



# *The Jarrett Nature Center Through the Years*



On the Occasion of Carolyn Koch's Retirement • June 4, 2009

# *For Carolyn Koch*



On the occasion of Carolyn Koch's retirement, this historic perspective of the Jarrett Nature Center is a testament to her dedication and affection which helped to create an exemplary outdoor classroom for the students, families, and staff of the Hatboro-Horsham School District.

*June 4, 2009*

# *The Jarrett Dairy Farm*



*The field where Elizabeth (Betty) Jarrett and her dog are standing would be near the edge of the varsity baseball field today. The back of the farmhouse is behind her, and Babylon Road is in the distant background, facing the front of the farmhouse.*

In 1798 the Jarrett family purchased 96 acres of farmland in Horsham Township and began a 170-year tradition of dairy production and vegetable farming. Aside from the 13 acres that were later sold to the local German Club (today the site of Joseph's Catering) and a half-acre that was proffered to Lawrence Henry in appreciation of his service (currently the first dwelling west of Simmons Elementary School on Babylon Road), the property remained within the Jarrett family until the early 1960s. Initially, the property

*This is Morris Jarrett putting clean cans on a rack. The large box in the center of the room is the cooler which contained cool water that circulated around the cans (milk was still warm when placed in the cooler)*

*Morris was the last owner of the farm (5th generation). This picture was taken around 1949 or 1950.*



which is now home to the Hatboro-Horsham High School was sold to the school district, and seven years later the remaining land facing Babylon Road was also acquired by the Hatboro-Horsham School District, housing the original Keith Valley Middle School, which became Simmons Elementary School in 1992.



Morris and Elizabeth Jarrett were the most recent homeowners of the property, part of which is known today as the Jarrett Nature Center. Morris passed away in 1988, however his widow, Elizabeth, and their daughter, Amy have been indispensable in the preservation of the history of the land. Elizabeth and Morris had three other children: Frank, Quintin, and Jonathan Jarrett. Both Morris and Elizabeth's families have been members of the Horsham Quaker Meeting House for generations.

*Elizabeth and Frank, 1953.*



# *Interview & Walking Tour*

**with Lawrence Henry • June 25, 1997**

*The small building attached to the existing barn (used currently for school district maintenance equipment) was called The Milk House. This picture shows Lawrence Henry washing a 40 quart milk can. The milk was placed in these cans and put in a cooler until the dairy came to collect the milk.*

*The machines used to milk cows are hanging on the wall below the window.*



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***Below and on the following pages is the documentation of an interview conducted by Kathy Hurst, William Allen, and Donna Spangler:***

“Lawrence Henry was hired as a farm laborer by Morris Jarrett in 1950. In 1953, in lieu of a raise, Mr. Henry was given a parcel of land of his choosing, half an acre in size, and he built himself a home on Babylon Road where it was ‘quieter.’ Until he moved into his home, he resided in the tenant house located between Joseph’s Catering and the present high school building. The tenant house has since burned down.

The driveway access to the Jarrett farmstead from Babylon Road was located to the south of the stadium drive by approximately 150 feet. It led directly to the south end of the building currently used as a maintenance shed, but which Mr. Henry called the ‘cow shed’ indicating its original use. The driveway from



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*The carriage house is on the far left, which was positioned directly in front of the farmhouse. In the center is the farm’s largest barn. The driveway leading up to the farmhouse is visible in the foreground.*

Babylon Road was flanked on either side by two large pine trees which were struck by lightning and removed.

At the site of the baseball field across the driveway from the stadium building, a large hay barn stood. It was located away from the other outbuildings as a fire safety precaution. Eventually Morris Jarrett moved that barn closer to the cow shed and other buildings, which was an enormous undertaking.

The barn had two silos used for grain, corn, or hay if it was put in while still green. In the 1920s, potatoes were cultivated and the fields were kept fertilized. In the 1930s and 40s,



*The front of the farmhouse is visible, which faces Babylon Road. The wood shed and spring house are to the left of the house. The wood shed was attached to the farmhouse but was at a lower elevation. The spring house was close to the pond.*

carrots and tomatoes were grown. This was the era when the farm was very productive and sent produce to *Campbell's Soup Company*. In the 1950s and 60s, when Morris was studying to become a teacher, the land was leased to the Strong family who grew corn and did not fertilize the land.

Two or three outbuildings used as tractor and wagon sheds were located to the right of the current paved path that leads to the baseball field.

The house faced northwest and was located where there are currently woods. Mr. Henry showed us the approximate location of the well which the family used. It is in the wooded area. The house was three stories high and two rooms deep. It had porches on the front and back.

The tallest trees on the site were topped and since then, many have died. At one time there was a light placed on one of the trees by the Naval Reserve Base. They were the home of many raccoons.



The spring water was of excellent quality and Lawrence Henry spoke of really enjoying that water. He indicated the location of the spring house and that the stones are scattered quite a bit. It was about 10 feet by 10 feet square.

