

# The Devon Horse Show and Country Fair: An Illustrated Time Line

Bobbi Cowley  
Edited by John O. Senior

## 1896

- Invitation to organize a Horse Show. Organizing meeting held on 22 May.
- One day show on 2 July, held on Polo Grounds with over 100 entries in 26 classes.

## 1897

- One day show on 15 June, extended because of rain until 16 June, held on Polo Grounds with over 200 entries.

## 1898–1900

- Two day shows held on the lawn of the Devon Inn 21-22 June 1898, 7-8 June 1899, and 19-20 June 1900.

## 1901–1909

- No shows held, possibly due to time conflicts with the Wissahickon Show. Devon restarted the same year the Philadelphia show closed.

## 1910

- Three day show held 30 May-1 June on the Devon Polo Field, in the same general location as present day shows. This was the first time the show was held on Decoration Day (now known as Memorial Day).
- Grandstand erected with 46 private boxes, later covered with canvas awnings.

## 1911

- Three day show held 30 May-1 June with over 600 entries, with jumping classes and 20 classes for hunters.



The first Devon Horse Show 1896 *Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

DEAR SIR :

In order to effect an organization for the purpose of holding a Horse Show at Devon, a meeting of gentlemen, interested in the breeding, showing and ownership of horses, is called for Friday Evening, May 22, 1896, eight o'clock, at Devon Inn.

Please attend and invite others who may be interested.

Signed,

HENRY T. COATES  
C. DAVIS ENGLISH  
HENRY M. WARREN  
GEORGE H. EARLE, JR.  
JOHN W. PATTON  
D. B. SHARP  
LEM. COFFIN ALTEMUS  
JOSEPH F. PAGE  
R. PENN SMITH  
E. B. COLKET  
JAMES W. PATTERSON  
E. W. TWADDELL

Original 1896 invitation  
*Courtesy of Chester Country  
Historical Society*

Early horse show on the  
lawn of The Devon Inn  
(c. 1898)

*Courtesy of Devon Horse  
Show and Country Fair*

### Excerpts from *The First Devon Horse Show By One Who Was Present*

In 1951 Mrs. Margaret Beaumont Lapp wrote her memories of the first Devon Horse Show.

"The first Show grounds were southwest of Devon Inn and I saw little children shouting with merriment as they rolled down the grass terraces west of the Inn while their families were absorbed in watching the Show."

"I remember driving there in a buggy drawn by my small gray horse 'Mike.' That little gray horse driven to the First Show in 1896 at the age of 13, many years afterward at the age of 30 won a fine silver cup in the 'Aged Class' of the 1913 Devon Show. There were eight entries in the class, so I prize that cup highly."

"Class twelve was the first class of the first Devon Horse Show; Barclay H. Warburton was one of the judges. The class was for farmer owned Yearlings, and out of the six entries, our entry listed in the catalogue as 'Senorita'-chestnut filly owned by Dr. Elbert W. Lapp very proudly wore home a ribbon."

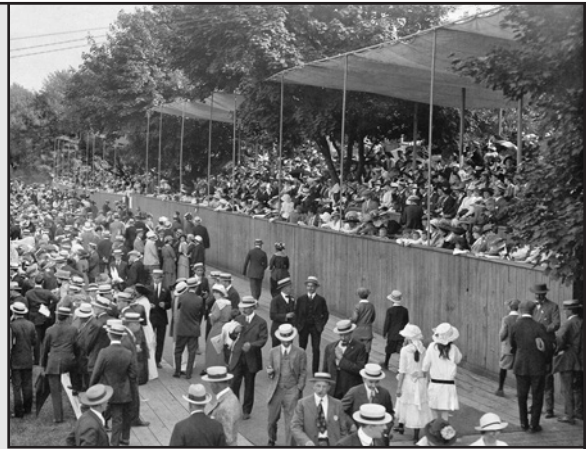


### Early Accommodations for Spectators

During the first five years of the Show, 1896-1900, spectators brought their own ringside seats in the guise of carriages and early automobiles. When the Devon Horse Show returned from its hiatus in 1910 however, many improvements were made for the spectators, including construction of a Grandstand and a boardwalk.

A Grandstand in four sections, later covered with canvas awnings, was erected on the west side of the ring. Forty-six exclusive box seats were offered. Adding to the ambiance with natural dappled shade was an apple tree right in the center of the seating. In 1918 the Sunday Record described the scene, "Directly in the front middle of the Grandstand was a large apple tree and Mrs. Fales Baker always insisted on having the center box, shaded by the apple tree. There she sat every Devon Horse Show, the rest of her life, even after she had to be carried to her box in a chair."

Within a few years a boardwalk was built in front of the Grandstand to protect the ladies' skirts and the men's trousers from the mud. A pillared judge's pavilion was built in the center of the ring and a band stand was at the north. On the east and south sides of the ring were reserved parking spaces where V.I.P. spectators could watch the proceedings. The spectators were now considered an important part of the show.



Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair

### KING HORSE WILL REIGN ON TANBARK AT DEVON AGAIN

#### Main Line Popular Equine Event to Be Revived in May

Enthusiasts were jubilant yesterday over the announcement that the Devon Horse Show would be revived. It was abandoned in 1900, when its dates conflicted with those of the Wissahickon organization. For five years it had been in the field, and in that period had become popular, and its ring was the center for many competitions of equines which have become noted. — *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 3, 1910

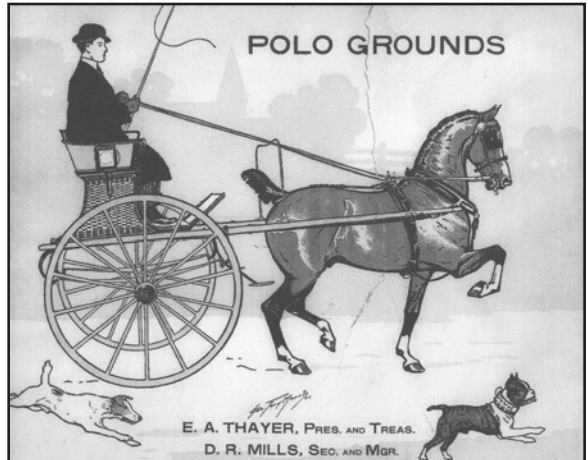
### 1912

- Four day show held 29 May-1 June.
- First Ladies Day held on 1 June with proceeds going to charity. Ladies served as judges, class callers, and veterinarian inspectors.
- Helen Hope Scott and Freddy Pinch first competed.

