



Photo courtesy of Chester County Historical Society.

The Ballroom

In 1893, the Crump brothers remained entangled in their financial struggles, and the day to day management of the Inn passed to G. Jason Waters of the Hotel Windsor in Atlantic City. It was announced that building had begun on a spacious new ballroom on the south side of the Inn to accommodate the orchestra, concerts, dances, parties, and amateur theatre. We are uncertain when the construction was actually finished, but the addition may be seen on the 1897 A.H. Mueller Map.

In 1895, Miss M. E. Simmons became proprietor, and many of the rooms were redecorated and painted white, as seen in this 1899 photo. To celebrate her arrival, a dance was given not only for those staying at the Inn, but also for guests invited from neighboring cottages, other hotels, and from Philadelphia. The music was provided by the popular

Mask and Wig Orchestra, and the ballroom was described as a beautiful green and white, decorated with enormous vases of white mock orange blossoms and large palms.

In September of 1897, the guests at the Inn were entertained by a three-act comedy to benefit Dr. Gerhard's Hospital in Bryn Mawr, and the characters were played by many of the local belles known to society. The event and the dance afterward were held in the ballroom which was said to be beautifully decorated with plants and flowers and a striking show of gowns.

Nearly ten years later, in June of 1907, another popular charity event was held in the ballroom to benefit the Strafford Revolutionary Schoolhouse. The musicale and vaudeville program consisted of songs and clog dance.

Devon Golf Club

By the 1890s, golf had started its dramatic rise in popularity in the United States, and its governing body, the USGA, was formed in 1894.

Despite the skepticism of some that golf was here to stay, in November of 1894, the Devon Golf Club received a charter to become one of the first clubs in the area. The Board of Directors was made up of Sidney W. Keither, Lemuel C. Altemus, C. Davis English, Angelo T. Freedley, and Marcellus Coxe, who was known as the club's best player.

The nine-hole course was laid out over forty acres, and its location is said to have been east of the Inn and south of the polo grounds. The Crump Cottage was leased for six months to serve as the original club house. Some of the bunkers were natural and some were man-made. The rough was long, lush, and caused many challenges for players. For early members,



a score of 100 for nine holes was considered respectable.

Golf had experienced tremendous growth by 1898, and there were now seven recognized clubs in the area: Philadelphia Cricket Club, Philadelphia Country Club, Merion Cricket Club, Belmont, Huntington Valley Country Club, Belfield and Devon. Apparently the first team match ever played was at Devon.

By the early 1900s, the Devon Golf Club had 200 members, and Lewis A. Riley was its President. Annual dues were \$10, and hotel guests paid \$5. There was no official club house, but members gathered at the Inn. There was concern that the club might not continue due to the pressures of land development around the property, but as late as 1929 golf was still mentioned in advertising material.

