

The History of Clarks Green



The Early Years

A branch of the Clark Family came to New England soon after the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth Rock. One branch of the family settled in Guilford, Connecticut and Plainfield, Rhode Island. Deacon William Clark was born in 1757. Deacon Clark became a soldier in the Revolutionary War and was a hero at the Battle of Bunker Hill. He also served with General George Washington at Valley Forge. It was customary at that time to give land grants to war heroes. So, the State of Connecticut gave Deacon William Clark a grant of 800 acres in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

In 1792, Deacon Clark, with his three sons William, Jeremiah and John, set out for Pennsylvania to locate his land grant. They traveled down the Hudson River, over land to the Delaware River, to the Minisink, portaged to the Roaring Brook, and then up Leggetts Creek to what is now the Borough of Clarks Green.

During this time period, this area was part of Luzerne County. While examining his deed, Deacon Clark discovered the State of Connecticut did not have title to the land granted, since the King of England had given all of the territory included in the grant to William Penn. Consequently, Deacon Clarks was required to purchase it. The Deacon and his sons built a log cabin located in what is now the Clarks Green Cemetery.

Deacon Clarks and his sons returned to Connecticut. In 1795, Deacon Clark brought his family of three daughters, six sons and his wife "Aunt Sophy", the first white women to settle west of the Lackawanna River. Since no roads existed the Clark Family's possessions had to be dragged behind in the native American transport style. Prior to the Clark's Settlement the area was considered "Indian Territory". During the latter 1790's, two brothers named Percival, disappeared while trapping. Along the creek, located in the 100 block of South Abington Road, two scalps were found. There arose conjecture those scalps belonged to the trappers.

One of the next families to arrive was that of Elder John Miller, Deacon Clark's friend. It was winter when the family arrived, half starved, as a result of rats having eaten their food supplies. Deacon Clark provided them with food and shelter. The Miller Family soon after settled in Waverly.

In August 1778, soon after the Wyoming Massacre and during the Revolutionary War, Timothy Keyes, James Hocksey and Isaac Tripp were taken prisoners by the local Indian Tribe in the Lackawanna Valley. Keyes and Hocksey were killed and scalped in the Abington woods near the present site of Clarks Green. Tripp later escaped unharmed. It has been reported, Deacon Clark found Keyes and Hocksey's bones in 1803.

By 1821 the new settlers quickly realized a dangerous and unexpected problem, wolves. On a cold early winter day in 1821, Deacon Clark and the other early settlers consisting of Abington farmers and volunteers from as far away as Pittston, gathered along Leggett's Creek in what is now called "the notch" with their pitchforks and rifles to put on a drive. From there the small army spread out and marched all the way to West Mountain toward a pocket near the present-day Hyde Park section of Scranton. Musket shots rang out as the shouts of men wielding pitchforks drove the wolves into the mountain pocket where they were killed. No record exists of the number of wolves killed that cold winter day in "the notch", but legend has it that the area was strewn with the carcasses of wolves along with deer and a few bears that "got in the way." For the rest of the week, the residents of the Abingtons feasted on bear meat and venison obtained in the great wolf hunt. The wolves never returned to the Abingtons from that day on.

Clark went on to establish a very successful farm. He is also credited with establishing the first apple orchard in the area. His apples known as the "Clark Apple" were sold as far away as southern New York. In addition to apples, the Clarks began to tap maple trees for their sap which was used for, among other things, making maple syrup.

William Clark House

123 North Abington Road



Built in 1811, by William Clark, son of Deacon William Clark, this is one of the oldest houses in the Abingtons. It is the most architecturally and historically significant home in Clarks Green. In the 1930s, a team of surveyors were commissioned by the Library of Congress to register the building as a Historic American Building. The home's architecture and design strongly reflect the Clark family's New England heritage. One of the Commissions Architect's called William Clark's House "probably

one of the finest architectural examples of the New England Colonial style.”

