



INTRODUCTION



This little publication has been prepared as a commemorative piece, dedicated to the 50th year of Forest Hills' incorporation as a Borough. It is an attempt to gather historically interesting information about a small community. Materials have been taken from notes, diaries, printed papers, records, letters, and tales often repeated. Some of this information is first hand, given us by a few of those who have lived through a portion of those early times of our heritage.

Much of this information has never before been published. It is put down here with the hope that in so doing, an interest will be sparked in the hearts and minds of present day residents to cherish and respect the work, the institutions, and the community of their heritage. There is not only nostalgia here but a glimpse into the lives and times of a fine little community. As a community, Forest Hills pre-dates by at least 50 years the 1919 date of incorporation. Some of the stories and printed information here, span across this period of time in our boundaries. Time has wrought many changes, but there is still much remaining to keep us anchored closely to our very interesting past.

Let us hope, as we move at today's pace, that we can retain something of the serenity, the character, and feeling for this heritage started with such modest beginnings.

This little historical publication will give us a quick, small glimpse backward to tell us where we have been and how it was here, so that we may better mould the future.

Many thanks and appreciation go to all of those who participated in the Jubilee.

We hope that some instances of Forest Hills' change and progress will be recognized in this Brochure.

We hope you will enjoy the view.

John Shepherd, General Chairman

Roger Wentworth, Historian

GOLDEN JUBILEE COMMITTEE



AL KOCH A LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME

At the time of the Golden Jubilee, the Forest Hills residents recognize our Number 1 citizen as Honorary Chairman of this 50th Anniversary celebration. *Al Koch* is a native of East Pittsburgh who graduated from Turtle Creek Union High School. He was one of the founders of the Borough and served as a member of our first Council. Later he was elected as the third Burgess to serve this community and subsequently our first Mayor when the Borough code under state law redesignated the Burgess as Mayor in 1961.

Al not only grew with the community, but literally sparked and fostered numerous innovations and organizations. He was a charter member of the Forest Hills Rotary Club and served as its second President. He helped organize the Forest Hills Presbyterian Church as well as our Volunteer Fire Department, the Formas Club, and the Building and Loan. He sold the politicians on the idea of a Post Office for the Borough and became its first Postmaster because he thought this would help put Forest Hills "on the map."

Al lived at the same residence on Halsey Ave. with his father and sister, as he does today, and later married Amelia Konstanzer. His two daughters are, today, *Virginia Brindley* and *Alberta Burrell*.

Al's enthusiasm to promote our Borough was surpassed only by his generosity. He obtained gratis the land for the Presbyterian Church at Atlantic Avenue and donated the church bells. Years ago he donated the Christmas tree which stands by the Borough Building to be decorated each Christmas.

The flag pole in the Borough Park is his pride because it was given as a sort of memorial to the returning war veterans after

World War II. According to the Forest Hills News, Mr. Koch offered \$500.00 for construction of a proposed outdoor amphitheater in the Borough Park in 1937.

In the 1930's, our Burgess came forward with a generous amount of prize money to stimulate an attractively decorated Borough for Christmas. The citizens were urged to *decorate* their *homes* and compete for prizes which were judged and awarded after New Year's Day.

In 1969 when the firemen moved into their new quarters, a beautiful American flag was presented by our retired Mayor.

Al owned property in the Borough including two buildings and the bowling alleys for many years. He and Mrs. Koch operated a little novelty store in the 1930's and many citizens remember buying fire works before today's "Safe and Sane" 4th of July.

Contemporary honors were conferred on Al Koch in 1966 when a new park site, which was given to the Borough by Roland Catarinella, was named in his honor, and on February 17, 1966 an over-flow crowd attended the big testimonial dinner at Churchill Country Club for the veteran Mayor. Here Al Koch and his wife were presented with a beautiful color television set and the warm good wishes of nearly 500 people who gathered to honor our Number 1 citizen on his retirement from public service.

On that occasion, Al declared that "While Forest Hills is one of the best places to live, we're not through yet, and we'll go even further!!"

This dedicated man who really believes in Forest Hills and America will long be remembered for 46 years of faithful public services to his community during his tenure of Councilman and Burgess-Mayor.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

HOSPITALITY CENTER

Forest Hills Presbyterian Church
(Middle Level)

Hours—10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
June 30 thru July 5

INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITS & DISPLAYS

Forest Hills Presbyterian Church
(Lower Level)

Hours—10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
June 30 thru July 5

ART EXHIBIT "WHAT IS A COMMUNITY",

Sponsored by Forest Hills Coordinating Committee
for Human Relations

Hours—10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
July 1 thru July 5

SPECTACLE: THE FOREST HILLS STORY "INDIANS TO ATOMS"

July 1755 to July 1969

July 2, 3, 4 & 5 — 9:00 PM—High School Stadium

FRIDAY, JUNE 27th

EVENING: 9:00 PM

Presentation Ball, Edgewood C. C. Jubilee Queen and Court

SUNDAY, JUNE 29th

Religious Heritage Day

MORNING:

Observance in all Forest Hills Churches: "50 Years of Religious Growth in Forest Hills."

