

W. P. A. 1936 HISTORIC SURVEY

TINICUM TOWNSHIP

[2014-2016 UPDATES SHOWN IN SQUARE BRACKETS OR BOLD]

This Township was removed from Ridley in 1780. Like Chester and Chichester, it has a history extending back to 1643, when the Swedish Governor, John Printz, established the seat of Government on this Island, the beginning of Pennsylvania history.

[Revised 7/30/2016.]

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Tinicum Township
Marker No. 1

LANDING PLACE OF GOVERNOR PRINTZ

The first permanent settlement of the Swedes in Pennsylvania was at Essington, the landing place of Governor Printz. The Swedes settled here in 1643. On the Corinthian Yacht Club property stands a monolith erected to Governor Johan Printz, Governor of New Sweden from 1643 to 1653. It was erected by the Swedish Colonial Society June 14, 1923. Printz Hall was burned in 1645, rebuilt and again destroyed early in the nineteenth century, about 1826. It stood in front of the Rosedale Inn. (1936)

[2016: Today the site is Governor Printz Park at 101 Taylor Avenue.]



Pennsylvania historical marker at Governor Printz Park in Tinicum Township

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 2

FORT NEW GOTTENBURG

The site of this Fort is believed to have been on the Delaware River at Essington some two hundred yards west of the present Corinthian Yacht Club at 300 W. Second Street and to have been in existence between 1638 and 1655.

[2016: This picture below, taken from the Delaware River, shows where the fort would have been on the right, near the entrance of Darby Creek.]



Riverbank site of Fort New Gottenburg

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 3

QUARANTINE HOSPITAL (THE LAZARETTO)

This building located at Wanamaker Avenue and Delaware River was erected in 1800 and used as a hospital until 1893. Then it was used by the Pennsylvania Athletic Club until 1916 when it was purchased by the Essington School of Aviation, and is still being used by said school (1936).

[2014: There are three deeds for the Lazaretto: November 1, 1799 (E-151) John Taylor six acres and 28 perches cost 1235 British Pounds.; November 22, 1799 (E-152) Mary Norris of Chester for 5 shillings, unknown size and houses and buildings. A last deed (E-617) is for the Taylor Estate by his heirs for the above same six acres. The building still stands at Wanamaker Avenue and Second Street and is now owned by Tinicum Township. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.]



The Lazaretto Quarantine Hospital on the shores of the Delaware River

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 4

HOTEL TINICUM

This hotel originally known as the Essington Inn was located at the northwest corner of Carre Avenue and Second Street was built in 1884 and burned down in 1927. It was sold [690-478] to Samuel Miller, the tenant for \$31,000.00 in January 28, 1926. A new building now 211 Second St. was built in 1927, and now (1936) is known as Tinicum Inn.

[2016: The newer building still stands today at 211 Carre Avenue in Essington and is now J. D. McGillicuddy's Tavern.]



The former Essington Inn or Hotel Tinicum of 1927 in Essington

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 5

EPISCOPAL CHURCH [aka ESSINGTON READING ROOM]

A Mrs. Box built a meeting hall at the northwest corner of Wanamaker Avenue and Third Street, Essington, in 1892. The building was also known as the Essington Reading Room. In 1929 a stone building was erected on the same spot and the wooden structure moved to the side of the new building. This wooden section is now used as a meeting place for Boy Scouts (1936).

[2014: No deed evidence has been found to confirm the 1892 meeting hall. Robert C. H. Brock of 1612 Walnut Street Philadelphia bought (Y9-360) on December 7, 1901 for one dollar, a lot from the Tinicum Land Company at the corner of Second and Marsden Streets (now Third and Wanamaker). On the deed, Brock is the sole trustee for the "Memorial Church of St. John the Evangelist." Brock in the Spring of 1902 built a chapel and reading room as a memorial for his deceased son, Colman Brock. Robert Brock was a prominent member of the Corinthian Yacht Club. Although completed in June of 1902, it remained empty until mid-June of 1903. At that time the reading room and the Episcopal Chapel opened. The chapel was run by Rev. Edward Hardcastle of Philadelphia (based on *Chester Times* articles on June 13, 1902; May 14, 1903; and June 13, 19 and 20, 1903). After the 1929-1930 construction of the stone church, the rectory followed in 1954 and the church was incorporated in 1958. The Church of St. John the Evangelist, still stands at 16 West Third Street in Essington.]



