

# THE FOREST HILLS STORY

## ARDMORE CAR BARNs

**1907 ARDMORE CAR BARNs** were built at time of laying the streetcar lines — making it one of our oldest buildings. One half of the building on Ardmore Boulevard side is the original brick structure with the other half of the building added later. The occupancy now is the *Ardmore Roller Rink*.

**1915** The original *Westinghouse Research* building was built, and an addition was constructed later. This important laboratory witnessed a parade of inventions and scientific "greats" until the present day when the new labs were moved to Churchill Borough. This building is a history book in itself and topping the list was the ATOM SMASHER, Forest Hill's famous "world's first"!!!

## WORLD WAR I

**1917** The United States entered into World War I on April 6, 1917.

**1918** Armistice Day — WAR ENDED! on November 11, 1918.

**1919 FOREST HILLS BOROUGH** incorporates on July 29, 1919.

**1919 WESTINGHOUSE PLAN** development began (see special History write-up)

**1920** Celebration of the *opening of Ardmore Boulevard* after a nine-month closing for repairs to the wretched road after World War I military traffic. \$234,000

Except for the 1969 Golden Jubilee, one of the biggest celebrations of all the valley communities and Forest Hills along with Wilkinsburg was culminated after a parade of more than 250 automobiles from Wilkinsburg to East Pittsburgh and Turtle Creek and back to Forest Hills. There were street fairs, a reception, and band concerts. Addresses were given by County Commissioners Gumbert and Cain and the several local Burgesses were on hand.

**1920 KDKA** 1st Commercial Radio Broadcast was of the Harding-Cox election.

**1922 BOROUGH BUILDING** was constructed for about \$25,000.

**1923 KDKA's** new and *first 50 KW powerful transmitting station* was built on the Greensburg Pike by Barclay Avenue. The building sets as the nucleus of the *Westinghouse Lodge*

and *Recreation Center* today. This was another "world first" in our Borough. (see special story and pictures)

**1925 FOREST HILLS LIBRARY** was born. It was created by *Crescent Hills Woman's Club*.

**1928 AL KOCH** was appointed *Postmaster* and a post office was opened approximately that year which only "made the scene" about a year and a half.

## 1929 STOCK MARKET CRASH and DEPRESSION

The date was October 29, 1929 and came to be known as "Black Friday." Forest Hills together with the rest of the country fell into a deep and long depression. The depression hit industrial towns harder than most other areas. The Westinghouse and Valley Corporation, like all the factories in the United States, cut back production and reduced payrolls to the minimum. Not having unemployment compensation to fall back on, the industrial workers plight was one of despair and desolation. Men in their prime wandered the streets. Unemployed banded together and set off on hunger marches. The world of dreams collapsed; the crazy, carefree days of the twenties had run their course and were gone forever. Suicides were not uncommon.

**1930's FOREST HILLS BUILDING and LOAN ASSOCIATION** was located in Al Koch's building at Ardmore Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue for probably more than ten years. It was a flourishing Building and Loan operation in the village. The Depression, however, proved a little too much and the organization was eventually liquidated.

Some of the men associated with it were: Harold Kirk, Al Koch, Frank Kelley, O. B. Abraham, E. H. Turnock, Frank Wentworth, Herschel Haldeman, Norman Allen (Attorney.)

**1930 JOHN FRANCE**, first Burgess of Forest Hills, died after waging a losing battle with pneumonia. He was forty-three years of age and served as Burgess of Forest Hills for twelve years. *Dr. Funk*, our first doctor and two other specialists had been called into consultation for the lung disease.

**1930 or 1932** Storm sewers came to Forest Hills.

**1933** A Federal Emergency Conservation program, later to be known as the Civilian Conservation Corps or CCC was a Federal organization to help unemployed youths. The Corps sponsored many courses but the most popular projects were planting trees, building roads and trails and fighting forest fires. Some of our local men remember these projects well for they were a part of them.

**1934 FOREST HILLS SAGA**, written by Mrs. Arthur Jackman, was researched in 1934 and published in 1936 and later republished in the 1952 FOREST HILLS NEWS. This history of our community in early times, and before the borough's incorporation, was significant in that the records of the Freehold Real Estate Company were completely destroyed in the flood of 1936.

