

HISTORY BRIEF

In 1787 Mr. James Speer received a patent of land from William Penn and built the first brick house on a farm in the territory that we now know as Kennedy Township. The farm was willed to his son, James Speer II in 1789. This was the sixth will to be probated in the State of Pennsylvania.

Other notable pioneers include the Herbst and Nolte families, and the Clever family who migrated from Carlisle in 1825 via covered wagon. The Clevers traded acres of land in Carlisle for acres in the Kennedy/Robinson area. The original farmland was sold to the Board of Education which would become the site of the Montour High School. The Herbst and Nolte farm buildings dating back over on hundred years are still standing today.

The first church in what was to become Kennedy Township was organized as the Mt. Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1843. The Clever families donated the land on which the first church and cemetery were located. The Mt. Calvary Cemetery still remains in Kennedy Township; the church is now located in McKees Rocks.

Gas, oil and coal mining played an important role in the development of Kennedy Township. Oil was drilled from the Clever farm around 1889 and shortly thereafter, drilling started on the Arbuckle farm as well. Coal mining began in the 1920s in the area from Fairhaven Road to Moon Run. The coal seam was thought to be the single most valuable source in the world and produced more coal at that time than anywhere in the world. One of the most infamous coal strikes took place here, as depicted in the movie "Black Fury".

The early 1920s saw the introduction of electric street lights, telephones, and rural free mail delivery to Kennedy Township. It was not until 1937 that plans for a water and sewage system were implemented. Today, Kennedy receives its water supply from West View Water Authority, although many wells are still in use, indicative of rural farmland.

In 1921 the first school consolidation in Pennsylvania took place; Kennedy Township constructed a school building containing four rooms and a gymnasium to replace the three one-room schools

in use. The new school was named KenMawr, a Scottish term meaning "more knowledge".

In 1947 the original Municipal building was dedicated at its present location. The police department was organized at this time. Open house ceremonies were held in 1993 to commemorate the Township's 90th anniversary, and the renovation of the municipal building.

Allegheny County Court granted Kennedy Township the stature of first class township in 1961 which provide advantages such as protection from secession [from the Township] and more legal capacity to develop land. The label of first class not only applies to Kennedy Township in the legal sense, but to the community as a whole. Its rich heritage, the generations of people who developed and continue to play an active role in growth, has made Kennedy Township a great place to live, work, and worship!.