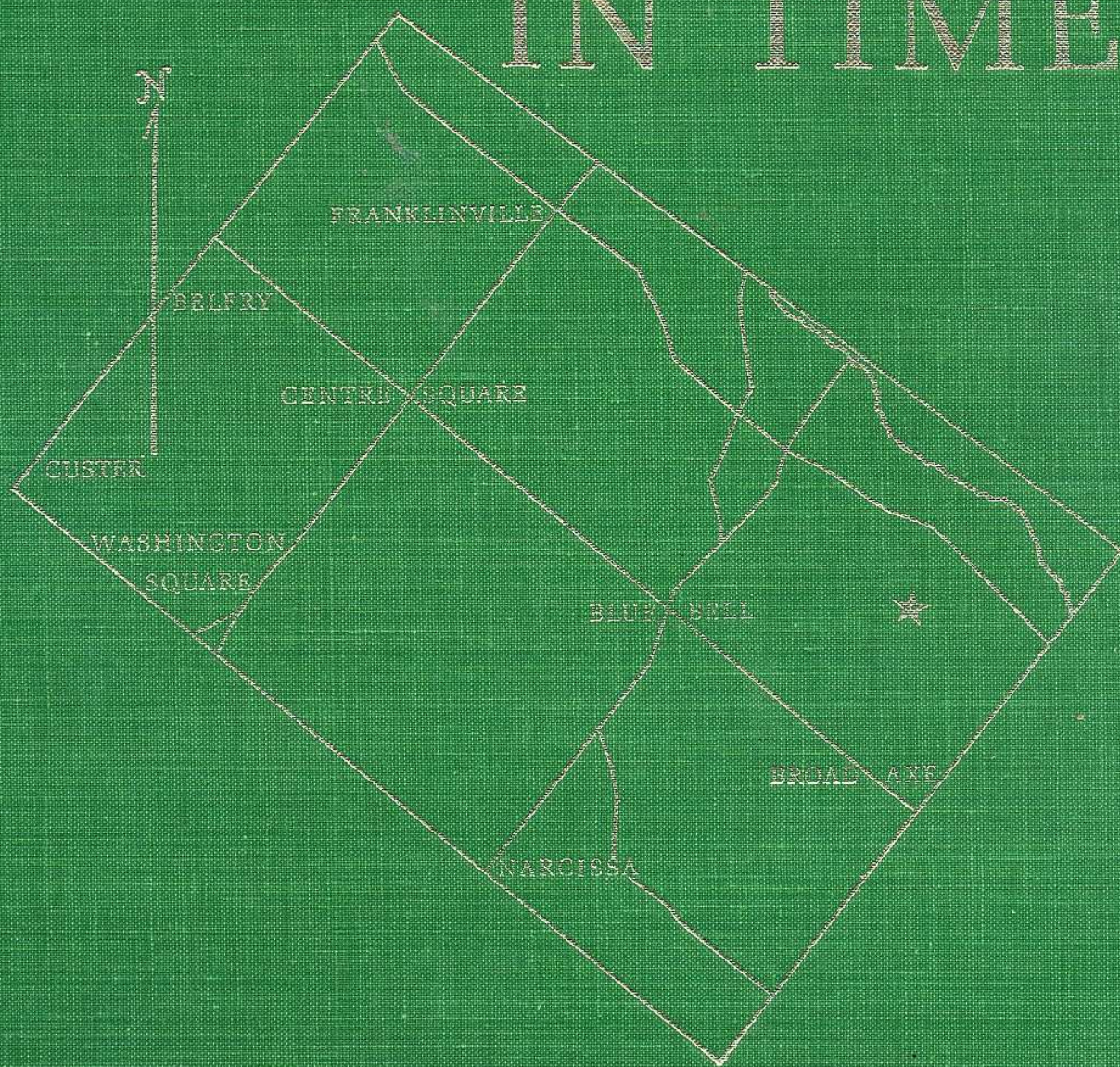


WHITPAIN...