Fourth of July at the Devon Inn

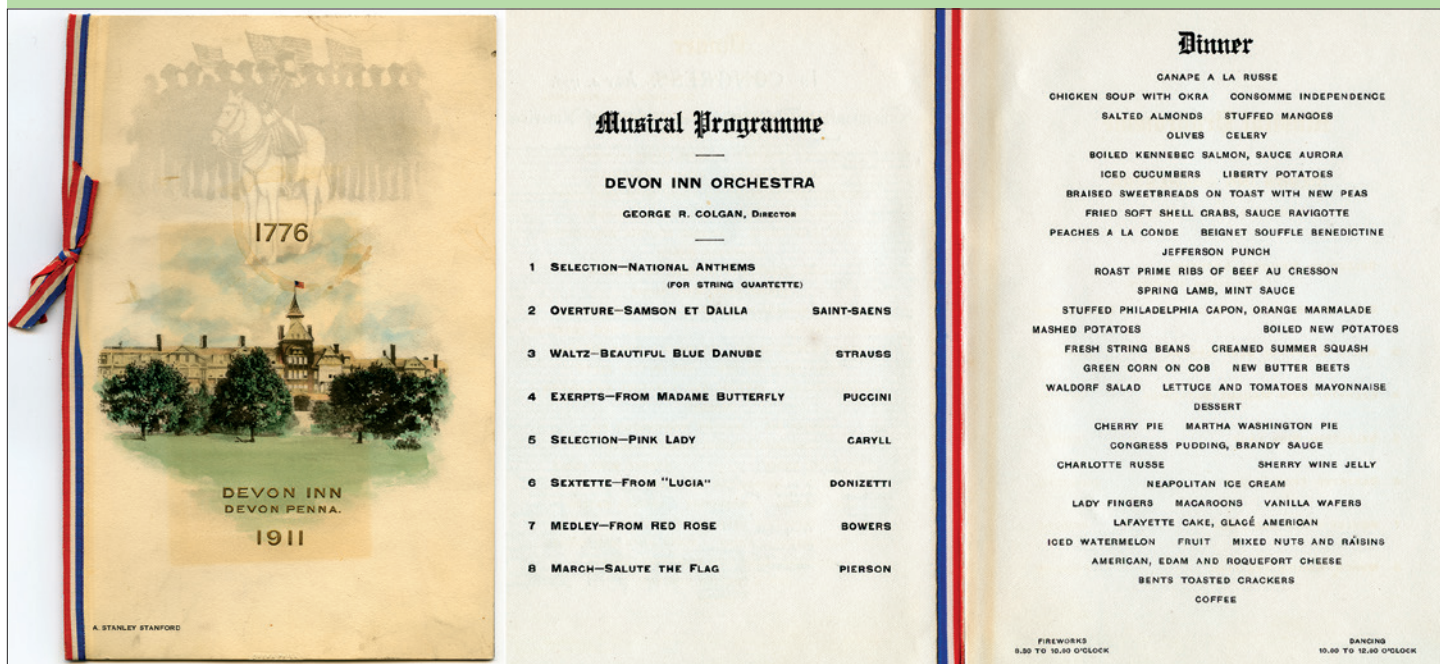
Roughly a month before the first Devon Inn's devastating fire in 1883, the Fourth of July was celebrated with a military band from Phoenixville and an amusing display of sack, hurdle, foot and wheelbarrow races between employees and stable coachmen. The evening concluded with fireworks. By the next summer, the second Inn had opened. The Fourth of July was observed with a tennis tournament during the day, and music and dancing were said to have entertained the guests at night.

A large Independence Day celebration was held in 1887, and the guest list included Congressman Darlington and Sheriff Hooper of West Chester. The following day, the *Daily Local News* described the ending of the fireworks display as:

"Devon in Arms, commencing with rotating fires of ruby sapphire and Jessamine, when suddenly bursts forth in fire the Arms of Devon Inn followed by the uprising of a grand pyric bouquet, forming in the heavens an immense floral cloud."* [*Carolina Jessamine: a vine with fragrant bright yellow flowers]

Over five hundred people gathered at the Inn on July 4, 1890. Guests stood on the lawn and porches and watched what was described as a highly crafted pyrotechnic display of color. Philadelphia's Germania Orchestra played on the porch both during and after the conclusion of the fireworks.

Twenty years later, in 1910, an advertisement for the Inn promoted the Fourth of July as offering a polo game, fireworks, dancing, and unsurpassed cuisine—all within an easy motoring distance of Philadelphia's City Hall.



1911 Musical Programme and Menu — A. Stanley Stanford of the American Resort Company had taken over as manager after Miss Simmons death in 1910, and he planned an elaborate Fourth of July gala in 1911 in honor of the 135th anniversary of America's independence. Special room rates were advertised (see below), as well as golf, tennis, an orchestra, dancing, and fine dining in the Floral Café. That evening's colorful Musical Programme and Dinner Menu may be viewed above. The elaborate bill of fare includes everything from Consommé Independence, Soft Shell Crabs and Jefferson Punch to Roast Prime Rib, Spring Lamb and Martha Washington Pie. Fireworks at the Devon Polo Grounds followed from 8:30 to 10:00 PM, and afterwards there was dancing until midnight. The Devon Inn Orchestra played a collection of patriotic pieces under Director George A. Colgan. *Courtesy of Chester County Historical Society*

DEVON, PA.
DEVON INN
Special Rates Over the Fourth
 Excellent golf links. Tennis courts. Liberal management. Large orchestra. Dancing. Dine in the beautiful Japanese Floral Cafe and see the fireworks.
DEVON INN, DEVON, PA.
 Offers excellent accommodations at, very reasonable rates July and August. 50 acres, golf, tennis, etc. High-class service and cuisine. Large Orchestra, dancing every evening. Special inducements for young people. Booklet.
A. STANLEY STANFORD.