"Hunters are always a wonderful exhibit at Devon but I do not remember seeing this season's record beaten for numbers or quality. There were forty or fifty shown in a single class."

"Eighteen saddle horses to a single class indicated the popularity of riding through the beautiful Devon country."

SPUR - 15 June 1915

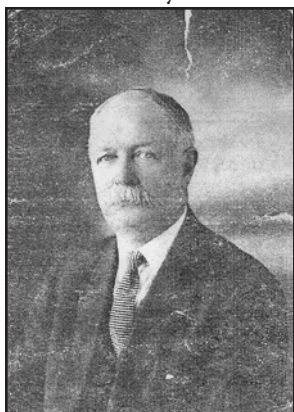


Devon Polo Grounds Poster

Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair

### 1913

- Five day show held 28 May-1 June with 1,000 entries.
- Co chairman William Hunter is credited with the resumption of the Show in 1910 and the unparalleled growth of the Show in the early 1900s.



William Hunter

### 1914-1917

- Largest outdoor horse show with over 1,800 entries, including more hunters and saddlebreds than ever.
- International exhibitors first mentioned.
- Army Officer Competitions.
- Ladies rode astride for the first time at Devon in 1915.
- Social aspects of the show were well covered, frequently introducing the next year's debutantes for the first time.

### Women Judges At Devon Horse Show

#### Novel Experiment to be Tried by the Pennsylvania Management.

Women judges and ring officials will play an important part at the annual Devon Horse Show, which will be held on the club grounds at Devon, Penn., May 29 to June 1.

On Ladies' Day saddlers, ponies, hunters and jumpers, Hackneys and harness horses will be judged by women, many of whom have driven and ridden at the National and other shows. The list of women judges includes Mrs. C. Cecil Fitler, Mrs. Richard P. McGrann, Mrs. William J. Norris, Mrs. John R. Valentine, Mrs. Charles Randolph Snowden, Mrs. Alfred Clement, Mrs. David Sharp, Mrs. John T. Windrim, Mrs. J. Stanley Reeve, and Mrs. William L. Hirst. The veterinary Inspector for the day will be Miss Ethel Moore of Colorado Springs, while Miss Anna L. Taylor will be the class caller.

*The New York Times*, May 19, 1912



## 1918

- The three day War Relief Show was held 6-8 June and earned over \$9,000 to benefit the Main Line Branch of Emergency Aid chaired by Mrs. Charlton Yarnall.
- Tea was served by society maids, luncheons were available, there was an ice cream booth, and girls sold programs, flowers, cigarettes, and lemonade in "natty costumes."

### Horse Show to be Given At Devon to Assist Main Line Emergency Aid

In former years at this time members of society were settled in their country homes looking forward to the Devon Horse Show, on Memorial Day, as the closing event of the season. Those who were fortunate enough to own places at Newport, Narragansett and Bar Harbor were making preparations to flit there.

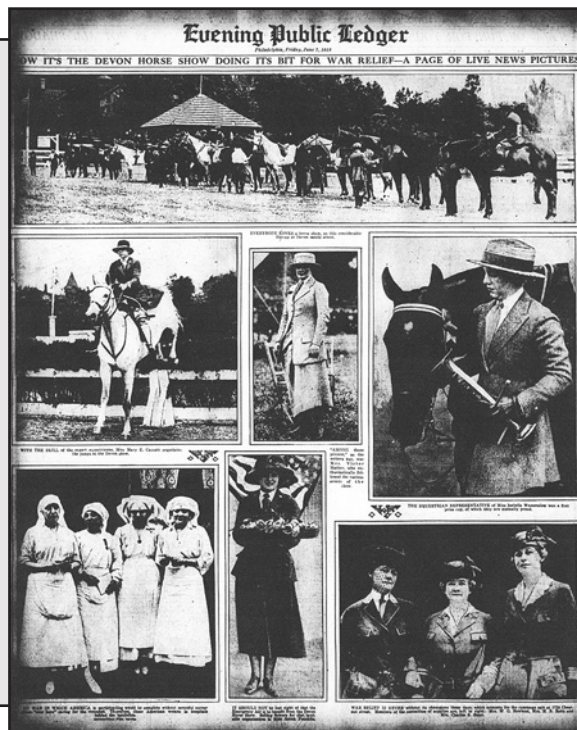
Now everything has changed, and in the place of a closing season, it seems society will have a more progressive and active month or two than ever before. Prominent men and women are working industriously for the financial success of entertainments to raise money for patriotic purposes.

There will be a horse show, although the usual affair given by the Devon Association was called off.

After due consideration, Mr. and Mrs. Charlton Yarnall, Dr. Thomas Ashton and Mr. William H. Wanamaker have completed arrangements to give a horse show at Devon on June 6, 7, and 8. The beneficiary will be the Main Line Emergency Aid.

Mrs. Charlton Yarnall is the chairman of the Main Line Emergency Aid, and will be assisted by many prominent women.

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 26, 1918



## 1919

- Four day show held 28-31 May. The war was over but it was decided that the show should continue to benefit a worthy charity, Bryn Mawr Hospital (BMH) was chosen and received \$26,000.
- The Devon Horse Show and Country Fair Inc. (DHSCF) was formed.
- Thatched roof market was introduced.
- Coconut Grove replicated for dancing and tea.
- First pre-event party, card game at Inver House.
- Governor's Box, Gov. Sproul attending.



A view of the first show to benefit the hospital in 1919. Country Fair booths then were thatched huts. Early shows were exhibitions of stylish dress, almost as much as stylish horse, rig, and rider. Devon was a place to see and be seen and casual dress was a breach of etiquette. (From *A Country Doctor's Dream*, © 1992 Bryn Mawr Hospital)

- Rummage sale, baby show, doll show, dog show, Punch and Judy show, raffle of livestock.
- Mrs. Archibald Barklie became the first Devon Country Fair Chairman.

### Mrs. Archibald Barklie

In 1919 Mrs. Archibald Barklie became the first Chairman of The Country Fair. Reconstruction in Europe would have benefited from her formidable organizational skills and management style. Mrs. Barklie commandeered a friend's house on Walnut Street on April 30th and from 10 in the morning until late that evening she had every committee and sub-committee report on their plans for the May Show. A village of thatched-roof cottages was built, a fresh food market was installed, and a Dog Show, Doll Show, and Baby Contest were organized. She also was hostess at the first pre-event, a card party at her home, Inver House. Mrs. Barklie continued as Chairman for five years.

