



"THE VALLEY"

official publication of the Darby Creek Valley Association

INTRODUCTORY ISSUE

SPRING/SUMMER 1985

THE VALLEY

The Darby Creek Valley, rich in history and recreational opportunities; a swarth of green trees and cool water winding its way through an urban setting.

From its source near Berwyn, the creek flows for 30 miles in a broad, sweeping valley, draining over 80 square miles of eastern Chester County, northern and eastern Delaware County and a portion of Philadelphia. Along the banks of Darby Creek are located several township parks and the Tinicum National Environmental Center, the largest remaining tidal wetland in Pennsylvania. Many more acres adjoining the creek are undesignated land, awaiting either funds for development or the outcome of some issue (such as the Blue Route) to decide its fate.

Within the watershed, very little public space for woodland recreation exists and much of what does is located along the banks of Darby Creek. Those of us who appreciate the opportunities afforded by such a resource so close to home must work together to preserve what remains so that we can experience the peace of a woodland setting when the mood arises.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

The Darby Creek Valley Association is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of all of the watershed's resources, including water, wildlife (both flora and fauna), historical sites and the floodplain.

DCVA's immediate goals are to prevent all forms of pollution of Darby Creek including its tributaries and prohibit all dumping and construction on the floodplain.

The Darby Creek Valley Association also seeks to improve water quality and create a debris-free streambed through cleanups and public education. Preservation of historical properties, especially the Swedish Cabin (please see page 2) is high on our list of priorities.

The Association wants to preserve the natural



"wildness" of the watershed and establish a major recreational asset by having the entire 30 miles of valley set aside as protected parkland. Area schools would be encouraged to utilize this parkland as a "living classroom" for the study of such relevant subjects as history, biology, zoology, and mineralogy. Paths for hiking, jogging, and bicycling, along with access for fishing and boating in summer, ice skating and cross-country skiing in winter are also part of the plan.

The Darby Creek Valley Association envisions a day when there will exist a valley-long park, from source to terminus, for the enjoyment of all people. We will work with concerned state, county, and local municipalities and authorities until that goal becomes reality.

SWEDISH CABIN

The history of the Valley is the history of the early settlement and development of Pennsylvania. Swedish settlers arrived in 1638, over 50 years before William Penn, and established the first colonial government in the Commonwealth on Tinicum Island. There exists strong evidence that from this outpost at the mouth of Darby Creek, the first penetration of the interior of Pennsylvania occurred by settlers traveling up the Darby Creek Valley.

Unable to compete with the Dutch for the lucrative fur trade, the Swedish settlers and their Finnish brethren who came with them, established small farms throughout the region. Located along the banks of Darby Creek on Creek Road in Upper Darby was one such settlement where the Swedes and Finns raised crops and animals for sustenance and possibly tobacco for export. It is believed that in 1652 they constructed the log house that stands today at the site, first as a one-room cabin, then later expanding it to its present size.

By 1655, the Dutch finally succeeded in expelling the Swedish as a power from the Delaware Valley. Very little history of the Swedish-era of settlement remains to this day. The cabin on Creek Road stands as the last tangible vestige of these early Swedes and Finns. DCVA is committed to restoring the cabin, which is in a threatened state, and developing the site around the structure into a suitable recreational park. The cabin represents a unique example of an era of Pennsylvania's history and needs the commitment of the people to preserve it at its present location for now and all time.

CABIN DEDICATION

On Sunday, May 26, a flag-raising and dedication ceremony was held at the Swedish Cabin, located on Creek Road in Upper Darby. Capping off a month long series of weekend open houses which were co-sponsored by the Darby Creek Valley Association and the Upper Darby Historical Society, the event drew over 75 people.

Most noteworthy among those in attendance was the Swedish Consul to Philadelphia, Bengner Jansson, who made a presentation on behalf of the Swedish Ambassador to the United States to Dr. John Furth, Chairman of DCVA's Historical Sites Committee.

Other speakers included Swedish authors and historians Anna and Carl Lingborg, Gayle Lawrence, president of DCVA, and George Kane, Chairman of the Upper Darby Township Historical Commission.

The day's events ended with taps played by American Legion Post 214 color guard and Archer-Epler VFW Post 979 drum and bugle corps in a Memorial Day observance.



DVCA HOSTS MACWA

On Thursday, June 27, DCVA will host the quarterly meeting of the Mid Atlantic Council of Watershed Associations at the Little Flower Manor on Springfield Road in Darby. Area residents interested in environmental issues on a local or regional level are invited to attend.

The morning program begins at 10:00 A.M. with a series of presentations by various DCVA members concerning the past, present, and future of the Darby Creek Valley. The afternoon will be devoted to attending to MACWA business.

