

Marple Historical Society local history collection

01

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

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Marple Historical Society

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Summary Information

Repository	Marple Historical Society
Creator	Marple Historical Society
Title	Marple Historical Society local history collection
Call number	01
Date	1685-circa 2000
Extent	5 linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Marple Township in Delaware County, Pennsylvania was settled by English members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in 1683. It was primarily agrarian for most of its history, until after World War II when improvement to roads, public transportation and the availability of the automobile made Marple Township a suburban community. The Marple Historical Society local history collection, 1685-circa 2000, consists of various primary- and secondary-source materials that document the history of Marple Township and the people, businesses, and organizations in the township and vicinity. Featured in the collection are 17th century deeds, ledgers from the Bonsall Brothers general store (1873-1918), and 1930s military photographs.</p>

Biography/History

"In 1683 a small group of Quakers, from the Cheshire region of England, landed at the City of Chester in the Province of Pennsylvania. These members of the Society of Friends had determined to seek a new way life, away from the religious persecution [they had experienced]...in...England, and settle in the new land of William Penn's Holy experiment. Of these early "[F]irst [P]urchasers," as they were known, three men: Francis Stanfield, Jonathon Hayes and John Howell were the largest landowners in what was to become Marple Township [Delaware County, Pennsylvania]. Stanfield, whose youngest daughter had been born in Marpool, England, may have been responsible for providing the name of the township. These three men played a prominent roll in the development of Marple Township. They helped to determine the Township's borders and roads as well as providing for a collection of a tax for assistance to the poor. Since Marple Township was originally a part of Chester County, Jonathan Hayes served as a justice on the Chester County Court.

"...[Prior to the American Revolutionary War] many of the early farms, or plantations as they were then known, in the township gave way to trades. With an increase in population,...weavers, millers, joiners and tanners began to develop to serve the enlarging community.

"Although no action took place in Marple during the Revolutionary War, the people in the community... [were affected by] the Continental and the British armies. Since it was against the Quaker faith to take an oath or participate in a conflict, many of the plantations in the township were raided by both armies... [resulting in] the loss of food, clothing and livestock.

"...[After the war,] [t]he major focus of the area was still farming and those industries that supported an agrarian life style. The center of social life remained the churches in the area. In 1834, a group of local residents belonging to the Middletown Presbyterian Congregation decided to build a church of their own in Marple, making Marple Presbyterian church the first and oldest church in the township.

"...[In the later half of the 19th century], Marple Township experienced a leveling off of population growth. This may be attributed to the fact that most of the job opportunities in industry and manufacturing were centered in communities along the Delaware River and transportation to these areas was limited. It took until the turn of the 20th century and the construction of the rail transportation to the western suburbs to reverse this trend.

"The largest period of development in the township came at the conclusion of World War II. After the war, resources for manufacturing and building became readily available. Improvement to roads, public transportation and the availability of the automobile made Marple Township a suburban community."

Bibliography:

Quoted text from: Marple Historical Society. "History of Marple Township." Accessed July 8, 2014. <http://www.marplehistoricalsociety.org/history.html>.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of various primary- and secondary-source materials that document the history of Marple Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and the people, businesses, and organizations in the township and vicinity.

Primary-source papers include approximately ten deeds and indentures (1685-19th century) and several ledgers, such as: Charles A. Locher prescription book (1879-1880), an account book (1840s), Flood family account book (1782-1793, unbound), Samuel Taylor ledger reused by Marple Township as receipt book (1859-1893), and Broomall post office money orders register (1931). The largest cluster of primary-source papers are seven volumes of accounts and daybooks from the Bonsall Brothers general store, 1873-1918.

Photographs depicting Marple Township scenery, buildings, and its inhabitants, circa 1900-1980, can also be found in the collection. Of interest is a set of photographs, circa 1930s, including family photographs as well as images of servicemen abroad (pre-World War II Pearl Harbor and other sites).

Additionally, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, and maps are present in the collection. There are newspapers from the late 18th to mid-19th centuries, notably original issues of *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser* from 1791.

Secondary-source materials in this collection include Massey family genealogy research binders (most compiled by Judge Frank A. Massey, 1974); a doctoral dissertation on 18th century English kitchen gardens in Eastern Pennsylvania by Clarissa F. Dillon (1986, 2002); and research files on period crafts, early Quaker clothing, recipes, and other historical topics, with research articles, instruction sheets, workshop summaries, and related materials.

Also available on-site is documentation of the historic Thomas Massey House, including restoration blueprints, and photographs depicting the house before, during, and after its restoration, which took place circa 1965-1975.

Administrative Information

Marple Historical Society

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

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 Marple Historical Society for information about accessing this collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Materials collected over time by Marple Historical Society from various sources.

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 Marple Historical Society directly for more information.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Delaware County (Pa.)
- Marple (Pa. : Township)

Subject(s)

- Genealogy
- Local history