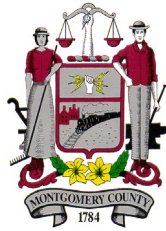


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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 1, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Draft Chapter 3: History

**TO:** Comp Plan Development Team

**FROM:** Mike Narcowich, AICP, Community Planning Assistant Manager

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## Outline

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## Introduction

Abington Township has a rich history. The concise history in this chapter is not a comprehensive one, but rather one that summarizes some of its major historical developments. This begins with the sale of land from the Lenni Lenape tribe to European settlers, land settlement and development, the origin of its villages, and a few of the major developments in government, industry, transportation, education, and health care. Abington's

identity and its future are shaped by its history. *Note: Much of the information in this chapter was drawn from "Montgomery County: The Second Hundred Years," by the Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies, 1983, and on "History of Montgomery County," by William J. Buck, 1884, and general assistance provided by the Old York Road Historical Society.*

## Acquisition and Settlement

The land that became Abington Township was occupied and lived in by the Lenni Lenape tribe of Native Americans. Documentation shows the sale of the land that became Abington in deeds dated 1683 (for land east of the Pennypack Creek) and 1687 (for land west of the Pennypack Creek). The first of these deeds included the following information<sup>1</sup>:

*Signatures of eight Indians and four representatives of Penn were attached, together with a separate acknowledgment by Tamanend, sometimes described as the original Chief Tammany. According to the deed, payment was made in wampum, guns, shoes, stockings, blankets, looking glasses, and other goods, as much "as ye said William Penn shall be pleased to give unto us."*

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<sup>1</sup> "Montgomery County: the First Hundred Years," 1983, edited by Jean B. Toll and Michael J. Schwager; Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies.

Some of the earliest records of settlers in Abington were of those who had, by 1681, settled along Susquehanna Road (then known as "Susquehanna Street Road.")<sup>2</sup> Originally known as Hill's Township, the name Abington Township<sup>3</sup> came into use by 1702. The Abington Friends Meetinghouse was one of the first significant structures constructed in the township. It was constructed in 1698-1699 by John Wall on land donated by John Barnes, just outside and to the east of what is now Jenkintown Borough.

## Population Over Time

*Note: For additional information, see the Demographics chapter.*

By 1696, maps listed 22 landowners in Abington. By 1734, it was reported to have 42 "resident landholders and taxable."<sup>4</sup> By the first U.S. Census in 1790, the population had reached 881. The earliest inhabitants were English Quakers, Welsh, Scottish,

## Willow Grove Park

Willow Grove Park was built by "influential men in area transit affairs," as described in "Montgomery County: the Second Hundred Years." The idea was developed by Peter Widener and William Elkins of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company. The park opened in 1896. The park was built with the intention of promoting trolley use and land development.

Over the next 50 years, the area became known as the music capital of the world due to the summer concerts conducted by the great American composer John Philip Sousa at Willow Grove Park, attracting up to 50,000 people each day. In 1909, the total attendance was three million people. Its amusement park and roller coasters were also major attractions. In the 1970s, the amusement portion of the park was rebranded as "Six-Gun Territory," a western theme park.

In 1976, the park and its attractions were demolished to make way for the construction of Willow Grove Park Mall.

*Artwork portraying scenes of Willow Grove Park hangs in the Willow Grove Park Mall*

<sup>2</sup> From a map by Thomas Holme, Pennsylvania Surveyor General, 1681

<sup>3</sup> There is no known connection between the settlers of Abington Township and any of the Abingtons in Northampton or Cambridgeshire, England.

<sup>4</sup> From report by the constable ordered by Thomas Penn, "History of Montgomery County," by William J. Buck, 1884.

Dutch, and New England Puritans. African-Americans were part of the township's population, including in the Edgehill area.