EVENING: 8:00 PM

All-Faith All-Denominational Service at the Churchill Area High School Stadium. Featured speaker—George Swetnam—Choir Director—Howard Le Fever

MONDAY, JUNE 30th

10:00 AM-5:00 PM—Hospitality Center Open, F. H. Presbyterian Church

5:00 PM-9:00 PM—Food Concessions and Amusement Rides at Boro Park

9:30 PM—Water Ballet at Boro Pool—Forest Hills Recreation Board

TUESDAY, JULY 1st

10:00 AM-5:00 PM—Hospitality Center Open, F. H. Presbyterian Church

5:00 PM-9:00 PM—Food Concessions and Amusement Rides at Boro Park

6:00 PM—Pony League Baseball Game, Junior High School Field Churchill vs Forest Hills Bears

7:30 PM—Boro Park—Kangaroo Kourt and Preliminary Judging of Beards

WEDNESDAY, JULY 2nd—HOMECOMING DAY

10:00 AM-5:00 PM—Hospitality Center Open, F. H. Presbyterian Church

12:00 NOON—Mayors Luncheon

12:00-9:00 PM—Food Concessions and Amusement Rides at Boro Park

6:00 PM—Swimming Meet at Boro Pool

7:00 PM—Firemen's Water Battle—Wilkins NO.1 vs Wilkins No.3
Wilkins No.4 vs Chalfant
Presbyterian Church Parking Lot

7:30-9:30 PM—Entertainment at Boro Park Featuring The "Stingrays"

8:15 PM—Pre Spectacle Show, High School Stadium Featuring The Gordon Highlanders

9:00 PM—Spectacle at High School Stadium—The Forest Hills Story "Indians to Atoms"—July, 1755 to July, 1969

THURSDAY, JULY 3rd

Ladies Day

10:00 AM-5:00 PM—Hospitality Center Open, F. H. Presbyterian Church

10:00 AM—House Tour, Womans Club of Forest Hills

11:30 AM-1:00 PM— "Scratch" Baking Contest, Womens Club of Bryn Mawr Farms

12:00 NOON— Catered Lunch at Womans Club

12:00 NOON— Food Concessions and Amusement Rides at Boro Park

1:30 PM-4:30 PM— Card Party at St. Maurice Church, St. Maurice Church Women

6:00 PM— Pony League Baseball, Junior High School Field Wilkins Devils vs Churchill

7:00 PM— Firemens Water Battle, Presbyterian Church Parking Lot, Braddock Hills vs Churchill East Pittsburgh vs Forest Hills

7:30 PM-9:30 PM— Entertainment at Boro Park Featuring The "Stingrays"

8:15 PM— Pre Spectacle Show at High School Stadium Featuring "The Blue Knights" and Forest Hills Rangerettes

9:00 PM— Spectacle at High School Stadium—Jubilee Queen and Court

10:30 PM— Fireworks at High School

2:30 PM— Horseshoe Throwing Contest

3:30 PM— Egg Throwing Contest

4:00 PM— Firemen's Water Battle Championship, F. H. Presbyterian Church Parking Lot

4:00 PM-7:00 PM— Ox Roast Dinner, Lions & Rotary

5:00 PM— Family Dinner Time

5:30 PM— Shaving Contest

6:00 PM— Pony League Baseball Game, Junior High School Field — Forest Hills Bears vs Forest Hills Tigers

6:00 PM— Pioneer Awards

6:30 PM— Drawings for Bicycles

7:30 PM-9:30 PM— Evening Entertainment at Boro Park Featuring "The Blue Knights" and Val Mar Studios Show

8:15 PM— Pre Spectacle Show at High School Stadium—Featuring Junior Tamburitzans

8:30 PM— Children's Movies at Park

9:00 PM— Spectacle at High School Stadium

10:30 PM— Fireworks

10:45 PM to 12:00 NOON (Sat.)—Skating Marathon at Ardmore Skating Rink

FRIDAY, JULY 4th

Community Day (Boro Park)

10:00 AM-5:00 PM— Hospitality Center Open

10:00 AM— Flag Raising

10:00 AM— Food Concessions and Amusement Rides Open

10:15 AM— Games at Boro Pool (Children)

10:15 AM— Races and Games (Children)

11:30 AM— Watermelon Eating Contest (Children)

1:00 PM— Exhibition by Forest Hills Rangerettes

1:15 PM— Period Costume Contest Awards (Women)

1:30 PM— Women's Roller Pin Throw, Men's Golf

2:00 PM— Bingo (Adults) — Grab Bag (Children)

2:00 PM-3:30 PM— Fire Engine Rides

SATURDAY, JULY 5th

Firemans Day

10:00 AM-5:00 PM— Hospitality Center Open

10:00 AM-9:00 PM— Food Concessions & Amusement Rides at Park

11:00 AM— Time Capsule Ceremony, Boro Fire Hall

12:00 NOON— End of Skating Marathon, Ardmore Skating Rink

1:30 PM— Gigantic Parade—Ardmore Blvd. from Braddock Road to Avenue B

7:30 PM-9:30 PM— Entertainment at Boro Park Featuring The "Stingrays"

8:00 PM— Pre Spectacle Show at High School Stadium Featuring Val Mar Studios "Dance To Music" and the Sundowners Drum & Bugle Corps