There are three Colonial entrances, with elliptical shaped transoms. Most of the doors and windows in the house are still fastened by the original latches and hooks. The home has been occupied by many families over the years and all appear to have had an appreciation for its beauty and architectural significance, keeping it well maintained and preserved.

The house has several unique features. The first floor ceilings are seven feet in height, while the second floor ceilings are eight feet high. This height difference is blamed on the building crew having had too much to drink. Another significant feature is a hidden space in the attic used to conceal runaway slaves as part of the Underground Railroad. If danger arose, attic boards would slide away revealing the space hidden above a second-floor closet. It has been estimated that as many as 300 escaped slaves passed through this home on the way to freedom in Canada.

Jeremiah Clark House

524 South Abington Road



Jeremiah Clark arrived with his father William Clark and brothers William and John in 1795. The family originally lived in a log cabin. The first family member to build a house was his brother William in 1811. Shortly thereafter, Jerimiah Clark built his house on the property located at the corner of South

Abington and Venard Roads site of the present Clarks Green Assembly of God.

By 1812, a primitive road had been built to Clarks Green which followed the old Indian trail. The same year Jeremiah built his home, a site was selected as the “green” in Clarks Green where the local militia marched and practiced. The site was comprised of about an acre and a half of land near Clarks Green Corners. The elevation of this primitive road was higher than the current elevation. During the 1930’s depression, the decision was made to lower the elevation resulting in the building of the stone walls surrounding where the church is now.

In 1819 Jeremiah bought stock and became a voting member of what today known as the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. As a result, Jeremiah was able to have the road in front of his home named the Philadelphia-Great Bend Turnpike. An adjacent road beginning at the Clarks Green Corners, now known as Glenburn Road then named the Waterford Turnpike. Constructed took place from 1821-1822. Tolls were collected at the intersection of North Abington Road and Fairview Road and on Glenburn Road until 1849. Jeremiah thought this would be a good site for a main stopping point. In 1820 Jerimiah built a tavern and boarding house as a stop-over for the stage coaches

traveling the Turnpikes. It cost ninety cents per night for dinner, lodging and breakfast.

A group of men, including Jeremiah Clark, Dr. Bedford of Waverly, one of the first doctors in the area, proposed the idea the railroad should extend north from Scranton to the Abington Heights area. This vision finally came to fruition in 1851 resulting in the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad line from Scranton to Great Bend. The Borough of Clark Summit was named after Jeremiah Clark who had become a director of the DL&W Railroad. The term summit refers to the fact that Clarks Summit was the summit of the railroad.

Jeremiah Clark realized the arrival of the railroad would bring an end to his stage coach stop, so he joined the tavern to the main house in 1851. This large wing contained a Post Office, printing and engraving shop, jewelry store and his office. The first Post Master was Stephen Northup. Today if you view the house you can see where the structures were joined resulting in roof lines not matching and the windows and doors in different alignments.



The Dave and Beth Koehler, originally from Berks County, moved to Clarks Green in 1973 and rented the Jeremiah Clark home then situate at the corner of Abington and Venard Roads.

The Assembly of God Church which owned the property told the Koehler's they were going to start building the church and they had to move.

The Koehler's bought the house from the Church but the house is so big they were limited as to where they could even move it to. One day, the Koehler's were driving down Abington Road toward Scranton and saw a "For Sale" sign on the last property in Clarks Green. The topography of the property gradually went down to a small creek but was sufficient to

accommodate the house. To ready the new location for the house, it was necessary to bulldoze a portion of the property so that the land was street level required to set the house on the property. The house was then transported down the road using both a tractor and a truck guiding it.