Cremona Satterthwaite was an African-American woman who owned 198 acres of land there—at a time when it was unheard of for African-American women to own land. She had been a slave owned by, and then a servant who worked for, Humphrey Morrey and his family—he being one of the fifteen original founders of Cheltenham Township in. Cremona lived with, and had five children with, Humphrey's son Richard between 1735 and 1745.<sup>5</sup>

The population of the township more than quadrupled from 1800 to 1900. This rapid growth seems to reflect the national trend occurring in the 19<sup>th</sup> century-- strong population growth due to natural population increase. This was a result of high birth rates, coupled with moderate death rates—and those death rates declined in the later part of the century.<sup>6</sup>

Year	Population or Landowners	Source
1696	22 Landowners	Maps <sup>7</sup>
1734	42 Landowners	Report by the constable ordered by Thomas Penn <sup>8</sup>
1790	881 Population	U.S. Decennial Census
1900	3,803 Population	U.S. Decennial Census
2000	55,989 Population	U.S. Decennial Census

## Transportation <sup>9</sup>

Old York Road, originally “York Road,” was one of the first roads in the township and one of the most important in the mid-Atlantic region, since it was “the shortest and fastest overland route from Philadelphia to New York.” <sup>10</sup>

Some of the first documentation of the road dates to 1693, but it was likely in use for years before that<sup>11</sup>. In 1697, Nicholas Scull was appointed to survey York Road from Cheltenham to Moreland. Old York Road would connect Philadelphia to New Hope and New York. Old York

<sup>5</sup> “The Montiers—An American Story,” Produced by Karen Smyles, WHYI, accessed January 27, 2021.

<https://whyi.org/montiers-american-story/>

<sup>6</sup> Haines, Michael. “The Population of the United States, 1790-1920,” National Bureau of Economic Research, accessed on December 28, 2020, at: [www.nber.org](http://www.nber.org).

<sup>7</sup> “History of Montgomery County,” by William J. Buck, 1884

<sup>8</sup> “History of Montgomery County,” by William J. Buck, 1884

<sup>9</sup> “Along the Old York Road,” by James and Margaret Cawley, Rutgers University Press, 1965.

<sup>10</sup> Along the Old York Road,” by James and Margaret Cawley, Rutgers University Press, 1965.

<sup>11</sup> “Montgomery County: the Second Hundred Years.” 1983, edited by Jean B. Toll and Michael J. Schwager; Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies.

Road was improved through the township in 1803, and functioned as a toll road until 1918. Easton Road, opened around 1717, was a toll road called “Willow Grove Turnpike”, which operated as a toll road until 1917. Susquehanna Road was proposed as a road running in a direct line from the Delaware River to the Susquehanna Rivers, but was never completed to its originally envisioned extent. Another part of the early road system in the township was oriented around Abington Friends Meetinghouse. Roads were built that connected the Abington Meetinghouse to that of Byberry Meetinghouse (1712), Fitzwatertown (1725), and Germantown (1735—this last destination was reached by way of what is now known as Washington Lane.

The stagecoach ran through Abington, but ceased operations in 1872. Before 1802, a regular stagecoach line from Philadelphia to New York used Old York Road and stopped at the Red Lion Inn in Willow Grove (just across the municipal boundary in present-day Upper Moreland Township) for breakfast. By around 1854, five daily stagecoach lines from Philadelphia stopped in Willow Grove, bound for Doylestown and Hartsville in Bucks County, Easton, and New York. Stagecoaches also carried the mail.

Passenger rail began serving Abington when the North Pennsylvania Railroad opened a line through the township, from Philadelphia to Gwynedd, in 1855. In 1872, stagecoach service to the area was terminated. In 1876, the North Pennsylvania Railroad’s “New Line” opened through the township; today this is known as SEPTA’s West Trenton line.<sup>12</sup> The Newtown Railroad, constructed in 1878, ran along the route of the present-day Pennypack (rail) Trail. Harper Station was located along this line in the eastern portion of the township.

Trolley lines came through Abington in 1895 when the Philadelphia Traction Company line was extended from Jenkintown to Willow Grove, when the People’s Traction Company line reached Jenkintown. Willow Grove Park was opened in 1896, and within a decade, the trolley line was extended to the Park using Old York Road. Another trolley line was built to Willow Grove by way of Glenside, Keswick Avenue, Ardsley, Jenkintown Road, Tyson Avenue, and Roslyn, and opened in 1905. Buses replaced the first trolley line in the late 1930s and replaced the second trolley line in 1957.