10:30 PM— Fireworks at High School Stadium



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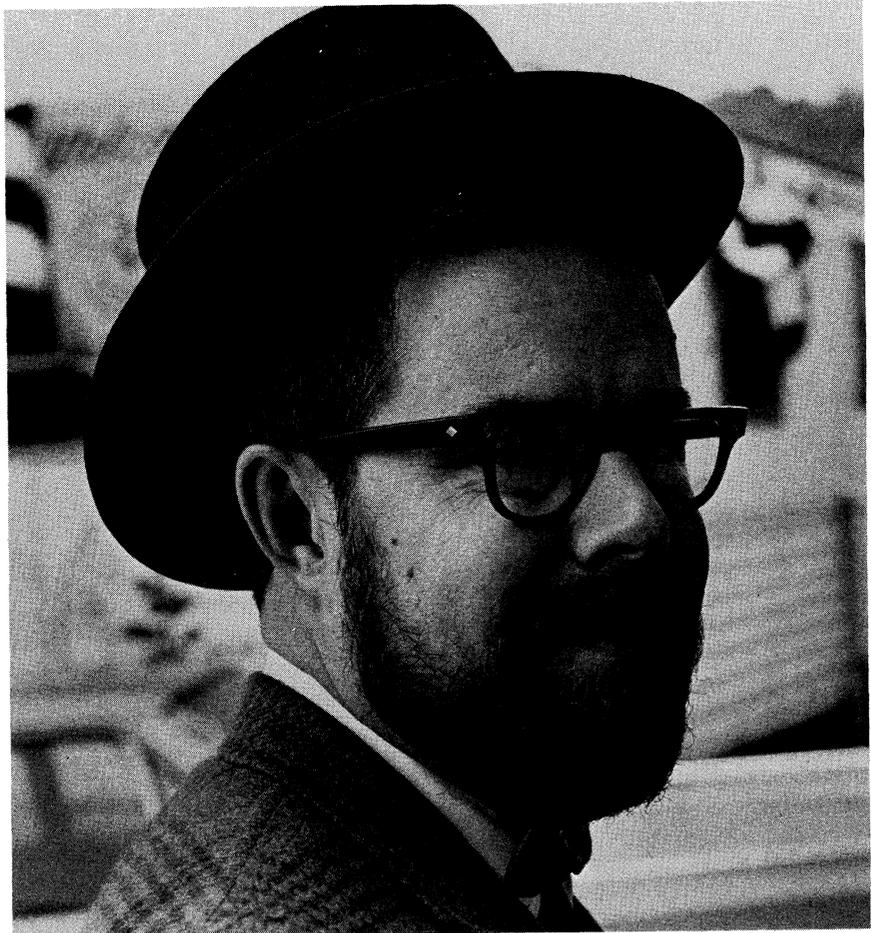
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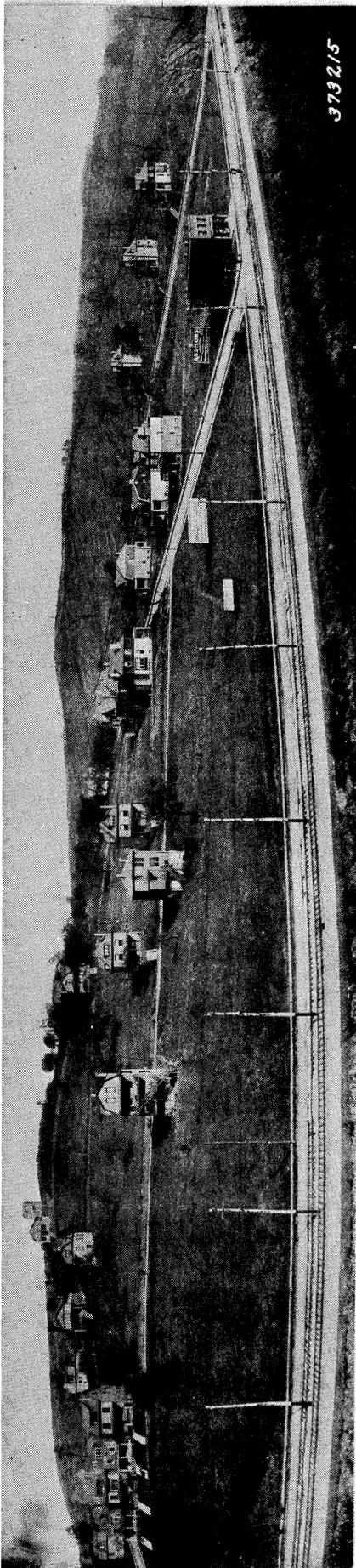
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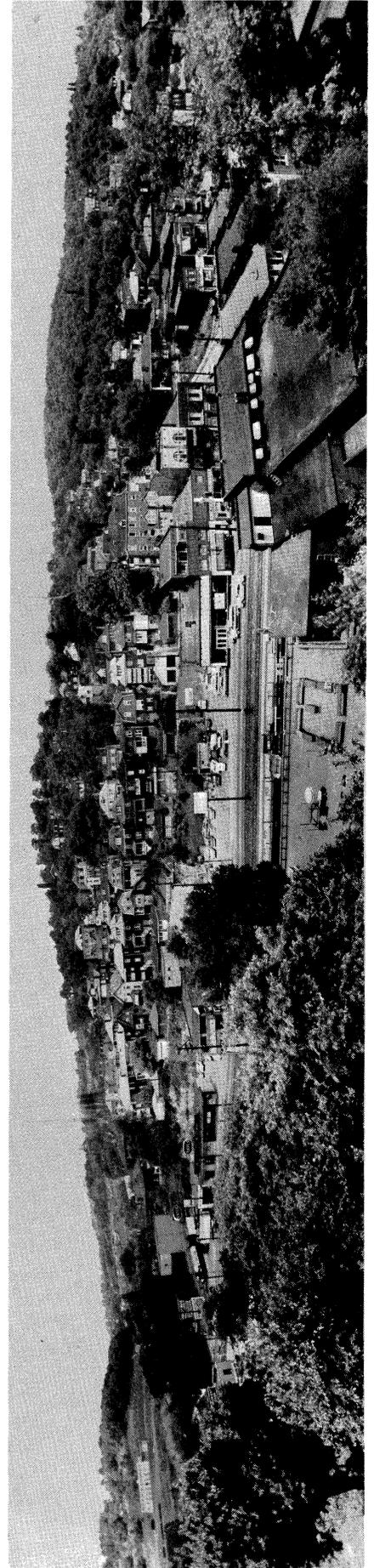
MORE THAN 50 YEARS OF PROGRESS