Swimming

In September of 1894, residents and neighbors of the Devon Inn, led by C. Davis English, met to discuss building a "swimming bath" to be designed as one of the largest and finest in the country. Five thousand dollars was raised that evening to fund construction of the tank.

Although we can find no evidence of its exact location, the following June it was announced that a swimming pool had opened at the Devon Inn. It was hoped that guests, especially young ladies, would remain at the resort during the summer months and not depart for the seashore. Swimming races and water polo were offered as entertainment, and in July, the National Swimming Association amused guests with an exhibition of the evolution of swimming strokes, diving, imitation of a seal, swimming like a duck, and somersaults. Instruction on life-saving and floating was also provided.

By the end of the season, it was predicted that in the future no fine hotel would be without a swimming pool or bathing pavilion.



Peasants' Market Tag — Concerts and bazaars were often held the Devon Inn over the course of its many years, but a memorable Peasants' Market, benefitting the Children's Aid Society, was held only once, in June of 1909. A vast number of guests arrived for the enormous fair, and the Inn bustled with activity. Over four hundred volunteer society maids and matrons were involved with running the Peasants' Market. Dressed in fancy outfits from cultures around the world—Dutch, Roman, Italian, Irish, Swiss, and Sicilian—the costumed women staffed the lavishly decorated booths that dotted the lawn of the Inn. They sold everything from dolls and other toys to fruit, vegetables, flowers, and cigarettes. One young maiden walked around selling chances for a quarter for the opportunity to win a four-inch Yorkshire terrier. Other features included a midway, a livestock market, a shooting gallery, a ventriloquist, a Caledonian Pipe Band, and horse races. There were refreshments of all kinds, and dancing to the orchestra in the hotel ballroom. *Courtesy of Chester County Historical Society.*



Peasant Market — “Miss [Evelyn] Howell, in Sicilian garb, a white collarless blouse and short, red skirt with yards of coral beads encircling her throat, was seated amid a wealth of baskets piled high with fruit, chiefly golden lemons which she coquettishly proffered to all admirers, who gazed too long, or a trifle too ardently.” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 13, 1909) Note that the Inn can be seen in the background.

Camp Sherman Map

In July of 1891, an encampment of the First Brigade, National Guard of Pennsylvania was set up on nearly 80 acres of land south and west of the Devon Inn. For six days the sound of military games disrupted the usual quiet, but it also provided much entertainment for guests of the Inn, especially the young ladies.

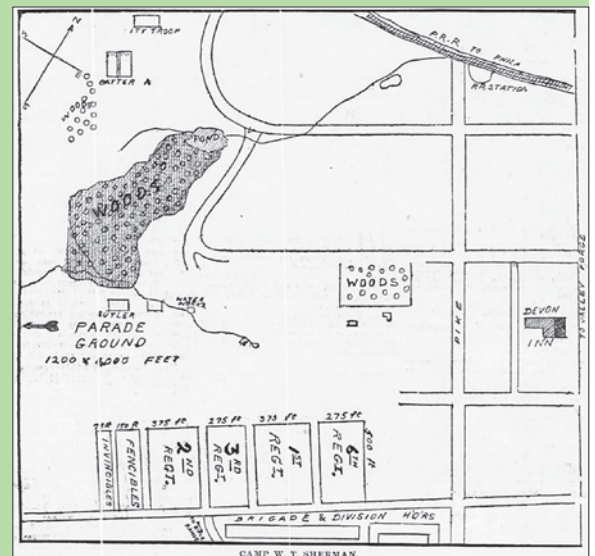
The encampment was named Camp Sherman in honor of the late William T. Sherman, former Commanding General of the United States Army, and a total of 2,700 citizen soldiers participated in the military maneuvers. There were troops from the First, Second, Third, and Sixth Regiment Infantries, Infantry Battalion State Fencibles, Infantry Company Grey Invincibles, Battery A, and the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry (also known as the First City Troop).

Brigadier-General Robert P. Dechert was in charge of camp, and as shown on the adjacent map, every organization had its own specific location to place the nearly 1,000 tents—described as a “city of white canvas.”

The weather was particularly warm, and a typical day included skirmish drills and target practice. Pennsylvania Governor Pattison and Division General A. Loudon Snowden were present for reviews and inspections. A dress parade on the south lawn of the Devon Inn entertained guests in the late afternoons, and one day when General Snowden was the reviewing officer, the parade was said to have been witnessed by thousands of applauding spectators from the Inn and surrounding areas.

