Lippincott-Kelley House

◆ 7 First Avenue ◆

In 1803, Paul Troth owned and farmed over 300 acres in this area. Troth then sold his "plantation" to David Borton (Burton) in 1835. Contemporary maps illustrate Borton's house adjacent to the east side of Kings Highway along the high rise of a hill known as "Laurel Mount," "Hinchman's Hill," "Collins Hill," and later "Kelley's Hill." In 1853, David Borton sold a 1-acre lot to Newton Township for "a suitable lot or piece of ground to be used as a public burying ground by the township." Attorney and local historian David Larsson places the graveyard on the northern portion of the Borton's property along Kings Highway near modern-day Lippincott Avenue.

Following Borton's death, the Orphans Court ordered an auction be held for Borton's land. Stephen G. Collins of Philadelphia offered the highest bid, acquiring the 99-acre tract for $11,946 in 1859.

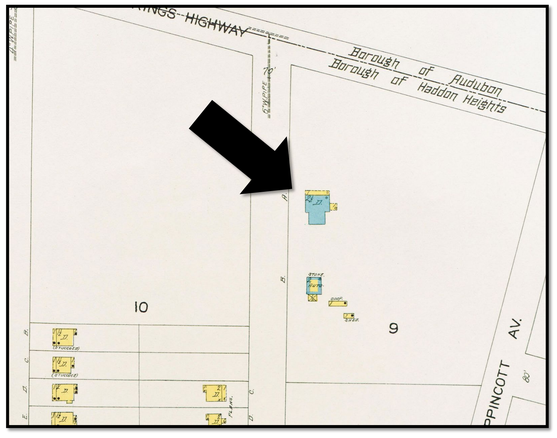
Maps show Collins home located back from Kings Highway near the current location. A fire insurance survey indicates the home comprised a three-story frame dwelling with a two-story addition and a lean-to shed kitchen. The exterior had both a front and rear veranda. The "front" veranda faced current Lippincott Avenue while the "rear" veranda faced current First Avenue. Collins also maintained a two-story frame tenant house, two barns, a cow barn, a chicken house, a corncrib, a two-story carriage house and wagon sheds.



Historian Dennis Raible writes in his book, *Down a Country Lane (1999)* that Collins was an "active member of an association of farmers and fruit growers that looked out for the interests and concerns of local farmers." Around 1874 Collins hired James Redman to manage the farm.

In 1877, Isaac M. Kay acquired the 99-acre property at a sheriff's sale and the following month conveyed the property to Jacob F. Dodd. Dodd was a farmer from Delaware Township. A contemporary newspaper article noted that Dodd grew 65-70-pound watermelons on his four-acre patch. In 1881 Dodd acquired the "Grave-Hole," or "Newton Township burial ground," for $100. According to Raible, the bodies remain in situ.

Detail, 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co.



In 1888, Jacob Dodd's children sold their family's "plantation tract" to Benjamin A. Lippincott for $13,000. Benjamin A. maintained numerous professional titles including farmer and the first mayor of Haddon Heights. Lippincott was also a successful land speculator, with most of his holdings comprising modern Haddon Heights.

In 1903, Lippincott deeded a portion of the former Dodd property to the Suburban Railway Company to "encourage in the building of a railway line" that would connect the rail line from Haddonfield along Kings Highway to Station Avenue. This spawned the creation of Lippincott Avenue. Lippincott sold the property to Anna G. and John M. Kelley in 1911.

The Kelleys maintained a successful real estate & contracting company constructing homes, neighborhoods, roadways, bridges, and public utilities. Together with their seven children, the Kelleys lived at the property until 1931 when the county ordered it sold in a Sheriff's sale. Numerous prominent individuals held the property from that point on, including Kate K. Webster and her son, E. Kessler Webster.

The historical record does not indicate when the current structure at 7 First Avenue was built or when it gained its current appearance. Contemporaneous maps from 1907 indicate Lippincott built a stone house which the Kelleys altered by the early 1920s.



In memory of Lynn Laitman
Haddon Heights Historical Society

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