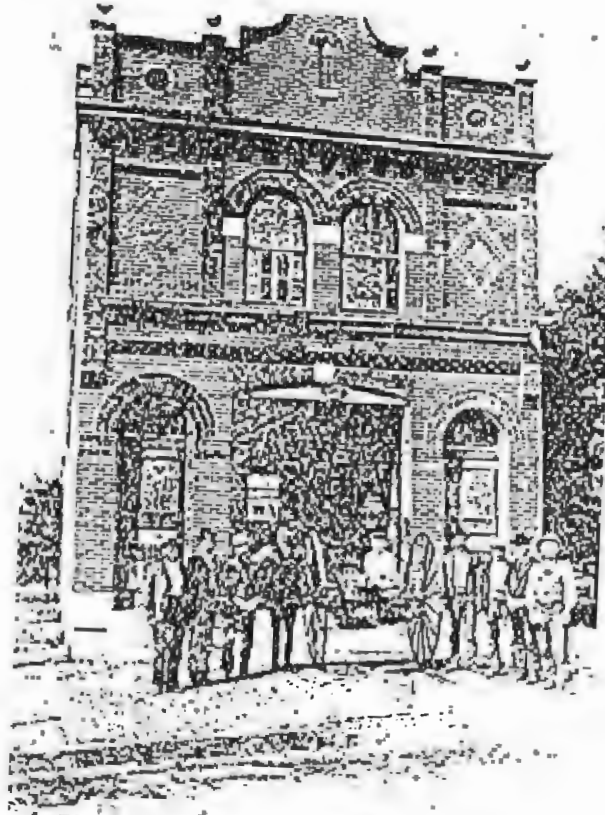


STANLEY KECK, one of the first Hellertontians to become a licensed pilot. Plane is his Waco-10. Mr. Keck managed Bethlehem Airport and has logged over 22,000 hours of flying time during his lifetime in aviation.

This is where the I-78 construction is now east of Main Street

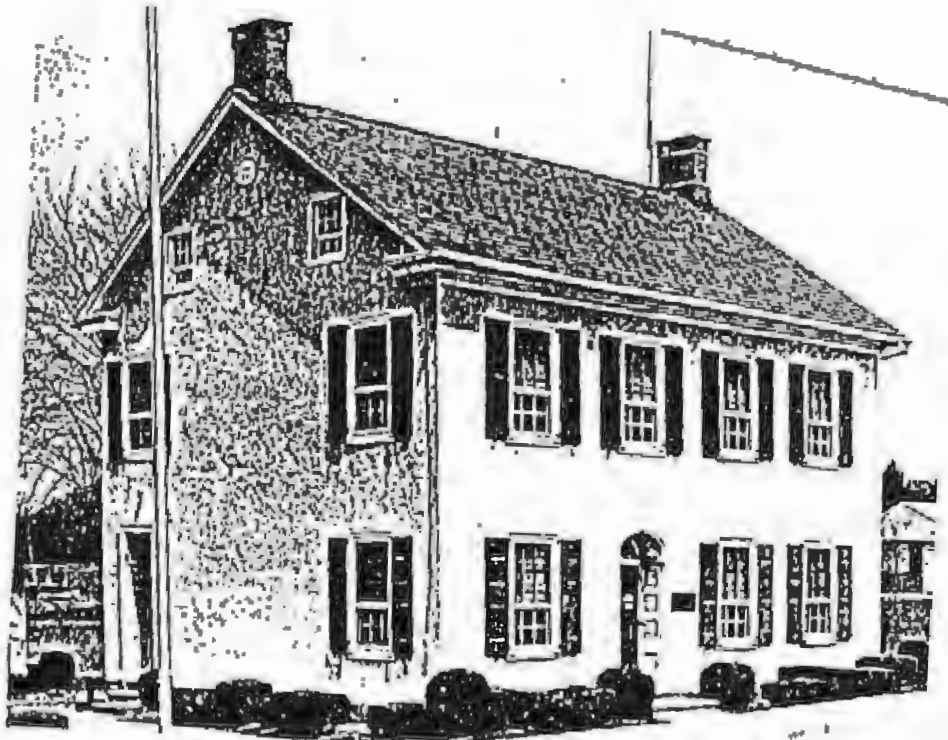


Cluney Fire Co -
new Saucon
Valley Apartments
(east of Main)



EARLY EQUIPMENT AND FIRE HOUSE:
hose cart purchased in 1899 in front of first fire
house built on Saucon Street in 1900.

501 Durham
Street



BUILT 1832: by Tobias Rentzheimer and rebuilt in 1964 for Borough Authority use.

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WAGNER'S MILL—1767

West of Main St.
at Walnut St.

THE FIRST MILL ON THE SAUCON

The mill of Jedediah Irish was the first to exist.

Along the Saucon, where it stone ground the valley farmer's grist.

In 1735, where the Saucon Creek enters the Lehigh River, the first grist mill was built in the valley; and it has been said that it was the third one in the eastern part of the state. Irish, the builder, operated it for a few years, then sold it and, before 1900, it changed hands through sale no less than eight or nine times. Its final owner was Howard Knecht, who remodeled it, enlarged it, and equipped it with the most modern machinery then used in the milling business. It was thus converted from a grist mill into a roller mill for the purpose of turning the farmer's grain into flour with names such as "White Lily," "Golden Flour," etc.

In 1743 the Moravians of Bethlehem asked the county courts to open a wagon road to the mill so that they could take their grains to it. This the county did. Along the southeastern branch of the Saucon, many mills had been built; however, only a few are still standing. Mills with names such as Boehm, Hess, Berner, Heller, Moyer, Ehrhart and Wagner were common, however Moyer's, Ehrhart's and Wagner's are the only ones remaining. Wagner's mill was built by Stoffel Wagner in 1767 and is now in the possession of the Borough of Hellertown with the possibility of becoming a museum. It is said that Lafayette, in coming from Philadelphia after the Battle of Brandywine, stopped at Stoffel Wagner's Tavern en route to Bethlehem.

For more information contact *Edith* (Honey Section) 535-8323