



SHAUNA YORTY



Left, Art and Jean Bernd grew vegetables, fruit and flowers in their four-lot garden in the West Jewels neighborhood. When they moved, they sold the space to Lancaster city, asking for it to remain green space. It's now a community garden. Clockwise from above, a rose bush and apple tree are from the original garden; a banana pepper grows in the community garden.



CHRIS KNIGHT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOS

||||||| GARDEN |||||

# PROVIDING PRODUCE

*Community garden helps residents connect, learn and grow their own vegetables, fruit*

ERIN NEGLEY | ENEGLEY@LNPNEWS.COM

**W**hen Kelly Slippey moved to West Lancaster Jewels eight years ago, a friend told her about the neighborhood's secret garden. "She took us over here, and we were just like blown away," Slippey says. "You wouldn't know it's here, unless you knew it's here."

Sandwiched between Bay Street and two alleys was quite a garden. The space had tidy rows of vegetables and two apple trees at the side. It was surrounded by grass paths and protected by a fence dotted with cascading roses. Spreading over four building lots, the garden looked more like a farmette in a neighborhood with little public green space.

For decades, this space has provided food and community: first as Depression-era victory gardens and then as a couple's hobby. It's now

Lancaster's newest community garden. At Bay Street Community Garden, people continue to grow, learn and connect. Lancaster plans to use what happens here as a model to create more gardens throughout the city.

## Longtime garden

When Art and Jean Bernd moved to the neighborhood in 1960, neighbors filled the empty lots with plants.

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Above, Shauna Yorty takes home freshly-harvested red beets; left, Andrew Phillips, left, and Craig Walt, right, weed the garden on a Wednesday work day. Below, Spencer Shambaugh, left, manages the community garden for Lancaster Recreation Commission; right, markers for the range of produce.



Kelly Slippey, right, and her kids Nellie Slippey, 6, and Esben Slippey, 4, weed before picking flower bouquets.







Western Market, at North Queen and Walnut streets, was designed and built by John Evans. The Italianate-style building was built in 1882. According to an article in the LNP archives, the market house was bought by auto dealer John Groff for \$65,000 and sold in 1958. Center, Evans was the architect and builder for the Western Farmers Market in 1868. It was built with Queen Anne style towers, with the market below and a community hall above. Right, Eastern Market, built in 1883, was designed by Evans in the Empire style with a distinctive tower and five-bay facade.

LANCASTER/STORY PHOTOS

# FOUNDING FATHER

## John H. Evans designed 3 city farmers markets, constructed a number of notable buildings and started a tradition

Our June edition of "The Architects of Lancaster" celebrated the work of architect John H. Evans. This month we explore the life and work of his father, John H. Evans, purported to be the city's first architect. Evans' work includes formalizing construction codes and licensing architects in 1897. With skills in drawing and construction, Evans could declare himself an architect. Evans was one of the first individuals. Self-taught in drafting and men- John Lawrence, a town and respected architect. Evans launched his career as a self-proclaimed architect/builder in his 20s. He and his wife raised 10 children, whom followed in his path. Evans' ability to design commercial buildings and his construction career throughout Lancaster and his respect and influence among the community, most notably for his architectural work. Prior to the construction of refrigera-



GREGORY J. SCOTT  
DESIGN INTERVENTION

THE ARCHITECTS OF LANCASTER, PART 4:  
JOHN EVANS, 1824-1894



John Evans designed and built the three-story Federal-style Marietta Town Hall in 1872, with its belvedere clock tower.

GREGORY J. SCOTT

tion and supermarkets in the 1930s, families would frequent their local farmers market three to four times per week to purchase fresh produce and meat. The city of Lancaster constructed five farmers markets in the 1880s. Interestingly, three were designed by John Evans in three distinctly different architectural styles. Other notable buildings constructed by Evans but designed by out-of-town architects include Franklin & Marshall College's Diagonothian Hall (1856), Lancaster Theological Seminary (1892), First Methodist Church (1890) and the Lancaster County Almshouse (1876). Evans

designed three highly acclaimed residences at 551-555 North Duke Street in 1887. Newspaper accounts declared the three-story homes, elevated 6 feet above the sidewalk, as some of the most beautiful in the city. The use of distinctive black and straw-colored brick, abundant stained glass windows, ornate porch details and a pair of 2-inch thick walnut front doors made these some of the most desirable residences along the posh North Duke Street corridor of elegant homes. Poor health forced Evans to retire at the age of 67. He died from a stroke at the age of 70 and his son Clifton and grandson Melvern would

carry on the family practice for the next two generations.