**1934 BOROUGH PARK** purchased by Council.

**1934 FOREST HILLS NEWS:** 1st Issue was published and born, sponsored by the Civic Association and served this community well for 20 years.

**1935 W.P.A.** – In May of 1935, the Federal Government instituted the "Work Progress Administration" and Forest Hills Borough and the School Board were fortunate to get several projects started under this W.P.A. program.

**1936 ST. PATRICK'S DAY FLOOD** . . . March 17th, 1936, Pittsburgh, Turtle Creek Valley (Wilmerding included) flooded . . . even Forest Hills was affected indirectly.

**1937 Atom Smasher** – "World's First" Atom Smasher was constructed at old Westinghouse Research.

**1938** Council purchased first new *ash spreader* for \$160.00.

**1939** Borough issues \$70,000 in Councilmanic Borough Bonds to relieve financial pressure and to retire other indebtedness with a high rate of interest.

**1939 to 1942 EDGEWOOD ACRES:** The new part of Edgewood Acres Development was announced in 1939 by Freehold President, J. William Brass. The addition and expansion of old Edgewood Acres would be along Cascade Road and Westward. The entire development eventually was to include some 100 lots to be sold for building homes.

**1944 FRANK L. P. KELLEY,** Pioneer citizen and businessman of the borough, died of a heart attack. In the early 20's, Mr. Kelley operated a motor sales and service garage which building was purchased by the Coca Cola Company, and today is the St. Maurice Catholic Church.

Mr. Kelley was credited with our first Community Day and was active in the borough as a Council President and participated in many civic affairs. His residence was at 1819 Ardmore Boulevard.

**1945** On May 8th, at 6:01 P.M. a cease fire order took effect with the German Army surrendering to the Allies. At last the war in Europe was over; the name VE Day became a by-word.

**1946** On August 14th, Japan announced her acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, calling for unconditional surrender, and on September 2nd, to bring World War II to a close, the formal instrument was signed on board the United States battleship Missouri.

**1946 FIRST BOROUGH DIRECTORY** was published by the Woman's Club.

**1946** The newly-organized WILKINSBURG PENN JOINT WATER AUTHORITY took over operation of the Pennsylvania Water Company on May 15, 1946.

**1949-1952 PARKWAY HEIGHTS** development was started during the summer of 1949 by the McKinney Bros. Construction Company and included about 135 homes. Here the Hope Lutheran Church was also built on Ridge Road – all in the vicinity of our Junior High built in 1948.

**1949-Dec. FIRST SUPERMARKET** (Giant Eagle) in Borough – 42 Store Chain at 2139 Ardmore Boulevard. In 1969 this location is occupied by Ardmore Sunshine Center.

**1950 ARDMORE BOULEVARD** (East Bound lane) widened and curbed.

**1950 ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERY** – In recent years the Saint John Fisher Church was built on the former site of the Ack-Ack Center of the United States Army on Lewin Lane near the Greensburg Pike. The *Rotary Club* used to help entertain and provide special TV and lounge facilities for the military personnel stationed there in the 1950's.

**1950 CLUB HOUSE** of the Woman's Club of Forest Hills was completed and dedicated.

**1950 FOREST HILLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION** sponsored a big Appreciation Dinner on May 18th at the Edgewood Country Club honoring our Borough and School officials.

**1952 MILTON G. THOMPSON** entered into his tenth term as President of Forest Hills Council.

**1952** Forest Hills Civic Association sponsors first *Townhall meeting* in February, 1952.

**1952 LADY COPS** were introduced in the borough by Burgess Albert Koch. The women officers were installed in an effort to safe-guard school children against traffic accidents.

**1952 DOCTOR CHARLES B. NUTTING** of 168 Fairfax Road appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh.

**1953 CHEST X-RAY SURVEY** – Mobile units moved into the Borough after a big publicity build-up and Borough organization when the largest public health undertaking ever tried in Allegheny County was activated.

**1953** As early as 1953, the Forest Hills Council approved the re-zoning of the *Fairfax Road area* which gives way for the proposed apartment houses-office complex (at that time it was being considered for a shopping center). In those days, organized groups of citizens tried to block the project and a property owner said "We don't want concrete staring us in the face." Others felt shopping centers and so forth would cause traffic hazards or residential property might be de-valuated. Significantly, one resident asserted that "progress in the borough is very slow and development is needed." Remarks at council hearings held in June, 1953.