MACWA serves as a forum for communication between the nearly 80 individual watershed associations located in the region it serves. MACWA also offers help and guidelines for new associations.

For further information on the June meeting, call Clyde Hunt at 449-9333.

OFFICERS OF DCVA

G.K. Lawrence, President
William J. Frasch, Vice President
Clyde M. Hunt, Vice President
Elsie Mueller, Corresponding Secretary
Anne Battista, Recording Secretary
Robert Shaner, Treasurer

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Photography and newsletter by Howard L. McKean

Masthead by Bruce A. Van Dervort

STREAMS AND TRAILS

On June 1, the area civic associations of Darby, Lansdowne, and Havertown will hold their annual "Darby Creek Clean-up Day" to spring-clean their respective stretches of the Valley. Trash and garbage that has collected along the trails over the winter will be the target of this operation. DCVA will be on hand to supply financial and logistical support where needed.

Mark September 28 on your calendar as the day to come down to Darby Creek and "get wet". Low water levels, warmer water temperatures and those balmy September days make for ideal conditions for major creek-bed clean-up. Tires, shopping carts, and the odd car or two that somehow makes it into the creek will be removed by heavy machinery. This clean-up is planned for the entire length of the Valley; we can use all the bodies we can get. District 745 of the Rotary International will be among the sponsors funding this operation; should time be available following the clean-up, we hope to do some trail construction and related work. Please plan to come.

On May 4, DCVA guided the Wanderlust Hiking Club of Philadelphia on a Valley Walk that took the club from the old sawmill off Route 3 south to Route 1. Led by Bill Miehle and accompanied by other DCVA members, Wanderlust was treated to a hike along a very scenic stretch of the Valley that runs through Haverford Township.

These Valley Walks, held most months of the year, are an excellent way to experience the seasonal beauty of different sections of our Valley in the company of others who share your appreciation of the outdoors. Listen for announcements of future hikes; come, and bring a friend.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Darby Creek Valley Association is open to any person or organization who subscribes to the purpose of the Association. A sponsor is anyone wishing to make a contribution of \$25.00 or more but is not a voting member. A special membership is available for situations not indicated, please call for details.

If you are interested in local environmental, recreational, or historical matters, we invite you to join today. If you have any special interests or services to offer, please let us know. For further information, contact Bob Shaner at 449-7297.

Testing of water quality continues by the Delco-Manning Chapter of Trout Unlimited, an associated organization of DCVA. Tests are conducted by Jack Kesling once a month at five locations on Darby Creek and three on Ithan Run. Checks of water temperature, dissolved oxygen, and PH levels are the most important of the many tests conducted.

The most obvious objective of the tests is to monitor the water quality of Darby Creek, which is considered excellent above Route 1 and generally good below, and to take necessary steps to improve the quality to provide good habitat for fish. A long-term goal is to establish a data base against which future testing can be compared. Once the data base is established, it can easily be determined whether a change in a test value is merely a seasonal fluctuation, or a change that requires further investigation.

On the subject of fish, Trout Unlimited and Delco Anglers stocked 1500 Brooks, Rainbows, and Browns at three locations on Darby Creek on May 18. Along with the Pa. Fish Commission's pre-season stocking and some "monster" trout which have wintered over, fishing on the Creek should be good this year.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION

- INDIVIDUAL \$5.00
- FAMILY \$8.00
- STUDENT \$3.00
- ORGANIZATION \$15.00
- SPECIAL-PLEASE CALL
- SPONSER (AMOUNT) _____

PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN WITH CHECK TO:

DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 258
Lansdowne, Pa. 19050

DISTRICT 745
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Bill Walsh-Governer

We have clubs along the Creek
Havertown Chester Pike
Radnor Philadelphia
Upper Darby Baltimore Pike
Darby-Lansdowne

"WE ARE CREEK FREAKS"

SWEDISH CABIN
PRESERVATION FUND

Send donations for the preservation
and maintaince of the Old Swedish
Cabin in Upper Darby to:

P.O. Box 258
Lansdowne, Pa. 19050

Info: Dr. J. Furth 622-3939
Chairman- His. Sites Comm.

ATTENTION: ORGANIZATIONS AND AREA MERCHANTS ESPECIALLY THOSE
DEALING IN OUTDOOR AND RECREATIONAL PRODUCTS.

Darby Creek Valley Association is looking for sponsors to fund this newsletter so that we can promote our organization's goals which are CONSERVATION and RECREATION in the Darby Creek watershed. These newsletters will be distributed to those individuals who appreciate the out-of-doors such as hikers, joggers, bicyclists, and fishermen. Cost is \$50.00 for sponsorship of 4 issues. Call today for Volume I, Number 1 due out in September. Bob Shaner, 449-7297.

DARBY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 258
Lansdowne, Pa. 19050