### What precipitated the licensing of architects as a profession?

As the U.S. population expanded rapidly in the 1870s, families moved from rural settings to the cities. Growth was unregulated as were the buildings, which led to fires and death. New York averaged 8,700 fires per year! It wasn't until 1917 that The Handbook of Architectural Practice was introduced and formalized as a guide to good practice.

### What markets did Evans design?

Eastern Market (1883) Second Empire style; Western Market (1883) Queen Anne style; and Northern Market (1884) Italianate style.

### Where did Evans reside?

Evans and Sarah resided in a modest, three-story row home at 515 W. James St., most likely designed by him.

● This column is contributed by Gregory J. Scott, FAIA, a local architect with 50 years of national experience in innovation and design. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects' College of Fellows. Email GScott@ripis.com.

## Lender

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**Mindful Nature Exploring Well-Through Words Wildlife.** Friday, July 11, 10 a.m. to noon. Take a breathe deep and meet with nature in a walk at at Manheim Library. Free. Register on 13-18. Register on 13-18.

**Power Paint** Friday, July 18, 11 p.m. Join a playful, creative painting experience celebrating the blooms and the creativity at this business Studio, 150 N.

Prince St., Lancaster. \$75. Register online.

**String Art workshop.** Friday, July 18, 7 p.m. Create string art (with botanical design options) at Horst Arts, 17 N. Main St., Manheim. \$39. Register online.

**A Gardener's Guide to Soil Health.** Saturday, July 19, 9 a.m. to noon. Learn about soil and how to work with our soils for optimal plant growth at Horn Farm Center, 4945 Horn Road, Hallam. \$45, sliding scale. Register online.

**Summer Tree Hike.** Saturday, July 19, 10-11 a.m. Learn about native trees and plants at Lancaster County Central Park. All

ages. \$2. Register online.

**Glass Plant Stake Mushrooms.** Saturday, July 19, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Make at least one set of five glass plant stakes with Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsman, Lancaster. \$107. Register online.

**Plant Swap.** Saturday, July 19, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bring houseplants, perennials, tools, pots, books and labeled seeds to Manheim Township Library. Free. Register online.

**Outdoors for All Day.** Saturday, July 19, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Celebrate the outdoors and nature with Let's Go 1-2-3, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, SoWe

neighborhood and the City of Lancaster with music, food, games and outdoor and nature activities at Culliton Park, 200-238 S. Water St. Free.

**Pop-Up Plant Bar.** Saturday, July 19, 1-3 p.m. Make a succulent planter with Terrarium Therapy at BierHall Brewing, Lancaster. \$20. Register online.

**BYOB and Watercolor.** Saturday, July 19, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Create a watercolor painting of basil with artist Jona Minotto at Cicci's Olives, 12B South Fifth Ave., West Reading. \$47, includes Italian bites. Register online.

**Leaf-Shaped Ceramic Bowls.** Tuesday, July 22, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Make ceramic bowls shaped like leaves with Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsman, Lancaster. \$100. Register online.

**Yoga on the Lawn.** Tuesday, July 22, 6-7 p.m. Join a yoga class outdoors at Conestoga House and Gardens, 1608 Marietta Ave. \$20. Register online.

**Antlers and Academic: Fall Food Plot Preparation.** Tuesday, July 22, 7-8:15 p.m. In this webinar from Penn State Extension, learn strategies for fall food plot success, including species selection, planting and spraying. \$15. Register online.

**2025 Invasive Species Scavenger Hunt.** Wednesday, July 23, 10 a.m. In this webinar from Pennsylvania Invasive Species program, learn about a project to document the spread of invasive species. Free. Register online.

## Garden: Community

Continued from A13

The high school sweethearts met in Schuylkill Haven and relocated to Lancaster after Art graduated from what's now Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. They grew a few tomato plants and spring onions in their small backyard and expanded to a friend's yard, Art Bernd says. They started gardening in a corner of the open space after buying it from a neighbor in the late 1970s. Over the next 15 years, they bought the remaining parcels. The last was topped with grass and a wash line open for the neighborhood to use.

Art planted and Jean harvested and processed. Here, he grew perennial crops like asparagus and strawberries and rotated annual crops such as potatoes, tomatoes, corn, onions, cabbage, beans and more. He harvested plenty and is especially proud of picking tomatoes as early as June 16.

