



The Gazette



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Sponsoring Historic Bristol Day - Third Saturday of Each October

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President's Corner

Usually, I try to think of something positive and light to write. However, this past year has brought sadness to us. We are suffering from a pandemic which has affected all of our lives in one way or another. We at BCHF have not been able to provide many of the activities which our members and others look forward to and enjoy.

But most sad of all, is the loss last year of two of the backbones of our organization.

Carol Mitchener did so much for the organization over the years. One of her notable accomplishments was the organization and coordination of the Annual Tea. Carol made the sandwich spreads and made sure all the ladies assembled those delicious tea sandwiches to perfection. They were delicious as was attested by the fact that few, if any were left after the event. She sewed costumes for events and often she and Harold were seen about town decked out as one colonial figure or another. You can't replace that kind of talent and enthusiasm.

Mary McIlvain passed away suddenly the second to the last day of the year. There was only one Mary. She served as President of the organization along with many other roles through out the years. You can read about all her achievements in the lovely article in this month's Gazette. Personally, I will miss her guidance and heartfelt kindness she showed to me. When we volunteered together at the Center for the Arts, there was always a treat waiting for me. She was willing to step in and take on any task at BCHF that needed a helping hand. It is hard to believe that she will no longer be with us in body, but I am sure she will always be there in spirit.

We surely have been blessed to have known these ladies. We are fortunate also to have many members who are pillars of the organization and members who support us with their kindness.

Jan Ruano, President

A Tribute to Mary M. McIlvain

August 2, 1933 - December 31, 2020

Sadly, we must inform you of the passing of Mary McIlvain. The Irish would surely say, "We'll not soon see the likes of her again."

As you well know, Mary was a woman of boundless energy and unbridled optimism. She gave us direction and leadership. She gave us a laugh or two. She gave us friendship.

Born in Bristol, PA, Mary received her early education at St. Mark School. She then went onto Cathedral High School in Trenton, NJ, and to Thomas Edison University. She was employed for many years at American Bridge and U.S. Steel and later at CD Technologies.

At BCHF, Mary was Past President, a member of the Board of Directors, Corresponding Secretary, Historic Bristol Day Co-Chair, and Fund Raising Chair. It was during Mary's tenure as President that our present headquarters building was purchased.

In 1981, Mary was a member of the Bristol Borough Tricentennial Board of Directors, Chairperson of Heritage Day,

the Bristol Borough 325th Anniversary Committee in 2006, a member of Raising the Bar, and a volunteer at Centre For the Arts. She did all of this and also found time to be President of the Celtic Heritage Foundation and to Co-Chair Celtic Day.



Mary was known for her life-long love of and devotion to St. Mark Parish. Indeed, she was famous for being one of the original "Church Ladies" of St. Mark's. She was equally famous for her New Year's Day Dinners of roast pork, sauerkraut, and colcannon.

And so, farewell to Mary Margaret McIlvain. To a life well lived. To a legacy of love and compassion. Rest in Peace.

Nick Rizzo

See additional tributes on Page 2

Personal Tributes to Mary M. McIlvain

I will always remember Mary when she was president of BCHF. That was back in 1991 when we purchased the building from The Travel Club. Thanks to Mary, we have permanent headquarters in one of the most historic buildings in Bristol. - - *Harold Mitchener*

I met Mary in the First Grade at St. Mark School. After completing elementary school, we went through high school together. We both were elected to BCHF's Board of Directors in 1987. Mary was a highly intelligent, personable, caring woman, whom I had the privilege of calling "friend." She will be sorely missed by BCHF, myself, and all who knew her. - - *Helen Younglove*

Mary was an integral part of our organization in a variety of roles, especially with Historic Bristol Day. I remember the first time I ever attended the annual meeting and was fairly new and not knowing anyone really, she came right up to me and introduced herself and welcomed me. I will never forget that. As many others have said, Historic Bristol Day will not be the same without her, and the same with Celtic Day. You could always find Mary at the Raffle Table selling the basket of cheer tickets under the wharf. She will be sorely missed by many. - - *Nick Rizzo*

Preserving Imported and Domestic Fruit

Green Lane in Bristol was once called Bloomsdale Road. Between 1875 and 1880 on the bank of the Delaware River, at approximately the location of Seabird Drive across from the present Moose organization was a fruit preservation building. It was owned by Nathan Hellings.

