



Jenkins Journal

Newsletter of the Lansdale Historical Society

August-October 2021

Ray Walton to get top borough honor

The Borough of Lansdale will present its 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award to Raymond E. Walton, long-time businessman, community supporter and lover of local history.

The award will be given on Founders Day, Aug. 28, at 10:15 a.m. on the grounds of the Lansdale Historical Society, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Ray Walton, now 98, is the son of Clyde S. Walton, founder of the four-

generation fuel oil company that has served the North Penn region for more than a century.

"So many of Mr. Walton's contributions to Lansdale have flown under the radar because he is such a humble man who has worked behind the scenes to help a wide variety of causes," said Dick Shearer, former president of the Lansdale Historical Society. Growing up, Walton wanted to be a farmer, spurring a life-long interest in tractors and early agricultural equipment.

(Continued on page 4)



Festival of the Arts
10 am - 4 pm
Memorial Park

Chamber GMC
Health & Wellness Fair
10 am - 2 pm
Railroad Plaza

Opening Ceremony/
Lifetime Achievement
10:15 am
Jenkins Homestead

Jenkins Homestead
Open House
11 am - 3 pm
Jenkins Avenue

Model Trains
11 am - 4 pm
Fairmount Fire Co.

Beer Garden
1 pm - 7 pm
Century Plaza Lot

Cemetery Tour
1 pm
Lansdale Cemetery

Live Music Performances
1 pm - 3:30 pm
4:30 pm - 7 pm
Century Plaza Lot

Family Entertainment
and Food Festival
1 pm - 7 pm
Green Street

Lansdale Police Station Tours
1:30 pm - 5 pm
Police Station

White's Road Park
Walking Tour
2:30 pm
White's Road Park

Fireworks
9 pm
Pennsdale Middle School



Historic Downtown Walking Tour

Take a self-guided tour of downtown Lansdale and see the key role it played in our history. Pick up the guide book at Lansdale Historical Society and take the tour at your pace throughout the day.

Society's 50th at center of Founders Day events

The theme for Lansdale's 10th Founders Day, Saturday, Aug. 28, will focus on the Society as it marks its 50th anniversary in 2021. The annual event was canceled in 2020 because of the COVID pandemic.

For the first time, the day-long event will begin at the Jenkins Complex at 10 a.m. with the

presentation of the borough's Lifetime Achievement Award to retired businessman and LHS Trustee Emeritus Ray Walton for his life-long contributions to the community.

HOMESTEAD TOURS: Following opening remarks and the awards ceremony, the Jenkins Homestead *(Continued on page 2)*

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Lansdale loves a parade

By BILL HENNING

Like many small towns throughout the country, Lansdale seems to enjoy finding reasons to celebrate and get together for a worthwhile event.

One popular thing to do, which is always a great way to get everyone together, is to have a parade. And who doesn't enjoy a parade? Lansdale has a pretty good history

through the decades of having parades. Whether it is to honor our armed forces, ring in the holiday season or to celebrate our town's anniversary, our residents are here to share in the festivities.

One of our oldest recorded parades was in 1894, the Grand Army of the Republic Day which was a grand *(Continued on page 3)*

Many activities planned for Society's anniversary

(Continued from page 1)

will be open for tours through 3 p.m.

CLEARANCE SALE: Throughout the day, the Society will hold a combination memorabilia clearance sale and giveaway on the complex grounds. Our volunteers have been combing our archives for duplicate copies of donated items we've received over the years. We're offering them at minimal cost, or in some cases, free, although donations will be appreciated.

REOPENING OF MUSEUM: Now that the society is renting off-site storage space, the on-site museum room in the Research Center is again open with all-new exhibits on the history of the society and the 1972 Lansdale Centennial Celebration and the Jenkins family.