"Every effort has been made to provide attractions that will appeal to people in all stations of life," said Mrs. Barklie today. "We do not want the people of the Main Line to get the impression that the fair is held to provide pleasure for the rich people of this section of the state. We want fathers and mothers-be they rich or poor-to come to the fair with their families and enjoy themselves. In order that the working man and woman may help us with this worthy charity we have decided to run all amusements, including the dancing pavilion, until 10 o'clock each night." — Mrs. Archibald Barklie, May 28, 1919

### 1920

- The Polo Field (11.899 acres) was purchased for \$22,500 from John and Martha Livenzy on 4 April.
- Five day show held 26-30 May.
- Grand Pageant by Mrs. Ottis Skinner.
- Straw vote for President.

### 1921

- 25th anniversary four day show held between 25-30 May, with nearly 1,500 entries in 174 classes.
- Horse Show Ball was held at the Devon Inn during the Show.
- The first barn was built early 1920s by William DuPont just northeast of the oval.

### 1922

- Five day show held between 25-30 May.
- Vice President Coolidge, his wife, Senator Pepper, and Governor Sproul attended.
- Opening events were announced on Strawbridge & Clothier's newly introduced Radio (Wireless) Telephone Broadcasting Station (WFI AM) — a first for any horse show.
- Cafeteria turned into a clubhouse for committee.
- Whippet racing.

### COOLIDGE'S FIRST WINNINGS

#### Gets Box of 100 Cigarettes in Spin Of a Wheel of Fortune

PHILADELPHIA, May 27- Vice President Calvin Coolidge today won a box containing 100 cigarettes and incidentally cheers from a group of young women at the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair when he paid a quarter for a spin at a wheel of fortune.

"That's the first time I ever won anything," said the Vice President, as the wheel halted at the number he held and the girls, also investors in the spin, broke into cheers.

The distinguished visitor saw the Corinthian challenge event in which the most famous hunters in America carried their red-coated riders over board and brush leaps and warmly applauded Mrs. J. Howell Cummings Jr., formally Isabella Wanamaker as she guided Red Gauntlet to the blue in the harness horse event. — *The New York Times*. May 28, 1922 (Copyright © The New York Times)

### HORSE SHOW OPENS WITH COUNTRY FAIR

#### Grounds Attractive

The grounds at the Devon Polo Field never presented a more attractive appearance than they do this year. Under the management of the show committee and the executive committee of the country fair, the big enclosure has been made to take on the appearance of an Irish village on a fair day. Quaint thatched-roof cottages and booths have been erected for the country fair, and will be the scene of a number of innovations. There will be thousands of articles of every description sold along "Easy Street," the main thoroughfare of the little village.

Mrs. Archibald Barklie, chairman of the fair committee, will serve supper daily, as the festivities in the village are scheduled to continue every night after the last horse leaves the oval. At six o'clock Mrs. Alexander Brown presides over the cafeteria. Other attractions are a market house, a toy shop, a rummage shop, a vanity shop and a grab bag as well for the children. "Happy Village" is the term applied to the little collection of houses, and if all the plans of the committee succeed it will live up to its name. Visitors will dance in the evenings at a quaint pavilion which in itself is an innovation for the annual fair. — *Evening Public Ledger*, May 28, 1919



On May 30, 1922, then Vice President Calvin Coolidge was a guest at the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair. Pictured here are (L to R) Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, Mrs. Archibald Barklie, Mrs. George Wharton Pepper, Vice President Coolidge, Isaac Clothier, Jr., a member of the Show committee, and Samuel D. Riddle. The photo taken by Evening Bulletin photographer Bruce Murray, was reprinted in the Bulletin on May 20, 1955.

*Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA*



### Early Cafeteria

In the 1920s most of the food for the cafeteria was donated. Only luncheon was served and the long cars and chauffeurs would start arriving in the morning. The committee could usually count on receiving three or four rib roasts, lettuce and strawberries. The Barclay in Philadelphia would frequently send a planked salmon. Then the young misses and matrons dressed all in white from their hats to their shoes made magic out of the assorted food. They were helped in their endeavor by a cook named Margaret and an English butler named Harrington. A volunteer, Mrs. Clarence "Sam" Lewis, would tell how they would all work shoulder to shoulder at Devon but later when she was being served a fine dinner she recognized Harrington and called him by name. He politely corrected her and said, "Not here, madam".

### 1923

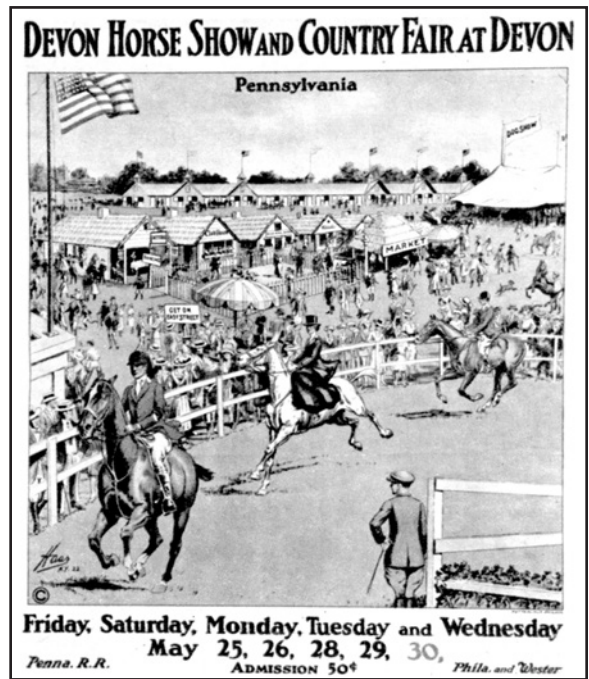
- Old grandstand replaced with wood-roofed grandstand.
- Judges stand located at northern end of ring.
- A new special course built with stone walls, water and broad jumps was constructed between the oval and the barns.
- 89 entries in one Hunter Class.

### 1924-1929

- Edward Beale became president and remained until 1946.
- President Coolidge visted as guest of DHSCE.
- Show extended to four days, with over 2,000 entries.
- Volunteers in the food booths were required to wear white-from head to toe.
- Relatively few changes due to the Depression. Small decline in number of entries and spectators.

