

What Souderton Was, Is and Will Be...Some Historical Facts About Souderton, Telford, & Franconia's Community Development and How We Got To Our New Community Pool PROJECT..."Make Your Splash"

With about 6700 residents and 2100 homes, Souderton Borough in 2007, has grown a hundred fold since it was chartered in 1887.

- ❖ William Penn's treaty with the Lenni Lenape Indians was made about 1681 without an oath and it was never broken.
- ❖ Early History of Souderton-the area of Souderton, Telford and surrounding area was settled by Germans from the Palatine area of southern Germany around 1719.
- ❖ Souderton is located on a 1000 acre tract on land that Wm. Penn originally granted and confirmed with 5000 acres to Thomas Harly of Great Britain.
- ❖ Franconia post office was established on August 4, 1828 and it was located at the home of Sam Wenhold on the Telford Pike. A boy on horseback delivered the mail once a week. In 1852 two deliveries were added.
- ❖ Souderton's first post office was called New Harbor; and it was established May 12th, 1860. The name of the post office was changed to Souder's on January 13th, 1864 and then to Souderton in March of 1876. The post office was first located in Wm. Souder's lumber office.
- ❖ The Union National Bank of Souderton was chartered on May 12th, 1876. Isaac G. Gerhart was elected President and Jacob C. Landes, Cashier. The bank was first located in the trolley station at Main and Broad Street. In 1928, there was a name change when the capital was increased from \$100,000. to \$125,000. to Union National Bank and Trust Company.
- ❖ 1888-1912- Religious faith grew and so did the growth of congregations and churches. Leidy's church, south of town, where Reformed and Lutherans worshipped together, felt a need for their own church. New Mennonites decided to meet in this new church and later Lutherans from Leidy's church formed a mission league there. Mennonites, German Reformed and Lutherans still dominate in the area today.
- ❖ In 1908, Souderton was a growing community and there were a few men who had the foresight to see that a water system was needed. Nathaniel Wampole, Charles Price Sr., and Harry Z. Wampole erected a row of six brick homes on the south side of West Broad Street and then a 40 ft. tower was erected with a 15,000 gallon capacity. It was not too long that this well ran dry.
- ❖ From this modest beginning, The Telford Water Company was born in 1911 and financed by the Lansdale First National Bank at a cost of \$36,000. New wells have been added to this system but as the borough grew, this system gave residents of Souderton the lowest water rate in the area.
- ❖ In 1927, the Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in getting a new railroad station constructed that was safer and at a better location; at the same time that the automobile was getting increased daily use.
- ❖ 1928 Swim Pool-In this year the Souderton Playground Association opened a large sand bottom swimming pool with dimensions of about 300 feet in diameter at Wile Avenue and Reliance Road. 12th, 1896.

- ❖ This was closed to the public in 1941 by order of the state health authorities with the borough council assuming the debts and property of the pool.
- ❖ In 1949 the citizens of Souderton backed the floating of a bond issue of \$45,000. for the purpose of building a more modern concrete swimming pool.
- ❖ In 1953, real action came about when bids were submitted. Again, the citizens responded by making a house- to- house canvas of Souderton, Telford, and Franconia with the result total of \$24,252 was raised and the pool opened to the public in June of 1954.
- ❖ 1950's-the original pool was built and the community of Souderton was behind it just like it is today with its \$ 3 million current reconstruction and renovation project.
- ❖ In 1962, the year of Souderton's Diamond Jubilee celebration, Souderton had 5 schools in operation and a total of 188 graduated. There were also 17 industries and approximately 40 businesses in Souderton.
In 1962 a Swim Pool parking lot and 15 miles of paved streets existed and 13 other miles were maintained by the borough.
- ❖ Advances in Souderton were futuristic but simple; they always included a clean and safe place to swim for all ages. Souderton's municipal pool was ahead of its time when it offered three pools for residents: one for wading, one for lap competition, and one for general use that would include exercise. At noon, the pool was often off limits to everyone but seniors, who may soak, exercise and swim away their time without the interruption of children splashing them.
- ❖ 2000- Nearby Souderton Mennonite Home senior residents use the pool today for recreation and fun and are often seen there together. Staff and residents come to enjoy the water on those hot, hazy days of summer! This is a wonderful intergenerational place for people and families of all ages to gather together! Remember that swimming is a lifetime sport.
- ❖ May 31, 2010-summer of 2010-Memorial Day-\$1 million "Make Your Splash" Campaign kicks-off with 8000 pieces of mail going to the homes and businesses in Souderton, Telford, and Franconia residences. Thanks to the mail volunteer help of the Indian Creek Foundation we were able to keep this bulk mail project cost to a minimum.
- ❖ May, Memorial Day 2010 -pool closed for planning, rebuilding and renovations
- ❖ May 28, 2011 new, rebuilt and safer Souderton Pool opens with celebration and excitement for all!

What's Good About Swimming? Swimming is a healthy lifetime sport for all generations to enjoy and benefit from, so the efforts of continuing and saving the Souderton Community Pool is worth it... to fill the recreational and health needs for individuals and families for generations to come!

Souderton and the rest of the Indian Valley is a well- kept secret but more individuals are discovering it is a perfect place to raise your family and the community-at large has small town friendliness, with rural landscapes but city conveniences.

Sources & Acknowledgements

Compiled by Henry S. Landes, reprinted from Souderton Independent, 1930

Brief History of Souderton and Telford by Charles H. Price, Jr.

Seeing Souderton by Phil Johnson Ruth Souderton Diamond Jubilee Booklet-1887-1962-Comm.



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