

Then and Now

The Devon Horse Show and Country Fair

Following its relatively simple origins in bucolic surroundings, the entity that we now know as the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair, and the complex it inhabits, has expanded and evolved significantly over the years, and the adjacent area has also seen some notable changes.

One of the most memorable landmarks in the area may no longer be seen except in historic photographs. The majestic Devon Inn stood opposite the Devon train station at the other end of tree-lined Devon Boulevard. It was a grand summer resort destination for many years, and the first Devon Horse Show was held on its lawns in 1896. Tragically, it was lost to fire in 1929 and was not rebuilt. Closer to the station, opposite Dorset Road, there was also an imposing two-story stables building that housed horses and carriages for the Inn, as well as employees. That structure is also no longer standing.

The family-owned Waterloo Gardens complex, later built along the same Devon Boulevard, is another long-standing landmark that will soon be only memory. Started by James and Anna Paolini in 1942, the business prospered until economic setbacks began in 2007 and the business finally closed in 2013. The property has been sold and preliminary plans are in development for a mixed-use commercial complex that may feature a new boutique hotel bringing back the Devon Inn name.



Looking southeast across the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair in a 1928 Dallin Aerial Survey photo. *Courtesy of Hagley Museum and Library*

For more background on the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair, you may want to refer to some of the following articles that have appeared in past volumes of the *Quarterly*. To investigate further, also including other aspects of the Devon area, the Search tool provided on the Society website (www.tehistory.org) can locate even more information.

The Devon Horse Show Association by Elinor C.J. Sensenig, April 1963, *Tredyffrin Easttown History Club Quarterly* Volume 12, Number 3, pages 59–61

Where Champions Meet: The Devon Horse Show by Bob Goshorn, July 1994, *Tredyffrin Easttown History Club Quarterly* Volume 32, Number 3, pages 101–114

Other noteworthy references include:

The First Devon Horse Show by One Who Was Present by Margaret Beaumont Lapp, which appeared as an article in the *Main Line Times* in 1953.

Down Through the Years 1896-1971 by Raymond S. Cox, 1971 Devon Horse Show and Country Fair catalog

A Week Down in Devon: A History of the Devon Horse Show by Christopher Hyde, 1976 Chilton Book Company, Radnor, PA

Devon (A Pictorial History Showing Over 475 Images) by Margaret DePiano and Stephen DiAddezio, 2007



Looking east-southeast across the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair in a 2009 photo.
Courtesy of Roger D. Thorne and Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society