The pond is fed by a stream from Jarrett Road and that is why it does not dry up completely.

The ice house was located in the curve of the pond near a dock. It was three stories high. Ice was packed in straw and sawdust and kept cool all summer. The pond was also used recreationally. The school district built the retaining wall that is breaking at the north end of the pond.

Mr. Henry helped put in the footings for the outdoor fireplace that is on the property. This dates it to the years 1950 to 1955.

After Mr. Henry left, Morris Jarrett sold off his herd of dairy cows.

Following the trail through the woods of the 'nature center' you come out at the back of the first baseball field. If you face the tree line, all that you see to the northeast and south are wild cherry trees."



*Amy and Frank Jarrett enjoying a canoe ride in the pond.  
The spring house is in the background.*



*To the left of the driveway looking northwest (toward Babylon Road) are the machine shed with the corn crib barely visible behind it. To the right of the driveway is the large*



*Driver is unidentified. One of the Jarretts' two silos is visible behind the largest barn.*



*A view of the pond from the farmhouse. The high school's parking lots are about where the field is pictured here.*



*The Jarrett Family gathered by the back porch. Approximately 1950.*



*The back porch of the farmhouse in winter.*



*The milking shed, built in 1949, is currently used as the school district's maintenance shed.*



*The stone wall at the end of the large barn, which ran along the driveway leading to Babylon Road.*



*The existing maintenance shed was built in 1949, originally used as a cattle stable.*



*The carriage house and machine shed are in the foreground. Babylon Road is in the distance.*





*Rick Collier (right) talks with PA State Senator Stewart Greenleaf about needed improvements to the JNC's pond.*

The natural area known as the Jarrett Nature Center (JNC) was named and dedicated as Hatboro-Horsham's Outdoor Classroom on April 20, 2002. Before its formal recognition and dedication as a nature center, the area of approximately 13 acres was informally used by some Simmons Elementary School and Hatboro-Horsham High School teachers and students for class field trips for science and many other academic subjects. Several years of planning by administrators, teachers and the Simmons Home and School Association (HSA) resulted in setting aside this area as a preserve and as a dedicated environmental education area for use by the Hatboro-Horsham School District and the community.

Today, the Jarrett Nature Center is a rich assemblage of woods, meadow, wetlands, open water, and floodplain. The first school construction on the property along Babylon Road in 1972 was the building and associated facilities for the Keith Valley Middle School. Since 1992, this building and grounds have served Simmons Elementary School. The

Hatboro-Horsham High School and its facilities were built in 1991 on a portion of the same property. The intervening land, now the Jarrett Nature Center, remained undisturbed as it is today and is not suitable for development due to the sensitive environmental conditions and the local and state regulations that limit its use. Allowed to revert to natural conditions from the early 1970s, this area became an ideal place to further the goals of preservation, enhancement, and use for environmental education, nature appreciation, and passive recreation.

*Carolyn Koch and friends gather with newcomers to the Jarrett Nature Center.*

*Local Girlscout troops provide refreshments and craft activities for visitors.*



In 2000 Simmons' Principal Al Grande, Simmons teacher Carolyn Koch, and other teachers and Home and School Association members decided to prepare a Master Plan to better identify the area's characteristics, assets, and needed improvements to ensure its future use for educational and recreational purposes. Having a nature center in the school district within walking distance or a short drive from each school is considered a highly valued resource. Further, this center is viewed as an invaluable resource to enrich the curriculum consistent with the



Pennsylvania State Academic Standards. Among the State standards that can be served by the

Jarrett Nature Center are: Environment and Technology, Science and Technology, and

Geography. The JNC offers hands-on teaching and viewing opportunities for a wide range of habitats from upland meadow and woods to flowing water and wetlands.

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*Below: Scouts and other students test water samples from the nature center's creek. There are endless opportunities for learning in nature's outdoor classroom.*



Vegetation in the JNC is a mixture of woodland, wetlands, meadow, and turf, which provides habitat diversity. This variety contributes greatly to the educational and recreational value of the center, as well as its visual interest. The dominant components of the vegetation communities are the woodlands that cover more than seven acres of the center. The woodlands composition varies depending on location and ranges from



drier upland woods to wetter lowland woods. The former is found back from the stream and floodplain at the higher elevations. It is an assembly of mature upland trees such as oak and ash with some understory trees and shrubs. Much of the upland woods has become established in the last 30+ years after the farm was vacated and the area allowed to return to woods through biological succession.



The vast majority of the woods is floodplain woods and is dominated by wet-loving vegetation such as willow, sycamore, red maple, silver maple, and river birch. Many of these trees are large suggesting that they have occupied this stream edge for many years even when the surrounding areas were farmed. There are some understory trees, shrubs and herbaceous species in the floodplain woods, including spicebush, skunk cabbage, and ferns. Throughout the upland and lowland woods, a high proportion of the lower layers are dominated by invasive species such as multi-flora rose, honeysuckle, poison ivy, English ivy, stilt grass, garlic mustard, and white snakeroot.