The main building was 80' by 59' and it had thick walls. The purpose of the thick wall was to avoid changes in temperature inside. Mr. Hellings tried to

keep the temperature inside at 34 to 36 degrees Fahrenheit. There was always a current of dry air that passed through the building. Hellings had a large bed of ice under the building to preserve the fruit during the hot and humid days of summer. There were about 10,000 barrels for storage of citrus. Within a few years, cold storage was invented and Hellings was forced to close.

source: History of Bristol 1911, Grundy Library

Bristolian Tries Auto on Ice

The following dispatch from Burlington appeared in the Philadelphia Record on Sunday:

With the return of cold weather; sleigh travel across the Delaware at this point has been resumed and the ice yachts, regardless of four inches of snow upon the ice, are out daily. A few days ago two sportsmen from Riverton rode horseback to this city and thence across the river to the Pennsylvania shore.

However, that feat was surpassed yesterday when Matthew Lincoln, an up-to-date Pennsylvanian, with two companions, drove his automobile across the ice to Burlington and, after making a tour of the city, returned in the same manner. The party declared that the trip, aside from its novelty, was much enjoyed.

Before returning to Bristol, several speed tests were made on the ice by the automobile and a remarkable speed was attained. A visit was also made to Burlington Island Park.

News item from Burlington in the Bucks Gazette of February 1904



Morrisville and Bristol

Two Towns On The River

It is sometimes said that transportation and a little pigskin helped connect Morrisville and Bristol, two of Bucks County's oldest towns.

Morrisville was at first called Crewcorn and Colvin's Ferry. Bristol had the English name of Buckingham.

Native Americans inhabited the region. They used their canoes to travel on the Delaware River to go between these locales; the Lenape Indians traveled along the riverbanks by foot. The original English proprietor of Pennsylvania, William Penn's private barge, was rowed up the Delaware from Philadelphia past Bristol to his country estate (Pennsbury Manor) near present-day Morrisville.

In 1928, Morrisville and Bristol high schools played their first competitive football game on Thanksgiving Day. In the first few years, spectators could witness the Bulldogs of Morrisville and Bunnies of Bristol meet for this classic game using any of the routes. Later, from private cars and school buses, spectators would cheer on their teams from the end of the stadiums. In 1948, the Bristol bunnies became the Bristol Warriors. The two teams continue their tradition with only two exceptions when in 2001 and 2012 the competition did not take place.*

These two urban areas were once the largest in southern Bucks County however; at present, they have been almost devoured by larger "suburban" communities.

TRANSPORTATION TWIXT THE TWO

Morrisville was located at the Delaware River's fall line (that area where the Piedmont and coastal plain met). It was an ideal location for future bridges across the river.

Both Morrisville and Bristol were initially connected by the King's Highway, which came from Philadelphia. On November 19, 1689, the Provincial Council made provisions for this route through southern Bucks County. The road was later called the Frankford Turnpike. The stagecoach traffic between New York City and Philadelphia used the Frankford Turnpike and therefore traveled through southern Bucks County

In 1824, when General Lafayette was on his "Farewell Tour" of America, he rode in his carriage with troops on horseback escorting him on this road between the two Bucks County towns.

Another waterway that connected the two towns was the Delaware Canal. This man-made waterway

was dug primarily to transport anthracite coal from the northeastern Pennsylvania coal regions to Bristol. The canal was dug between Easton and Bristol starting in 1827. Because of the differences in elevation, 168 feet, there were 24 locks needed to complete the journey between the two ends of the canal. The sixty miles passing through the two communities took mule-drawn barges 48 hours to drag the canal boats to complete the journey.

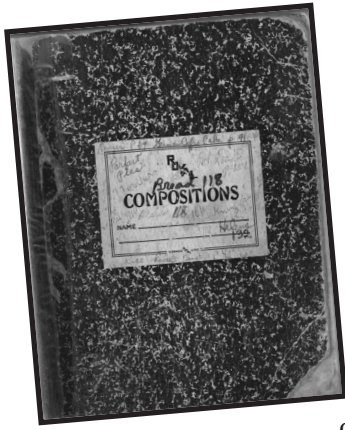
When the railroads first came into Bucks county from New York City on its way to Philadelphia, Morrisville and Bristol were on its route. Passenger stations were established in each community. Because of its proximity to Trenton, NJ, and not far from Tullytown station (presently Levittown Station), the Morrisville station eventually was closed. The Bristol station remains part of the SEPTA system. Amtrak trains between Trenton and Philadelphia pass through these towns. Regularly scheduled steamboats between Trenton and Philadelphia allowed Morrisville residents to travel by river from the fall line to Philadelphia with stops at Bordentown, Bristol, Burlington, and Philadelphia.