**1955 NORMAN A. ALLEN,** our Borough solicitor, died in May of that year. This was a loss of a good friend and faithful servant. *Warren Reding* became the newly appointed solicitor.

**1955-1956** Catranell Construction Company starts 200 home development of *Forest Hills Manor* – acreage was purchased by Catranell from Pittsburgh Coal Company and was to increase our assessed Borough evaluation by about 1 million dollars.

**1956 ARDMORE SHOPPING CENTER** — Our first shopping center at Ardmore & Yost Boulevard went under construction by Mellon-Stuart Company. The 52,000 square foot structure was to house 15 business firms in the beginning with an asphalt parking lot for over 300 cars. Entrances are off Ardmore, Yost and Rockwood. The stream running through our Valley was covered for 170 feet and run through a steel culvert.

**1958 BOROUGH WAGE TAX** — Following the School District Wage Tax enacted in 1956, the Borough was not to be outdone and gave us the same treatment!

**1964** Forest Hills Veteran Chief of Police, *Chuck Lavish*, died of a heart attack on January 15, 1964.

**1965** Council applies for *Appalachian Funds* to rebuild Braddock Road.

**1965 NEW BOROUGH ZONING ORDINANCE** — adopted by council — first completely revised ordinance since first set of zoning laws of 1923. (12-8-1965).

**1965 ARDMORE GARDEN APARTMENTS** — our first "Garden" apartments were built on Ardmore Boulevard at Bevington Road. This is a double apartment building with 46 units and three stories in height.

## FOREST WOODLAND PARK

**1966 \$50,000** purchase of new Project 70 Park from the Westinghouse. The money was reimbursed under the State Project #70 for \$25,000 and a Federal Government Act reimbursed the Borough for the other \$25,000. In 1967 it was named Forest Woodland Park. We doubled our park area with the additional 20 acres.

**1966** Borough budget nearly tops 1/2 million dollar mark. Borough budget \$476,100.

**1966** 2 mill Tax hike setting the tax at total of 14 mills.

**1966 RICHARD E. WISE** was successor to A. L. Koch as Mayor.

**1966** Council appoints Recreation Board.

**1966-1967 FOREST HILLS PLAZA** — The second Forest Hills Shopping Center was constructed by The Cost Brow, Inc. 5 exits were planned for increasing traffic flow in the large four-acre parking area. The center is a beautiful two-story complex with offices on the second floor and storerooms on the first.

**1967** Westinghouse's Atomic Power Divisions presented \$5,000 to Forest Hills for support of our Swimming pool and Recreation lodge project.

## PARKWAY CENTER EAST

**1967 PARKWAY CENTER EAST** ground breaking for the ten million dollar complex for a 23 acre development *Kossmann Project* at the site of the old Victory and War Gardens. The first building to be constructed was the *H. B. Maynard Co.* on the thousand foot frontage on Ardmore Boulevard. The Westinghouse *Information Systems Laboratory* was the second. There will be more, including high-rise apartments. This area runs from the Dennis restaurant to Fairfax Road and is bound on the upper side by Brinton Road. The Project represents a *change of concept* of Forest Hills Real Estate development and is indicative of Forest Hills growing again.

**1967** Ordinance #506 adopted the setting-up on a formal basis an inter-borough, Township, *Police Assistance* program for Churchill Borough and Wilkins Township.

**1967** Ordinance #504 — Forest Hills takes membership in the *Churchill Regional Planning Commission*. To act jointly in cooperation with neighboring communities for over-all planning.