# Volunteers!



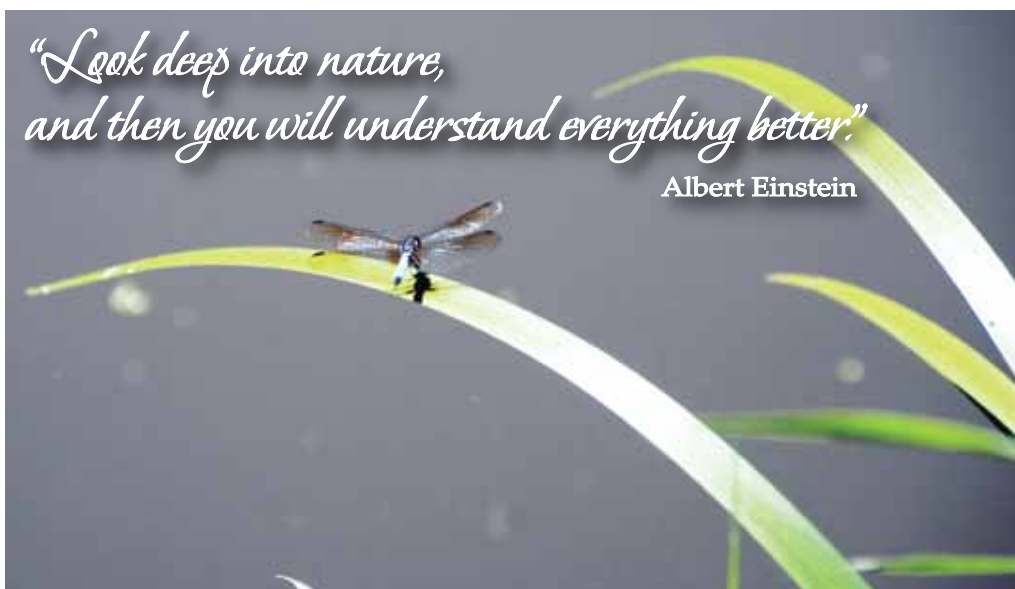


*"Earth laughs  
in flowers."*  
Ralph Waldo Emerson



*"In every walk  
with nature  
one receives far more  
than he seeks."*

John Muir



*"Look deep into nature,  
and then you will understand everything better."*

Albert Einstein



Earth Day  
2003



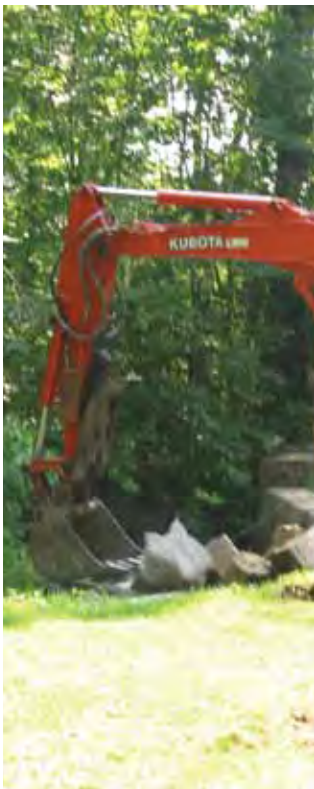
Earth Day  
2004





# *the Pond*

*The Jarrett Nature Center pond was in desperate need of dredging and rebuilding. Funding for the pond's restoration was acquired through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development, with help from Senator Stewart Greenleaf.*



*The JNC also received funding from Centocor, a biomedicines company headquartered in Horsham, who made their contribution through the Hatboro-Horsham Educational Foundation's EITC program. The pond, newly terraced and equipped with an aerator, and greatly improved by new dam and diversion structures, was completed in the fall of*

# *2005*



# Feature Signs

Added in 2006



# Friends & Supporters



*Motorola Day at the Jarrett Nature Center*



*2007 Earth Day Celebration*



*Jennifer Buff (far left) of the Smithsonian's Conservation Research Center, instructs students in establishing a biodiversity grid at the JNC.*



*Planning the "Story Telling Chair" are (left to right): Danine Wish of Mermaid Art Studio in Ambler, Carolyn Koch, Sarah Sweet, HH High School ceramics teacher, and Wally Grummun and Kim Rubenstein of the JNC.*



*The Jarrett Nature Center received the 2007 Montgomery Award for Land Development.*



*Above: Monica Taylor, Eileen Smith, and Karen Davis participate in the Jarrett Nature Center's 2006 Golf Outing.*





*The Jarrett Nature Center had its greatest number of visitors to date at 2009's Earth Day Celebration!*







*The Jarrett Nature Center*



*Hatboro-Horsham's Outdoor Classroom*



*Dedicated in 2002*



*Committed to the Future of Our Students*





*Thank you, Mrs. Koch!*