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THREE COMMUNITY TOURS: The society will also be offering three off-site tours on Founders Day as part of our 50th anniversary celebration:

(1) A SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR of Downtown Lansdale offers the chance to stroll the retail district whenever you want and at your own pace. Tour books and maps (\$10) are on sale now at the Jenkins Complex which will guide from location to location. The book – **which must be purchased at the homestead** – includes photos, and brief histories of the buildings past and present along with lists of businesses that occupied them over the years.

Take the tour at your convenience then pass the book along to friends and neighbors so they can get a sense of what life was like in old-time Lansdale.

(2) LANSDALE CEMETERY TOUR (1 P.M.) Join Pat Rieker and other LHS volunteers for the latest in our series of visits to this historic cemetery. This year's tour will highlight some of the town's early leaders who played key roles in Lansdale's development.

The cemetery is located at South Broad St. and Whites Road. There is no charge. Please enter from South Broad Street and park along the driveway. Exit via Green Street.

(3) WHITES ROAD TOUR (2:30 P.M.) Steve Moyer will host this walking tour through Whites Road Park, once the site of Edgewood Park, Lansdale's summer retreat in the late 1800s. It featured a lake, skating rink, dance hall, carousel, shooting range, picnic pavilions and a refreshment stand. Edgewood was the place to go to beat the heat.

The tour will begin at the footbridge leading to the amphitheater. Those coming from the cemetery tour are invited to walk the one block, crossing at Whites Rd. and Green St.

New hope for Fox burial site

Friends of Philip Lansdale Fox, the North Pennsylvania Railroad surveyor for whom our town is named, will be pleased to hear that his gravesite in Philadelphia may soon be accessible.

For several years, Mt. Vernon Cemetery at Ridge and Lehigh Aves., has been closed except at the whim of the owner. For whatever reasons, the out-of-state owner was unable or unwilling to see to the upkeep of the property. The overgrowth has covered many beautiful and meaningful monuments. In May, the property was finally turned over to a conservatorship, and in July, the work of clearing the cemetery was begun.

Philip Lansdale Fox was born in 1817 in Philadelphia and died there of kidney failure in August of 1895. His work as a civil engineer brought him to our area as he scouted for a location for the junction of the railroad – one branch leading to Doylestown and the other to Bethlehem. He stayed at the Jenkins Homestead during his time here. Much more about his life is available in the LHS publication, *Back in Time, Volume III*, available through the Lansdale Historical Society.

Lansdale Historical Society

is a 501c3 registered non-profit organization.

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The Jenkins Homestead and Historical Research Center

are open to the public
Wednesdays-Thursdays 11 am–3 pm
Saturdays 9:30 am-noon.

There is no charge for tours of the 1770 homestead or the research center and museum. Charges may apply for research projects.



‘Spring’ tea now Oct. 23

The 10th Annual Spring Tea, postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been rescheduled for October 23.

The program will be the same “Tea in Britain—Comfort in a Cup”. Karen Donnelly who is a certified Tea and Herbal Association of Canada sommelier for more than 25 years will be the presenter.

Karen owns a tea house in Delaware County, which is called “The Orchard Tea Room at The Rose Hip Barn”.

So come and join us for an afternoon of fun and relaxation. There will be door prizes and baskets will be raffled off. The time is 11 a.m., with doors opening at 10:30.

The location is the same as in previous years - Lansdale Borough Hall, 1 Vine St. Tickets are \$35 cash or check made payable to the Lansdale Historical Society. They are on sale at the research center.

Since 1894, Lansdale loves parades

(Continued from page 1)

parade to honor our civil war vets though about 30 years late. Better late than never I suppose.

Today we do have our annual Memorial Day parade to honor our U.S. military personnel who have deceased during the course of carrying out their duties. This is usually a well-attended parade with a memorial service afterward in Lansdale’s Memorial Park. Always a very moving event that can bring a tear to the eye.

