

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, February 12, 2007

**Kennett Square in the 1930s:** For residents of Yorklyn, the epitome of shopping and entertainment would have been center-city Philadelphia, but most did not visit more than once annually. Downtown Wilmington also had some fine stores and movie theaters and was accessible via car or short line bus. But Kennett Square, just four miles away, was "our town," 10 minutes by car and 15 minutes by bus. The stores there could fill almost anyone's need, and the Auditorium Theatre, in one side of the fire house on State Street, was a much-loved children's destination. It usually cost 35 cents for a first-run (but three-week-old) movie in the evening, with tickets as low as 15 cents for children at a Saturday matinee. The *Kennett News and Advertiser* and the *Kennett Advance*, both weeklies, had gossipy columns on Yorklyn as well as Hockessin.

Until 1936, when the Hockessin Fire Company was founded, our nearest protection was the Kennett Fire Company. There were always two and sometimes three drug stores, each with a soda fountain. Connors' was the most permanent, and its location at the northwest corner of State and Union Streets was in the very center of activity. The best and most permanent restaurant was the Kennett Kandy Kitchen on West State Street, whose proprietor, Alex D. Cozantis, worked about 20 hours a day to run a respectable, reasonable place to buy food, ice cream, and homemade candy. The most expensive thing on the menu was a full-course prime rib dinner for about \$1.25. He and his wife and five children lived over the restaurant, and all the kids had to earn their keep by working in the Kandy Kitchen while attending Kennett School. Alex never made much money from his candy business, as he gave most of it away at holiday times to a multitude of charities. There were usually three barber shops, the two staying in business the longest being those run by the Burton family and by John Dettori. Ralph Schuibbeo was a men's tailor and had a sports shop, and Jim Tingle ran a fine men's clothing store. There were several hardware stores, John H. Voorhees's, Kennett Hardware owned by Joe Kanofsky, and Gawthrop's Lumber Yard. There was an American Store (forerunner of Acme Markets) and an A & P, both in the center of town. Frank Pierce and his sons, Duer and Max, had a fine meat market with their own slaughter house south of the borough. Cyrus L. Thomas was a jeweler, and William S. Worrall was everyone's undertaker. His sister, Mary T. "Miss Minnie" Worrall operated a dry goods, ladies' apparel, and furniture store. J. R. Hosch opened a large variety store, which later became Sheldon's. There were several building contractors, notably William H. Worrall and Paul Hannum. The two banks had combined into the National Bank and Trust Company of Kennett Square, and there were two Building & Loan Associations.

Auto dealers and repair garages flourished. Bill McCord sold Pontiacs and Buicks, Dave Mason had Chevrolets, Tom Worrall had the Ford agency, and Monroe L. Nute had Chrysler and Plymouth. Bob Ferguson sold Dodges and Plymouths. The Tunis Brothers had a farm implement and tractor business on Cypress Street. Jacob Noznesky, Kennett's well-known "junk man," operated the Royal Garage, and the Mohican Garage also had storage and repair services. Bill McSparran had his auto repair business in an old livery stable on North Broad Street. Bill Allaband was an excellent auto-body specialist on West Linden Street. Known as the "Mushroom Capital of the World," Kennett had several support businesses for the many area growers. It was also a wholesale rose and carnation growing center, with such firms as J. Howard Thompson and Sons, P. J. Yeatman and Sons, Frank T. Way, Meadowcroft and Arden, the Murphy brothers (Elmer and Dick), and Charles Walter succeeded by Frank Palmer, to name a few. Well-respected retail flower shops were the House of Flowers operated by James Edge and Scott McMurtrie, and William Swayne, Florist, later owned by Roland Barber. Manufacturing firms included the Good Roads Machinery Corp., J. B. Swayne and Brother, the Fibre Specialty Mfg. Company, and the Phenolite Division, the latter two subsidiaries of National Vulcanized Fibre Company of Yorklyn. The Marshalls shopped in Kennett Square frequently.