### 1930-1935

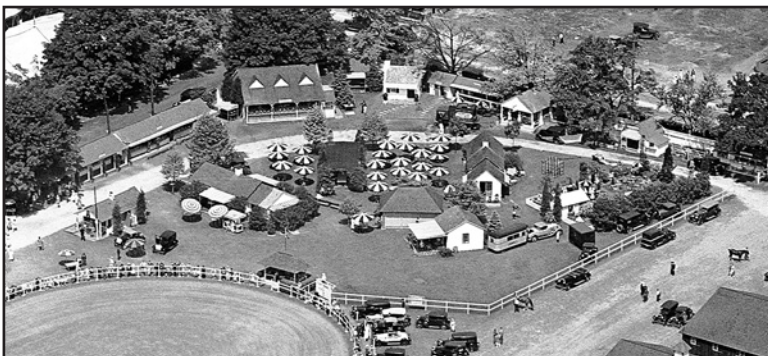
- Thomas W. Clark was general manager of the show from 1919-1942.
- The Devon Country Fair was now giving more than \$23,000 annually.
- Over 50,000 people attended the six day event.
- Fingerprinting exhibition.
- An Ice Water Committee was started by the Country Fair to train their new chairmen. This committee became the Soft Drink Committee.



1923 Poster



Lending Color to the Devon Horse Show (Left to Right): Misses Marion A Galey, Rosina D. Malpass, Polly Brinley, Mary Law Starr; Mrs. Robert F. Holden, Mrs. Sumner Rulon Miller, Mrs. Joseph R. Rollins and Mrs. Alex Coxe Yarnall, who had charge of booths at the affair. - *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, June 2, 1929 (Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives, Philadelphia)



Looking north, this aerial close-up of the Devon Country Fair in May 1931 was taken by the Dallin Aerial Survey Company of Philadelphia. Courtesy of Hagley Museum & Library and the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society.

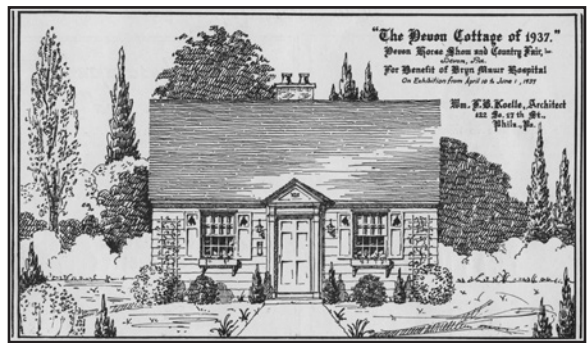


Thomas W. Clark. Photo by Carl Klein  
Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair





R. Peter Richards up on Dilwyne Farms' "Old Guard," winner of the Palmer Trophy in 1931 on the "Corinthian" course. Dilwyne gained permanent possession of the cup with this win. Richards of Wilmington, Delaware was thirteen at this time. A Marine lieutenant, has was lost at Guadalcanal, October 1942. *Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*



Drawing of cottage raffle prize from 1937 program book. *Courtesy of Chester County Historical Society.*

## 1936–1942

- The outside course was altered to have horses run clockwise.
- The raffle prize now included a house and a 1937 Ford V-8 Coupe with Quaker Trailer attached.
- Devon Country Fair was presented with barrels of Nova Scotia salmon by an avid fisherman, and the Cafeteria served salmon in every conceivable guise all week.
- The Toy Booth net profit was \$325. Most of the profit came from the sale of a large number of kittens.
- In 1938 the German ambassador and thirty German soldiers attended the Show, and when a German song was played they stood at attention and gave the Heil Hitler salute.
- In 1939 the main oval was renamed the Wanamaker Oval, and was completely refurbished and under laid with drains, but the repairs were not totally successful.

## 1943–1945

- The Horse Show was cancelled due to the War, but a Dog Show was held in 1943 and 1944.

### The Second World War

Devon Horse Show did not take place in 1943, 44, or 45, but retained its standing with the American Horse Show Association by continuing to reserve its customary dates. However, during 1943 and 1944, to benefit Bryn Mawr Hospital, the Devon Country Fair held Dog Shows over the Memorial Day weekend with over 3,000 entries. As the Country Fair Chairmen were busy doing War Relief work, the job of planning and running the Show went to the Debutantes and Post Debutantes from prewar society. The press must have been pleased to cover such happy activities featuring pretty, wealthy young women with pampered pedigreed pooches because hundreds of clippings and photographs from these years survive in the DHSCF archives.

A representative sample from the *Philadelphia Record*, May 21, 1943.



Mrs. Harold Brownlee, of Colonial Village; Mrs. G. Gordon Snyder, of Pen-y-Bryn, Bryn Mawr; and Mrs. John C. Remington, 3d, of Haverford, admire a puppy at the Devon Country Fair. Mrs. Snyder is chairman of the new "Dog House" booth – which features antiques. May 28, 1947

*Images courtesy of Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA*



Balloon Vendors at Horse Show – Mrs. Thomas E. Spence, Jr. (left) of Merion, and Mrs. Hal K. Reynolds of Bryn Mawr, sell balloons in the toy booth of the Devon Horse Show's Country Fair section. May 31, 1948



Lance Kelly, 5, has a carnation pinned on him by his sister Louise, 3, at the Flower Booth. They are the children of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence B. Kelly of Chester Springs, PA. May 28, 1949

## 1946–1950

- 50th anniversary celebrated in 1946.
- Charlton Yarnall succeeded Beale as President.
- Freddy Pinch became general manager (he first rode at Devon in 1912).
- Show went back to five days with the introduction of evening classes.
- Annual gift to BMH was now over \$50,000.
- 1947 Mary B. Johnson, chairman of the Candy Booth provided the recipe from her grandmother which was chosen to become the famous Devon Fudge. The candy booth also sold lemons with candy straws, a century-old Philadelphia tradition.

## 1951–1955

- The early 1950's marked a decline in exhibitors and spectators.
- More than 2,000 entries and \$33,000 in prize money included eleven stakes of \$1,000.
- Over 1000 volunteers under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Lewis.
- 21 booths and 9 outdoor exhibits, including Saks Fifth Ave, Bonwit Teller, J. Lichterman (furrier), Richel Cosmetics, MacDougall, Wanamakers, Strawbridge & Clothier, and Wright, Tyndale & Van Roden. Bonwit Teller held a fashion show every day at 12:30 pm.
- In 1952 a disastrous fire started three weeks before the Show, and destroyed the stables along Valley Forge Road. The Show went on with stabling in tents.

