

Neshaminy education began 300 years ago

Rapid growth since 1950

The history of Neshaminy Schools as they developed in the Langhorne-Middletown area continues. Harriet Pickel, librarian at the Langhorne-Middletown Branch of the Bucks County Free Library, compiled the history in this and the December 1975 Neshaminy Newsletter.

The next issue will relate the history of the Lower Southampton Schools.

When the Pennsylvania Public School Law was passed in May, 1854, a public school house was built of brick. This building became a part of the Delaware Valley Advance (Advance of Bucks County, since April 3, 1975) building on Richardson Avenue. With this two story brick public school, the Bellevue Institute and the Friends' School, Davis notes that few country towns of this size were supplied with better schools.

In 1867 the present Friends School was erected. The dimensions of this school were 30 by 40 feet which, with desks and apparatus, cost \$4,609.75 and served as a Friends School until it was closed in 1929. The public school later rented it when extra classroom space was needed. Today it is used for, among other things, a meeting place for the Langhorne Sorosis. As extra space was needed at various times, several other buildings served as classrooms. Clem Mather recalls going to school at the Langhorne Borough Hall. Mayor Sheese's home was once a private school and the Richardson House served as a nursery. Even the Country Club was used for classrooms in the early 50's for one year.

Langhorne Manor's Borough Hall of today was built as a school and served children of the Manor while another served the Maple Point area and still another the Oxford Valley area. This school was built in 1894 and named the Edge Hill Public School.

There was a wooden building on Pine Street which served as an elementary school. At that time Pine Street was not

cut through from Maple to Winchester. The school was a one room school with a pot belly stove. Mrs. Mable Clark remembers the story her mother told her of the last day of school in the old building in 1898, the teacher, Mr. Hartney, told the children "pick up your books and go tomorrow to the new school." The new school was the Pine Street red brick building on the corner of Pine and East Maple Avenue. This also housed a small secondary program while Middletown Township maintained a high school in Hulmeville Borough. The Pine Street School was torn down in 1965.

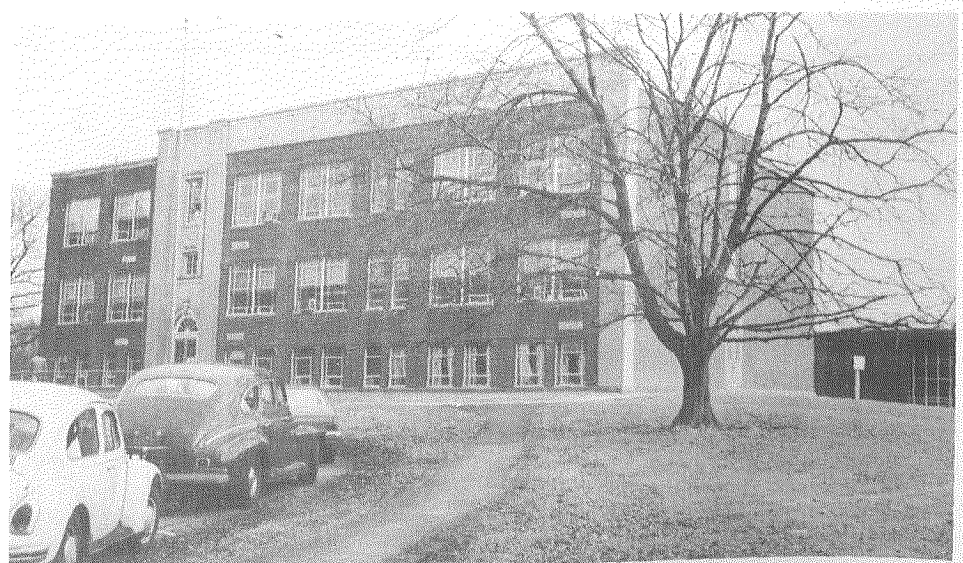
In 1926 one of the first school jointures in eastern Pennsylvania was established by the Boards of School Directors of Middletown Township and Langhorne Borough. The Joint Board agreement was made in order to erect a new high school building. This structure was started in 1926 and with several additions served as the secondary school for the children of Middletown Township and the Boroughs of Langhorne, Langhorne Manor, Hulmeville and Pennel until 1953. Originally known as the Langhorne-Middletown High, this building was later called the Cherry Street School. In the early sixties it served as an elementary school until the Oliver S. Heckman Elementary School, located right

behind it, was opened in 1967. Today Cherry Street School houses the Educational Services facilities of the Neshaminy School District.

By 1953 the new Neshaminy Junior-Senior High School on Old Lincoln Highway was sufficiently completed for boys and girls in grades eight to twelve to move over there. The high school has had additions made in 1955, 1957, 1960 and 1965. In 1965 the Neshaminy Junior High School on Route 413 north of Langhorne was opened and the Junior-Senior High School became a Senior High School for grades 10, 11 and 12 only.

In the fall of 1975 a second high school opened at Maple Point on the acreage behind the early Maple Point one room school house. Thus the circle of education grows ever stronger around Langhorne as the surrounding area continues to become more populated. The Borough still has its elementary school named after Dr. Heckman. Today's principal of Heckman School is Irwin Shanken. East and west are two high schools known as Neshaminy Maple Point and Neshaminy Langhorne.

The spirit of education remains strong in Langhorne.



The former Cherry Street School, once the Langhorne-Middletown High School, is now the Educational Services Center, housing administrative offices. Behind it is the Oliver Heckman Elementary School.