As the 20th century emerged, the newest mode of transportation was the electric trolley system. A trolley line connected Philadelphia to Bristol, Morrisville, and Trenton. Another route was from Bristol to Newtown and Doylestown. Morrisville people could also travel via Newtown to the county seat. By the early 1930s, the electric trolley cars' tracks were removed, and bus transportation replaced them.

The Neibauer Bus Co. had a route from the Philadelphia border using U. S. route 13 through Bristol to Morrisville. The connecting buses could be used to cross the river to Trenton. This route gave those wishing to shop in the larger department stores in Trenton an opportunity to reach the New Jersey capital city. Simultaneously, the automobile became more available to more families, and many traveled the same route in their own vehicles. Two bridges connected Morrisville and Trenton for the use of private cars, trucks, and buses. Now there are three and one for the railroad.

*In 2019, the 90th meeting between the two schools still took place amidst the coronavirus pandemic

source: the Grundy Collection



Aunt Wanda's Notebook

By Marty Shively

There's nothing that says history like a family notebook. You may recall the Black & White Composition books, like this one, filled with recipes & homespun remedies.

It was my Aunt Wanda's and was passed down through family generations. Today it is a fragile, time-worn, scotch-taped treasure, treating us to another time & place.

Our Polish ancestry is well documented, often written in her native language. These were mixed in with international titles such as Supper in Russia, Jewish food for Purim, Penna. Dutch Delights, and Central European for New Year's.

It seemed imperative these handwritten recipes give credit to their authors: Alice Suchadolski's pudding, Cousin Jo's ranger cookies, or Dad's rhubarb wine. Most telling, though, is the myriad of side comments inserted by various family members over the years. Different handwriting, red pen & pencil cross-outs gave critiques: no good, too sweet, ingredients are missing. The advice to compare with others' recipes often led to notes such as "Edna's is better."

Personal preferences were widespread: Do not use an electric mixer (Brownies); Use Taylor's N.Y. State Sherry wine 18% by volume (Fruit Cake); It's OK to

use Gold Medal flour; Do not use chopped nuts in Date Nut Bread, they are too sweet, It's OK to use the water taken from the well.

Special consideration was given to recipes Not from the family, but they are always duly noted: From Bob Steel's radio show; Winner of the 22nd. Pillsbury Bake Off; a scrap of paper from a Home Ec. brochure, or Edna's pierogi's (Not OUR Edna).

Procedural tips were of utmost importance: Use mother's canning jars; get ready for speedy action (Alice's pancakes); use the 8 ½" x 10" pan ONLY; how to "wash butter" (for Puff Paste/French pastry dough). It's filled with what now seems like "dated" terms: griddle, double-boiler, and skillet.

My ancestors were famous for using substances that may make us cringe: turpentine, paraffin oil, kerosene, acetic acid, cream of tartar, Petroleum naphtha benzene, peroxide, lard, linseed oil. These items were used for such chores as: furniture cleaning, rust removal and pulling up linoleum!

I'm particularly fond of the advice to use organic fish emulsion to feed gardenia plants & use lima bean water for shrunken woolen sweaters.

You see, the taped & ripped pages along with cross-outs & blotches from fountain pens, also hold layers of flour and preserved history. I can almost smell the Snickerdoodle cookies in the oven.

A Snow Storm Hits in 1900

The first touch of winter hit that Friday evening February 22nd when Bristol was visited by a severe snow-storm. The flakes fell covering the ground in a depth of about a foot. The wind howled piling snow so high in places that traveling carried on only by great difficulty.

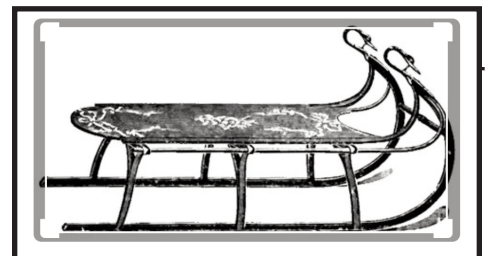
By late Saturday the Bristol trolley line was blocked to Newtown but open to Langhorne station. By noon on Monday the cars began to run again.