Snowden was also the United States Minister to Greece and Romania and a former captain of the First City Troop. He and his family spent part of a two-month leave that summer at the Devon Inn. His son Charles would later become captain of the Devon Polo Team.

In July of 1893, guests were once more entertained by the First City Troop who camped for eight days in the fields south of the Devon Inn. Although we cannot know for certain, the soldier holding the horse appears to be wearing a uniform of the day, and the back of the image reads, “Jerry – With the compliments of his rider [name unclear] Devon 1893.” *Courtesy of Barbara & Jack Jacobsen.*





Floral Café Postcard, 1910 — In May of 1910, the Devon Inn opened under the new management of the American Resort Hotel Company. Mr. A. Stanley Stanford became Resident Director and replaced the previous owner of the Inn, Miss Mary E. Simmons, who had passed away the preceding January. One of the hotel's new features was the Floral Café, created mainly to attract automobilists who found Devon to be an easy drive from Philadelphia and within a few miles of many significant sites of historical interest. The back of the postcard advertised "a garage on the premises" and "an orchestra morning and evening." Also that same May, after a ten-year absence, the horse show returned. The Floral Café was instantly popular with horse show attendees, including Miss Helen Taft, daughter of President Taft, who was about to graduate from Bryn Mawr College. *Vintage hand-colored photo postcard courtesy of Meg Wiederseim.*

Floral Café Menu — This menu from the Floral Café was attached to the bottom of the 1910 color postcard (above), and the prices are noteworthy. A Planked Boned Porterhouse Steak was the most expensive item on the menu at a price of \$3.00, or what would be \$82.60 today. A lobster salad was 75 cents or the equivalent of \$20.65, and a cup of coffee was 15 cents or what would translate to \$4.13 today. *Courtesy of William Woys Weaver.*

DEVON, PA.
DEVON INN
Finest appointments: new Floral Cafe. Music.
Special rates July and Aug. A. STANLEY
STANFORD, Pres. and Res. Dir.

Ad from *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 25, 1910.

A la Carte

RELISHES

Celery 25 Stuffed Mangoes 25 Olives 25 Gherkins 20 Dill Pickles 25
Sliced Tomatoes 25 Sliced Cucumbers 25 Tomatoes en Surprise 40

SOUPS

Consomme 25 Chicken Broth 25 Cream of Tomato 25
Cream of Celery 25 Green Turtle 40

FISH AND SHELLFISH

Oysters and Clams in Season

Broiled Sea Bass 50 Broiled Sea Trout 50
Broiled Spanish Mackerel, whole 1.00 half 60 Soft Shell Crabs 60
Deviled Crabs 25 Broiled Live Lobster, whole 1.25 Lobster a la Newberg 1.00

STEAKS, CHOPS, ETC.

Planked Sirloin 1.50 for (2) 2.50 Planked Boned Porterhouse 3.00
Tenderloin Steak 1.00 Tenderloin Steak with Mushrooms 1.25
Lamb Chops (2) 50 (3) 60 English Mutton Chop 75
Calf Sweetbread Braised or Broiled 75 Broiled Chicken, whole 1.25 half 75
Roast Chicken, whole 1.50 half 90
Squab en Casserole 1.25 Broiled Squab on Toast 80

SALADS

Lobster 75 Chicken 60 Lettuce 25 Lettuce and Tomato 35
Crab Flake 45 Potato 35

RAREBITS

Welsh Rarebit 40 Golden Buck 45

SANDWICHES

Club 40 Cheese 25 Tongue 25 Ham 25

COLD MEATS

Roast Beef 50 Ham 50 Tongue 50 Chicken 65 Turkey 75

VEGETABLES

New Potatoes 25 French Fried Potatoes 25 Creamed Potatoes 25
Julienne Potatoes 25 Plain or German Fried Potatoes 25
Fried Tomatoes, Cream Sauce 40 Green Peas 25 String Beans 25
Lima Beans 25 Corn on Cob 25

DESSERT

Ice Cream 20 Fancy Cakes 25 Fruit in Season

CHEESE

Pineapple 20 Edam 20 Roquefort 25 Cream 20
Coffee, per pot 25 cup 15 Tea, per pot 25 cup 15

SEE WINE CARD FOR WINES, LIQUORS AND CIGARS

Lemuel C. Altemus, son of Joseph B. Altemus, is generally given credit for introducing polo to the Philadelphia area. As the story goes, he had a "carload of Texas ponies" brought to the area, and the Devon Polo Club saw its beginnings.