The 1929-1930 Memorial Church of St. John the Evangelist today

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 6

RIVERSIDE HOTEL

This hotel was built c.1880 on two acres at the northeast corner of Taylor Avenue and the Delaware River. William and Jennie Miller of Tinicum purchased [C4-373] the property of 2 acres from Y. S. and Latitia Walter on March 20, 1876 for \$5,000.00. Miller was the owner until August 17, 1907 when it was purchased [U12-22] by Charles Walber for \$15,000.00, who is the present owner. Now known as Walber's Hotel (1936).

[2014: Today the c.1880 building is built into a Holiday Inn Express at 101 Taylor Avenue.]



The old Riverside Hotel

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 7

ESSINGTON POST OFFICE

The original site of the Essington Post Office was in the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Station which was located on the west side of Wanamaker Street on the south side of the tracks. It was located there from when it started on July 19, 1891 to 1910. The post office was then, 1910, moved to a site on Wanamaker Street fifty feet from the northwest corner of Third Street, where it is at present (1936) located.

[2014: Today the post office is located at 408 Powhattan Avenue in Essington.]



The current Essington Post Office (not the 1910 one) today

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 8

PUBLIC SCHOOL

In April of 1869 this school was erected on the south side of Island Road one square southeast of North Essington Station. The property of 25 1/2 square perches had been bought [F2-293] on October 8, 1857 from lawyer Aubrey and Mary Rose Smith for one dollar, but was not built for 12 years. On April 20, 1869 Smith sold [03-165] 36 and 9/10 square perches on Island Rd. to the school board with "improvements thereon erected" for one dollar.

[2014: The school, with the ground, was sold (387-554) to the Westinghouse Corporation on February 18, 1916 for \$45,000.00. The school site is now a Wawa Store at 600 S. Governor Printz Boulevard and Jansen Avenue.]



Site of the old Public School

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 9

LESTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

This school was built in 1918 at the northeast corner of Third and Powhattan Avenue at what is now 320 S. Governor Printz Boulevard. It is the only school in Lester at this writing (1936).

[2015: In June of 1918 the Tinicum Township School District purchased numerous lots from 8 different people to build both the Lester and Essington Elementary schools. This school closed in 1965 and became the Interboro School District Bus depot and had some administrative offices there. Today the old Lester Public School is a plumbing business at 3rd Avenue and Powhattan Avenue.]



The former Lester Public School as it looks today

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 10

SWEDES CHAPEL AND BURIAL GROUNDS

The Swedes' Chapel, situated to the east of the Corinthian Yacht Club, was a log building erected by Governor John Printz about 1646, the first rector being Rev. John Campanius. A burial ground adjoined the church, the first burial being in October 1646. The site of the chapel and burial ground is now (1936) part of the Corinthian Yacht Club property. The chapel was torn down about 1700.

[2016: Some references say the chapel was torn down in 1800, not 1700. Today, the site of the chapel is Governor Printz Park at 2nd Avenue and Taylor Avenue in Essington.]



Site of the Swedes Chapel and Burial Grounds

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 11

FIRST SCHOOL IN ESSINGTON

In 1843 Elizabeth Griffiths had a school in the "Dutch House" which was located near the Lazaretto, about two hundred feet southeast from the southeast corner of Second Street and Wanamaker Avenue. The name "Little Dutch House" was given to the building because of its being used to quarantine the crew and passengers of a Dutch vessel. In 1847 the school was abandoned at this location and a wooden building next to the Swedish Church was used as a school until 1854. It was located on the present Corinthian Yacht Club grounds. In 1855 this school was abandoned and a new building erected on the west side of Wanamaker Avenue about seventy-five north of Second Street, which was rebuilt in 1918.

[NOTE: Most of the above information is from Henry Graham Ashmead's 1884 History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, which he probably got first hand. These schools all appear to have been rented; no deeds have been found for any schools in Tinicum prior to 1857. No maps show any school in this location.]

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 12

SAINT JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

This church was built in 1904 and is located at the northeast corner of Fourth Avenue and Iroquois Avenue. This church was chartered [Charter E-410] on November 9, 1920 as the Tinicum Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church. On September 8, 1921 the Westinghouse Corporation sold [493-70] a lot to the church for one dollar. The lot was by Seneca Street and Jensen Avenue. It is a wooden structure and is the only church in Lester now (1936). Fifty members is the total enrollment (1936).