In the early 1900's (after the turn of the century) the Westinghouse Corporation took the now celebrated picture (left) of the Ardmore Boulevard, where stands today's business section of the Borough. The picture was apparently taken between 1908-1911, after the "cut" was made and a streetcar line was put through from East Pittsburgh along with the original Ardmore Boulevard at that time.

The only and *first* business house on the Boulevard was the Bissel Store. This grocery and general store for many years, has come to be a historical land mark to be recognized on our 50th Anniversary. For some years this building housed the Forest Hills Public Library. It was eventually purchased by Joe Bush where he and other tenants operated a small dairy and restaurant over the years.

Structurally, the two-story building has not changed, but the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Norm Riedl, created a new look on the old store front. Our oldest store near the corner of Ardmore Boulevard and Lenox Avenue keeps pace with the times.

A picture taken from the same location (right) in 1962 shows the progress made in development of the Ardmore business section more than 50 years later.



EARLY HISTORY AND VIEW

1682 The history of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Forest Hills, and the Turtle Creek Valley began with William Penn's purchase of this land from the *Indians*.

1753 The earliest historical references to the Turtle Creek Valley are to be found in connection with the struggle between France and England for possession of the Forks of the Ohio River.

In the summer of 1753 John Fraser, an Indian trader, whose station at the mouth of French Creek on the Allegheny River had been seized by the French, came to the Turtle Creek Valley and built a log cabin on the North bank of the Monongahela River about 200 yards west of the mouth of Turtle Creek. George Washington, on his trip to LeBoeuf, to warn the French to desist from their expedition to the Ohio, visited at Fraser's cabin in November of 1753. Returning from LeBoeuf, on December 29, 1753, Washington again stopped at Fraser's, and remained for three days, spending one of the days visiting Indian Queen Aliquippa in her village at the mouth of the Youghiogheny River.

1755 It was in July that General Braddock was leading his expedition to capture Fort Duquesne. Heading for the Turtle Creek Valley, he found it difficult country, thus skirted our area to avoid any Indians.

1758 On November 24th General John Forbes camping among the hills of our valley received word that the French had abandoned Fort Duquesne, his destination. He went on to the smoking fort and started to build Fort Pitt.

1758 Soon after the Forbes expedition in 1758 and the building of Fort Pitt, settlers began taking grants all through the land that is now Forest Hills and its surrounding territory. These tracts or grants of about 300 acres were given names. This area was "Somerset" and was acquired by David



Gilliland in two lots. One lot of 300 acres was granted to Gilliland by court order in Pittsburgh in 1817 for \$900. The other lot, the Shields tract to the north, the David Soles tract to the south, and the original grant to Rodarmel to the west bounded and contained parts of the present Forest Hills.

The Great Stage Road, now the Greensburg Pike, was a toll road and part of the main highway from Philadelphia. The Pittsburgh Gazette of January 27, 1816 gives an account of 5800 covered wagons plus stages and mail coaches traveling the road in one year.

1763 Colonel Henry Boquet set out from Philadelphia for the relief of Fort Pitt. When the Indians found out that he would come through the valley, they went out to meet him and engaged his forces in battle at Bushy Run. This was a complete victory for Boquet and it relieved this area from any serious danger of future Indian raids.

1769 After the Battle of Bushy Run, settlers began to filter into the Turtle Creek Valley. Among the earliest of these settlers was *Widow Myers*, who located upon land where the Turtle Creek High School now stands, and conducted a road house or tavern on the road leading to Fort Pitt, her establishment being located at what is now the Northwest corner of the intersection of Sycamore Street and the Lower Monroeville Road, within the present limits of the Borough of Turtle Creek.

Widow Myers was well established at this location in 1769, when, following Penn's purchase of 1768, she made application for a patent to the lands occupied by her, that being the earliest date legal title to lands in this locality could be obtained.