## Industry

Early industry in the township included mills in each of the township’s three major watersheds (Pennypack Creek, Tookany/Tacony–Frankford Creek, and Sandy Run (part of the Wissahickon)). The mills included saw, wool carding, and grist mills. Tyson Limekilns was the earliest industrial operation in the township<sup>13</sup>, and operated in the western corner of the

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<sup>12</sup> “North Pennsylvania Railroad Company Records, 1836-1982,” Archival Collections at Hagley Museum & Library, accessed January 27, 2021. <https://findingaids.hagley.org/repositories/3/resources/941>

<sup>13</sup> “Montgomery County: the Second Hundred Years.” 1983, edited by Jean B. Toll and Michael J. Schwager; Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies.

township, between Cheltenham and Jenkintown Road (the North Hills area). It supplied lime to build the state house in Philadelphia (which we now know as Independence Hall) in the period 1729-1735. Iron ore was mined in the Edge Hill area for many years (and on the land now used as Hillside Cemetery); after the Civil War, the Edge Hill Iron (manufacturing) Company was formed.

Rose wholesalers clustered in the Roslyn area around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An article in *The American Florist* from 1919 described Roslyn as “an ideal rose-growing location,” and observed that there were three large rose-growing establishments in the village at that time. One, Victor Groshen’s, is now the site of Copper Beech Elementary (Victor Groshen planted the copper beech that the school was named after).

Manufacturing in the township included a gardening-agricultural tools manufacturer that operated in Huntingdon Valley, along the route of the former Newtown Railroad. Standard Press Steel was, and is, a major manufacturing company in Glenside. A manufacturer of high-tech steel and cast-iron products, the company moved to its current location in Abington in 1920. Previously, the site was occupied by the Wharton Railroad Switch Company, which began operations on the site in 1868. SPS It was founded in 1903 in Philadelphia by William T. Hallowell. Now known as SPS Technologies (owned by PCC Fasteners), it is a manufacturer and supplier of aerospace nuts, bolts and associated products. Other traditionally industrial areas in the township tended to be located along or near railroad tracks, such as the area opposite the railroad tracks from Penbryn Park in the Glenside-North Hills area, and the area across Easton Road from Willow Grove Park Mall.

## Commercial Development

Commercial development traditionally occupied land in village centers, including Abington, Jenkintown, Weldon, and Edge Hill. Transportation improvements led to housing development which then led to the creation of Roslyn, Glenside, North Hills, Ardsley, McKinley and other areas, along the township’s major roads; many of these areas grew in conjunction with railroads. As automobile use became more widespread and suburbanization intensified in the mid-twentieth century, commercial development grew quickly along the township’s major highways and intensified in the postwar era. A few of the more notable commercial developments in that era included the Abington Town Center, formerly Abington Shopping Center, constructed in the 1950s on the former Elkins Farm; Baederwood Shopping Center, constructed in the 1960s on the site of the former Huntingdon Valley Golf Course; and Willow Grove Park Mall, built in 1981 on the site of the former Willow Grove Park amusement park.

## Government and Community Services

The Board of Commissioners first met in 1906 at the Weldon Hotel (located at Easton and Jenkintown Roads—now site of a church). The first township building was finished in 1908, on the southwest corner of Old York and Woodland Roads (now the site of Abington-Jefferson Hospital). When that building became too small, the hospital purchased it and sold land to the township to construct a new building at its present location, at Horace Avenue and Old York Road. That building opened in 1926, followed by the police station (1955). A building addition was completed in 1956.

The acquisition of parks and recreation areas began in 1923 with the appointment of the Parks and Shade Tree Commission. Some of the first parks and conservation areas founded in the township were:

*Figure \_\_: Early Parks and Conservation Areas of Abington Township*

Baederwood Park	1929
Ardsley Park	1935
Crestmont Park	1935
Roy-Chester Parks	1938
Abington Township Bird Sanctuary	1939
Alverthorpe Park	1959, 1963

Alverthorpe Park was a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lessing J. Rosenwald to the township; the first one part was gifted in 1959, and the second part was gifted in 1963. Mr. Rosenwald was chair of the board of Sears, Roebuck & Company. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Betsy Ross lived with her daughter in a house on the land from 1827-1833.

