

# 2020 VISIONS

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HISTORIC STONE ARCH BRIDGES  
NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA  
& VICINTY



Frankford Avenue-Pennsylvack Creek 1697

# January 2020

February 2020

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 Full Moon	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 King Day	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1



Fisher's Lane-Tacony Creek 1759

# February 2020

March 2020						
Sa	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 Full Moon	10	11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15
16	17 President's Day	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29



Old Newtown Road-Pennypack Creek Tributary 1793.

# March 2020

April 2020

Sa	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Daylight Saving Starts	9 Full Moon	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Spring Begins	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1 April Fools Day	2	3	4





Krewstown Road-Pennyjack Creek 1890



# April 2020

May 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1 April Fool's Day	2	3	4
5	6	7 Full Moon	8	9	10	11
12 Easter	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Earth Day	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2



Old Lincoln Highway-Poquessing Creek 1805

# May 2020

June 2020

Sa	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Full Moon	8	9
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6



Byberry Road-Southampton Creek 1828

# June 2020

July 2020

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	3	4	5 Full Moon	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Flag Day	15	16	17	18	19	20 Summer Begins
21 Father's Day	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4 Independence Day



Meetinghouse Road-Paul's Run ca 1840

# July 2020

August 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
25	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1	2	3	4 Independence Day
5 Full Moon	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1





Richieu Road-Poquessong Creek 1840

# August 2020

September 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
10	11	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3 Full Moon	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5



Creek Road-Pennysuck Creek 1840

# September 2020

October 2020

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1	2 Full Moon	3	4	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 Autumn Begins	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3



Red Lion Road-Poquessing Creek 1845

# October 2020

November 2020

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Native Americans Day	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween Full Moon



Paper Mill Road-Pennysuck Creek 1847



# November 2020

December 2020

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Daylight Saving Ends	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving Day	27	28
29	30 Full Moon	1	2	3	4	5



Century Lane-Poquessing Creek 1853.

# December 2020

January 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Winter Begins	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26
27	28	29 Full Moon	30	31 New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day	2

Concrete and steel construction has replaced the ubiquitous presence of stone arch bridges that once upon a time dotted the landscapes along the Philadelphia area's many creeks. Very few remain on the Tacony, Pennypack, and Poquessing Creeks and their tributaries in Northeast Philadelphia and nearby. One is of particular importance – the Pennypack Creek Bridge at Frankford Avenue (the old King's Highway) in Holmesburg. It is essentially the Oldest Bridge in the New World. Eleven more round out the entire inventory in our neck of the woods - all easily visited in a day. Some are very well preserved. Others are close to utter collapse. We need to act now or lose what little we have left.

The Friends of Northeast Philadelphia History are excited and proud to bring awareness of our history by presenting these images. It is our fervent hope that the existing treasures of the past will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Please do all you can make that wish a reality.

**Frankford Avenue Bridge over Pennypack Creek.** Built ca 1697, it is the oldest roadway bridge in continuous use in America. One of William Penn's first orders in 1682/83 was for bridges to be built over the creeks on the King's Highway (current Frankford Ave) northeast of Philadelphia to facilitate travel to and from Philadelphia and New York and particularly to his Pennsbury Manor residence in Bucks County. Penn's return to England in 1684 apparently eased the pressure to have the bridges built, for few were. In 1696/97, the Pemmapacka Grist Mill was constructed on Pennypack Creek just downstream from the King's Highway. This seems to have provided the motivation and manpower to finally get the bridge built. We know the bridge was carrying traffic in 1700 for Penn himself, having returned to Pennsylvania in 1699, complained that the condition of the bridge was a "nuisance". There have been many other historically notable crossings of the bridge including the march to Yorktown in August/September 1781 to defeat British. The bridge was widened on the downstream side (calendar photo) in 1893 to accommodate trolley traffic. PennDot performed an extensive rehabbing in 2018. Currently 17,000 vehicles, including buses and tractor-trailers, cross the bridge daily.

