

## Mantua: A Brief Neighborhood Timeline



**1690:** Welsh Friends lay beginnings of Lancaster Pike  
**1795:** Lancaster Pike opens as the only turnpike in the country.



**1809:** Judge Richard Peters divides and sells a portion of his Belmont Estate for real estate development. The appropriated land is called Mantua after the town of residence of ancient Italian author Virgil  
**1812:** Spring Garden Bridge, designed by German engineer Lewis Wernwag, opens, offering direct access to center city and increasing the residential appeal of Mantua



**1858:** Trolley lines are first extended to West Philadelphia. The railroad is rerouted across the Northern edge of Mantua to parallel the river down to market street  
**1870:** University of Pennsylvania moves to West Philadelphia  
**1891:** Drexel Institute of Science, Art and Industry is opened



**Early 20th Century:** Mantua is a well established community of Irish working class families whose presence lends the nickname “Cork Town” after County Cork, Ireland. Local residents also sometimes call the area “The Bottom”  
**1920’s:** Mantua experiences an influx of African Americans migrating from the south. These residents find employment in manufacturing, railroading, construction, clerical work and other office/service support jobs



**1950:** Mantua hits peak population of 19,394 residents  
**1960:** 18-story Mantua Hall is constructed, reflecting the trend of public housing “projects”  
**1963:** West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area is certified  
**1964:** Herman Wrice forms the Young Great Society with the goal of inspiring the youth of Mantua to be leaders within the community



**1970:** Herman Wrice establishes the Urban Leadership Training Program

**1970:** *Mantua Urban Renewal Plan:* Establishes the Neighborhood Development Plan (NDP) and spells out community development initiatives

**1971:** *Planning for Mantua,* prepared by The Mantua Joint Workshop is submitted to Philadelphia RDA

**1978:** Mount Vernon Manor Apartments are completed



**1980:** Mantua population drops to 9,112 a decrease of 53% from peak

**1980's:** Mantua sees a rise in drug-related crime and violence

**1988:** Herman Wrice establishes Mantua Against Drugs. His organization demolishes or boards up numerous known drug houses



**1992 - 1993:** Cloisters and Cloisters I homes are constructed

**1994:** *Plan for West Philadelphia* attempts to address areas of Mantua that were overlooked in previous redevelopment efforts.

**1997:** Establishment of the University City District (UCD)

**1997:** Spencer Place Townhomes constructed



**2000's:** PHS's Vacant Land Stabilization and Mayor John Street's NTI programs work to improve the condition of the neighborhood by demolishing abandoned structures, removing debris from vacant land and creating "park-like" settings on vacant parcels

**2003:** Mantua Community Improvement Committee (MCIC) is founded by Rick Young in an effort to keep the streets of Mantua clean and safe

**2008:** Mantua Hall is demolished

**2008:** Mantua Presbyterian Apartments is completed



**2010:** Union Hill development completed

**2010:** Mt Vernon Manor Inc. is awarded a HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant

**2011:** Mantua Square development is completed by the PHA