

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY

By Mary M. Cavaghan, Chairman, Philadelphia Women's Swim League 1961-63

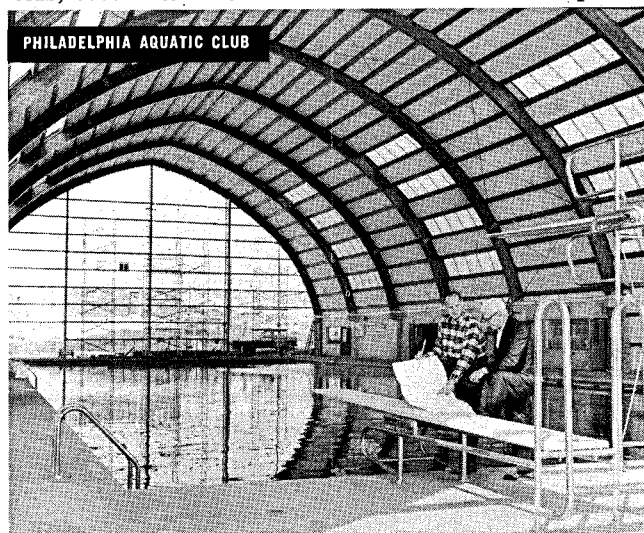
Philadelphia is the third largest city in the United States. It has industries, transportation and water—not all in the Delaware or Schuylkill Rivers. Some energetic swim-conscious people hereabouts have seen to it that part of this H₂O has been filtered into some of the country's most beautiful pools.

If you visited Philly as a competitor a few years ago you may remember wishing you had stayed home in your own bath tub. Pools were hard to find. Even local swimmers fed their tank suits to the moths.

Today, if you've still enough lactic acid in your system to compete, or if you have an up-and-coming youngster in your clan, fill out the entry blank and plan a visit to Ben Franklin's old haunts. You'll find it worth your while to take a train, plane or even the old family buggy on a ride through the City of Brotherly Love (and pools).

You won't have to drive far to dip your toes in the waters of a pool or meet stiff competition stroking up the lane next to you. There are beautiful indoor pools all over the area and you'll need a pretty fancy tank suit to fit in with the glamorous settings.

There are still remaining a few of those old Roman Bath type pools, but the majority of the new ones will really open your orbits. Be prepared to amaze at the Philadelphia Aquatic Club, 3600 Filter Street in the northeast section. This pool is



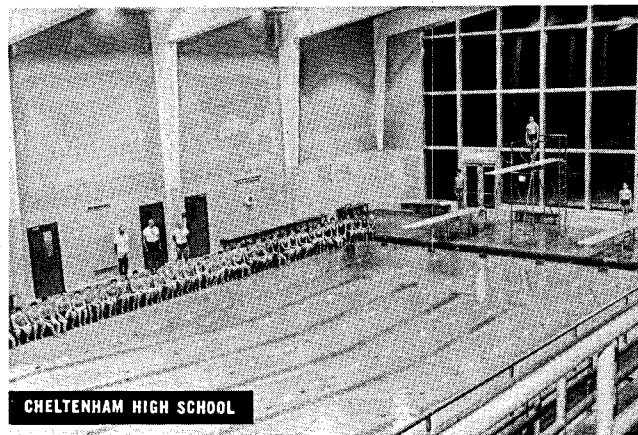
brehtaking. It's huge — an Olympic size fifty-five yard, eight lane beauty with a magnificent plastic (polyvinyl chloride) dome-like roof which allows rays of light to penetrate and dip and dance on the smooth waters—made smooth by specially constructed gutters which allow even the end lanes to be placid. The roof is portable and can be removed to allow the swimmers maximum sunshine. It is also high enough that the divers standing on the ten meter diving tower will wonder if they aren't diving from outer space. A steel elevator type bulkhead within the pool can be raised in three minutes to separate the large tank into two twenty-five yard pools. Locker rooms are ultra modern, portable seats can be stacked to accommodate a thousand spectators and the parking lot is adequate to hold their cars.

You'll probably linger longer than you expected at 3600 Filter Street, but once on your way again, you'll pass a number of outdoor swim club and country club pools now devoid of their swimmers, but preparing for when the mercury zooms to the top of the thermometer.



Soon you'll come to the Abington Senior High School Natatorium. This is the scene of many competitive school and age group meets. The twenty-five yard, six lane pool is beautifully constructed with heated decks, a floor to ceiling window-wall and balcony for over two hundred spectators. No trouble parking a thousand cars here.

A bit farther, you will probably see many teenagers and parents milling about the Cheltenham High School. Chances are there's a meet in progress in its twenty-five yard, six lane pool. Groups of youngsters will be sprawled out on heated



decks playing cards while waiting for their event. The balcony holds five hundred fans, and the window-wall permits others on the outside to look in. This pool, besides hosting age group and senior meets, has a full program for school competitors and handicapped individuals.

Upper Merion High School houses a pool you won't want to miss. It's new and modern with a window the entire length of the twenty-five yard pool and on the opposite side of the six lanes is a balcony which affords an excellent view of the competitions.

Going south, you'll pass many Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. buildings, all containing twenty or twenty-five yard pools. On Broad Street, just before City Hall, you may take a break from the traffic and visit the Philadelphia Athletic Club (formerly the Broadwood Hotel) which has recently restored its pool. This organization helps develop Penn-Town's swim talent. It has six lanes and is usually bustling with age groupers.

Moving down the Parkway to the Aquarium Pool you'll see kids swimming up and down its six lanes in organized workouts.

Continuing on to the West River Drive, you come to the John B. Kelly pool in Fairmount Park. It echoes of three National A.A.U. meets, Eastern championships, innumerable developmental, age group, Middle Atlantic and senior meets. Its fifty meter, eight lane course with ten meter diving tower has been the site of many swimming and diving epics.

Next door, is Memorial Hall. Inside is the newly completed twenty-five yard, six lane pool which will host many Philadelphia meets. A diving pool will offer that sport wonderful facilities without interference from swimmers.

At Newtown Square, visit the Suburban Swim Club. This organization, with an indoor six lane, twenty-five yard pool, has been in existence for a number of years and conducts a swim school in addition to turning out fine swimmers.

Even without pools, Philadelphia has supplied many champions to the national scene. Drag out your old Olympic clippings and you'll spot Philadelphia names such as John Macionis, and Joe Verdeur. And if you jog your memory you'll remember names such as Louis Mais, Joe Kirk and Gordon Mullen . . . coaches who have pointed outstanding swimmers toward national prominence.

Today, the names behind the names of champions are Mary Freeman Kelly, Ed Geisz, Tom Williams, Bob Mattson and others.

In Quaker Town, there's an organization called the Philadelphia Swimming Directors' Society: The Society solves many swimming problems and contributes much to the local program. They send representatives to the National Conventions of the Amateur Athletic Union and project new ideas to put Philadelphia into the national picture.

Philadelphia loves swimming. Its citizens are building pools, diving tanks and diving towers to further develop the thousands now participating in competitions at all levels. Philadelphians are plugging, prodding, pushing and perspiring to send the best competitors, to the really big one. The Olympics!