The wind drifted the light snow so badly that the country roads were impassable. People using the back road to the Neshaminy avoided some of the drifts by driving through the Bristol cemetery.

A Mrs. Wherlong who resided out on Bath Road went shopping into Bristol on the Saturday trolley. The cars became blocked and so she decided to walk home. She got caught in a drift and was overwhelmed with the cold. Fortunately, a farmer came and took her to his home, lest she die in the snow.

Even the mail did not get to the Post Office. The Fallsington, Emilie and Woodbourne stage did not reach Bristol until Tuesday noon.

On a happy note with schools and roads closed, the children were out on the hilly streets sledding until they were so cold as to turn blue.



A vintage sled circa 1900

Out Of The Past

The following items were excerpted from **FEBRUARY 1911** issues of **THE BUCKS COUNTY GAZETTE** (Bristol).

2/3 – “Sweeping Reduction in Boys’ Bloomer Suits. \$5.00 kind reduced to \$4.00. \$4.00 kind reduced to \$3.25. \$3.75 kind reduced to \$3.00. \$3.00 kind reduced to \$2.50. **JOHNSON BROTHERS**, Cor. Mill and Wood Streets.”

“Bowling and Pool. Cigars and Tobacco. **RIVERSIDE BOWLING ALLEYS**, Radcliffe and Market Streets. Open afternoon and evenings. Stout & Funk, Mgrs.”

“Washington. Popular Three-Day Tours - \$10.60 from Bristol. Including hotel accommodations and necessary expenses. Under personal escort. **PENNSYLVANIA R.R.**”

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE:

About a hundred canal boats are quartered in the canal basin ready for the beginning of the Spring trade.

The Bristol baseball association will greatly improve the grounds this Spring by erecting a grandstand.

When the high price of brooms is considered, we cannot help but wonder if it would pay more persons to plant broom corn. The crop is said to be worth more than potatoes.

Four Bristolites were among the 143 graduates of the Rider-Moore and Stewart Business College of Trenton, who held their commencement exercises last Friday night at the Taylor Opera House. They were: Miss Mary R. Ferry, Miss Jennie Fine, Miss Mary R. Strong, and Elwood Wright. Miss Fine was the vice-president of the graduating class.

The plans for the proposed new Pennsylvania Railroad passenger station at Bristol are in the hands of contractors for estimates.

HENRY STEEL DIES AFTER OPERATION. Henry M. Steel, head of the firm of Edward T. Steel & Co., manufacturers of cloth at Bristol, died Wednesday morning in the Germantown Hospital after a three weeks’ illness. Complications after an attack of ptomaine poisoning, which necessitated an operation, caused his death.

2/10 – “This Week’s Specials at Pearson’s! All Our \$1.00 and \$1.25 White Shirt Waists Reduced to 50c and 75c. **R. R. PEARSON**, 310 Mill Street.”

FRUITFUL ITALIAN MISSIONARY WORK. The building committee which had charge of the erection of the new Italian Presbyterian Church, at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Wood Street, held its final meeting on Wednesday evening, the building having been completed and all of the financial obligations connected therewith discharged. The pastor of the congregation is Rev. Mucci, a cultured Italian minister. The church has a membership of about 60. The Sunday School membership embraces about 50 Italian children.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE:

Wilmer E. Hibbs and Miss Ethel H. Barnes, both of Bristol, were married at the Methodist parsonage on Wednesday evening by the Rev. S. Gehrett, D.D.

At the Fair of Good Will Hose Co. No. 3, which is now in progress at Mohican Hall, tonight will be devoted to what is known as “Chicken Night.” A hundred live chickens will be chanced off.

It may be well to tell your grocer and your butcher about the reduction in food prices. Probably they have not heard about it.

A few tips to correspondents in writing obituaries: Do not

say he was without money and without friends. Simply say he was without money and the latter will be understood.

Again, do not say he was poor but honest. You have only to say he was honest.

DOUBLE WEDDING. Two young Bristol couples created a little surprise among their friends last week by taking a quiet journey to Philadelphia on Saturday and having a double marriage ceremony performed. At about noon, Miss Anna Wichser, of Jefferson Avenue, and Robert Appleton, of Lafayette Street, and Miss Anna McCoy, of Otter Street, and John Wichser, without the knowledge of their friends, appeared before Rev. E. J. LaRose, pastor of the Messiah Reformed Church, 13th and Wolf Streets, Philadelphia, and were married.