## SWIMMING POOL & RECREATION LODGE

**1968** Swimming pool and Recreation Lodge was completed. Splash Down was Memorial Day June 30, 1968.

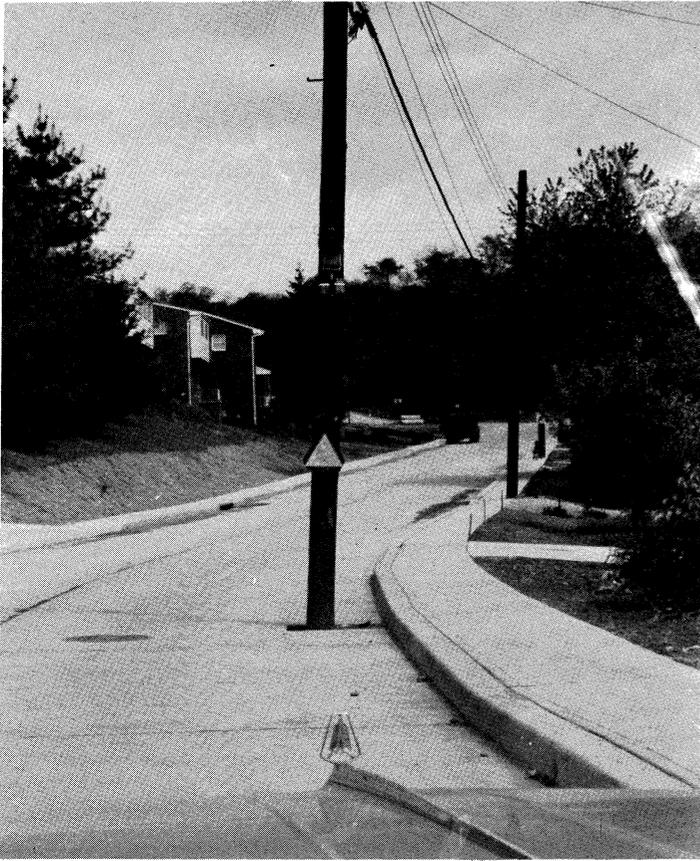
Forest Hills Pride and Joy . . . a long-awaited dream!



1969 NEW SWIMMIN' HOLE

**1968-1969** Road improvement projects were set at \$510,000 for *Braddock* and *Filmore* Roads with financial help of the Allegheny County Commissioners and an Appalachia Grant from the Federal Government. Also resurfacing of Parkway Heights was put on the "go" list by Council.

**1968 FILMORE ROAD** residents presented council with a signed petition and a total of \$50,000 to accelerate the immediate paving of the northerly half of Filmore Road. This money was collected within two weeks. (July 1, 1968)

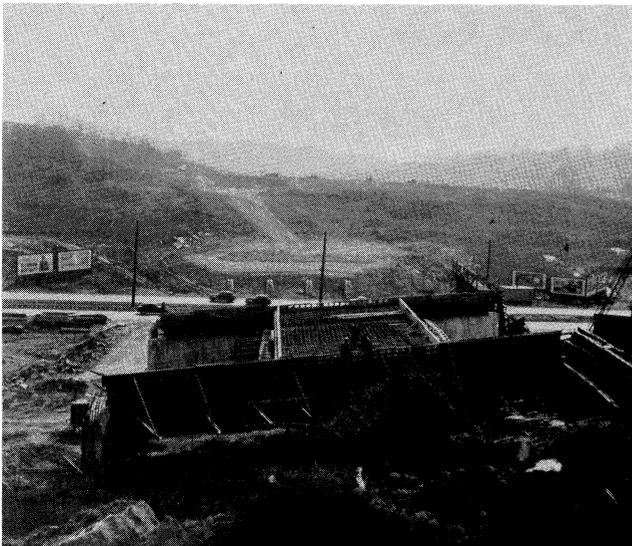


**1969** In 1969 relations between Borough Council and the residents of newly paved Filmore Road were "up tight" but here is some kind of a humorous Forest Hills "first."

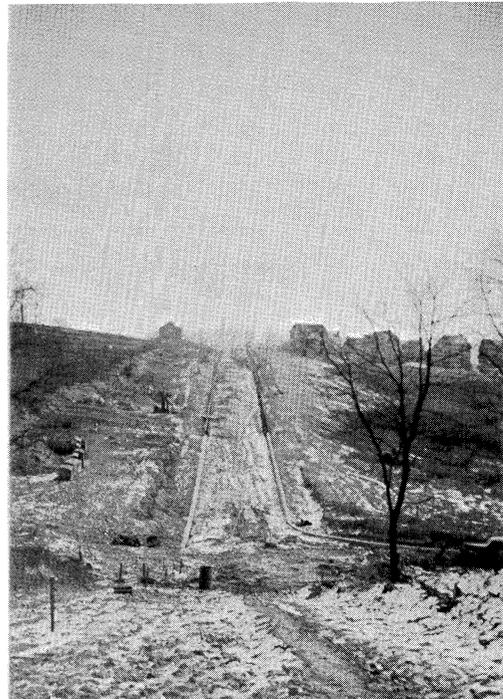
### **NEW FIRE HALL**

**1969** New *Fire Hall* and Volunteer Fire Department Headquarters completed. A \$96,000 twenty-year dream comes true . . . . .