OUR EARLY GOVERNMENT FORMATION

1788 Allegheny County was formed from parts of Westmoreland and Washington Counties. The county was divided into townships. Our vast area was Pitt Township.

1812 Pitt Township was subdivided and most of our section became Wilkins Township.

1851 Railroads came to the area and forever changed our lives.

1860-1870-1905 Forest Hills first village was Gordonville or Duquesne Coal Co. Town. Later, Woodland Hills or Mucklerat area.

1885 Now another subdivision of Pitt Township left part of today's Forest Hills area in Wilkins Township and part belonged to Braddock Township.

1887 George Westinghouse moved the Westinghouse Air Brake works from Allegheny (North Side, Pittsburgh) to the Valley as the center of the future Westinghouse Industrial operations. He purchased approximately 500 acres located in Wilmerding, Turtle Creek, and East Pittsburgh. This was the beginning of an *era* that would *influence development* of *Forest Hills*.

1907 Freehold Real Estate Co. started to develop and build homes in Ardmore, and about 1910 in Bryn Mawr and then in Edgewood Acres. This and the street car and Ardmore Boulevard 'cut', which was around 1908, started the real borough growth.

1908 In the early 1900's it was the Freehold Realty Development efforts nearly all the way plus the Ardmore street car line which induced Westinghouse employees to live near and commute to the East Pittsburgh plant. In the late 20's, probably 90% of the residents of Forest Hills worked at Westinghouse.

1918 Our people felt they were paying considerable sums in taxes and getting little benefit therefrom. The Commissioners of Wilkins Township would each year engage a few farmers in the Township to go over the unpaved roads of Forest Hills with teams and scrapers to smooth out the surface and in this manner work out their road taxes. In a month or so the roads were in bad condition as they were before. Since all of the Forest Hills Section was still under Township, it was very difficult to start any paving program by the property owners.

It was the general feeling that the only way to get real relief in regard to *roads* as well as with *lighting* and the *school situation* would be to petition the Allegheny County Courts to allow the Forest Hills Section to form a borough of its own where we would control the much needed improvements of a rapidly growing community.

We were also deeply concerned with maintaining the Ardmore Boulevard, but the people were determined to create a borough of their own—not only to get better roads but for better schools and churches. Residents from the upper ends of the borough began meeting at the Freehold Real Estate office on Bevington Road in Edgewood Acres section to plan secession from Wilkins and Braddock Townships who were bitterly opposed to the removal of this area from them. They were unsuccessful in court action and *on July 29th, 1919*, Forest Hills was incorporated as a borough.



OUR FIRST REAL TOWN OR VILLAGE

WOODLAND HILLS

"Mucklerat"

Duquesne Coal

Gordonville

Probably the most fascinating history of Forest Hills centers around the first real town or village in our confines. *Woodland Hills* dates back before 1870. Previously, the Forest Hills area had been large tracts of land or type of plantation farms. The wooded hills and streams were beautiful, but the ugly industry of coal mining developed here as in the general Turtle Creek Valley area.

Many new residents of the borough are surprised to still see some of the old Duquesne coal town buildings still standing in 1969, such as a row of company houses on Filmore Road or a coal company office which still stands on Fairview Road.

The Woodland Hills area of today is still somewhat the same and comprises the Glasgow, Sherwood, Braddock, Filmore and Fairview Road areas. In all of the original grants the province, or later the state, reserved the gold and silver rights. As *Mr. Brass*, President of the Freehold Real Estate Company, once remarked, "How much more to the point had they reserved the coal and gas rights!" By 1870, the Armstrong Mine was well established. In this district a prosperous, though perhaps ugly, mining village sprung up with its center near *Braddock* and *Glasgow* Roads where stood the old *Duquesne School* house and the *Riley Post Office*.

CHECK HOUSE

Bill Fellers, Jimmy Boyle, Dan Hiland, Jimmy Tomer, Murt Snyder, *John Kennedy*, & "Big Paul"