Farm accidents or emergencies led to the realization that an emergency medical station was needed. The Abington Jefferson Hospital (formerly Abington Memorial Hospital) was founded in 1912. George W. Elkins provided the land on Old York Road, along with a donation sufficient to build the first hospital building, which was completed in 1914. The hospital expanded significantly in years since. One of the notable early expansions, in 1941, was the Memorial Nurses Home, made possible by a financial gift from Eleanor Widener Dixon.

Holy Redeemer Hospital was founded in 1957 by the Sisters of Holy Redeemer, a group with a mission of “charity, dedication, and nursing.”). The sisters had moved to the area in 1934 from Philadelphia and formed St. Joseph’s Manor, a home for the aged. The sisters purchased adjacent land, which they farmed to provide revenue for the home’s operations.

The township includes extensive cemeteries of historic interest and value for their attractive open space and trails. Hillside Cemetery was founded in 1890. In 1953 it expanded by

purchasing the adjacent Ardsley Burial Park. Now 180 acres, it is connected to the Ardsley Wildlife Refuge with walking paths. The adjacent Lawnview and Montefiore Cemeteries (108 acres, taken together) abut Rockledge. The oldest cemeteries include the burial grounds affiliated with Abington Presbyterian Church, which contains graves dated as early as 1728, and the cemetery outside Abington Friends Meetinghouse.

## Villages

Abington can be understood as a township comprised of villages and neighborhoods. The villages are unincorporated areas that may have approximate, but not specific or official boundaries. They have their own identities and village centers. The development of these areas was often closely related to the building of roads, railroads, and schools. Below are short histories of some of the villages and neighborhoods that played a role in the township's historical development.

### *Abington (a.k.a., "Mooretown")*

*Note: See also "Acquisition and Settlement" section at beginning of chapter.*

Abington Village, located around the intersection of Old York and Susquehanna Roads, began around 1702<sup>14</sup>, and was also called "Mooretown." This name derived from the tavern Mary Moore kept at this location marked by a sign known as the "Square and Compass." By 1884, it included approximately 40 homes, a hotel, two stores, mechanic shops and a post office<sup>15</sup>. The post office was established in 1832. At various times in past, it included a tannery, boarding school, tavern, a grocery store, and (in 1915) the YMCA. The original village was anchored by the Abington Presbyterian Church (1714), the third-oldest Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania.

As recently as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Old York Road in Abington Village was lined with large shade trees. As noted in "History of Montgomery County: the Second Hundred Years," "Abington, once a quaint village, has lost its identity in a cosmopolitan business area, lined with stores, auto agencies, banks, and offices." Although the development in the area cannot be reversed, planning and land use policy should be used to restore greenery, and the sense of village character that has been lost, to the area.

### *Ardsley*

Originally planned as "North Glenside" (an extension of Glenside) in 1918 and 1919, and developed by W.T.B. Roberts, it includes a train station, erected in 1897 (originally named "Tyson"). Its post office opened in 1922, and Ardsley Elementary opened in 1932. The second

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<sup>14</sup> "Montgomery County: the Second Hundred Years." 1983, edited by Jean B. Toll and Michael J. Schwager; Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies.

<sup>15</sup> "History of Montgomery County," by William J. Buck



trolley line that was constructed in the township contributed to the village's development. The first school in the village was built 1900-1902 and served grammar and high school students (and, briefly, Kindergarten students). It closed when Glenside-Weldon School opened on Jenkintown Road in 1907.