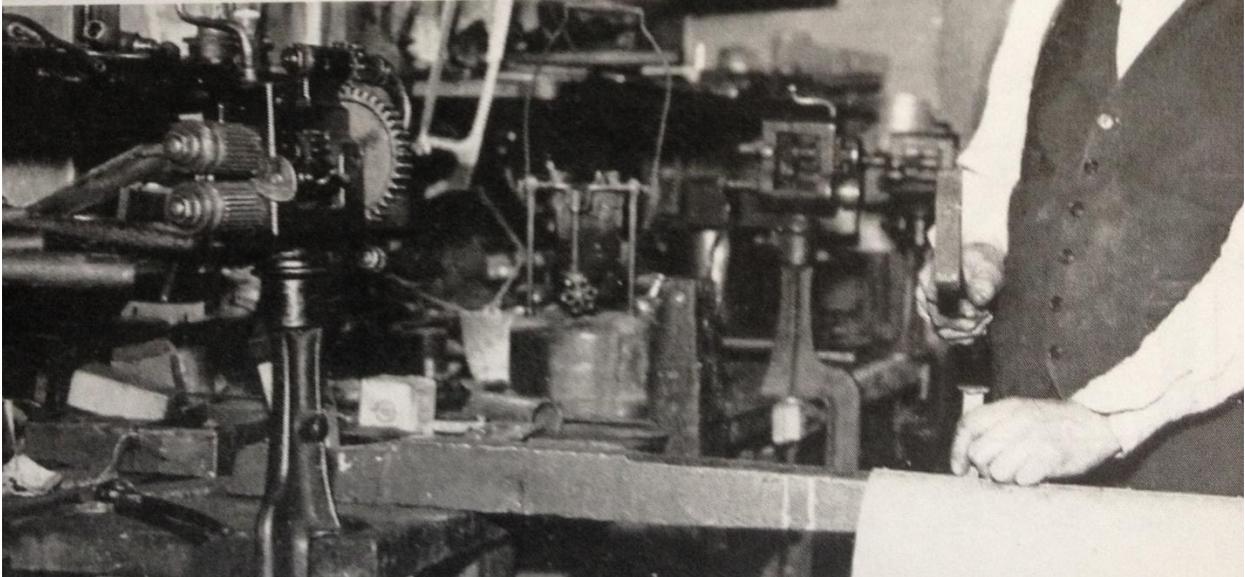
At the time, the Koehler's said, "We love the feeling we have to be living in an historic home that belonged to the family that founded Clarks Green and Clarks Summit. It gives us a sense of pride that we saved a part of Clarks Green's past. Even though we had little cooperation from anyone and we were told by several organizations the move would not be possible, we did it. We did it in spite of all the adversity,"

The move was supervised by Police Chief Joe Solomini and Deputy Jimmy Gray.

The Koehler's moved into the relocated home, during Memorial Day weekend 1976.

History records very little about Jeremiah's brother William and even less about his brother John but Jeremiah was a real achiever. His drive and determination did more to shape the future of the Clarks Green and Clarks Summit than anyone else in the history of the area.

Coon's Hardware Store
(Summit Frameworks)
107-109 Abington Road



Merritt Coon moved to Clarks Green in 1882 and opened a hardware store. Initially, he and his family lived in the apartment above the store until they constructed the home adjacent to and just north of the store.

The store carried a wide variety of merchandise. Early advertisements indicate his stock and trade included agricultural implements, threshers, treadmills, mowing machines, rakes, feed mills, pumps, hardware, tin ware, stoves, wagons, buggies, paint, oils, varnishes, bicycles and even sewing machines.

Merritt Coon died in 1903 and the business was taken over by his son Willard Coon who operated the store until his death in 1948. The hardware store was in continuous operation for 66 years. Since 1948, the building has been home to many distinct businesses, including an antique shop, a gift shop, and a children's clothing store. A portion of the building has been occupied by barbers and bakers.

When Merritt Coon died in 1903, he left the hardware store to his son, Willard and the house on Abington Road to his wife, Martha. Upon her death, the house and its belongings would go to their daughter, Emma Coon.