CROSSROADS

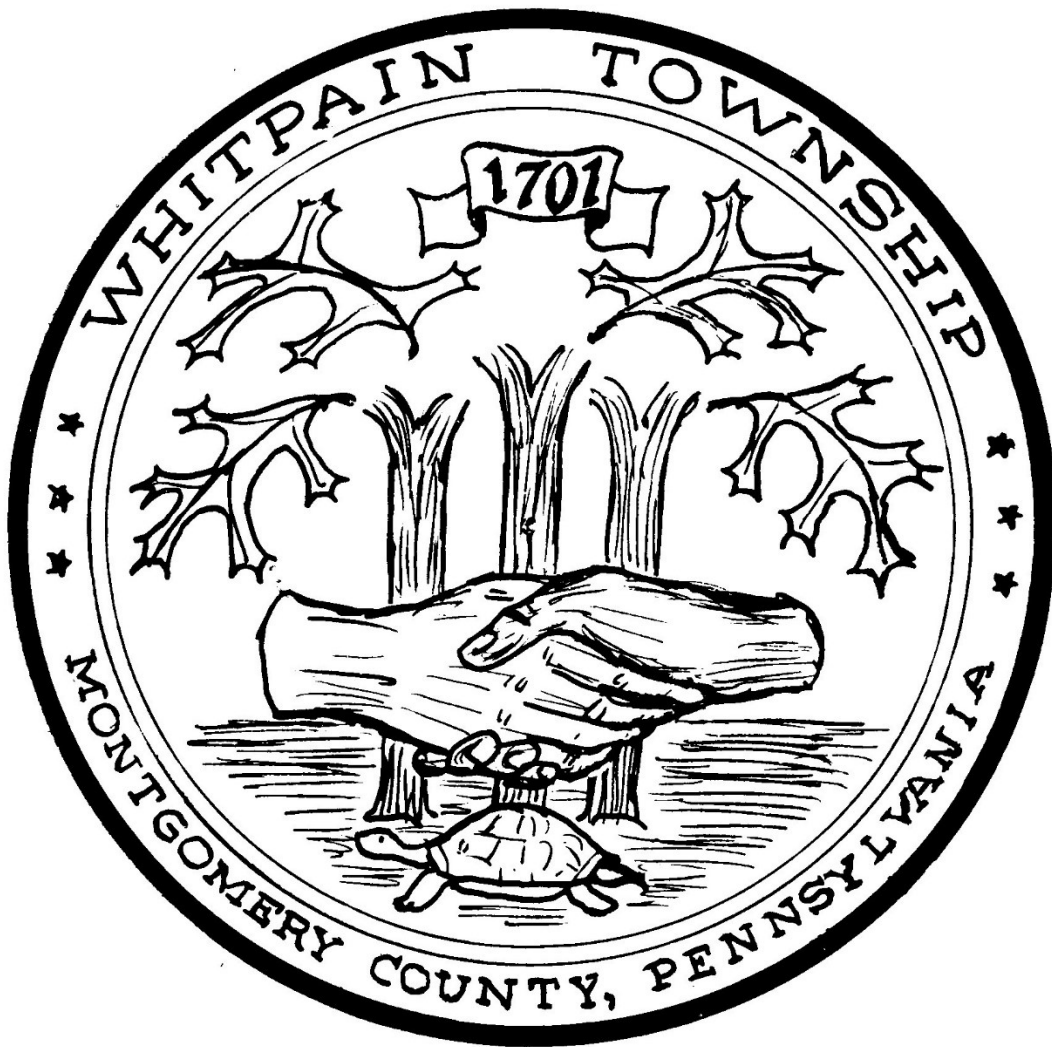
IN TIME



WHITPAIN...

CROSSROADS IN TIME

Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission
Whitpain Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania



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Information in this book has been derived from many sources and may contain inaccuracies or errors. Great effort has been made to provide the reader with the most complete narrative possible, using reference materials as well as folk tales.

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The Yost Log Cabin By Cheryl Hendershott

Introduction

The purpose of this book is to bring the past of Whitpain Township closer to the people, especially our neighbors.

Our project began on April 13, 1975 during the first official Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission Meeting. It was decided that a committee would write a book about the history of our township.

We envision this, not as a history, but as a combination of historic fact and forgotten tales which will interest not only the historian but also our friends and neighbors. The facts have been gleaned from original Deeds, Church records, Tax records, Philadelphia, and Montgomery County records. The stories, when unsupported by facts, have been indicated as such.

Many authors have combined their efforts to complete this book and we have endeavored to allow each author's literary style to remain intact. This accounts for the interesting variation of styles which we feel best expresses the authors original conception of our history. With many authors working on the book, repetition of facts was inevitable. These repetitions remain to permit completeness in each authors work.

After reading this book we hope you will feel, as we do, a special insight or kinship with the old houses, taverns, churches, and people scattered throughout our township.

Malcolm McFarland Jr.
Chairman — Book Committee



Early Whitpain Township History

The lovely land which was here — its rocks and streams; its plants and animals; its early people, the Indians. The granting of this land by William Penn to Richard Whitpain and the creation of a Township. The life of early settlers in the period up to the Revolution.

Early History of Whitpain Township

By Graham Swift

Photography by George S. Peck

Artwork by Becky Huttinger

Donna J. Stockett

Bobby Rhindress

Pre-European History

When Europeans first arrived in this part of the "New World," some 150 years after Christopher Columbus discovered America, it was in reality already very old and inhabited by the first Americans, the Indians. The awe-inspiring primeval forest which covered present day Whitpain, and an area far beyond, consisted mainly of oak, hickory and chestnut, but many other varieties of trees were also present. Clearings burned out by the Indians as grazing land were probably noticeable to these early settlers.