Through the years we’ve had several fireman’s parades, with my favorite the Fairmount Fire Company’s 100th anniversary parade in 1989. I remember it being a long day of celebrating with big crowds, lots of firetrucks and even more liquid refreshments pouring. Good times.

For a little while during the late 80’s to early 90’s there was the Clemens Car Parade that went down Main Street then Cannon Avenue to the grounds of the old American Olean Tile. Always a good time with such a variety of vehicles. It was a rolling car show complete with the sounds and smells you just don’t get from a typical car show.

A popular long-time parade tradition is the Mardi Gras parade, yes, despite the name this is our annual Holiday parade, and it has been going on for 70 years. This November the pa-

rade is celebrating this milestone with the theme “Decades of Celebrations”. This holiday tradition was started in 1950 by the Lansdale Chamber of Commerce and Jaycees along with its local businesses wanting to create an event to help kick off the holiday season and to welcome Santa Claus to town.

Several other key parades from the past recognized our town’s history like the Semi-Centennial in 1922 and the big daddy of parades for Lansdale, the 1972 Centennial parade which brought residents out like nothing ever seen before and perhaps never to be witnessed again - though we can try next year which will be the Borough’s Sesquicentennial. It’ll be 150 years since Lansdale was incorporated and as with previous celebrations, a lot of planning is going into making 2022 a memorable place to be in Lansdale with several events planned throughout the year including a parade, of course, that will be on Aug. 20, 2022.

To go along with this 2022 year-long celebration the Historical Society is already working on a Sesquicentennial booklet to help share the history of the Borough that rose from a small village to a busy suburb yet is still able to hang on to its small-town charm.

Here at the Historical Society we are looking forward to next year’s big anniversary and the many projects that we will be involved in. We hope and encourage everyone to reach out to the Society or the Lansdale 150 planning committee to find out how to get involved. It takes many volunteers to pull off an enjoyable and memorable celebration like those we are accustomed to.

Lansdale Lifetime Achievement Award to Ray Walton

(Continued from page 1)

He took pride in growing corn on the land where the Broadmore Apartments are now located. However, eventually he was drawn into his dad's business which started as a tire repair and auto agency that evolved into fuel oil in the 1930s.

It was while he was learning the business that he met his wife-to-be, Pauline, who worked in the office and impressed Clyde Walton with her organizational and bookkeeping skills.

When the elder Walton retired in 1956, Ray took over with Pauline as his business partner.

"She was the brains of the operation," Ray says with typical humility. "She kept the place running and made many of the decisions. I was most interested in keeping the trucks running and making sure customers had their tanks filled on a timely basis."

Between them, Clyde S. Walton Co. grew to become the largest fuel oil distributor in the region while at the same time supporting many community organizations and projects financially or with good-old, hands-on labor, often supplied by Ray himself.

Eventually, he turned over the business to his son,

Terry, in 1986, and now a fourth generation is at the helm of the company.

Ray Walton joined the Lansdale Rotary Club in 1962 and has participated in many of the organization's activities over the years, especially Lansdale Day.

He has also been an active member of the Lansdale Historical Society for several decades and now serves as a trustee emeritus. In recent years he has concentrated on researching the town's early history and its development during the 20th century.

He was presented with the 2016 Edwin G. Holl Historic Achievement Award for his support of the society's efforts to preserve and interpret the North Penn area's rich heritage for future generations to enjoy.

True to his early interest in agriculture, the Waltons lived on two farm properties in Towamencin Township. The first is now the site of Walton Farm Elementary School on Allentown Road. They later moved to Claude and Irene Kriebel's 1848 farmhouse on Kriebel Road. Pauline Walton died on Feb. 7, 2020. She and Ray were married for 76 years.

We invite all in the community, especially our society members, to attend and join us in honoring this noteworthy citizen.

BECAUSE OF THE PANDEMIC, FALL/WINTER PROGRAMS WILL BE ANNOUNCED LATER.



Lansdale Historical Society

137 Jenkins Avenue
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