Upon his death in 1903, Merritt Coon additionally willed his 90-acre farm to his son George. The Coon Farm was located in what is now part of South Abington and Newton Townships

fronting on the easterly side of Summit Lake. An interesting provision of Merritt's required each of his living children, William, George, and Emma, to pay a yearly sum toward their mother's support.

The hardware store building is an example of Greek Revival Architecture and is listed on the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission's Inventory of Historic Places. This building is the oldest commercial building in the Abingtons.

Merritt Coon Home

113 North Abington Road



Constructed by the Merritt Coon in 1885, this Victorian-era home is of the Queen Anne architectural style. The identifying features associated with this style are the steeply pitched roof, patterned shingles; elaborate spindle work on the porch balusters and other features giving the structure a distinctive asymmetrical appearance. In the backyard is a fieldstone lined well relied upon by the Coon family until public water became available.

After Merritt Conn died on November 11, 1903, his widow lived in the house until her death after which their daughter, Emma, inherited it. Pursuant to Merritt Coon's Will, Martha Coon depended on receiving a yearly payment of \$25 from each child to maintain the property until her death. Upon Martha's death in 1921, Emma took control of the house eventually selling it in 1927 for \$14,000.

The Former Mead Hotel

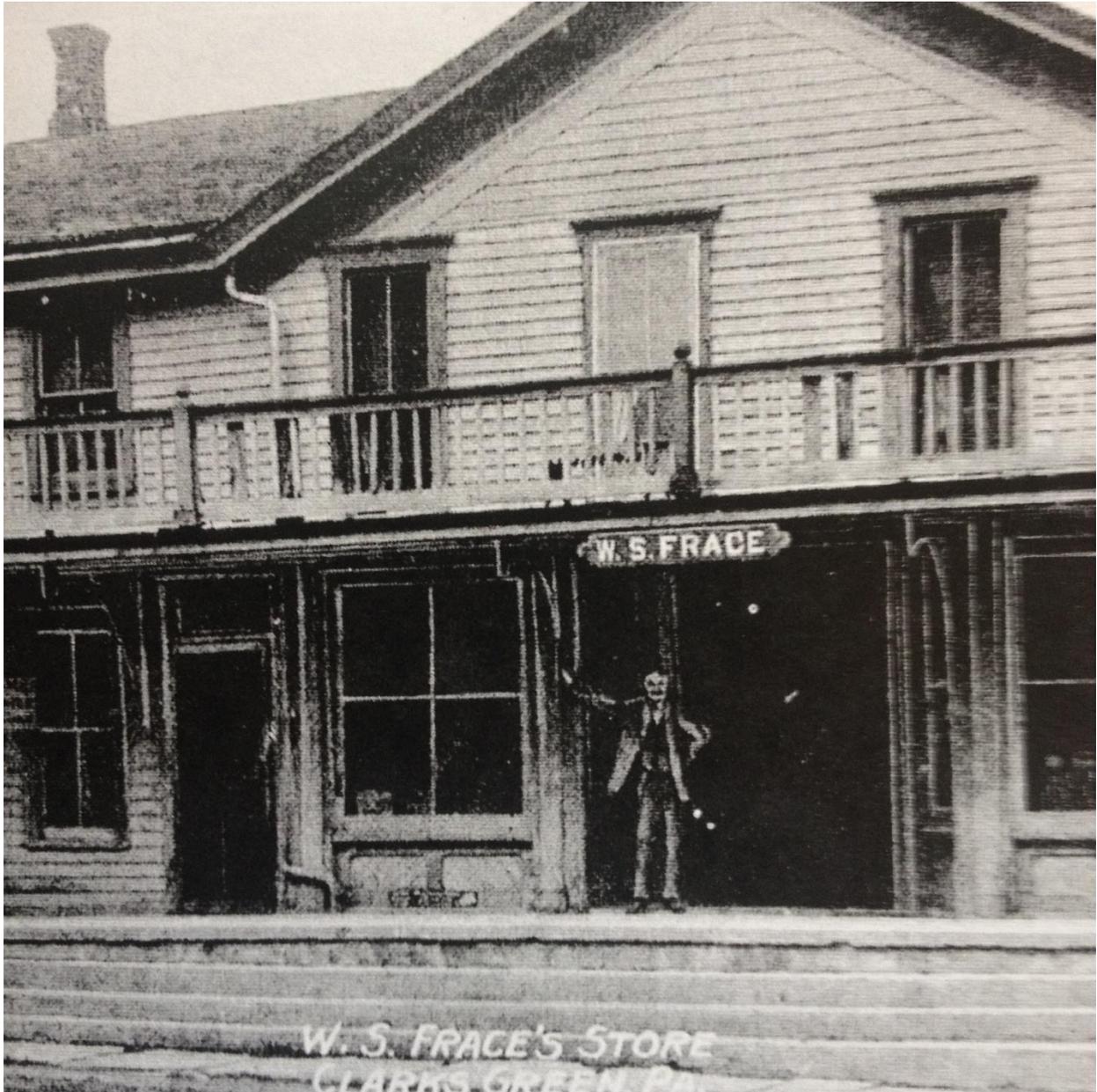
Corner of Grove Street and Glenburn Road



