
BOROUGH OF SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS

A History

During this year of 1987, Spring Lake Heights residents will commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of their Borough. Looking back, the last six decades have been a period of growth for the community, evident in the increasing number of residents and the expansion of services available to them. The quality of life in the "Heights" is appreciated by its residents and continues to attract new families.

As a Borough, Spring Lake Heights dates back to May 3, 1927, when following the lead of local governments, a group of residents from the

Como and Villa Park sections of Wall Township formed the Fourth District Improvement Association of Wall Township. This Association held meetings for the purpose of establishing a new borough, and in effect seceding from the Township of Wall. Like their neighboring communities of Sea Girt, Manasquan, Spring Lake, Belmar and South Belmar, residents of Como and Villa Park had become disenchanted with Wall Township's ability to provide adequate services for their area. Weekly meetings were held by the Association, and card parties, dances and other fund raisers were held to finance the undertaking.

William Senkel was elected the first President of the Association.

Other officers elected were Thomas E. Barnett, Mrs. Frances W.

Heulitt and Miss Adelaide B. Craig. Mr. R. W. Stout of Asbury Park was instrumental in having the Bill for Incorporation introduced in the State Legislature, which was attended by members of the Association.

In March of 1927, Senator Stevens' efforts resulted in the Bill passing the State Senate, and being signed by Governor Moore. The Referendum approving the Bill to Incorporate the Borough of Spring Lake Heights was approved by the voters on May 3, 1927. The Spring Lake Gazette printed a news story following the election, part of which follows:

"...but no one knew until the final count by what margin. Then a pandemonium broke loose: fireworks were displayed, bells were rung, horns blown, and every source of noise was resorted to. Never before was such a large crowd assembled in the Township as that which gathered around the Newark House Tuesday night. Bonfires were lighted and many who had automobiles paraded up and down the State Highway tooting their horns and making as much noise as they possibly could. It was a wonderful night for the new Borough and those who had worked so hard for it..."

The final tally of votes was 280 in favor, 238 opposed, and 14 rejected. On May 31, 1927, Spring Lake Heights elected its first Mayor - Roderick A. Allgor, together with Councilmen Allen D. Wickham, Herman C. Bennett, Walter T. Pearce, Samuel B. Jeffries, Harry Larson, and Andrew F. Pearce, Adelaide B. Craig, and William T. Senkel were elected Collector and Assessor respectively. At the Borough's first meeting in the Como Schoolhouse on June 6, 1927, Mayor Allgor appointed J. Edgar Brown as Borough Clerk, Harry R. Cooper of Belmar as the Borough Attorney, and A.D. Wickham as President of the Borough Council.

Although the Borough of Spring Lake Heights had its origin in

1927, its geographical location had an earlier history. Originally settled by the Lenni Lenape (Delaware) Indians, in 1665, the Monmouth Patent granted lands to patentees, who with their associates began settlements within the County. A claim for hunting and fishing rights for the territory "from the mouth of the Squan River to the mouth of the Shrewsbury River, to the streams of each of their heads and across from one head to another" was settled in 1758 with the Unami branch of the Delaware Indians. As settlers purchased land from the Patentees and moved into the County, the Indians moved away.

The year of 1693 witnessed the formation of Shrewsbury Township, from which Howell Township was formed in 1801. As part of Howell Township, Wall Township was established in 1851 and from that date new boroughs have been created from within Wall Township's borders, including Spring Lake Heights in 1927.

The date of the first settlement within Spring Lake Heights is uncertain as records are sparse, yet early deeds disclose land holdings in Villa Park by William Brindley as early as 1716, and by Walter Herbert in the Como section in 1788. A Post Office opened in 1802 at Route 71 and Prospect Avenue and a one-room schoolhouse was erected in 1830 on the present site of Wall Church. 1830 census records indicate residents within the borough.

Two communities, Villa Park and Como comprise present day Spring Lake Heights. Como (formerly known as Sea Plain or Pearce's) had the advantage of an 1812 County road from Howell Township to the sea. Formerly called Brand's Road, we know it today as Allaire Road. In addition, a schoolhouse, Post Office, Pearce's Store and the Methodist Church were located at Route 71 near Allaire Road. Farms, homes, and woodlands sprinkled the Como area.

Villa Park lies at the southern border of the Borough. Principally farmland until 1874, John S. Rogers and William V. Reid applied for the construction of a public road (now Ocean Road) which provided access to their land in Villa Park for development as building lots. A Post Office and general store were situated on the main highway in Villa Park.

During the last two decades a dramatic trend has developed. Apartments and condos have sprouted throughout the Borough. New homes have settled in on most every piece of vacant land. Several office buildings have located on Route 71. A sorely needed Municipal Building has been completed and services to our residents have been maintained. Fortunately we have retained our residential profile. Over five elementary school has kept pace with the continued growth. We entrust the future to our young residents and our children. With God's help, they will keep Spring Lake Heights a fine community in which to live.

Eileen McLaughlin