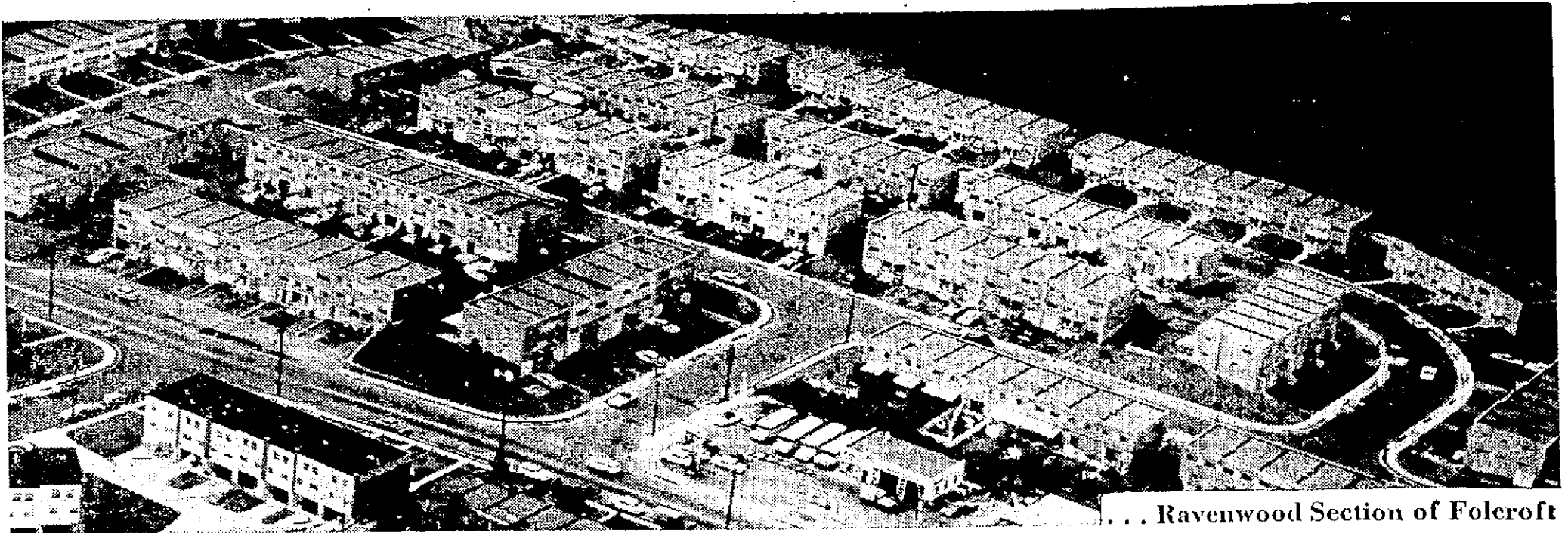
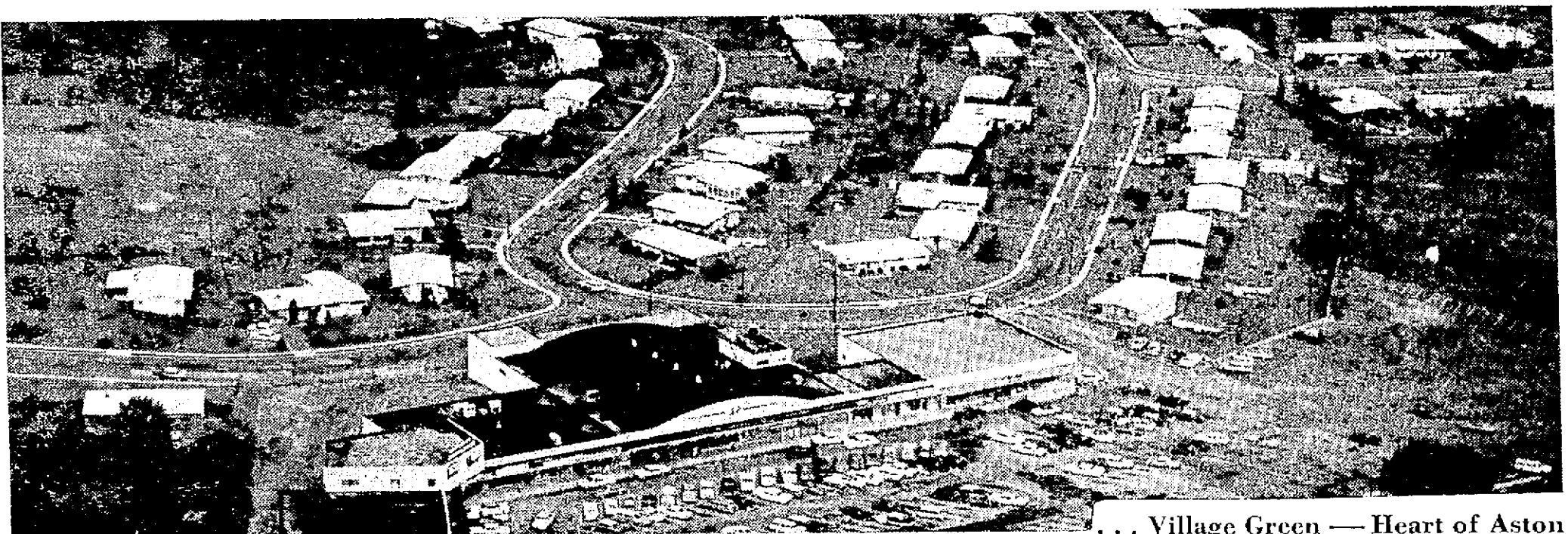


# Building Boom Rattles County...



... Ravenwood Section of Folcroft



... Village Green — Heart of Aston

Delaware County, already third most populous in Pennsylvania, is growing by apartment-sized leaps.