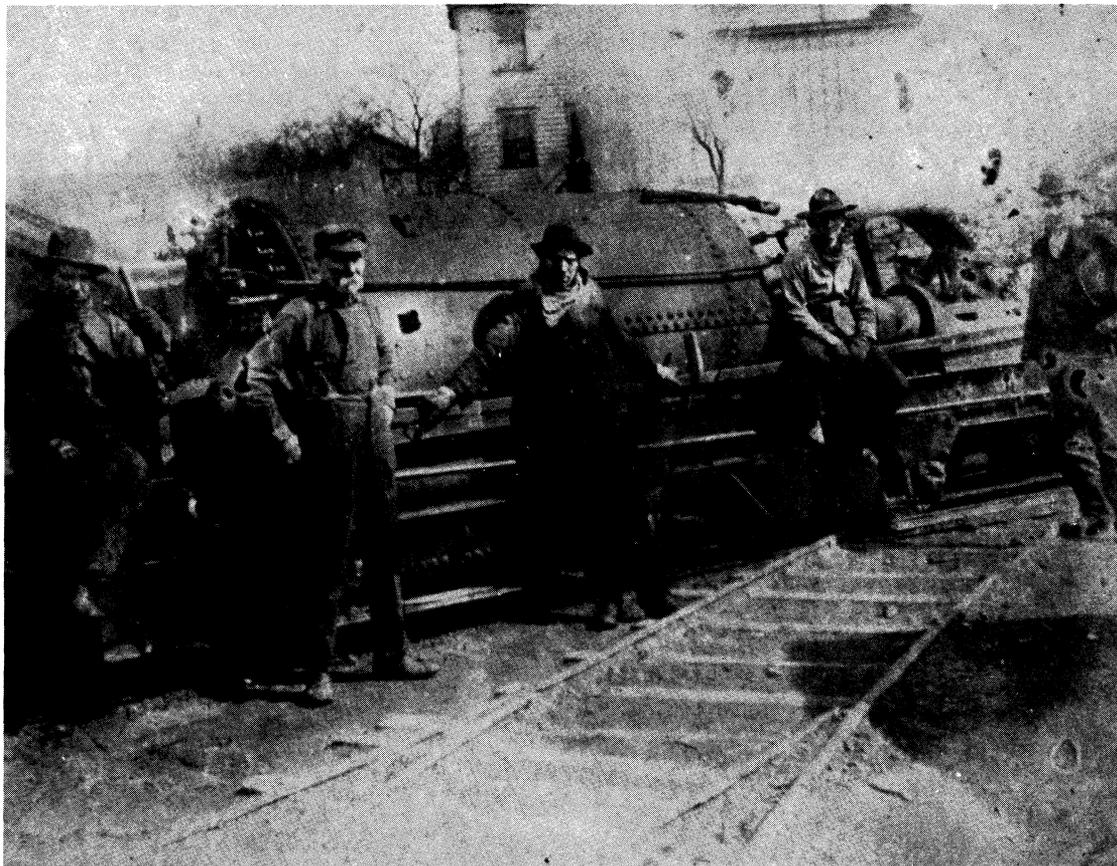
Mustached Man is *Mr. Feller* who lived on Glasgow Road at corner of Braddock and Sherwood Roads.

A huge slag dump had built up where the mines came out to an exit in the hillside to deposit the waste near the Jewish Cemetery. A trestle bridged the valley (where now is Ardmore Boulevard). This tunnel came out finally at the main *check-house* on Brinton Road opposite where now stands a small shopping center (formerly the club house site of the Pup's Foot Golf Course). This *check-house* was a frame structure serving the miners and used also as a stable for 21 mules. The loading point destination was, of course, the Pennsylvania Railroad near the Edgewood station.

In the beginning, a *Mr. Alexander Gordon* started the mining here and took up the deeds of property owners in the Woodland Hills area. Many of the miners had to buy about an acre and a half of ground to even get work in the mines. Filmore Road in those days only ran about halfway down to the Ardmore Boulevard instead of connecting with Route 30 as it does today.

Sherwood Road was called by another name in those times. *Mr. Gordon's* name appears on many of the old deeds and later the *Duquesne Coal Company's* name appears and still appears on the records in the Tax collector's office today. *Mr. Gordon* sold out to *Mr. J. B. Corey* and after probably 15 years *Mr. Corey*, about 1900, sold to the New York and Cleveland Coal Company which in turn was bought by the Pittsburgh Coal Company. By 1905, the coal was mined out in our locale. Nevertheless, casual operations still went on and a few mules





Armstrong Mine Locomotive—

A very early articulated steam powered mine locomotive probably built in the 1870's.

NOTE—Boiler mounted on one car and cylinders and valve gear on another. Since coal was available anywhere on the line, none was carried on the locomotive.

remained around to greet residents about the time of our incorporation. The coal tipples were still with us and so were the open mine entrances for a few years. There was truly a ghost like hand-over from the life that was.

Mrs. Jane Stauffer's home on Sherwood Road is an original building of the second Garrity Store. *Mrs. Garrity* was the grandmother of *Mrs. Stauffer* (who was a Boyle before marriage).

The old stores here were in operation about 75 years ago and sold all kinds of things including grease, lamps, picks, shovels, and hard *cider!* The famous one-room, and later two-room, *Duquesne School* according to legend and history tells us it was at one time the center of the "*Molly McGuires*" invasion of our coal mining areas.

Many of us remember the little *Riley Post Office* which was only torn down in the late '50's by our Borough. It jutted out on the curb of Braddock Road and was considered a traffic hazard. It was at that time owned by Schillings. The building

had been abandoned for some years but even some 40 years ago, it was still known as the little *Henny Kane Store*. *Miss Riley* was the first Post Mistress and this was prior to rural-free delivery where people at home receive their mail as today. *Mrs. Martin Plack* (Anna Kennedy) has the original boxes from the Post Office and remembers when the residents who were richer or more influential got their mail in these boxes, which were wood cubicles, while the bulk of the mail was just laid on the counter for the rest of the citizens.

About 1917 — they tore down the old Duquesne School. For some years after World War I, a War Memorial and Plaque were in evidence at the corner of Braddock and Glasgow to honor World War I veterans of the little community.

In 1930 when the *Woodside Road School* addition was constructed and again in 1948 when we built the *Junior High* at Central Site, the old coal-mining operations "came back to roost" costing us dearly to defray the expensive underpinnings for reinforcing the collapse of the mine pillars.