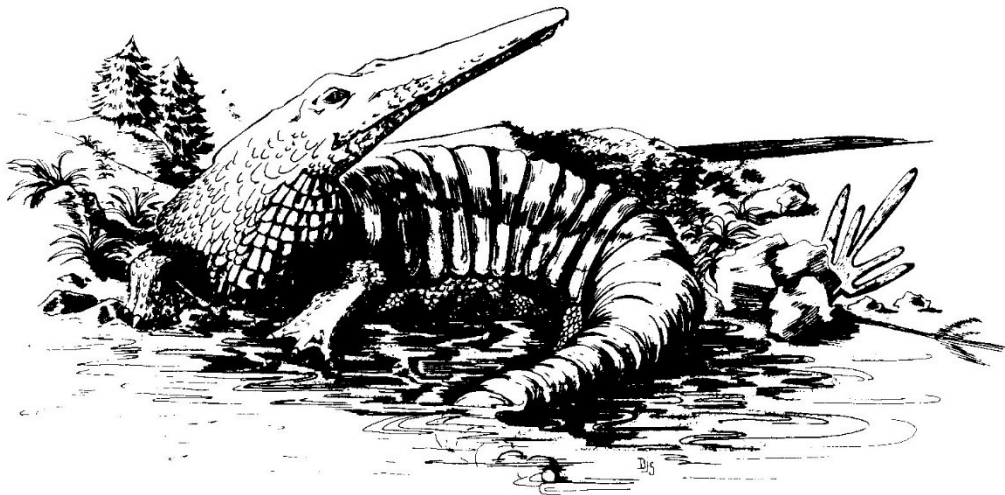
Before going forward in time through the founding and growth of our township to the present day, which covers only three hundred years, it is worthwhile to reflect on the pre-history of Montgomery County and Eastern Pennsylvania, of which Whitpain is a small part, which spans an enormous time of approximately one billion years. How was this land shaped? Where did the first Pennsylvanians come from? These are fascinating questions to which geology and Indian history provide some interesting answers.

Geology

Whitpain is in the Eastern part of Montgomery County which is a small area of land in a Piedmont Region, a long strip of land between sea and hills, located between the Appalachian Range and the Atlantic Ocean. Three distinct types of rock underlay the surface of the county, each formed aeons ago giving the soil its peculiar characteristics.

According to current scientific theory, Eastern Pennsylvania, from present day Philadelphia to Altoona, was the floor of a vast inland sea about one billion years ago. The sea bed was under tremendous pressure and became the very hard pre-Cambrian rock now visible in Eastern Montgomery County. The original sea bed slowly sank over a period of time from 600 to 200 million years ago, becoming submerged under layers of sand, mud, gravel, and lime. Then, suddenly, the eastern part of the sea bed rose above sea level throwing up the previously mentioned hard pre-Cambrian rocks in an area of the county bordering on present day Philadelphia, including Upper Dublin and Horsham. It was at this time that the limestone deposits which underlay Whitemarsh, Plymouth, and the eastern part of Whitpain also surfaced.

For a few million years following the rising of the land in eastern Pennsylvania, the earth went through geological shrinkage and upheaval known as the Appalachia Revolution, when the Appalachian mountains were formed. This tremendous upheaval of the earth's crust created a deep fold in the earth's surface running in a narrow belt through the eastern section of the North American continent, which included upper Montgomery County. The fold became a narrow sea which gradually accumulated mud and sand which slowly compressed into shale and sandstone. This sea bed later surfaced as a sandstone and shale area and probably includes the Stony Creek section of Whitpain which is rich in sandstone.



Clepsisauros Pennsylvanicus - Once native to the Whitpain area

It was during the time of this narrow inland sea that reptiles began to be the dominant life species. The famous "Blue Bell Dinosaur," which was really a giant lizard, is an example of the kind of creature that lived at that time. It was in fact found in a quarry just outside Blue Bell in Worcester Township and given the scientific name "Clepsisauros Pennsylvanicus." Its remains now reside in the Academy of Natural Science in Philadelphia. A great leap forward through millions of years covering the ice age and mammalian evolution during which time the Appalachian Mountains were eroded to their present size and the land contours took on their familiar present day shapes, brings us to the arrival of man, the Indian, in North America.

The Indians

It is generally agreed that the Americas were populated by Asiatic tribes who crossed the Bering Straits land-bridge sometime during the last 20-50,000 years. Though they retained many Asiatic characteristics, they eventually became a separate race.

There is no evidence or legend to indicate that Montgomery County was inhabited by Indians Prior to about 1000 AD' or only 600 years prior to the arrival of Europeans in this area. Sometime around 1000 years ago, the Lenni Lenape, also known as Delaware Indians, migrated to this area from the West.

Traditional history of the Lenape was inscribed on birchbark plates with red painted, carved figures. This is the only Eastern American Indian record that can be called a book and was called a book and was called the Walum Olum (translated to Red Scroll) by the Lenape.

According to this tribal legend, the Lenni Lenape originated in the vast land area west of the Mississippi River. For some reason, they left their home land and wandered eastward to the Mississippi, joined with the Iroquois and together they conquered the Alligewi tribe that occupied the Ohio Valley.

The Iroquois and the Lenape then parted and went their separate ways. The Lenape splintered into several groups; one half of the tribe continued eastward into the Delaware Valley; one quarter retreated westward from whence they came; and the remainder settled in the Ohio Valley. Those continuing eastward further subdivided into several groups. Two of these, the Nanticokes and the Shawnees, broke away and moved south. It is possible that the Shawnees later traveled across Montgomery County in a northward migration from present-day Maryland to the forks of the Delaware in the 1690's where they re-united with one of the main clans. The Nanticokes wandered for many years and may have crossed Montgomery County in the 1750's in a northern migration.