**Fisher's Lane Bridge over Tacony/ Tookany Creek.** Currently closed to traffic. Fisher's Lane was a main road connecting Germantown and Frankford by way of Adams Road. William & Harvey Rowland's Saw & Spring Factory was situated here where Wingohocking Creek (now underground) met the junction of Frankford and Tacony Creeks in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The village was known as Rowlandsville. Until recently, Fisher's Lane was a connector between I St and Ramona Ave. A stone marker mounted in the parapet at the west (I St) approach gives a build date of 1759. PennDot's Historic Bridge Inventory gives it a 1796 build date. It is in a beautiful location below the grounds of Friends Hospital and overlooking Juniata Golf Course downstream. Its current situation could be greatly improved. The calendar photo is taken from upstream.

**Old Newtown Road Bridge.** At the border of Pennypack Park just off Winchester Ave at Old Newtown Rd, the single span bridge crosses a small unnamed tributary of the Pennypack. A marker embedded in the parapet indicates it was originally built in 1793 and rebuilt in 1851. A concrete coating was applied to the bridge in the 1960s. The tributary with a couple of mill ponds is seen on historic maps emanating from the village of Bustleton. The village, probably the oldest in Northeast Philadelphia, was likely dependent on the run at its settlement in the 1690s. The Newtown Road, currently Bustleton Ave, connected Philadelphia with Newtown, then the seat of Bucks County. It was one of the Queens Roads or Highway laid-out during the reign of Queen Anne of England (1707-1714). It crossed Pennypack Creek at a ford in the vicinity of the location of the Newtown Road Bridge, downstream from today's Bustleton Ave Bridge, which was built in the 1960s replacing a circa 1800 bridge over the creek.

**Krewstown Road Bridge over Pennypack Creek.** A concrete marker in the parapet indicates a build date of 1800. The double stone arch span was coated with concrete in 1907, about the time of the construction of the New York Shortline Railroad Bridge (aka the “90 Foot Bridge”) seen behind and upstream on the calendar photo. Current Krewstown Rd was laid-out in 1712 as a Meetinghouse Road connecting Pennepack Baptist Church with the Pemmapacka Grist Mill Road (aka the Welsh Road) and the Queen’s Road (the Newtown Road). About 1725, Robert Thomas, brother-in-law of Thomas Livezey, operated a grist mill where the road crossed the Pennypack. The mill dam was in the vicinity of the 90 Foot Bridge and the mill race flowed through the location of the Pennypack Park’s Krewstown Road parking lot. A little ways downstream from the Krewstown Road Bridge is historic Baptismal Rock where Pennepack Baptist believers were baptized in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Old Lincoln Highway Bridge over Poquessing Creek.** The PennDot Historic Bridge Inventory gives it a build date of 1805. It is considered to have been the oldest bridge on the Lincoln Highway, America’s first transcontinental automobile road; opened in 1913 from New York to San Francisco. It was on the original 1913 route and was rehabbed in 1917 to accommodate the increased traffic. The bridge had been in use for over 100 years by that time. It was an essential component of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Road to Attleborough (now Langhorne), later called the Byberry & Bensalem Turnpike, and today known as Roosevelt Boulevard. However, the extension of the Boulevard in 1921 bypassed the bridge. It continued to carry traffic until it was closed in the 1960s. Plans have been made to rehab it as a pedestrian entrance to Benjamin Rush State Park from Bucks County, but as of this writing it continues to deteriorate.

**Byberry Road Bridge over Southampton Creek.** A plaque on the parapet indicates an original build date of 1828. It was apparently widened in 1858 and underwent extensive rehabbing in 2019. TranSystems, the same engineers and masons who did such fine work on the Frankford Avenue Bridge, also did an excellent job on the Byberry Road Bridge. An 1828 build date would make it the second oldest stone arch bridge in Montgomery County. Byberry Road was laid out in 1722 connecting Byberry and Horsham Friends Meetings. The bridge, located near the intersection of Byberry and Pioneer Roads, handles about 14,000 vehicles per day. Southampton Creek enters Pennypack Creek about ¼ mile from the bridge.

**Meetinghouse Road Bridge over Paul’s Run.** The bridge (currently closed due to structural issues) is located in Pennypack Park across from the Pennypack Environmental Center on Verree Rd. The apparently unadulterated single arch span may be a good indication of what the Newtown Road Bridge looked like before its coating of concrete. The build date is estimated to have been about 1840. A saw mill was just upstream on Paul’s Run in the late 18th century. The Pennepack Baptist Meetinghouse Road connecting the Verree Mills village of Verreeville with the Krewstown (Meetinghouse) Road appears to show a bridge over Paul’s Run on the 1848 Sidney map. Paul’s Run, which enters Pennypack Creek about 100 yards down from the bridge, was and is a major tributary of the creek. The first Welsh Baptists probably settled on Paul’s Run in the 1680s.