### *Baederwood-Noble*

The Baederwood area was described as being located “west of Old York Road, above Noble station<sup>16</sup>.” Around this area mills once existed (including gristmills and sawmills). The area where mills once operated was purchased as part of a large tract of land that came to be owned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Baeder, from whom the name “Baederwood” is derived. The Baeders had built their wealth from the glue and abrasives manufacturing industry. Baeder’s estate was 265 acres in size, and extended into Jenkintown. After his death in 1886, the estate was sold to John Wanamaker. The name “Noble” derived from Charles W. Noble, who owned a farm on Old York Road in this area. The major road, the Fairway, in this area, relates to the Huntingdon Valley Country Club and the 18-hole golf course that was founded in this location in 1898. The club moved to the Willow Grove area in 1927.

### *Crestmont<sup>17</sup>*

Crestmont’s development began in 1896, the year that Willow Grove Park opened. The section of the neighborhood near the Crestmont Regional Rail station was originally known as “Rubicam,” after the original train station name. When W. T. B. Roberts developed land to the east of the station, he gave it the name “Crestmont.” The portion west of Easton Road is also known as “Willow Grove Heights.”

Crestmont has traditionally been an African-American community; early members of the community predominantly came from rural areas and the southern United States; some had moved from Philadelphia. As described by “Montgomery County: the Second Hundred Years:”

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<sup>16</sup> “Montgomery County: the Second Hundred Years.” 1983, edited by Jean B. Toll and Michael J. Schwager; Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies.

<sup>17</sup> One of the sources for this section is “A Town Called Crestmont,” by Robert S. Camburn, 1975, with extensive excerpts from “And so We Grow,” serialized story of Crestmont, by Harold Lee Woolfolk, 1952-?

*Some bought or rented land for farming, and some performed hard labor, digging cellars for homes being built in the area. Others worked as hired hands on farms. Home building was expanding, and coal and lumber yards and quarrying also afforded employment, as did road building and trolley-line construction and maintenance. Some women obtained work in the homes of well-to-do families.*

The Willow Grove Heights (later “Park”) School was constructed on the eastern corner of High (originally known as “Highland”) and Rubicam Avenues in 1901. Until 1930, more white children than African-American attended the school; by 1955, when Hamilton Avenue Elementary opened, the student body of Park School was predominantly black.<sup>18</sup>

African-American residents of Crestmont endured discrimination and white flight during the early- and mid-twentieth century. Businesses, medical professionals, and religious institutions developed within the community to serve its African-American residents since discrimination prevented residents from availing themselves of other such area amenities. The First Baptist Church of Crestmont is the oldest African-American church in Crestmont. It was founded between 1910 and 1919 (exact date unknown) so that African-Americans had a place of their own in which to worship.<sup>19</sup>

### *Glenside, Keswick, and Weldon*

Glenside, Keswick, and Weldon are names for areas that partly overlap. Weldon and Keswick generally refer to the area located approximately a half-mile north of the Glenside train station. Bean's 1884 *History of Montgomery County* describes Weldon as follows:

*Weldon...dates its origin since the completion of the North Pennsylvania Railroad. It contains a store, hotel, twenty-eight houses, a hall, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, a post-office and several mechanic shops, The hall was built in 1864, and the post-office established since 1877.*

### **W T. B. Roberts**

W.T.B. Roberts (1850-1936) was as an associate of William L. Elkins and Peter A.B. Widener of the Philadelphia Transit Company. He developed much of western Abington Township, including Glenside, Ardsley, and Crestmont.

What is now known as the Glenside train station was called “Tacony” in 1855 by the North Pennsylvania Railroad, after the nearby Tookany-Tacony Creek. It soon changed the name to “Abington,” which by 1888 had changed again to

<sup>18</sup> “Montgomery County: the Second Hundred Years.” 1983, edited by Jean B. Toll and Michael J. Schwager; Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies.

<sup>19</sup> Lee, Nathaniel. “First Baptist Church of Crestmont: A Warm, Inviting Spirit Welcomes All,” Philadelphia Bulletin, 2017.

“Glenside.” The area, which included land in Cheltenham, was developed by William T. B. Roberts. This included “Glenside Farms,” located west of Easton Road (later renamed “Glenside Highlands”), and it included “Roslyn Terrace” and “Penbryn”, located to the east of Easton Road. The developments were marketed to households with a range of incomes. Roberts was responsible for the first school in Glenside, built 1900-1902, which was soon replaced by Glenside-Weldon School at Parkside Avenue (recently demolished).