Very little is known about this building's history. It appears on the 1873 Luzerne County map of Clarks Green. It was owned by M. Mead who lived on the 200 block of North Abington Road. It is believed to have been built sometime after the railroad came to Clarks Summit in 1851.

Clarks Green Market

120 North Abington Road



In 1850 Samuel Griffin operated the first store in Abington Township. Over the years the store changed hands several times, it became W. S. Frace store, and later operated by

Willard Baumgardner under the name Clarks Green Market. It was the place to go on a Sunday morning; one side of the store would be lined with paper bags with your name on it, inside would be your favorite paper. Needless to say Willard would remind you that there was plenty of room in the bag for groceries. The building burned to the ground on May 17, 1978.

The First Baptist Church

118 North Abington Road



The first church meeting was held in the home of Deacon William Clark in November 1802. William donated land to erect The First Baptist Church of Clarks Green in 1853. The first meeting house was built in 1852, enlarged and finished in 1853.

The original building was razed and rebuilt on its present site at 118 North Abington Road in 1869.

By the late 1960's the building had been sold several times, finally becoming a flea market. The building was acquired by Waverly Lodge #301 in the early 1970's after a fire destroyed their lodge, which was located above Davis Variety Store in Clarks Summit. They decided to keep the original building rather than replacing it. Construction began in the early 1970's and continued for several years. In the basement there is a well which was excavated by hand in 1853.



In 2014, in honor of Clarks Green Borough's Centennial Celebration, the Lodge donated the bell which hung in the belfry of the church to the Borough. The bell was cast in 1869 by the Meneely Foundry of West Troy, New York. The bell was restored by Clarks Green Mayor William Thorburn and rededicated at its present location in front of the Clarks Green Borough Building.

CLARKS GREEN CEMETERY



Clarks Green Cemetery was the site of the Clark family's original log cabin when the family first settled here in 1797. The cemetery was established by the Clark family in the early 1800s in the small area where the flagpole now stands. Around 1860, the Clark family announced they wanted to divest themselves of the cemetery. A group of local citizens and businessmen established what is now known as the Clarks Green Cemetery Association and purchased the land from the Clark Family. The Cemetery's incorporation took place on November 20, 1862.

Clarks Green Academy Schoolhouse

216 Glenburn Road



On April 17, 1866 the land on Glenburn Road was bought by the Abington School District from Stephen and Cornelia Northup for \$150.00 to establish a school.

This was the first substantial building constructed in the Abingtons specifically as a school, consisting of three classrooms. Prior to this construction, classes were usually conducted in log cabins, private homes or churches. The school

was built at a cost of \$2,000.00 and was called the Clarks Green Academy. Recent remodeling shows that much of the original building was built with used lumber from older buildings.