### John Stillwell

In 1953 a teenaged volunteer fireman was called to a fire at Devon Horse Show. As he drove toward the flames he was sure that all of the Horse Show was burning down. Fortunately for Devon only a row of barns was lost, and the Devon Horse Show continued with its scheduled opening three weeks later.

Also fortunately for the Devon Horse Show a wonderful relationship had begun with the young firefighter John Stillwell. John went on to become the Chief of the Easttown Township Police Department and simultaneously Chief of the Berwyn Fire Company.

As an officer with the Easttown Police John worked thirty-seven years at the Devon Horse Show, the last fifteen years as Chief. Rather than dreading the long hours and double shifts, John looked forward to Devon each spring. He became the special favorite of the chairman in the Country Fair, where he worked to prevent problems from escalating, and kept the youngsters from too many high jinx. John knew all the kids, and their parents! He viewed the Devon Horse Show not as two weeks of unceasing labor but as a cause for celebration by the residents and visitors under his protection.

### 50th Anniversary

Mr. Raymond S. Cox wrote in his foreword to the 1946 Devon Horse Show Catalog, "We expect to have with us this year six individuals who showed in 1896; Mrs. George A. Saportas (Miss Elizabeth R. Sinnickson), Mrs. Henry T. Holladay Jr., Miss Helen W. Warren, Dr. Edgar W. Powell, Dr. J.C. Bartholomew, Samuel Riddle and Joseph L. Serrill. It is hoped to have entries from Mr. Riddle and Dr. Powell in this our fiftieth anniversary show."

Mrs. Lapp added her comments: "Our family was honored as First Show Exhibitors by receiving passes to the 50th show and so the thrill of being present and participating in the first show in 1896 was again experienced 50 years later on Memorial Day in 1946, when the 50th Anniversary Horse Show officials asked the thousands present to stand in silence, in memory of Devon's past 50 years, while the Valley Forge Cadets' Military Band played a beautiful version of 'Taps' to honor Devon and the past 50 years of 'Our Great Devon Horse Show.'"

### The 1952 Fire

Less than three weeks before the 1952 show, in the afternoon on May 7th, a disastrous fire broke out at the show grounds. It started in a pile of rubbish, and it was suggested in the West Chester *Daily Local News* the following day that it may have been ignited "by a spark from a passing locomotive" on the railroad. Whatever the cause, the blaze, fanned by high winds that sent flames 100 feet into the air, completely destroyed the permanent stables along Valley Forge Road, with facilities for 274 horses. Five fire companies, from Berwyn, Paoli, Wayne, Newtown Square, and Ardmore, and some 150 firemen were on the scene and prevented its spread to the remaining stables, with accommodations for 220 horses, and the grandstand. Fortunately, no horses were stabled on the grounds at the time, though some were expected to arrive within a few days.

Bob Goshorn "Where Champions Meet: The Devon Horse Show" *Tredyffrin Easttown History Quarterly* July, 1994 Vol. 32, No. 3, p. 110



(Left) Firemen pour water on the embers of stables ruined by fire. (Right) Ruins of more than 270 stalls destroyed by fire are inspected by (L-R) show manager Fred Pinch, show committee chairman William Ashton, and show secretary Ward Sullivan. Photos dated May 8, 1952



### Devon Fudge

In 1947 Mary Barclay Johnson, then chairman of the candy committee, submitted to the Committee recipe competition her grandmother's delicious fudge recipe "that held together, even when made in huge batches," and won handily. This became the famous "Devon Fudge."

On May 26, 1976, KYW-TV host Jack Helsel, who had worked as a fudge maker on the Atlantic City boardwalk in his youth, taught the viewing audience how to make Devon Fudge, presumably without revealing the detailed recipe.

The recipe remained a secret until the 1984 Devon Horse Show, when it was published in the new cookbook *Devon Country Fare*.

#### DEVON FUDGE

Average yield: 1 pound; Preparation time: 30 minutes; Cooking time: 30 minutes; Do ahead; freeze

#### Ingredients:

2 ounces unsweetened chocolate  
2/3 cup evaporated milk  
2 cups sugar  
dash salt  
1 teaspoon light Karo syrup  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 teaspoon vanilla

#### Method:

Combine chocolate, milk, sugar, salt and Karo syrup in a pan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until mixture comes to a rolling boil. Then cook, stirring occasionally, over low heat until candy thermometer reads 236 degrees, or until mixture forms a soft ball when rolled in cold water. Cooking time varies with the stove, but averages 30 minutes for 1 pound. Remove from heat, add butter and vanilla, and place pan in cold water in the sink. Beat until fudge is fairly thick and creamy. Pour quickly into a buttered 8 x 8 inch pan and cool until warm. Then cut into 1-inch squares. Store in covered container at room temperature, do not refrigerate.

Candy Committee, Devon Horse Show and Country Fair, submitted to *Devon Country Fare Cookbook*

### 1956-1960

- Innovations to make Devon more popular with spectators included Western classes along with exhibitions of barrel racing and bareback jumping.
- Special Hospitality Committees were started to encourage exhibitors.
- Gift to BMH exceeded \$80,000.
- Frank H. Ellis, III became treasurer and got the finances back in order.
- In 1958 races featured chariots drawn by teams of Shetland ponies.
- Budweiser Clydesdales and Curtiss Candy ponies gave exhibitions.
- Midway with Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, and games.
- Rock concert, antique auto show.
- Gypsy Rose Lee presented a trophy.



Peter Luciano in full cowboy regalia  
*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*



Jimmie Robinson driving pony chariot in 1958  
*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*

### Gypsy Rose Lee

1958 saw one of the more flamboyant Devon moments in Devon history.

In the late 1950s, horse shows were losing their appeal. Thomas Bright, the new President and an advertising executive, found wonderful ways to make The Devon Horse Show a spectator's event.

He added terrific new classes, including races of Roman chariots being pulled by four Shetland ponies, cutting horses and parade horses. And he had it all covered by publicity.

The advent of publicity brought celebrities, Arthur Godfrey, Chief Halftown, Hopalong Cassidy, Sally Star, Dick Clark and Tab Hunter, to name a few. One evening the elegant, but scandalous, Gypsy Rose Lee was to present a trophy. The Wanamaker Ring, as too frequently was the case, was ankle deep in mud. Devon Horse Show Vice-President Jimmie Robinson swept Gypsy into his arms and carried her into the ring to the presentation! Devon's staid elitist profile was changing.