Residents of these areas sought incorporation as a borough in 1905, and again in 1938, but were denied by the court because the proposal excluded the Cheltenham portion of the area.

To the north, the Roberts firm developed Glenside Gardens (a.k.a., “Weldon Heights”) in 1923 (bounded by Charles Street, Edgely, Hillcrest and Pleasant Avenues, and Easton Road) and Glenside Village in 1948 (bounded by Louise and Fortune Roads, and Pleasant and Highland Avenues).

Although it is unincorporated, Glenside is considered a village and a Census Designated Place (CDP).<sup>20</sup> Most of the CDP is located in Abington, but part is located in Cheltenham. The CDP has a population of 7,737.

### *Hollywood*

Hollywood is a small village bordering, and located to the north of, Rockledge Borough. This neighborhood with a unique architectural design was modeled on Hollywood, California and its Mission/ Spanish Colonial Revival homes were built by Gustave Weber in 1917, during Hollywood’s “Golden Age.” The neighborhood has been certified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

### *McKinley*

McKinley began to be developed around 1895. Originally, it was known as the “East Ogontz Land Improvement Company,”<sup>21</sup> after the landowner. The post office (and then the village) was named “McKinley” in 1901 after the assassination of President McKinley that year. Beginning with a merger in 1923, McKinley was served by the Elkins Park Post Office, but the name “McKinley” endured. A quaint commercial district developed along Jenkintown Road, near the intersection with Cadwalader Avenue. McKinley is considered an unincorporated Census Designated Place (CDP)<sup>22</sup> with a population of 3,128.

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<sup>20</sup> Census designated places (CDPs) are statistical geographic entities representing closely settled, unincorporated communities that are locally recognized and identified by name. Source: “Census Designated Places (CDPs) for the 2020 Census-Final Criteria,” Federal Register; November 13, 2018.

<sup>21</sup> From interview with David Rowland of the Old York Road Historical Society, March 25, 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Census designated places (CDPs) are statistical geographic entities representing closely settled, unincorporated communities that are locally recognized and identified by name. Source: “Census Designated Places (CDPs) for the 2020 Census-Final Criteria,” Federal Register; November 13, 2018.

### *North Hills and Edge Hill*

The area that became North Hills underwent a series of name changes before settling on its eventual identity. It had been known as Remlu Heights (the developer's surname "Ulmer" spelled backwards), and had originally been under development under the name of "Ardley Estates." The Remlu School opened in 1896, and changed its name to the "North Hills School" in 1914. The railroad station was originally named "Edge Hill." "Edge Hill" is one of the three most prominent place names in Abington Township shown on the 1871 map located at the beginning of this chapter. The name of the post office was changed from "Remlu" to "North Glenside" in 1914, and to North Hills in 1931. A new train station built in 1928-1929 was named "North Hills," and the post office was renamed accordingly in 1931. A portion of North Hills in Upper Dublin was annexed to Abington in 1930.

### *Roslyn*

Roslyn is an unincorporated village that is recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau as a Census Designated Place (CDP).<sup>23</sup> Its population is 9,525.

Roslyn, originally known as "Hillside,"<sup>24</sup> was the general location of the Revolutionary War Battle of Edge Hill. In December 1777, the British army attempted to surprise Washington's army at Whitemarsh. The Americans attacked the British near where what is now known as Susquehanna Road meets the Edge Hill. The British, having superior numbers, drove the American forces back and then left the scene, returning to Philadelphia along Old York Road.

The first school in Roslyn was a one-room schoolhouse established in the area in 1822 by John Tyson, and operated until 1858, known as "Valley School." It was succeeded by the Plank Road School (at Easton and Edge Hill Roads). The Plank Road School closed in 1887, when Glenside Weldon School opened on Jenkintown Road.