The school remained in use through 1892, when the building and property were sold by then South Abington School District of Lackawanna County to N. S. Davis for \$600.00.

The building became a private residence, passing through a number of hands.

Glenburn Road Houses

The Northrup Family home was located at 113 Glenburn Road. The structure dates to the 1830's. Stephan Northrup was appointed in 1851 the first postmaster in the Abington's.



The small gray home at 129 Glenburn Road was built in the 1840's in the Greek revival architectural style which was a

dominant style for American domestic architecture during the period between 1830-1850.



The house at 128 Glenburn Road is thought to have been constructed circa 1840 and was moved to its present location in 1868. The building's original site was located at the northeast corner of Hall Avenue and North Abington Road. The move was accomplished using horses to slide the house on rollers up Glenburn Road. Interestingly, when the house arrived at its new location, the movers had no way to turn it. If you study the

structure carefully you will notice the back door has become the front door and the original front door now faces the side yard.



Rolin Parker Crellin Home

206 Glenburn Road



This home was built in 1835, 2-2 ½ stories, with wood clapboard in the Adams Architectural style, a variant of the Federal style. It is believed the structure was built by either a member of the Clark or Stone family.

Mr. Rolin Parker Crellin, a lumberman from White Haven, extensively remodeled the structure in 1929. In addition to making bigger rooms out of what he considered too many small

rooms, this was also the time indoor plumbing and electric wiring were installed. BY 1929 their garden which was an apple orchard became overgrown with weeds and brush.

In 1940, Rolin's daughter, Elizabeth Crellin, continued her father's remodeling by enclosing an outdoor porch to create a sitting room. By the 1940s, the former apple orchard was transformed into beautiful garden becoming one of the most attractive bird sanctuaries in the Abingtons. Eventually, the area where a portion of the garden was situated was subdivided and sold to create the residential lot directly to the north.

The house underwent another major renovation in 2012 by the current owner.

Clarks Green Borough

The land Deacon William Clark originally purchased was part of Tunkhannock Township, Luzerne County, until 1806 when a portion of that township became Abington Township. Abington Township was further divided in 1867 into North and South Abington Townships. Lackawanna County was itself incorporated and divided from Luzerne County on August 19, 1878.

Clarks Green was incorporated as a Borough on May 12, 1914. The first Borough Officers were: Burgess Jacob R. Schlager and Council, Walter Loder, William Swallow, Bert Wheeler, Silas White, L. Matthew, and I. Jones.

The first meeting of the Clarks Green Borough Council was held in the election room above Frace's Store at 8:00PM on June 2, 1914. Council signed a lease for the election room its first year. Rent was \$35 per year, providing that the room was repainted and an electric light was installed. The Store became known as Clarks Green Market in later years.

At slightly more than a half square mile in size, Clarks Green immediately became Lackawanna County's smallest sized municipality. Its government was also the poorest. Money and credit were so tight at that time, one of the newly elected

councilmen had to personally loan the government \$500 so it could begin operations.

In 1932, to serve a growing community, a new Borough Building was constructed at 104 North Abington Road.

Clarks Green has what is considered the most interesting mix of street names of any community in the area. For example, in the College Park section of Clarks Green, there are streets named after Ivy League schools: Princeton, Harvard, Cornell, Yale and Vassar.

Near College Park, just south of Fairview, lies another unusual community of names. The streets in this area are named after small animals. In descending order of charm, they are: Rabbit Run, Squirrel Run and Possum Way. Of course, possum are somewhat unusual in that they are only one of two marsupials native to North America.

Throughout subsequent years many streets have been renamed. Fairview Road was once known as Clearview Road. The portion of East Grove Street in Clarks Green was called Clarks Green Road. Likewise, the portion of Highland Avenue in Clarks Green had a different name, Marion Street. Maple Street starts at North Abington Road and runs west for two blocks to the Clarks Green Cemetery. Not surprisingly, Maple Street was formerly called Cemetery Road.

