

# 'READ IT IN THE REPORTER'

## In 1890's Lansdale, all news was fair game

By DICK SHEARER

*With summer upon us, this seems like an appropriate time to look back to those simpler times of 1890 through the prose of H. M. Woodmansee, editor of the Lansdale Reporter.*

*Keep in mind that in 1890, local newspapers were the primary source of all types of news, including gossip. With no radio, TV or Internet, people were hungry for anything that could spark conversation, whether it be on the front porch or at the neighborhood watering hole. Step back with us now 120 years – the summer of 1890. The headlines are ours:*

**HOT TIMES IN THE PARK:** "Lansdale Park will be marking its annual grand opening on Decoration Day, May 30, with events all day and evening. The North Wales Cornet Band will furnish music afternoon and evening. The Lansdale Gun Club will have a shoot at targets for prizes. All good marksmen are invited to attend.

"The Lansdale Base Ball Club will contest with a first-class club from Philadelphia. Boating, fishing, swings, see-saws, shooting gallery, flying horse, etc. will be available.

"J.W. White, owner, advises that groups planning excursions can secure them by contacting him."

(The following week it was reported that the Lansdale ball team won easily in an uninteresting game that followed Grand Army of the Republic ceremonies at the Music Hall. The weather was warm, pleasant and the day was enjoyed by all).

**WASTE MEAT, SAVE ICE:** "A number of ice consumers of this town have concluded to use little or no ice for the season at the prices being demanded at present. The butchers say they can afford to allow a portion of their meats to waste every day at the prices which they are compelled to pay for ice and are acting on that plan."

**WHO NEEDS AN EXERCISE BALL?** "A huge radish, 13 inches long and 18 inches in circumference, was shown at The Reporter office the other day. It was grown on Davis Longaker's lot and is now on display behind the Junction House bar. Who can beat it?"

**YOU'RE GROUNDED!** "The pupils of the Lansdale public schools will be interested by the publication of the complete list of averages attained at the general examination held prior to the close of the past term. It will also of great interest the parents of the pupils."

**THE MAGIC WORD IS "PRETTY":** "Marked improvement is noticed in the western portion of the borough by the grading and curbing of Mt. Vernon street and Lincoln and Montgomery ave-

nues. It greatly enhances the desirability of lots in that section for building purposes, and converts unsightly streets into pretty driveways."

**WHILE PRAYING, PERHAPS?** "Robbie Heebner, a little son of W.D. Heebner, had the misfortune to break an arm by falling over the altar railing at the Methodist church last Saturday afternoon. He is recovering nicely."

**THEY GO WELL WITH SOOT:** "The employees of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad are to don their summer uniforms on Sunday. Their new suits are to be the same as last year except those worn by the train conductors.

"Last year they wore cutaway coats, but this year they have adopted a double-breasted frock coat which reaches to within two inches of the knee."

**A NOSE FOR NEWS:** "The *Quakertown Free Press* has employed a new reporter to gather its 'home notes' and his first contribution reads: "No rye heads yet except those grown in saloons." It isn't hard to tell where the new reporter struck out for as soon as he got to town. The editor of that journal had better employ someone to watch over his new man. Preacher Shelly would have never allowed this."

**A BALL AT THE HALL:** "The ball given at the new Junction House hall was a success in every

way and was largely attended. Friends came pouring in from adjacent districts and boroughs, and comprised some of the best known and most accomplished dancers in this section.

"The music by the Cressman orchestra was up to the usual high standard and the order was all that could be desired. The best of feeling prevailed and the managers as well as the participants were highly pleased."

**HOW DID THIS WORK OUT?** "A meeting will be held in Freed's Hall Monday evening for the purpose of organizing 'The Fortuna Building and Loan Association'."

**(WRITE YOUR OWN PUNCH LINE)** "Daddy Hughes got off a good joke on some of his friends the other day. He had his beard shaved off and when he appeared in the bar room at the Junction House his friends thought he was wearing a false face. He left them under this impression for an hour before he explained to them their mistake."

### BACK IN TIME



*Publisher H.M. Woodmansee*