**Richlieu Road Bridge over Poquessing Creek.** The PennDot Historic Bridge Inventory gives a build date of 1840. The Richlieu Road connected the Bristol Road in Bensalem, Bucks County, by way of the village of Richlieu, with Townsend’s Grist Mill on Poquessing Creek and on to the Byberry Friends Meetinghouse. As with the Old Lincoln Highway Bridge, about 1 mile upstream, this double-arch bridge is in a sad state of disrepair and is being considered for rehabbing as a pedestrian entrance to Benjamin Rush State Park from Bucks County.

**Creek Road Bridge over Pennypack Creek.** A stone set in the parapet gives a build date of 1840. Creek Road was laid-out connecting Byberry Road with the popular Shelmire Grist & Plaster Mills built in the early 1800s. The road crossed the Pennypack about ½ mile upstream from the mill complex. Traffic along the road to and from the mills increased and a bridge was erected by the Montgomery County Commissioners in 1840. But with steam power on the rise, the usefulness of the old water powered mills was soon in decline. Construction of the Philadelphia-Newtown Railroad along the creek in the late 1870s and the attendant destruction of the natural creek flow closed the mills for good. The single arch bridge was only 40 years old. Traffic on the road was greatly reduced and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the bridge was rarely subjected to the destructive forces of the automobile; hence its very good condition. It is on the property of the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust and is closed to vehicular traffic.

**Red Lion Road Bridge over Poquessing Creek.** A marker set in the parapet gives a build date of 1845, as does the PennDot Historic Bridge Inventory. The colonial era Red Lion Road was named for the Red Lion Tavern (built 1730, destroyed by arson fire 1992) located on the King's Highway (current Bristol Pike) and Poquessing Creek at its confluence with Byberry Creek. A single-span concrete bridge built in 1904 carries Bristol Pike/Frankford Ave over the Poquessing just downstream from the three-arch Red Lion Road Bridge. The Red Lion Tavern is noted in history as a frequently used stopover for diplomats and other VIPs traveling the King's Highway from New England and New York to Philadelphia, in particular during the turbulent times leading up to the War for Independence. The Red Lion Tavern was a headquarters during the march to Yorktown by the combined French and American forces to defeat the British in 1781. The bridge suffered a relatively sloppy attempt at preservation about 2002.

**Paper Mill Road Bridge over Pennypack Creek.** A marker set in the parapet gives the build date as 1847. Like the Creek Road Bridge, about ½ mile upstream, the Paper Mill Road Bridge is on Pennypack Trust property and is closed to vehicular traffic. Paper Mill Road was laid-out in 1745 as the Road to Walter Moore's Grist Mill, which was located just upstream from the two-span bridge built 100 years later. The Longstroth Paper Mill replaced the grist mill in the 1790s. Due to fires and other obstacles, paper mills operated here intermittently until their final demise in 1858, only 11 years after the bridge was built. Unlike Creek Road, Paper Mill Road was a thoroughfare, connecting Huntingdon Pike and Terwood Road and the bridge would experience the effects of the automobile. Nevertheless, it has been well maintained and is in excellent condition.

**Century Lane Bridge over Poquessing Creek.** A marker on the parapet gives a build date of 1853. As with the other Poquessing Creek bridges, the Century Lane Bridge connects Philadelphia with Bensalem, Bucks County; in this case with the historic village of Mechanicsville on the Philly side. Located about a mile downstream from the Richlieu Road Bridge, it was in a similarly dilapidated state before being nicely rehabbed by Seravalli Construction in 2004. Unfortunately, vegetation including bamboo severely obstructs the view of this attractive bridge on the downstream side.

**Cover image:** A colorized version of William Breton's 1830 drawing *Bridge Over The Pennepack*. Frankford Avenue Bridge - downstream side.

All photographs taken November 2019 with a near-infrared modified digital camera.

***Friends of Northeast Philadelphia History • Design Layout and Photography by Fred Moore***