Mr. Thomas Bright introducing Gypsy Rose Lee to the spectators at the 1958 Devon Horse Show.  
*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*



## 1961–1965

- In 1962 three TV programs aired during Devon week, including taped sections highlighting the Country Fair and the children's classes. In 1964 WFIL paid \$2,000 for the program rights.
- Celebrities were invited and made appearances, including Hopalong Cassidy, Sally Starr, Ted Key (creator of "Hazel"), and many others.
- A "Devon Dress" was chosen by the Country Fair each year. Designs were presented by local shops and then sold to interested Chairmen.
- In 1963 the dangerous outside course was fenced and the bank jump was eliminated.
- In 1964 a new administration building was constructed.
- Dwight Eisenhower attends as a guest.
- Operation Goldmine was started with 300 chances at the price of \$25 each.
- Devon was extended to eight days in 1965.
- Record breaking number of spectators.



President Eisenhower meeting Mrs. James K. Robinson and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bright at the 1964 Devon Horse Show  
*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*

### The Robinson Family - Four Generations

These past eighty-three years and four generations, members of the Robinson family have been dedicated participants in the Devon Horse Show; many were willing and tireless leaders at Devon while many showed the same spirit through competition. The Robinsons have exhibited in many divisions and in competitions for specific breeds. History affirms the tireless support of this family that continues today for the wonderful community endeavor: the Devon Horse Show Where Champions Meet.

Beginning with the Draft Horse Division and later the American Saddlebred Division, three brothers James K., William H., and Samuel Robinson could be found leaning on the Wanamaker Oval fence admiring their most recent offspring in the mare and foal class. The great sires, Beau Fortune, Sensation Rex and Vanity Sensation (standing at Crebilly and Nawbeek farms) from the Saddlebred breeding programs of the past continue to produce Champions today.

In the early 50's, with the addition of the Four In Hand Division and Carriage Marathon initiated by Gay and Jimmie Robinson, we continue to see the influence of the Robinson family upon this great tradition and sport. Gay and Jimmie could be seen traveling on their Park Drag made by Brewster from Radnor Hunt Club to Devon and in the show ring competing with various teams. Members of the third and fourth generation family could be found in the lead line division, junior weekend, and the pony, working, and local hunter divisions as well as the Four In Hand Division.

Jimmie, former Chairman and Director of both the Horse Show and Foundation, and his son David, quietly assisted with the expansion and remodeling programs of facilities of both the old and new while making a financial commitment into technology with the raising of the first new electronic scoreboard for all viewers to participate. A priority of the Robinson family was to support Leonard King and Wade McDevitt in successfully raising the capital funds necessary to purchase the Devon Horse Show grounds from Bryn Mawr Hospital. Our family was pleased to be part of that great investment to maintain this great heritage.

My personal memories include Jimmie entertaining former President Dwight D. Eisenhower while visiting the horse show, saluting the Captain of The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and their drill team, Gay sitting on the box of the Clydesdale Budweiser Hitch, driving the Roman chariots during an exhibition, and as a child sitting on Hopalong Cassidy's horse Topper, one of my personal favorites. It has been truly thrilling having had all these wonderful experiences myself and with my parents, and also fulfilling to have watched my wife Laurie and two daughters exhibit at Devon as well. Today, our family treasures these many family pictures and memories that remain on the wall in the family office. For our family, Devon brought together two great interests: a love of horses and other animals, along with a love for the health and welfare of the entire community through the show's continuing support of Bryn Mawr Hospital. — David Robinson



Cowboy hero "Hopalong Cassidy" (actor William Boyd) with young David Robinson and his father Jimmie Robinson at the Show in 1953.

*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*

### Dismantling the Outside Course

During the late sixties the attendance grew by leaps and bounds. The outside course was a victim of the growth. Spectators had a habit of walking across the course during the hunter classes. Celeste McNeal Harper claimed she once jumped a "triple", a rail fence, a baby carriage and a second rail fence! Avoiding the spectators became a regular hazard with the bigger crowds. The outside course was eventually dismantled and the new Gold Ring replaced it. The new ring was larger than the former second ring and the area it occupied became a schooling area.

Photo on right: Martha Bishop, of Fairview Village, near Norristown, astride "Grey Impudence," leaving the center ring for the outside course in Children's Hunter Class (1947).



### 1966-1969

- The first east grandstand was built.
- First carriage marathon in many years.
- Junior Day was the first day of the Show.
- In 1967 Devon Show Grounds Inc. acquired ownership of the 18.6 acre property. They consolidated the stock by successfully asking the outstanding owners to donate their shares, and by the end of the year they owned 90%.
- The number of entries in the Show exceeds 1,350.
- New Gold Ring takes place of the outside course.
- South Grandstand added on the west side of the oval in 1969.

### 1970-1974

- Diamond Jubilee celebrates 75 years in 1971.
- The show runs for eight days, with entries representing 24 states, and \$43,000 in prize money.
- The contribution to BMH exceeds \$130,000.
- 1970 Derby prizes included a Plymouth Barracuda Convertible, a mink stole, an oriental rug, a color TV, and a weekend in New York.
- Pennsylvania Day, attended by governors, and International Day with different ambassadors attending were held during this time. Governor Raymond Shafer attended Pennsylvania Day in 1970.
- In the Paper Pony shop everything for sale was made of paper, including clothing.
- Mayor Rizzo attended in 1973 to give the Police Trophy, a class popular with the audience.
- No hackney classes were held in 1974 to save room, but the audience complained and the class returned the following year.



Capacity crowds at the 1963 Country Fair



The Carriage Marathon returns in 1966

*Images Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*

### Devon Diamond Caper

One of the social events at the 75th anniversary Show was the Devon Diamond Caper held at the Philadelphia jewelry store Bailey, Banks & Biddle. Among the evening's events was a fashion show with volunteers modeling a \$250,000 collection of some of the most glamorous costumes from 20th-Century Fox including dresses worn by movie greats Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor and Barbara Streisand.

Kathy O'Loughlin, "ML History: As Main Line as it gets - The Devon Horse Show" *Main Line Times*, June 6, 2010.