The largest group of the Lenape settled the land between the Susquehanna and the Hudson Rivers, south of the area occupied by their old allies, the Iroquois. Three clans of the Lenapi were: the Munsie or Wolf Clan which settled the Delaware Valley north of the Lehigh River, the Unalachtigo or Turkey Clan which settled the lower Delaware Bay area, and the Unami or Turtle Clan which settled the land between the others.

The Unami tribe controlled Montgomery County, including present-day Whitpain, and they were the only Indians residing here for any long period of time. The Unami were the most important tribe of the Lenapi and by custom the Chief of the Unami was regarded as King of the whole Delaware Nation. The totem symbol of Unami, the turtle or tortoise, reflected this sovereignty in that it had a special religious significance, being regarded as the symbol of life, of the earth, and of the origin of all things.

The name Lenni Lenape translates as meaning the real or original people. In fact, most of the Algonquin race of American Indians to which the Lenapi belonged, regarded them as the grandfathers of the race. From their position of leadership and influence over the Lenape and the Algonquins, the Unami tribe was able to maintain peace throughout the whole nation.

This tribal legend of being the "original people" had many important ramifications. It developed a feeling of kinship not only with the allied Indian tribes of the East but also a spirit of brotherhood among all mankind. White people were called "brothers," Mexicans were called "uncles" and the negro slaves of the Delaware settlers were referred to as "elder brothers." It was this attitude of respect for all mankind which enabled the first white settlers to live in harmony and peace with the Indians.

The ancient allies of the Lenapi, the Iroquois, did not share in this peace, and constantly tried to destroy the power of the Delaware nation. The Lenape decided to break up the Iroquois nation but were thwarted by Iroquois cunning. The confederacy of Iroquois (six nations) sent ambassadors to the Lenape suggesting they become the peacemakers for all the Indian nations of the East. The Lenape accepted this role and gave up their arms to become arbiters among their warlike neighbors. In Indian language, the Lenape were called "women" since this was an honorable title indicating a dignified position of peacemaker. The treacherous Iroquois soon reneged on their agreement with the Lenape and threatened them with invasion unless they become subservient. Hence, when Europeans arrived, the Lenape were vassals of the Iroquois and remained so until at least the middle of the eighteenth century.

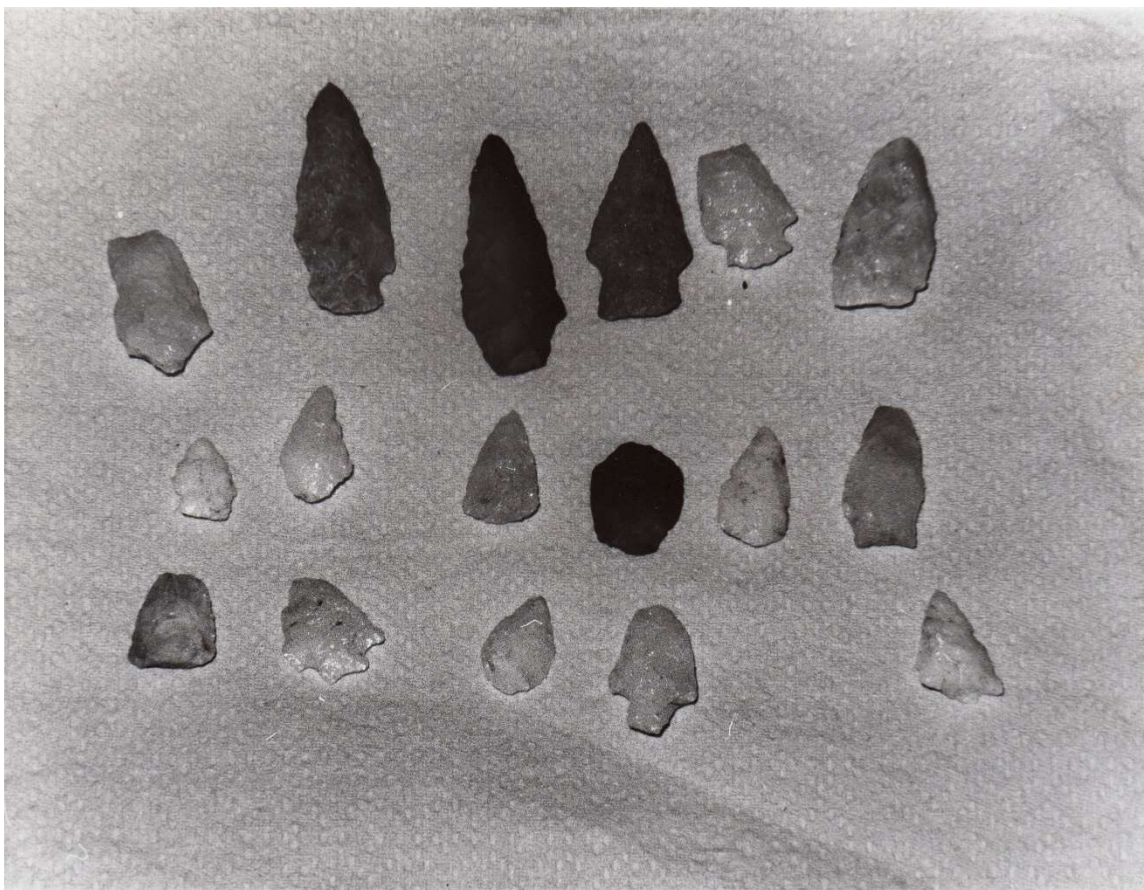
When Europeans arrived, the American Indians were still in the Stone Age; that is, their tools and implements were made of stone, bone, and wood. To Europeans their manner of life was extremely simple. Men were hunters and women cared for the crops which were chiefly corn, beans, and squash. They lived by a simple but highly moral code of law.