KDKA AND FOREST HILLS

1920 It was the year 1920...only one year after the Anniversary of the founding of Forest Hills when the word R A D I O came to the world and changed the course of history forever. It was by *Doctor Frank Conrad* in Wilkinsburg that the word came. Frank Conrad's licensed radio-telephone station 8 X K operation moved to a tent atop the Westinghouse K. Building in East Pittsburgh. It became the world's first commercial radio station with a scheduled or anticipated broadcast of KDKA—the Harding-Cox Election.

Soon Doctor Conrad was borrowing Victor records from the *George Bennett Music Store*, then near Caldwell & Graham's, in Wilkinsburg and the world's first commercials spoken by him were about the kindness of the Bennett Music Store in loaning the records for the broadcasts. *Mr. Bennett* resided on *Lenox Avenue* in Forest Hills. *Mr. Al Bartlett* of Forest Hills was probably the first man to sing over radio.

The radio broadcasting grew from a modest 100 watt transmitter and a handfull of crystal set listeners into a billion-dollar-a-year industry. Sixty million sets were in use across the nation—and all in less than three decades!

1923 KDKA had troubles at 100 watts from the steel buildings in East Pittsburgh and moved to the new site in our

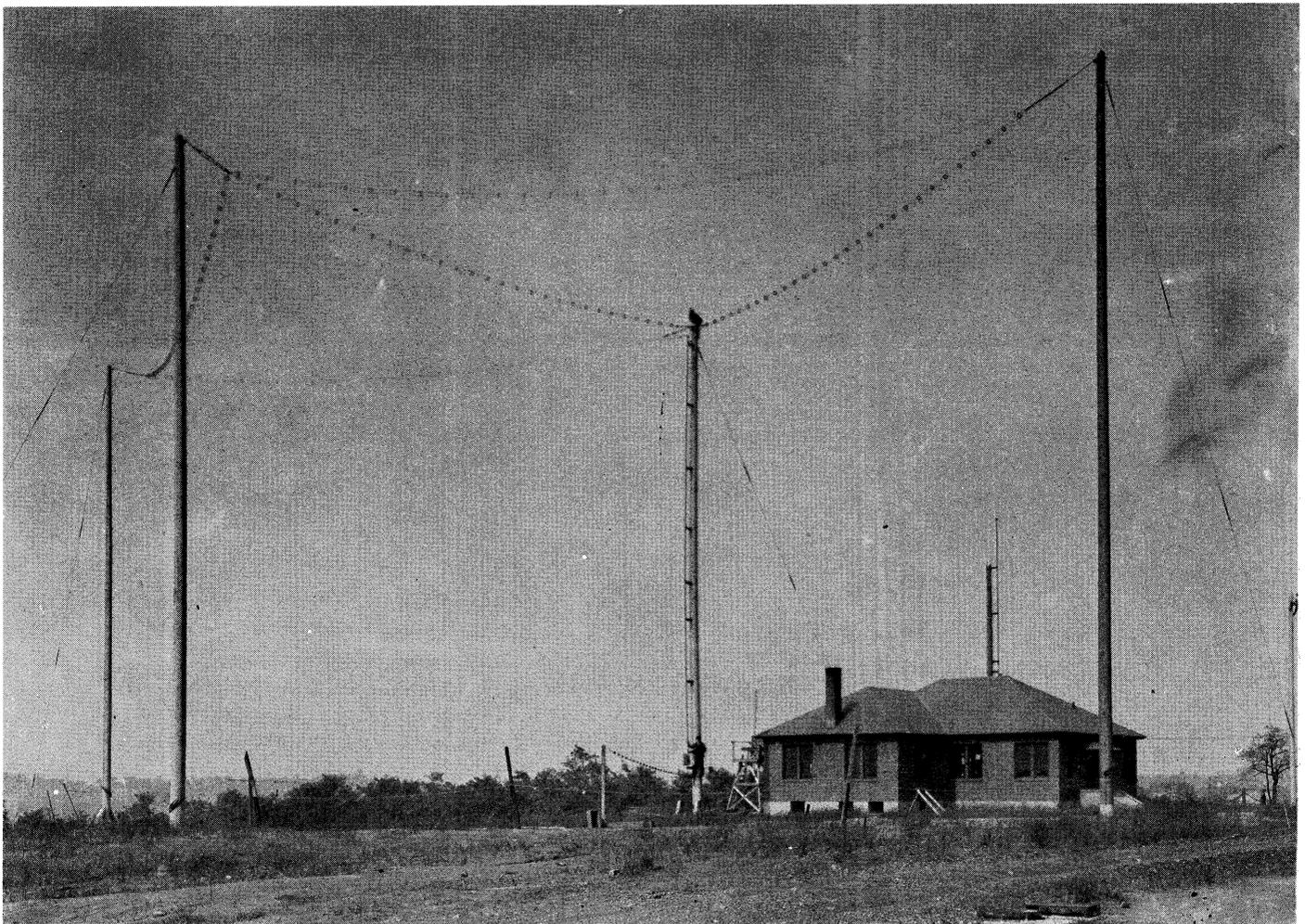
Borough on the Greensburg Pike. They felt this was one of the high and level spots in Allegheny County available on our adjoining hills. It was hoped to avoid the previous problem of steel buildings having decided absorbing effort on radio waves. The new Westinghouse experimental building was one story with a large basement housing the transformers and so forth.