[2014: A new brick church building was built on the lot in 1921 and still stands at 601 Seneca Avenue in Essington. The earlier wooden church building and Fourth Avenue and Iroquois Avenue no longer exists.]



Today's Saint John's Tinicum Lutheran Church in Essington

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 13

ST. MARGARET MARY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

This church was erected at the northwest corner of Island Road and Wanamaker Avenue, Essington, on June 5th, 1921. Prior to this time the building was the post office at Hog Island. It is the only complete building removed in sections on rollers from Hog Island. Rev. Dennis A. Coughlin was the first rector. (1936)

[2014: On May 26, 1922 the Max Stankiewicz Estate sold (540-272) property to Cardinal Dennis J. Dougherty. This deed could not be found, book and page are wrong. The old church building no longer exists. The current church building was completed in 1950 along with the church school. The convent was completed in 1954 and the rectory in 1958. The parish school closed in 1990 due to declining enrollment. The church still stands at 500 Wanamaker Avenue. This year (2014) the church closed and merged with St. Gabriel's in Norwood.]



The 1950 St. Margaret Mary Roman Catholic Church building

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 14

LOG HOUSE

This log house was located on the present Corinthian Yacht Club grounds at 300 W. Second Street from 1643 to 1893, with a springhouse, and was about one hundred feet north of the river. The Springhouse is still standing (1936), but not in use.

[2014: In Essington. The springhouse was torn down about 2007.]



This historic photo, taken looking west, shows the Log House as it once was

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 15

UNITED STATES CUSTOM HOUSE

This custom house was erected in 1801 and was located between Wanamaker Avenue and Taylor Street, near the river front in Essington. After one hundred years of service, the brick building was leased to the Essington Shipyard Company in 1919, which at this writing (1936) is still occupying same.

[2014: In Essington. The old Custom House building has been torn down and the property is now vacant.]



Old view of Sheppard's (or Essington) Shipyard in Essington; the old Custom House in in background

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 16

LOG HOUSE

This log house was located for over two hundred years on the west aide of Poulsen Avenue about three hundred feet north of the river front. It was supposed to have been the first house erected in what is now known as Essington. It was demolished in 1920 by the Westinghouse Corporation to make way for a canal.

[2016: In the 1909 Mueller Atlas map east of Crum Creek, the building is shown on the east side of Poulson Ave. above 2nd Street extended. The map shows no buildings on the west side of Poulson Ave. Part of the canal still exists below 2nd Street east of Poulson Ave.; the rest has been filled in. The site of the log house is now a parking lot.]



The Log House as it once looked

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 17

SWEDISH GRAVEYARD

A burial place was laid out by Governor Johan Printz on the river front between the present Corinthian Yacht Club at 300 W. Second Street and the Rosedale Inn in Essington in September 1646. The first corpse buried here was that of Catherine, the daughter of Andrew Hanson on October 28, 1646, being the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude. The graveyard has been worn away by the washing of the tide. This is now (1936) a part of the lawn of the Corinthian Yacht Club at 300 W. 2nd St., Essington.



The Corinthian Yacht Club in Essington

Tinicum Township
Marker No. 18

ROSEDALE INN

This inn was built by Gilbert Griffin Sr. in 1893 on tract at the southwest corner of Taylor Avenue and Second Street. The inn was in possession of the Griffin family until 1927 at which time it was demolished. At the present time (1936), this site is vacant ground.

[2014: In Essington. On June 25, 1928 trustees of trust, Henry D. Paxson et al. from the Tinicum Improvement Co. sold (821-145) to the Swedish Colonial Society for one dollar the 7 acre property. This property of 7 acres is now the Governor Printz Park at 101 Taylor Avenue. On December 18, 1937 the Swedish Colonial Society sold (1047-616) by Act 271 of 1937 signed May 28, 1937 the 7 acres to the Pennsylvania Historical Commission. The present park was created through the donation of land by the Swedish-Colonial Society to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of New Sweden in 1938. This 7 acre park was formally dedicated by Prince Bertil of Sweden on June 29, 1939. The Park was declared a National Historical Landmark in 1961. On November 13, 2003 the State of Pennsylvania sold (3009-1368) the 7.224 acres to Tinicum Township for one dollar.]



Vintage photo showing the Rosedale Inn prior to its demolition