Roslyn was originally known as "Hillside" and had a railroad station of the same name established in 1872. A post office was established in 1895 and the name chosen for it was "Roslyn," perhaps due to commercial rose growers in the area *Note: for more information on rose-growing, see the "Industry" section of this chapter.* Much of the development in Roslyn

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<sup>23</sup> Census designated places (CDPs) are statistical geographic entities representing closely settled, unincorporated communities that are locally recognized and identified by name. Source: "Census Designated Places (CDPs) for the 2020 Census-Final Criteria," Federal Register; November 13, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Montgomery County: The Second Hundred Years," Edited by Jean B. Toll and Michael J. Schwager; Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies, 1983.

began in 1940,<sup>25</sup> and it peaked in the 1950s. With land becoming scarcer by the 1960s, developers' attention shifted to apartments; five complexes were built by 1965.<sup>26</sup>

### *Willow Grove*

Willow Grove is an unincorporated village that is recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau as a Census Designated Place (CDP).<sup>27</sup> Most of the CDP is located in Upper Moreland and is located northeast of Old Welsh Road. In all, the CDP's population is 13,730.

Willow Grove, originally "Round Meadow," was founded along the route of a former Lenape trail used to travel to New York. It became a small village with inns and shops by the end of the 17th century. In 1711, York Road was constructed, connecting Philadelphia to New Hope (and later, New York). "Willow Grove" became the name used for the village that developed at the intersection of York and Easton Roads. In the 19th century, the area became a health destination, centered on the Mineral Springs Inn and spa. Its growth increased after the establishment of the Bucks County Railway's trolley line in 1889 and the opening of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company's Willow Grove Park in 1896. The park went through several iterations as an amusement park and outdoor concert venue; the last amusement park on the site was demolished in 1976 and the Willow Grove Park Mall opened in 1981.

## Suburban Neighborhoods

### *Rydal-Meadowbrook*

The construction of the railroad through the area in the 1870s was attributed with driving development.<sup>28</sup> The Rydal train station, originally known as "Benezet," was built in 1883. The name came from Anthony Benezet, a Quaker philanthropist and opponent of slavery, who was prominent in 18<sup>th</sup> century Philadelphia. Around the time that the railroad station was constructed, several upscale homes described as "handsome country-seats" had been built<sup>29</sup>.

Penn State–Abington is located in this area on a wooded campus. The school was formerly the site of the Ogontz School (1917–1950), a school for girls that had relocated to the site from Elkins Park. During the school's operation, a main building was constructed that was designed by Horace Trumbauer, the architect of the Keswick Theater, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Philadelphia Free Library.

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<sup>25</sup> E. Gordon Alderfer, *The Montgomery County Story*, (Narberth: Livingston Publishing Co., 1951), P.9., accessed on Roslyn Valley Business Association website (rvbaonline.org) on October 8, 2020.

<sup>26</sup> "History of Roslyn, Pennsylvania," Roslyn Valley Business Association. Web page (rvbaonline.org) accessed 12/23/2020.

<sup>27</sup> Census designated places (CDPs) are statistical geographic entities representing closely settled, unincorporated communities that are locally recognized and identified by name. Source: "Census Designated Places (CDPs) for the 2020 Census-Final Criteria," Federal Register; November 13, 2018.

<sup>28</sup> "Montgomery County: the Second Hundred Years." 1983, edited by Jean B. Toll and Michael J. Schwager; Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies.

<sup>29</sup> "The History of Montgomery County," by William J. Buck, 1884.

*Note: for more on Penn State-Abington, see Chapter 8: Infrastructure and Community Services.*

### *Huntingdon Valley*

A portion of the area known as Huntingdon Valley is part of northeastern Abington Township. Though this area has historically been developed less intensively than other parts of the township, it did include concentrations of development around mills on the Pennypack Creek, along Huntingdon Pike, and at Holy Redeemer Hospital. A railroad used to run on the site of what is now the Pennypack Trail; there was a station called "Harper Station," alongside which was the site of the Smith Harper manufacturing business, which produced hoes, rakes, pump and water-engines.

*Note: although Jenkintown is a separate municipality (a borough), it should be noted that many Abingtonians living near the borough identify with the name "Jenkintown" as a descriptor of the area in which they live because it has a strong identity and town center.*

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