

## History of Southampton, PA

Southampton, PA is a namesake of Southampton, England, the seaport from which adventurous followers of William Penn sailed to the Province of Pennsylvania. By 1685, Southampton was recognized by the Provincial Council as a township, and the lands within its borders had been allocated to thirteen original purchasers: John Luff, John Martin, Robert Pressmore, Richard Wood, John Jones, Mark Betres, John Swift, Enoch Flowers, Joseph Jones, Thomas Groom, Robert Marsh, Thomas Hould and John Gilbert, whose tracts were delineated on a Map of the Improved Part of the Province of Pennsylvania drafted by Thomas Holme, Penn's Surveyor General. Southampton's boundaries at that time extended eastward to Bensalem, and it was not until 1929 that the township was divided into Upper Southampton and Lower Southampton.

In order to ensure peaceful coexistence with the Indians residing in this region, Penn purchased the land with wampum and other valuable commodities including items of clothing, fish hooks, axes, knives and other useful tools. The area between the Pennypack and Neshaminy Creeks, encompassing Southampton Township, was conveyed by the Lenni-Lenape Chief Tamanend to William Penn by Deed dated June 23, 1683.

Many of the first English settlers were Quakers who fled religious persecution, and it was a group of dissident Quakers who joined with members of the Pennypack (a.k.a. Lower Dublin) Baptist Church to form the Southampton Baptist Church, which was constituted in 1746. Dutch colonists arrived in Southampton in the 1700's - the Vandikes, Vansandt, Vanartsdalens, Cornells, Krewsons and Hogelands - who migrated south from Long Island, New York and settled in Smoketown, later to be called Churchville after the North and Southampton Reformed Church erected on Bristol Road. The churchyards adjacent to the Southampton Baptist and North and Southampton Reformed Churches contain graves of patriots who fought in the Revolutionary War.

Farming was the way of life for most Southampton residents throughout the 18th and 19th Centuries, and roads were constructed from farm to mill, to market and to church. Second Street Pike was the thoroughfare used to carry produce by horse and wagon to the markets in Philadelphia. In the mid 1800's the villages of Davisville, Churchville, and Southamptonville (formerly "Fetter's Corner") sprouted at the various crossroads in the township, and Second Street Pike became a toll road.

The railroad arrived in the 1870's and brought with it many changes. "Southamptonville" was shortened to Southampton, and farmers now had a faster and more efficient way to market their milk and produce. Tradesmen and craftsmen opened shops along Second Street Pike, and residents began commuting into Philadelphia.

Changes continued through the 20th Century. Electricity and telephone lines were installed, and Street Road has been widened and a railroad overpass constructed, necessitating the removal and/or demolition of the toll house, several shops and residences.

Public education began in the mid 19th Century and one-room schoolhouses once stood at Street Road and Gravel Hill and on County Line Road just west of Buck Road. Southamptonville's former one-room schoolhouse has been enlarged to such an extent that it is no longer recognizable as such, but stands in its original location on the south side of Street Road near the railroad overpass. The first public school in the village of Davisville, known as the Davisville Seminary, remains on its original site on the South Side of Street Road - next to the Dairy Queen. The Seminary was used in more recent times as an overflow classroom for the "stone school" now C.H.I. Institute. In 1929, the township was divided into Upper and Lower Southampton, and Upper Southampton joined with Warminster to form the Centennial School District.

Upper Southampton Township has embraced industry and development, but retains a certain small-town feeling. It is a "nice place to live."