Abington and Glenburn Roads have actually had a number of names. Starting as a toll road in 1818, Abington Road was originally the Philadelphia and Great Bend Turnpike. Later it was called Waverly Road before receiving its current Abington Road name. Glenburn Road also started as a toll road. In 1823 the road was known as the Abington-Waterford Turnpike. In later years it was also known as Arlington Street before receiving its current name, Glenburn Road.

Venard Road was named after Theophane Venard, a Maryknoll missionary, who was martyred in Vietnam in 1860.

Finally, like most communities, Clarks Green has its share of streets named after its founders and early settlers. For example, Clark Street, obviously, named after original settler Deacon William Clark. Jeremiah Clark, Deacon Clark's eldest son, married Sophia Hall thus Hall Street. When Jeremiah Clarks' son, Jeremiah, married Amy Tedrick. Tedrick Street was named in her honor. Jeremiah and Amy had a daughter named Sophia. In 1894, Sophia Clark married a doctor by the name of Benjamin Evans. Evans Street is named after him. In this way, the Clarks and the families of their spouses left an indelible mark on their community.

Many people question why Clarks Green is spelled without an apostrophe, the reason is in 1914 apostrophes were not used.

In 2014 Clarks Green Borough celebrated its Centennial. Funds were raised by the Clarks Green Clock Committee for the purchase of a 13 foot tall Victorian Street Clock which is located on Abington Road near the corner with Glenburn Road.



On the weekend of May 24TH the Borough Centennial Committee held special events around town. Residents and Descendents of the Clark family gathered to celebrate in the Borough Park.



The opening ceremony began with members of Waverly Lodge #301 ringing the restored historic bell which they had donated to the Borough.



Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars performed the flag ceremony.



This was followed by the dedication of a plaque to honor the veterans.



Additional events held that Saturday included a 5k run, health fair, bake sale, free pork barbeque with live entertainment provided by the barber shop quartet, local singers, and historical photo display.



Also featured was an historical walking tour, narrated by Council Members and assisted by members of Queen Victoria's Court who dressed in period costumes.



A tour of the Clarks Green Cemetery featured the appearance by Dearly Departed historical reenactors.



On Sunday, the celebration continued at the Our Lady of Peace Grade School grounds. Entertainment featured multiple musical groups, an ice cream social, picnic food, a pie eating contest, sack races, face painting, and children activities.



Today Clarks Green has become a classic suburban community. Fortunately, its residents are more prosperous and

comfortable than anything Deacon Clark or his sons could have imagined.

CLARKS GREEN BOROUGH

Present Day

Since Deacon William Clark first settled here in 1792 the Borough has undergone many changes. What started out a log cabin high on a hill surrounded by hostile Indians and wolves slowly developed into the original commercial hub of the Abington's. Later the Borough transformed into a quiet tree lined bedroom community with a small commercial. Its present population is 1,465, covering .58 square miles, with 622 homes. The per capita income is the second highest in the county; the median home price is \$183,300. Its government consist of a Mayor, seven Council Members, a Borough Secretary, Treasurer, and Tax Collector. The Borough also maintains its own Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Boards.

The Borough is a portion of the Abington School District which is rated best in Lackawanna County. It is a member of the Abington Area Library System, Abington Area Waste Water Authority, Abington Area Council of Governments and Abington Area Joint Recreational Board.

Clarks Green Municipal taxes remain among the lowest in the county. Police Service and Fire Protection are contracted from Clark Summit Borough; refuse collection is

provided by an exclusive private hauler. The Borough's crime rate is less than half the national average.

The initial success of this community can be largely attributed to its founders and early settlers, people like Deacon William Clark his son Jeremiah, the Coon's family, and the Northup's. Its present day success is owed to the dedicated people who served their community either through public service or private community groups. These diverse groups together make Clarks Green Borough one of the most desirable places to live in Lackawanna County.

Written in 2017 by William Thorburn, John Earley, and Lynn Earley.