Indian mixing stone located on Walter Cassel Farm



Arrowheads found on Whitpain Township Farms by Walter Posen



Personal property was almost unheard of among the Indians. Fields cleared in the forest were communal projects and farmed jointly by all members of the tribe. As stated earlier, Indians regarded all men as brothers and they shared all their possessions freely, even with strangers. Although capable of strong affection, they rarely showed it in public where they behaved with great dignity and reserve.

Early missionaries observed that tribal settlements were rarely bothered by quarrels among the members. Clearly, Indian civilization may have seemed simple and undeveloped in comparison to European life, but it was harmonious and friendly. Europeans contacting the Lenape Indians for the first time generally misunderstood their religion. The Lenape believed in a Great Spirit who created the heavens and the earth. Like the Europeans, they saw this Great Spirit as a loving father to all men. However, they also believed in a number of lesser gods who were looked upon as agents for the Great Spirit who commanded all of nature. The Lenape's act of worship centered around what was called the Big House Ceremony. The Big House represented the whole universe and inside, ceremonial dancers moved in an oval path, the White Path, which represented the movement of all life and the goodness of the Great Spirit's road.

When Europeans first came in 1623, it is probable that only about 20,000 Indians occupied the whole of Pennsylvania. Their decline was rapid; by 1700 the numbers dwindled to 12,000 and by the end of the 18th century hardly 1000 remained. When Penn arrived in 1682 to take possession of Pennsylvania, some of the Lenape had already begun their westward retreat. At that time, most of what is now Montgomery County was still in the possession of Indians.

Early Swedish, Dutch, and English settlers in the lower Delaware Valley area had purchased that land from the Indians. One such purchase, by Edward Cantwell and Johannes De Hous, signed on February 8, 1673, gave them 700 acres for "I halle ankar of drinke, two match coates, two axes, two barrs of lard, four hands full of powder, two knives and some paint." A bargain for the white man!

The chief of the Unami tribe of the Lenape Nation, and hence the "King" of the Algonquins, when Penn Landed, was Tamanend or Tammany. He was one of their greatest chiefs; and the Europeans extolled his wisdom, virtue, prudence, charity, affability, meekness, and hospitality, a noble man in every way. When he died, he was buried in the valley of Neshaminy, the area which he had sold to Penn, whom he called "Miquon" or "Brother Onas." The burial site is claimed to be near Chalfont in Bucks County.

The most important village of the Unami, also the capital of the Lenape nation, was Shackamaxon which was situated on the Delaware in northern Philadelphia. Here, where important meetings were held and treaties made, was where Penn and Tamanend met in June 1683. Penn purchased all the land between the Pennypack and Neshaminy Creeks.

In the same year, another treaty gave Penn land along the west side of the Schuylkill, northeast of the Conshohocken Hills south to Chester Creek. Other Indian lands were purchased later; Perkiomen Valley in 1684, and Montgomery County in pieces through the years 1685 to 1697.

Probably the most important thing about these treaties was the way Penn dealt with the Indians. Every transaction was built on a firm foundation of mutual understanding and deep respect. This friendly treatment allowed Penn's province to grow for the most part in peace and security, unlike other settlements of the American continent which often were at constant war with the Indians.

There is one record of possible discord, however, when Zachariah Whitpain along with Thomas Holmes and a man by the name of Cox, were appointed in about 1686 by the Governor's Council to look into the cause of an Indian disturbance at the house of Nicholas Scull, grandfather of the Surveyor General, near the present village of Whitemarsh.

Our Indian heritage is remembered in the name of a creek and the arrowheads that have been found in the past and occasionally may be still turned up in a field.



Flora and Fauna of Whitpain Township

By Patricia A. Knault
Photography by George S. Peck
Artwork by Bobby Rhindress

Common Native Trees and Their Uses

The type of flora and fauna found in a given area depends on that area's geology. Whitpain Township is fortunate to be in a Piedmont Region because it contains some of the most fertile soils. Whitpain soil is loam; it contains largely red shale, diabase, and sandstone.

This rich earth brought forth a grand primeval forest, with trees towering more than a hundred feet. The make-up of the forest was mainly deciduous trees. The forest was of an oak-chestnut nature with other commonly seen trees being hickory, black walnut, maples, black cherry, black locust, sycamore, sassafras, tuliptree, cucumbertree, ash, beech, elm, and mulberry. The few conifers seen were white pine, hemlock, and cedars. Birches made an appearance when tracts of land were cleared of the dense stand of trees.