## 1975–1980

- Starting in 1975 events were scheduled on Sunday for the first time.
- Over 3,500 volunteers participated, and the donation to BMH reached \$200,000.
- All judges scheduled for the next year's horse show by July, and the announcers and farriers, etc. under contract by February.
- On May 26th KYW-TV taught the viewing audience how to make Devon Fudge.
- Devon Country Fair hosted cocktail parties for the author and cast of the television drama "All My Children."
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian Marching Band and The Clydesdales exhibited during Bicentennial week in 1976.
- Both Wanamaker and Clothier were very supportive with prizes for the Derby coming from their stores.
- Sun Oil donated property (parcel #7) to Devon Horse Show and Country Fair.
- The new East 2 Grandstand, with seating capacity of 400 general seats and 100 box seats, was added for a total seating capacity of 1,625.
- Ladies side saddle classes added once again (including the Ladies Side Saddle Over Fences class).



Edgar and Hope Scott

*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*

## 1981–1985

- Over 150,000 spectators.
- German Beer Garden opened for second year.
- Wanamaker Oval expanded and renamed Dixon Oval.
- *Devon Country Fare*, a new cookbook was published.
- In 1984 Hope Scott's 80th birthday celebration was a financial success for DHS.

### Toast to Hope Scott on her 80th Birthday

I can lyricize ornately on a lady who not lately  
Sat upon the finest horses in the land  
Whether side, astride, or bareback  
She would never let them rare back  
But instead they all performed with manners grand

In the hunting field or show ring  
Devon, Unionville, or Pickering  
She was counted second best to very few

Her story started at Ardrossan  
Mid profuse azalea blossoms  
And in sight of Ayrshire cattle by the herd

Life progresses to the altar  
And since Edgar cannot fault her  
They proceed down the years to love and serve

Arm in arm they try Barbados  
Or wherever a Broadway play goes  
New York, London, even Venice with a verve

Then on committees ad infinitum  
Where like Croesus, gold she got 'em  
She became in Philadelphia, quite a name

She inspired in others glory  
Like "The Philadelphia Story"  
While retaining her good judgment just the same

When not mucking out the stables  
You might find her draped in sables  
With accessories of diamonds, whitest blue  
Dirty stories won't offend her  
And if you've an ear to lend her  
She might even try to shock you with a few

Though four score years have gone behind her  
Here in finest form we find her  
With a future spinning plots and plans anew

She's the heart and soul of Devon  
And we fondly hope her heaven  
Is to lead us on for many a year, please do

We're all better to have known her  
And by coming here we've shown her  
Just a portion of the plaudits she is due

So raise your glasses and embrace her  
As in tribute now we face her  
Helen Hope Montgomery Scott, a lady true

Leonard A. King, Jr. 1984



Helen Hope Montgomery Scott  
Outside the Committee Stand circa 1984

Photo by Alix Coleman

*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*

### 1986–1989

- Gift to BMH exceeds \$300,000.
- Over 3,000 volunteers.
- Devon was part of the Show Jumping selection process for the 1988 Olympic Games.
- Ostrich races were a dismal failure and the ostriches were sent home after one exhibition.
- Special exhibitions: Mighty Dogs and U.S. Marine Corps Color Ceremony.



### 1990–1995

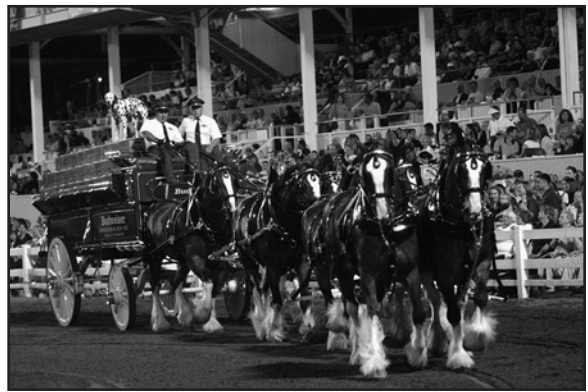
- Main Grandstand was rebuilt.
- The property was deeded to Bryn Mawr Hospital in forgiveness for the loans needed to rebuild the grandstand.
- Hope Scott Montgomery celebrated her 90th birthday in 1994, once again refreshing the Devon coffers.
- Canadian Mounties and Clydesdales exhibit.
- Three members of the Olympic team compete for \$60,000 prize in 1995.
- Record attendance 117,553 paid attendees.



Carson Kressley and Annika Bruggeworth on Freisians at Devon  
2013 Photo *Courtesy of John O. Senior*



Rebuilding the Main Grandstand 1991  
*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*



Budweiser Clydesdales at Devon  
Photo by Alix Coleman  
*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*



Royal Canadian Mounted Police entering the Dixon Oval  
*Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair*



Wells Fargo Stagecoach at Devon  
2013 Photo *Courtesy of John O. Senior*



## 1996

- 100th anniversary celebrated!

## 1997–2012 — The Second Century

- In 1999 the Show opens on Thursday for the first time.
- Series of newspapers printed on Devon Grounds by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.
- Prize money for the Grand Prix increased to \$100,000.
- Devon Horse Show received the United States Equestrian Federation's designation as a USEF Heritage Competition, the highest honor that can be given to a Federation Horse Show.
- DHSCF repurchased the property from BMH in 2004.
- Ladies Day restarted with hat contests and an elegant tea.
- Annual gift to Bryn Mawr Hospital exceeds \$400,000, totaling over \$14,000,000 since 1919.
- The permanent stabling was extensively rebuilt over a ten year span.
- Tea Cart rebuilt in 2009.
- Pavilion, Candy, and Souvenir booths rebuilt in 2010.
- Installation of All-Weather Euro Footing in the Devon Oval 2010, the Gold Ring 2011, and the schooling ring 2012.
- Wells Fargo becomes presenting sponsor in 2011.
- Devon was part of the Show Jumping selection process for the 2012 London Olympic Games.

## 2013

- North American Riders Group (NARG) gives Devon a number one place for shows in the United States.
- Wells Fargo is the presenting sponsor for a third year.
- New exhibitors lounge with closed circuit coverage of the ring.
- New catered ringside tables in the committee stand available for brunch and luncheon.
- New souvenir booth just for kids.

### Recollections from Peter Doubleday

#### Long-time announcer and co-manager of the Devon Horse Show

August (Gussie) A. Busch, Jr.'s tour bus intrigued many with its poker games and conviviality. Busch only paused to watch his Hunters compete and to drive his coach and four-in-hand in competitions. His family's participation at Devon continued the biennial appearance of Clydesdales and hitch. Anheuser-Busch has been a significant Horse Show sponsor.