AN OLD FIRM IN BUSINESS AGAIN. Thirty-three years ago, the New York Cash Grocery Co., Gordon, Groff & Company, established the first strictly cash store in Bristol in the building which formerly stood on the site of the present Post Office building at the corner of Radcliffe and Market Streets. At that time, Mr. Gordon was about 15 years old and was probably the youngest man engaged in extensive business in the United States. After a generation, Messrs. Gordon and Groff are again united in a business firm engaged in a similar line of trade as formerly. On Saturday, William F. Gordon, S. W. Groff and Robert Bruden purchased the grocery and meat business of George L. Horn and took possession on Monday.

NEW GARAGE TO BE OPENED HERE. The Riverview Motor Car Co. has leased the premises No. 8 Mill Street from Charles Rommel, where will be maintained a first-class garage and repair shop. In addition, the company has obtained the local agency for a well-known automobile, the Maxwell.

2/17 – Childs’ Cut Prices. Finest Fresh Butter - 26c lb. Best Granulated Sugar - 5c lb. Big 10c Pkg. Quaker Oats 7c. 40 Hardwood Clothes Pins - 3c. Norway Mackerel - 7c ea. **CHILDS’ STORES**, Mill & Cedar Streets, Bath Street above Otter, Wood & Dorrance Streets.”

ELKS HOME OPENING. The magnificent stone and brick building on Radcliffe Street, the new house of the Bristol Lodge of Elks, is about completed and is now ready for the installation of the furniture. It is calculated that the Elks will take formal possession on Saturday, March 4th or March 11th. The following week a public reception will be held.

MR. GRUNDY PURCHASES RADCLIFFE STREET RESIDENCE. Joseph R. Grundy has purchased the Miss Ellen Vanuxem residence property at the corner of Radcliffe and Dorrance Streets. The consideration was \$6,000. The property contains a two and one-half story frame dwelling and is located on a large lot extending to Cedar Street, the yard containing many fine old trees.

DORON GREEN WRITING HISTORY OF BRISTOL. Doron Green, a member of the Bristol School Board has been engaged for some time and has about completed the writing of a history of Bristol. The material he has gathered will be published in book form.

SPEAKEASY RAIDED. Yesterday afternoon, Bristol police officers, armed with warrants, swooped down on a shack on the line of the new elevated railroad on the old Bath Springs property just over the borough line on Bath Street and raided a genuine speakeasy.

continued on back page



**Bristol Cultural &
Historical Foundation, Inc.**
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

OUT OF THE PAST . . . CONTINUED

2/24 – “Trolley Freight Service, March 1st. TRENTON, BRISTOL & PHILADELPHIA STREET RAILWAY COMPANY. On or about March 1st, a daily trolley freight service will be inaugurated between Front and Market Streets, Philadelphia, and Bristol and intermediate points.”

CENSUS OF BUCKS BOROUGH. Bristol: 7104 in 1900; 9256 in 1910.

FUNDS READY FOR NEW P.O. BUILDING. Postmaster Minster has received information from Washington that the sum of \$40,000 of the \$75,000 appropriation for a new post office building for Bristol has been set aside and is now available.

WATER WORKS AND SEWER BIDS ASKED. The Street Committee of the Bristol Borough Council is advertising for sealed proposals for the furnishing materials and construc-

tion of a complete system of water works and filtration plant and also a sewer system

BRISTOL SCHOOLS' BIG CELEBRATION. On Wednesday evening, the Colonial Theatre was packed to the doors with the friends of the Bristol public schools, upon the occasion of the anniversary celebration of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln under the auspices of the high school and grammar grades.

“Our Stale Bread, 3c per Loaf. We have a supply of stale bread (yesterday's baking) which we will sell each day after 11 o'clock a.m. at 3c per loaf. The bread is strictly first-class in every respect, being returned from the groceries. GRATZ'S NEW BAKE SHOP, Cor. Dorrance & Wood Streets.”

The Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation

urges everyone to stay safe . . . wear a mask, wash your hands and practice social distancing.

Let's make 2021 the year when we can all get back to normal.

We look forward to trips and activities and seeing everyone in person once again.

• BCHF Headquarters are at 321 Cedar Street, Bristol.

• For current information about activities and events, check out our web site at www.bristolhistory.org.

Follow us on Instagram - - [IG@bristol_historic_foundation](https://www.instagram.com/IG@bristol_historic_foundation)

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