The Indians and settlers made good use of the trees with which they came in contact. The greatest use of the hickory differed between the Indians and the settlers. The white man valued it highly for timber and fuel; its wood made the strongest axe and hammer handles. Feeling that the hickory's greatest value was its delicious nut crop, the Indians believed that the felling of so many of these trees to feed a fire was wasteful. Other uses included bark for dye and tapping sap for sugar. Settlers followed the Indians in using the black walnut's nutmeats for food and the husks for dye; in addition they valued the wood in cabinetmaking. In the colonial period the tuliptree was one of the most valued for its timber. Pioneers and Indians used this wood for their dugout canoes; birch, another canoe material, was also used by the Indians. Twigs and leaves of hemlock made a medicinal tea for cases of scurvy and venereal disease. The Indians brewed roots of hemlock to make root beer. The mulberry trees extended their range through plantings by the Indians, who enjoyed the fruit. Black locust had the greatest resistance to decay; this factor made it the favorite of shipbuilders. Ships were fastened with locust pegs, and settlers used locust wood for corner posts when constructing their homes. Pioneers used sugar maple mainly for its timber; the secondary use being the tapping of sap for sugar. Black cherry wood was in demand by cabinetmakers who appreciated its beauty and knot-free boards. Not only was the ripe fruit relished by pioneers and Indians, but the bears loved it so much that they became quite irritable if disturbed while feasting on the berries.

A remedy for malaria called for the use of the bitter tasting bark of the tuliptree, and its leaves were claimed to give relief from headaches. A bitter brew of fruit, bark, and twigs of the cucumbertree plus whiskey, to make the medicine go down easier, was another remedy for malaria. The importance of the red maple was in its value for timber with some used for ink and dye. The sycamore was another source used in canoe construction. Chestnut, once the most prevalent tree, is now nothing more than a lingering ghost as saplings sucker from the stumps of stricken trees. "These trees fell prey to a devastating blight in the early 1900's. Valued highly for its splitting ability and resistance to decay with climatic exposure, it was a popular wood for fence rails and posts. Its bark was considered one of the best for tanning. White oak made excellent barrels, especially when the content was a liquid, and was widely used in shipbuilding. Uses of the chestnut oak were fuel, fence rails, shipbuilding, and tanbark. The mighty elm, another tree our heritage is losing, succumbs today to disease. Toughness and pliability of elm bark made it popular in the weaving of chair seats.



The European demand for sassafras made it a much sought after tree by the settlers. The whites believed it to be a cure for just about any ailment. It was believed to be effective for treatment of malaria, lameness, eye troubles, dropsy, and ailments of the liver, stomach, breast, and head. If this were not enough, it also repelled bedbugs. Virginia exported the roots of sassafras in amounts equal to their tobacco. It was very fashionable in England to drink sassafras tea. The sassafras craze came to an end when word got around that it was primarily a cure for venereal disease *.

* Robert Secor, ed., *Pennsylvania 1776* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), p. 51.

Colonial Medicinal Plants

The following are some of the plants that were found here and used medicinally by the settlers and Indians. Some of these plants were native while others were introduced very early and readily adapted to their new environment. The introductions came from Europe with people who valued the plants for their medicinal properties; others came unintentionally by boat in straw packing materials.

The plants are listed botanically by their family, genus, and species followed by their most widely common name. This system of identification is the most accurate; it is not unusual to learn that a given plant had a dozen common names or one common name meaning two entirely different kinds of plants. All these plants had many uses, but an effort was made to select only a few of the most prominent for each plant so as not to make the reading of this section laborious. The parentheses indicates that the entity has been introduced.

ANARCARDIACEAE: *Rhus typhina* [Staghorn Sumac]
possessed properties that cooled the blood; the Indians and settlers made a drink to reduce fever; also lessened throat irritation

AQUIFOLIACEAE: *Ilex verticillata* [Winterberry]
used to induce vomiting

ARACEAE: *Acorus calamus* [Sweet Flag]
indigestion remedy
Arun triphyllum [Jack-in-the-Pulpit]
to bring up accumulated phlegm from the lungs; sweat inducement
Symplocarpus foetidus [Skunk Cabbage]
treatment of chronic bronchial and asthmatic complaints

ARALIACEAE: *Aralia nudicaulis* [Wild Sarsaparilla]
detoxifier of the bloodstream
Aralia (spinosa) [Devil's Walking Stick]
treatment of toothache

ARISTOLOCHIACEAE: *Asarum canadense* [Wild Ginger]
stomach ache

BALSAMINACEAE: *Impatiens capensis* [Jewelweed]
to cure poison ivy

BERBERIDACEAE: (*Berberis vulgaris*) [Barberry]
treatment of jaundice
Podophyllum peltatum [May Apple]
to induce vomiting and expel intestinal worms

BETULACEAE: *Betula (alba)* [White Birch]
Indians used to remove warts

CAMPANULACEAE: *Lobelia inflata* [Indian Tobacco]
venereal disease

CAPRIFOLIACEAE: *Viburnum prunifolium* [Black Haw]
to prevent possible miscarriage