"I could come home from a frustrating day in the shop," he says. "I could fight with the weeds. It was a relief to me. It was a productive hobby."

Produce helped feed their family of four. They shared extra with neighbors at Redeemer Lutheran Church or Water Street Mission. After Art Bernd retired as a mechanic, he had even more time to devote to his large garden.

Over the years, there was pressure to sell the plots to pay bills or provide much needed parking. But they continued gardening until the couple, now in their mid-80s, was ready to move. They sold the garden to the city in 2023, asking for it to remain green space.

He remembers seeing cows grazing in what's now Golden Triangle Shopping Center. He'd rather not see their garden paved over.

"Once you do that, it almost never comes back," he says. "It's gone."

Lancaster's health bureau would like to see more community gardens throughout the city. There have been a few raised beds or smaller spaces for growing, but Bay Street is different: a large, city-owned space devoted to community gardening, says Craig Walt, Lancaster's bureau chief of health.

"We're very interested in continuing to work with the community for potentially other gardens or other things that improve healthy food access," he says.

Lancaster, and in particular, the garden's West Lancaster Jewels neighborhood, is dense, Walt says.

"This is one of the main reasons why, when the city was approached, it was like, of course we want to figure out any way we can preserve this green space and keep it available for the community," he says.

### The first growing season

Lancaster bought the property for \$150,000. City staff were still trying to find a garden manager by the time the 2024 growing season started. Neighbors didn't want to see the space go unused in the meantime.

With permission from the city and liability waivers, a group of neighbors dug in. They had no funding, no plants and no on-site water. A group of about a dozen split up the chores over the week through the growing season, even during heat waves.

"We were pulling hoses from other people's private water hookups, which was kind of a nightmare," says neighbor Shauna Yorty. "And then filling up watering cans and walking them over, like a bucket brigade. It was really bad. It was so

hot and dry last year."

They brought in donated plants. A neighbor made tomato stakes. Without a leader and despite the odds, the group grew crops to take home and share. They also shared knowledge: how to preserve hot peppers with fermentation, how to grow and use medicinal herbs and what to cook with all of that Swiss chard.

Slippery, another neighbor, appreciates the garden for more than the herbs and zinnias she brings home. Here, her children Nellie, 6, and Esben, 4, have space to roam. "Compared to our tiny backyard, this feels like a mansion to them," she says. "They can just run and explore and taste things and touch things and smell things."

Here, neighbors young and old and in between have a guaranteed meet-up to work together for the common good.

### This year's garden

By winter, Lancaster Recreation Commission had a five-year contract to manage the space, \$60,000 a year for staffing and operating expenses. Commission recreation specialist Spencer Shambaugh held meetings to learn what people wanted. They started planting in April, adding a similar mix to what Art Bernd planted, plus extra flowers, herbs and perennial fruit such as raspberries and elderberries.

A neighbor with a Burmese background planted a corner with melons, cilantro and more. There's a language barrier for many of the gardeners to learn more about this area, but that space still provides.

The city, with help from sponsors, covers capital costs. The department of public works replaced a perimeter fence with extra gates and added a water hydrant.

Soil testing discovered levels of lead as well as arsenic in one corner, possibly from pesticide residue from the space's victory garden days, Walt said. Luckily, that was an area covered in grass, not edible plants. The area was encapsulated with pavement and could be the site for a new storage shed and pavilion.

Other than vegetables and fruit, the Bernd's treasured roses are still growing along the new fence. The roses are cuttings from Art Bernd's grandfather's home he transplanted to his mother's garden and then here as their garden expanded.

On Wednesday work days, volunteers show up to weed and harvest. There's also monthly Saturday workshops to learn how to do things like make salsa. They take home what they need. This year, Shambaugh has brought 115 pounds of leftover produce to the rec's senior center.

He's also excited for people to learn how they can grow in their own yards as well as connect with others.

Next year, some plots will be available to rent and there are plans to create handicapped-accessible raised beds. The rest of the land will remain as a community garden, open to all.

Meanwhile, at Calvary Homes Retirement Community in Manheim Township, the Bernd's are adjusting to their smaller space.

"Since we lost the garden, the biggest crisis has been her grocery budget," Art Bernd says.

The garden is compact, but there's space to plant tomatoes, cucumbers, Romaine lettuce plus rows of yellow beans and beets. "I still go out and get dirt under my fingernails," he says.

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