

Hartsville History

The name "Hartsville" is derived from that of Colonel William Hart, second son of James Hart. In the late 18th century, Colonel Hart moved here from Plumsteadville and purchased an inn from James Baldwin, renaming it the "Sign of The Hart". This inn built in 1742, later known as the Hartsville Hotel, was located at the northeast corner of Old York and Bristol Roads (originally called "The Cross Roads").

A revolutionary War Veteran, active in public affairs, Colonel Hart served as Bucks County Register of Wills in 1807, and as a County Commissioner in 1809. It is held that Colonel Hart's influence caused the representation of a heart to be carved in the stone bridge just beyond York Road in 1793.

General George Washington and his officers dated letters from Hartsville in 1777, as did General John Lacey in 1778. The establishment of a post office in the early 1800's marked the official naming of Hartsville.

The Village of Hartsville was an important stagecoach stop on the Philadelphia-New York Stagecoach line, where fresh teams of horses were picked up and travelers could stretch their limbs or quench their thirst at the inn. Among early visitors was Benjamin Franklin, who stopped while enroute to New York.

Later known as the Hartsville Hotel, the inn was built in 1742, at the Northeast corner of Bristol and York Roads. Across the street from the Hotel, the Post Office was established with Joseph Carr as its first Postmaster, the exact date being evasive - ranging from 1817 to 1826, depending upon the text consulted. The Hartsville Post Office was the village venue for mail until delivery service was assumed by the Warminster Post Office around 1960, at which time the Hartsville Post Office was closed.

Joseph Hart was Treasurer of the Neshaminy Warwick Church, and is buried in the cemetery, West of the Church, along with 37 other members of the Hart family. The Church ties to local history owing to its first Pastor, the Reverend William Tennent, who arrived in 1726. In addition to his pastorate duties, he founded the Log College on York Road, about a half mile south of Bristol Road. Acclaimed as the parent of classical education in Bucks County, it was the only school South of New England, and North of Virginia where men could be trained for the ministry. Although derided by locals for its rough beginnings, many prominent Presbyterian ministers and teachers were schooled there, and its graduates founded Princeton University.

During revolutionary times, George Washington's army visited Hartsville, and there encamped from August 10th thru the 23rd 1777. The French General Lafayette met

there with General Washington and received his commission in the Continental Army. It was at this camp on the Little Neshaminy that the flag which Congress adopted on June 14th, 1777, is said to have been flown for the first time by the Continental Army. British troop movements led General Washington's troops through Hartsville enroute to Germantown. Having been informed that the British had returned to New York, he remembered the crossroads with its green fields and abundant water supply. Retracing his steps, he and his company of 18,000 awaited instruction from Congress. During this time, the army occupied the farms of Carr, Ramsey, and Jamison for 13 days. Washington made is headquarters in the Moland House, now known as Headquarters Farm, where he held his councils of war.

Whittingham J. Livesey, an officer of the 104th Regiment, 1000 strong, marched to Hartsville on the 17th of October 1861. 43 years later, his impressions are recorded: "I could see again the men in their bright, clean uniforms, the long lines of guns stacked and glistening in the sunshine, the eleven tables forty feet in length loaded with luxuries and substantials, such as roast beef, veal, mutton, chickens, pigs and boiled ham by the hundred weight, and bread, pies and cakes by the wagonload. I stood there for some time in deep meditation, thinking how many hundreds there were upon that beautiful autumn day, young men in the bloom of life, who partook of their last substantial meal of that description."

After a Labor Day fire in 1923 at Archie Darrah's barn, villagers gathered together and formed the Hartsville Fire Company No. 1 to jointly protect one another from the peril of fire. A stable stall of the Hartsville Hotel served as the first home for the Fire Company, formally established in January of 1924, until the Church Lyceum, built in 1849 was purchased as a new home. Neshaminy Warwick Presbyterian Church agreed to sell the property, then known as the Lecture Room, to the Fire Company in August of 1927 for the sum of \$3000. Vacated by the Fire Company in 1972 as a base of operations, the property continued to be used as a social hall through the late 1980's, and is now privately owned.