CARYOPHYLLACEAE: (*Saponaria officinalis*) [Bouncing Bet]
venereal disease

CELASTRACEAE: *Euonymus atropurpureus* [Burning Bush]
laxative and hepatic stimulant
Euonymus (europaeus) [Louse-Berries]
killed head lice in hair of children

COMPOSITAE: (*Achillea millefolium*) [Yarrow]
to produce sweating; effective in eruptive disorders of children, like measles;
Indians used a decoction extensively in treatment of burns

(*Arctium minus*) [Burdock]
blood purifier; Indian medicine men used for memory retention

Eupatorium perfoliatum [Boneset]
general cure-all including sweat inducement, colds, fevers, bronchial disorders,
and influenza; especially valued for its ability to reduce swelling in the
immediate area of fractures, thus enabling faster union of the bones
(*Tanacetum vulgare*) [Tansy]
expelling intestinal worms

CORNACEAE: *Cornus florida* [Flowering Dogwood]
treatment of sore mouth and helped to harden gums

EBENACEAE: *Diospyros virginiana* [Persimmon]
remedy for dysentery, diarrhea, and hemorrhage

GASTROMYCETES: *Calvatia gigantea* [Giant Puffball]
the powdered substance was snuffed up the nostrils to stop nose bleeding; as a
preventive measure against infection, the Indian midwives placed a piece of
puffball on the navel after cutting the newborn's umbilical cord

GRAMINEAE: (*Agropyron repens*) [Quack Grass]
to aid in eliminating stone and gravel from the kidneys and the bladder

HAMAMELIDACEAE: *Hamamelis virginiana* [Witch Hazel]
Indians applied as poultices to tumors and painful swellings

LABIATAE: (*Glechoma hederacea*) [Ground Ivy]
treatment of scurvy, headaches, and coughs with much phlegm
Hedeoma pulegioides [Pennyroyal]
to cause abortion

Mentha (piperita) [Peppermint]
antispasmodic for digestive problems

LILIACEAE: *Allium (cepa)* [Onion]
helped to prevent disease; used as a frostbite cure by wrapping boiled leaves around affected part

(Convallaria majalis) [Lily-of-the-Valley]
cardiac tonic and diuretic

Trillium (erectum) [Birthroot]
childbirth

MORACEAE: *Morus rubra* [Red Mulberry]
to expel intestinal worms

MYRICACEAE: *Comptonia peregrina* [Sweet Fern]
used by Indians to cure poison ivy
Myrica pensylvanica [Bayberry]
astringent

PAPAVERACEAE: *Sanguinaria canadensis* [Bloodroot]
to treat fungoid tumors, ringworm, and jaundice

PLANTAGINACEAE: *Plantago (major)* [Plantain]
to heal venomous snake bites

POLYGONACEAE: *Rumex (crispus)* [Yellow Dock]
Indians not only used this on their sores and swellings but also applied to it their horses to heal saddle sores

RHAMNACEAE: *Ceanothus americanus* [New Jersey Tea]
astringent

ROSACEAE: *Agrimonia gryposepala* [Common Agrimony]
treatment of jaundice and other liver complaints

Fragaria (vesca) [Wild Strawberries]
astringent, laxative, diuretic

Prunus serotina [Wild Black Cherry]
astringent and cough medicine

Rubus odoratus [Red Raspberry]
childbirth

RUBIACEAE: *Mitchella repens* [Partridge-Berry]
childbirth

SCROPHULARIACEAE: (*Verbascum thapsus*) [Mullein]

cough syrup

ULMACEAE: *Ulmus rubra* [Slippery Elm]

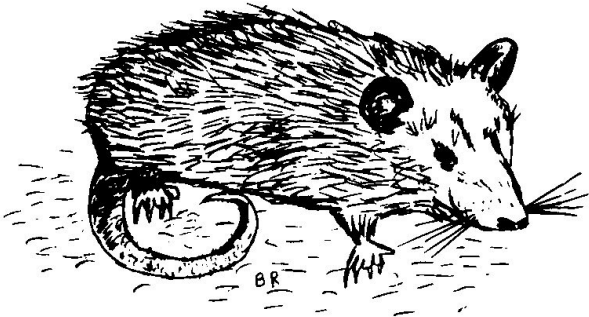
a soothing and healing effect on all with which it comes in contact

URTICACEAE: (*Urtica dioica*) [Nettle]

to relieve pain of rheumatism; stimulated hair growth

Mammals

Of great value to the early settlers were the mammals inhabiting their new home. Their supplies of domesticated meat were meager and it was necessary to supplement this with native mammals. The mammals served not only as a food source, but the furs could be made into clothing or traded for other necessities.



The settlers were intrigued by some of the mammals as a result of their bizarre appearance or behavior. These unfamiliar mammals had no duplication back in the settler's homeland. They included: raccoon, skunk, porcupine, and opossum. The opossum's way of raising a litter of young opossum in its pouch and their death-faking tricks

amused the white man. The settlers found humor in the raccoon's mask and feeding habits. Other oddities were the quills of the porcupine and the pungent spraying habits of the skunk.