The Swedes started it all when they established a log cabin colony in Tinicum in the early 1600s. It was a small beginning — but the people are still coming.

There are predictions that Delaware County, smallest in the state by area (184.43 square miles), will some day—soon—be an indistinguishable part of a "city" larger than Philadelphia.

Within the county are 49 municipalities.

The average population density in 1960 was 2,999 persons per square mile.

572,122

The last official estimate — made in 1962—placed the population at 572,122, an increase of 18,968 over the 1960 census.

Estimates say there will be 722,700 by 1980 and 837,000 by the year 2000.

In 1960, there were 162,000 housing units.

Since then, thousands more have been built, are being built or are in the planning stages.

The current growth in housing is not spectacular — unlike the booms of the 1920s and the 1940s. It is steady.

There is a new trend as the land left for development is rapidly being eaten up by bulldozers.

## APARTMENTS

It is the apartment boom.

Apartment buildings are sprouting in many communities — in all sections of the county. Most are "low rise" or garden variety. But there is at least one high-rise planned — a 12-story 96-unit structure in Chester.

To bring in tenants, the new apartment houses offer all sorts of incentives including swimming pools in inner courts.

No more worries about leaks and furnaces. The janitor takes care of them.

No more cutting the grass on Saturday afternoon of fighting the crab grass. That's the custodian's job.

No more long-term mortgages. No painting. No remodeling.

The developments of single houses continue to grow in what were farmlands, woods or pastures of large estates where blooded horses once grazed.

Many families still want homes with grass around them.

## HOMES GO UP

Single-house developments are still going up in such communities as Aston, Radnor and Upper Chichester, which have been heavily built up in recent years.

Rural communities such as Upper Providence and Edgmont and Concord are being dotted with houses.

The buildup in fringe townships such as Birmingham and Thornbury hasn't really started yet.

Their time is coming.

The developments will tax the school systems and part-time policemen and amateur governments—and the taxpayers.

Utilities will have to stretch their lines to keep up with the demand.

Highways, already inadequate, will have to be improved.

## 'SUPERURBIA'

The time is coming when this urban-suburban county will be part of "superurbia."

It will be an almost indistinguishable part of a solid area of housing, recreation, shopping centers,

public buildings, parking lots and streets and highways.

Ultimately, it could become part of one great city—made up of Delaware, Bucks, Montgomery and Chester Counties around the hub, Philadelphia.

At least that's the conclusion of the Communities Research Institute of the Villanova University School of Law.

There's still a large amount of land left in the county—mainly to the west.

But how long it will remain undeveloped is anybody's guess.

Planners and others are concerned about what is left.

## LOUD DEMANDS

The demand to save space for public parks is getting louder.

Last year a county planning commission official estimated there was building room left for only 83,000 persons in the county.

He estimated that by 1980 there would be 169,546 more residents. That's when World War II babies start having babies of their own.

One answer to the problem is apartments.

The apartment trend is being watched with interest by the county planning commission.

"In the last year or more, we've been riding a boom in apartments in the suburbs," says William Davis, the commission's executive director.

"The length of time the high demand will last is undetermined."

In 1900, the county's population was only 94,762. There were 19,000 dwellings.

## IN 1920s

The big boom came in the 1920s when the eastern part of the county mushroomed.

The decade of the 1930s was

relatively slow here, as elsewhere, but the second boom came in the 1940s and continued into the early and middle 1950s.

Building sloped off toward the end of the 1950s.

"We're now in a transitional period," Davis said. "The trend in single housing is steady . . . the significant shift is to apartment housing."

More than half the subdivision plans submitted to the commission are for apartments.

## Why?

Some say because money is more readily available for apartment building.

Others say older persons; once their children are grown, don't want the bother of taking care of houses.

And there are young couples with no children.

Probably all three reasons contribute to the boom.

## CONCERN

There is some concern whether the trend will reach a saturation point—too many dwelling units instead of not enough.

In 1961, the Philadelphia Electric Co. grouped homes and apartments in its figures for new housing starts. That year housing starts totaled 1,999 in PE's Delaware Division alone, which includes the lower part of the county.

Last year, PE broke down the statistics because of the upsurge in apartments. There were 1,399 new houses and 722 apartments, a total of 2,121 units.

For the first six months of this year, there were only 564 new houses started—as compared to 1,070 apartments.

School officials say apartments normally bring in less school-age

children than housing developments. But they are becoming concerned with the intensity of the boom.

In the past, probably the best known apartment complex in the county was the Drexelbrook in Drexel Hill.

Built 14 years ago on the site of a golf course, it has 1,200 units in 90 two-story buildings.

## 'HIGH RISER'

The most widely known "high rise" in the county is the 10-story, 320-unit Chetwynd Apartments in Rosemont.

Today's apartments come in all sizes and can fit almost any pocketbook.

One of the largest planned is Park Lane East, a garden apartment "community" at Sherbrook Blvd. and Naylor's Run in Upper Darby.

Ground has been broken for the first 134 of a planned 407 units. The first building is to be finished in January. The acres eventually will include five three-level buildings. There will be an inner court with a large swimming pool and a children's wading pool.

Also planned are a skating rink, miniature golf course and a putting green.

The apartments themselves? They will include a number of two and three bedroom suites.

## RIDLEY BOOM

Ridley Township, one of the communities which felt the boom in housing, is feeling it now in apartments.

The 244-unit Sulton Arms Apartments at Morton Ave. and MacDade Blvd., Folsom, are near completion.

Woodlyn Park Apartments on MacDade Boulevard south of Fair-