**1969 MUNICIPAL BUILDING** remodeled to house modern, air-conditioned and more spacious administrative offices for the Mayor, Borough Manager and office staff, as well as Police Department and new quarters for the Auxiliary Police.



**1947 — Penn-Lincoln Parkway Construction**



**1941 — Edgewood Acres Development  
Edgewood Road**



### BISSEL STORE

The Bissel Store as shown in the introductory pages has not structurally been changed, but the present proud owners, *Mr. and Mrs. Norm Riedl*, have given the building a new look as seen in this picture in 1965 when former Mayor Al Koch welcomed the new owners to the business community. The

historical library has long gone, and the store operated as the Boulevard Dairy for many years. For about 48 years, there was no property business house on the corner lot of Lenox Avenue until 1967 when the Baker Insurance Agency built a new building. The two new business houses and others are up-dating "merchants row" in keeping pace with progress.

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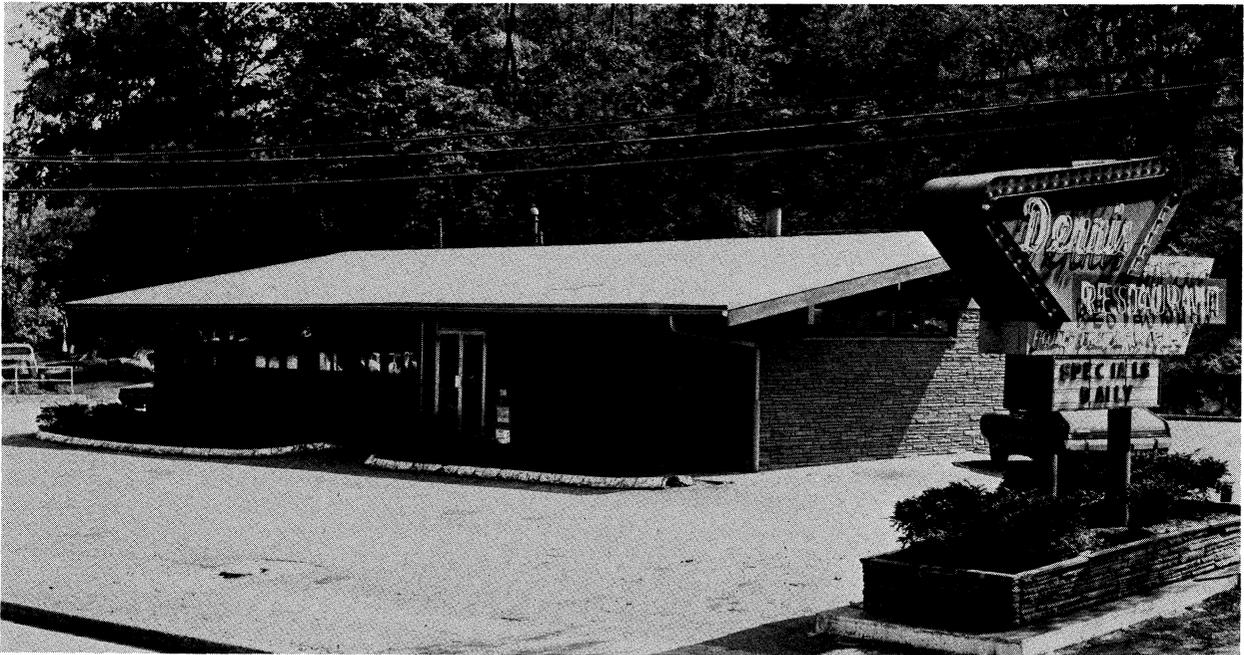
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