Devon's first Grand Prix in 1978, the main event of Jumping, was one of the first stops on the American Grand Prix Association circuit and grew into sold-out nights for world class jumping, spectating, and Country Fair activity. That year, Melanie Smith Taylor and her French-bred horse Val de Loire won top prize and Horse of the Year.

Devon's honored stars have included Richard E. McDevitt, former DHSCF president (1993); Hope Scott, Horse Show Chairman (moment of silence, 1995); C.L. "Honey" Craven, ringmaster and show manager (2002); Mrs. F. Eugene Dixon and family (Dixon Oval, 2007); Leonard A. King, Jr.'s lifetime commitment to Devon (2013).

Equestrian honorees include Lisa Jacquin's American Thoroughbred "For the Moment," aka "Fred the American-bred" (1996); the Pleasure Drive; Show Jumping Hall of Fame induction ceremony (2007); retirement ceremonies for "Gem Twist," and "Sapphire" (2012).



McLain Ward, two-time Olympic Gold Medalist (Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008), is one of many Olympians to compete at Devon, and he returned to win his eighth Grand Prix in 2013. (1997 photo by Mary Magrane)  
Courtesy of Devon Horse Show and Country Fair

### Devon Horse Show Trophies

One of the greatest horse show trophy collections in the United States belongs to the Devon Horse Show. Currently Devon has 185 Challenge and Perpetual trophies, the number fluctuate due to new donations and retirements. The trophies include beautiful crystals and numerous sterling silver vases, champagne coolers, trays, plates and loving cups. There is also a collection of magnificent bronzes depicting horses in the breeds contested.

There are a number of trophies in the collection over forty years old. The Wanamaker Trophy for the Open Jumper Stake Class is one of the largest and oldest dating back to the early 1900s. As with many of the older trophies descendants of the donators continue to present them. It is exciting to see the families of previous champions return year after year to honor their family member, their former farm or their bygone favorite horse.

Often presenters and winners return with friends to stand in front of the trophy display and reminisce about "their" trophy engraved with their name on the sterling, testament to past glory. — Joanna Glass



### Leadership

The leadership of the Devon Horse Show reads like a Who's Who of equine and society circles. There was Altemus, Ashton, Beale, Biddle, Cassatt, Clothier, Lewis, Scott, Strawbridge, and Wanamaker to name but a few. It takes quite a village to raise a Horse Show!

Each of these leaders left an indelible mark on the history of a Show that has become the oldest and largest outdoor multi-breed show in the country. Mr. William Hunter's efforts brought the Devon Horse Show back from its 1900-1910 hiatus to a nationally known event with over one thousand entries. Mrs. Barklie was the first Country Fair chairman, and helped the Devon Show become an event held for the benefit of the Bryn Mawr Hospital. Mrs. Edgar Scott was an exhibitor, a vice-president, and chairman of the show committee, but also the best ambassador Devon has ever had.

One of the longest running tenures was that of recently retired Leonard King. He was hand-picked by Hope Scott to succeed Richard McDevitt, the father of the current chairman. Mr. King's experiences of being an exhibitor, a judge, and a show manager brought The Devon Horse Show into the new century. Often volunteering more than fifty hours a week, his leadership led the Corporation to once again own the show grounds.

Devon's glorious past and bright future is due to the dedication of the volunteers and employees of The Devon Horse Show and Country Fair.



### Bryn Mawr Hospital

In 1919 Bryn Mawr Hospital was chosen to be the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair's beneficiary, and this strong relationship still continues. The present day value of Devon's gifts to BMH over the years is close to fifty million dollars.

"The Devon Horse Show and Country Fair (Devon) and Bryn Mawr Hospital (BMH) continue to enjoy a rich and rewarding community partnership that started a century ago. Devon helps BMH complete its mission through their generous donations. Each year the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair donations allow BMH to expand or create a service or program that is very much needed, but not otherwise funded. BMH is tremendously grateful for Devon's shared dedication to the health of our community through their generous and time-honored support." — Julie Hyland, BMH Foundation

### Richard Eggleston McDevitt

Many of the leaders of the Devon Horse Show were respected horsemen, but Richard Eggleston McDevitt, former president and chairman of Devon Horse Show, was unsurpassed having been elected president of the American Horse Show Association and also serving as a member of the Executive Committee of the United States Equestrian Federation. He was highly regarded by the people Devon was trying to attract.

Mr. McDevitt was born in Chestnut Hill, grew up riding, and in 1929, at the age of ten, he first competed at Devon. He obtained his trainer's license at sixteen and became a trainer on the Pennsylvania and Maryland circuits. Mr. McDevitt was active in racing flat, steeplechasing, driving, eventing, training, breeding and judging.

Dick McDevitt was a man of strong convictions and principles, and his ruling requiring that show horses be tested for the powerful tranquilizer reserpine led to threats and the burning of his barn, but he never wavered from his decision. In the same spirit, as partner in the law firm of Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads he helped establish the Pennsylvania Judicial Inquiry and Review Board, fighting once more for his principles.

Mr. McDevitt's involvement in the Devon Horse Show spanned his lifetime and his contributions as both a participant and visionary leader are many.

**Bobbi Cowley** has served as a trustee for The Friends of Valley Forge Historical Park, twice as the Chairman of The Country Fair, a board member for years, and a volunteer for decades.

In 2010 Meg Wiederseim, Director of Operations of Devon Horse Show, knowing that Bobbi was interested in history and passionate about Devon, asked her to act as liaison with Roger Thorne of the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society in order to save whatever possible of the historical photographs and documents that had been stored in a damp barn.

Bobbi became the most recent of a long line of Devon historians, following Raymond Cox, John J. Hill, and Bunty Sellers from the Devon Board of Directors, along with Margaret Lapp, Bob Goshorn, Elinor Sensenig, Dick Kurtz, and Christopher Hyde who all wrote about the Show, to name just a few.

It turned out that the assets in the barn were just the tip of the iceberg. Artifacts were found everywhere: in the Show office, in Country Fair files, on the Internet, at Chester County Historical Society and Pennsylvania Historical Society, in the Hagley Museum & Library collections and the Temple Urban Archives, but most importantly with the people who love Devon and asked that their memories be included in the Devon Story.

Devon has a rich history that started in the resort era of horse-drawn carriages and continues on into the future. Bobbi notes "I have had the pleasure of collecting some of that history and I hope to be inundated with more as we continue to preserve, protect and share the history of The Devon Horse Show."