

# **Historic Carversville Society local history collection**

**03**

**Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Faith  
Charlton through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden  
Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.**

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Last updated on July 16, 2013.

Historic Carversville Society

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Historic Carversville Society
<b>Creator</b>	Historic Carversville Society
<b>Title</b>	Historic Carversville Society local history collection
<b>Call number</b>	03
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	1970-1990
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1793-2013
<b>Extent</b>	3.5 linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	A prime example of a 19th-century farming community, Carversville in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, was one of the first districts to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. The Historic Carversville Society local history collection, 1793-2013 (bulk 1970-1990), contains various materials, including oral histories, photographs, newspaper clippings, ephemera, and two deeds, that document Carversville local history.

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## Biography/History

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"The rural village of Carversville [Bucks County, Pennsylvania] was a Lenni Lenape gathering place which they called Aquetong, or "many springs", over 300 years ago when William Penn granted tracts to

his steward, James Harrison, and to Joseph Pike. Harrison, who never saw the property, deeded his 500 acres to Randall Blackshaw and the Pike tract was divided into four 100-acre parcels.

"The village was first surveyed in 1702 after families had begun arriving on horseback. By 1730 roads had been cut into the forests so settlers could haul out wool and farm produce and bring in lumber that was being rafted down the Delaware River from Upper Pennsylvania.

"Originally called Indian Village, the town was later named Mill Town, later Milton and finally, in 1833, Carversville. The latter name was borrowed from the postmaster whose last name was Carver.

"A center of commerce from its inception, Carversville boasted such diverse enterprises as Stovers Mill, the Fretz Mill, the Carver Mill, the Suggin Bag manufactory, a sash and blind mill and the famous Roram Hat factory.

"In 1859 the Excelsior Normal Institute was founded on the hill overlooking the Village. The five-story stone building became a well-known school which turned out scholars until it fell on hard times in the late 19th century. Until its demise, students could peer down at the thriving village served by stagecoaches from the railroads at Doylestown and nearby Bull's Island, N.J., just three miles away. When the teaching ended, the pleasure began as the building became a resort. Its lifespan, too, was short-lived. The final use for the property was as the Carversville Christian Orphanage. The building was razed in the mid 1900s, but its legacy is intact thanks to the research of its [late] tenant, Edwin "Ned" Harrington, the Village's official historian.

"The Presbyterian Church, founded in 1872 has disbanded; the building is now a private home. The older Christian Church (1838) still serves the spiritual and social needs of many of the villagers...

"Carversville is a prime example of a 19th Century farming community and this earned it National Register of Historic Places status from the Department of Interior in 1979. Officially, the Village became "historic." Carversville was one of the first districts to be so honored and it is now under the protection of federal, state and local laws that regulate changes made to any building which may destroy its historic value."

### **Bibliography:**

Quoted text from "History." Accessed April 16, 2013. <http://www.carversville.com/history/index.html>

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## **Scope and Contents**

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This collection contains various materials, including oral histories, photographs, newspaper clippings, ephemera, and two deeds, that document Carversville local history.

The oral histories consist of a few DVDs and a VHS tape of video interviews, circa 2005-2013, with Edwin (Ned) Harrington, Dick Magill and Eleanor Price (long-time friends and companions), and a second interview with Dick Magill titled, "My Service in WWII."

The photographs, circa 1920-2010, are primarily stored in binders and include original photographs as well as a fair amount of copies. Many of the photographs are identified. Also included are a few oversized posters.

The newspaper clippings and ephemera (mostly pamphlets), circa 1985-2005, relate to the history of Carversville, the Historic Carversville Society, other local historical societies, and historic preservation. The clippings are roughly organized chronologically.

The collection also includes two original deeds, dated 1793 and 1796.

Also on site are several VHS copies of "Film of Bucks County 1977," and CDs that include photographs of building interiors of Carversville properties.

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## **Administrative Information**

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Historic Carversville Society

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### **Sponsor**

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

### **Access Restrictions**

Contact Historic Carversville Society for information about accessing this collection.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition Note**

Materials acquired by the Historic Carversville Society at various times.

### **Processing Information Note**

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact Historic Carversville Society directly for more information.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Geographic Name(s)

- Bucks County (Pa.)
- Carversville (Pa.)

### Personal Name(s)

- Harrington, Edwin, 1920-2009
- Magill, Richard, 1917-2011
- Price, Eleanor, 1918-2010

### Subject(s)

- Genealogy
- Local history
- Oral histories
- Photographs