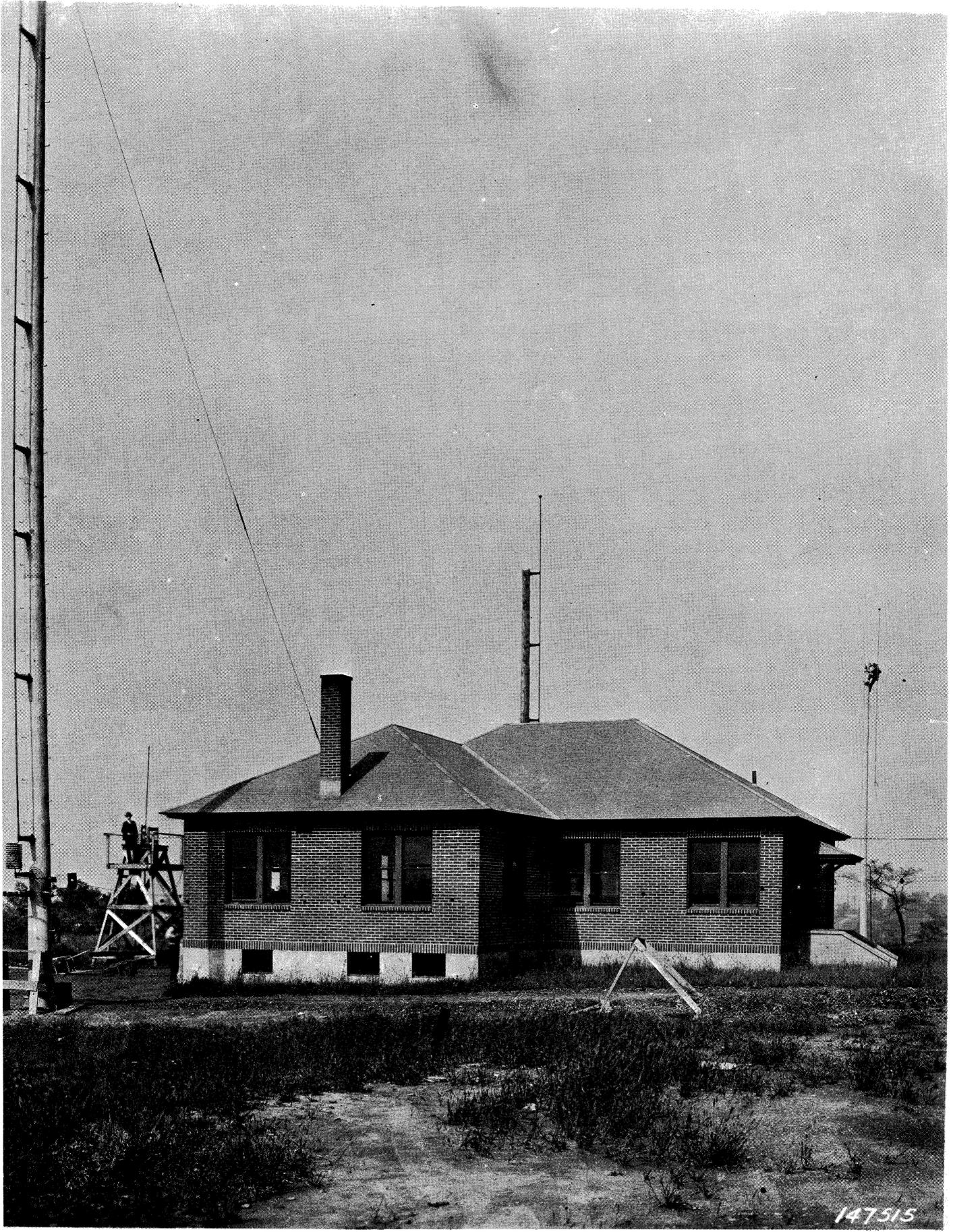
Here are rare early pictures that were taken of the building about 1925 with the antenna and short-wave transmitters and again in 1969 — center of the Westinghouse Recreation Center.

1931 The first home of the 50 KW radio station was closed down about 1931. Eventually, this building replaced the former wood Tennis Club house adjoining the property of KDKA. Today it has been converted into the Westinghouse Lodge or Recreation Center.

The KDKA transmitting station building is now the nucleus of the beautiful Westinghouse Recreation Center today.

Forest Hills cannot claim the actual radio inventor, Dr. Conrad, or the first broadcast as a Forest Hills first; but we were the *world's first* 50 KW high powered *transmitting* station—and the first home of international short-wave transmitters.





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The East Pittsburgh Divisions of the Westinghouse Electric Corporation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the residents of Forest Hills on the 50th Anniversary of their Borough. Through the years, Westinghouse has grown and prospered along with the Borough, and we hope to continue this tradition in the future.

Pictured here is the Westinghouse Lodge off Greensburg Pike in Forest Hills, recently remodeled for use by Westinghouse employees and their families. It was built around the former building of the Westinghouse recreation center, the site of the early radio broadcasts and the first 50-kilowatt High Power Radio Transmitter in the world. The Lodge offers picnic-dining facilities on a covered veranda which encircles the building, complete kitchen facilities including a barbecue pit, gamerooms, and rooms for parties and other social functions.



Westinghouse