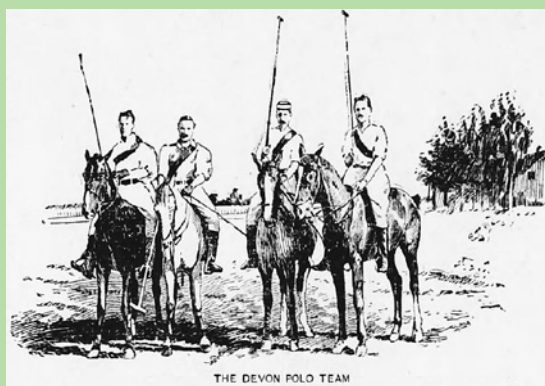
As early as September of 1894, polo was being played on the Devon Inn property, and Lemuel C. Altemus, C. Davis English and Devon Inn manager, G. Jason Waters were the best players. The following March, the Devon Polo Club became an official member of the National Polo Association. English was elected President, and Altemus became captain. In May of 1895, the club played its first game against the Philadelphia Country Club at their Bala grounds. Although the Country Club team easily defeated Devon on its first outing, the return match played at the Devon field in July was much closer. Afterward, the visiting players feasted on a fine dinner at the Inn.

Apparently, construction continued on the polo field throughout the year, and a tournament beginning on June 1, 1896 marked the official opening of the grounds, located on what is now the horse show property. Polo matches continued to provide welcome entertainment for guests at the Inn. The tournaments, especially over the Fourth of July, became an enormous draw for the hotel.

In 1897, Charles R. Snowden of Bryn Mawr took over as captain, and by 1899, the Devon Polo Team was undefeated in the Philadelphia tournaments, earning the nickname of the "Devon Invincibles."

One of the largest polo crowds ever seen at Devon was in June of 1900 when George J. Gould's Lakewood team arrived to play in the Alden Cup Tournament. George was the eldest son

Devon Polo Club



Lakewood. Mrs. Charles R. Snowden, however, was not to be outdone. Dressed in a stunning white gown, Mrs. Snowden ran up and down the sideboards clapping and waving her hands with enthusiasm. Although the Lakewood team was in the lead up to the last minute of play, the Devon team prevailed. The Goulds were entertained that evening at the Inn as guests of Devon team member Charles Wheeler. The Snowdens were not listed as having attended.

As the sport grew, additional clubs were created, and in 1900, the new Bryn Mawr Polo Grounds opened. It had a larger and more convenient field than Philadelphia or Devon, and many of the Devon players, including Snowden, played for both teams.

In 1913, Charles Snowden died unexpectedly in an automobile accident, and the Devon Polo Club never seemed to regain its former strength. The following year, the Devon Inn was sold and remained closed until 1917 when it was purchased again, and became the Devon Manor School for Girls. In the spring of 1920, the Devon Polo Grounds were sold to the Horse Show, and most of the polo team members moved over to the Bryn Mawr club, which remained in existence until 1935.

SCENES FROM POLO STRUGGLE YESTERDAY ON THE FIELD AT DEVON



The Wheelmen

The popularity of cycling as a sport grew dramatically in the late 1800s, and avid bicyclists were sometimes known as "wheelmen." One of the Philadelphia wheelmen's favorite and most scenic routes was said to be along Lancaster Pike to the Devon Inn. As early as 1884, the Times describes the Philadelphia Bicycle Club taking their "pedal horses" on a ride between the city and Devon in one hour and forty minutes. Another club known as the "Tavern Talkers" engaged in a series of nightly visits to the Inn. After each ride they would eat supper together, discuss different topics of relevance, and return by moonlight. The fine food offered at the Inn was a definite draw. By the spring of 1896, there was even a new bicycle model on the market called "The Devon."

A GREAT OFFER
\$75.00 FOR \$42.50
THE DEVON
The best Bicycle in the market for the money. Call and examine them.
GUARANTEED FOR 1896.
OUR HIGH GRADES:
THE AMERICA,
WORLD,
APOLLO
LOVELL "DIAMOND"
Bicycle Clothing and Sundries.
E. K. Tryon, Jr., & Co.
10 and 12 North Sixth St.