The number of wolves in the area was enough for William Penn to declare a bounty on them. As the white man greatly reduced the deer and elk-herds in the 1700's, the wolves were forced to turn to domestic livestock for survival. They also received misplaced blame that should have gone to two-legged cattle thieves. After a hundred and fifty years of persecution in Pennsylvania, the wolf was completely exterminated. The mountain lion also went the same route as the wolf because of the settler's overhunting of the predator's prey.

Gray foxes were also prevalent in the area until the appearance of the first settlers. As the settlers' presence resulted in a reduction of the gray fox population, it strangely encouraged the northern movement of the red fox from the south. The red fox population was encouraged by the man-made changes as opposed to his brother the gray fox.

Birds

A well-known bird during the colonial period in Whitpain Township was the wild pigeon. From the latter part of the 1700's to 1840, what is now known as Blue Bell was called Pigeontown. The name was given by Morgan Morgan, an old resident known as a great trapper of pigeons and a well-known gunsmith. Pigeontown was frequented by large flocks of pigeons, who were attracted by the opening up of the land. Washington and his troops cut down large stands of trees in this area to fuel the fires when they made camp during the Revolutionary War.



Listed are some of the birds most likely to be seen in colonial times. Those commonly seen were: sparrow Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, screech owl, black-billed cuckoo, downy woodpecker, flicker, barn swallow, night hawk, great-crested flycatcher, small flycatcher, red-eyed flycatcher, warbling fly-

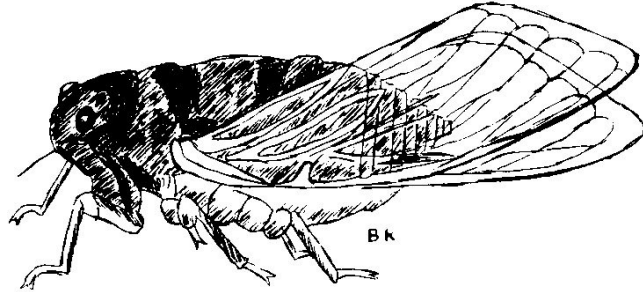
catcher, white flycatcher, blue-headed flycatcher, yellow-throated flycatcher, pewee, wood thrush (a favorite songster). Wilson's thrush, hermit thrush, bluebird (a favorite), black and white creeper, Maryland yellow-throat, blue yellow-backed warbler, blue-winged yellow warbler, catbird, brown thrasher, house wren, tufted titmouse, field sparrow, song sparrow, blue jay, and turtle dove. Birds seen abundantly were: chimney swallow, robin, crow, and wild pigeon.

Reptiles

Of the reptiles, the most widely known and respected in colonial times was the rattlesnake. Reaching lengths of six feet, these venomous snakes diminished with the removal of trees and stones in the cultivation of the soil. Snakes commonly seen were the ribbon, garter, and water snakes. Land tortoise could be spotted in the woods while the streams were home to snapping, mud, musk, painted, and spotted turtles. At nights making their presence known were the tree, bull, green, and spotted frogs. Moist grounds were favorite habitats for toads and spotted salamanders.

Insects

The locust's unusual appearance and its dramatic large outbreaks were of much interest to the settlers. The Indians relished the taste of the locust. The colonists made a well-known contribution to the native insect population. This contribution was the honeybee, known by the Indians as the "white mans fly." The honeybee earned this name by the Indians because where they appeared the white man wasn't far behind. When the settler's honeybee escaped confinement, they made their new homes in the sycamore trees.



William Penn

By Arthur Driedger
Photography by George S. Peck
Artwork by Becky Huttinger

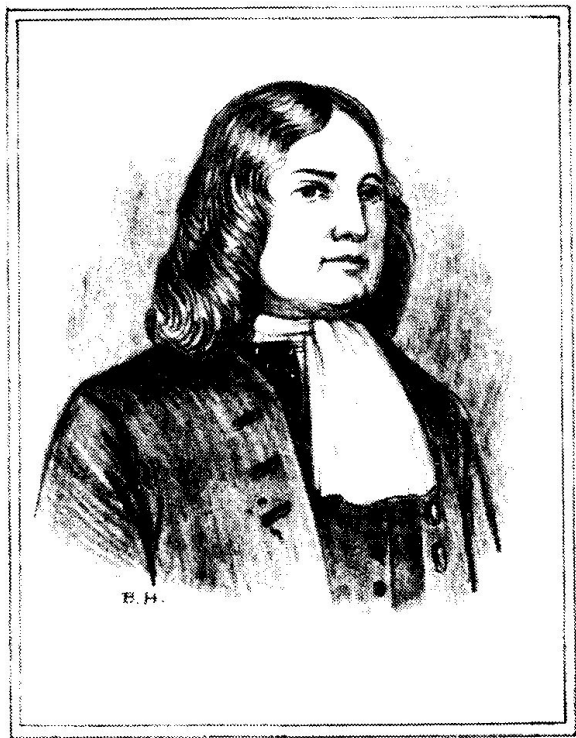
A traveler through the British North American colonies would have noted several unique characteristics when he entered Pennsylvania; among them would have been the great variety of ethnic and religious groups. In New England and the South the majority of settlers were from England, but in Pennsylvania there were Welsh, Scots-Irish, Irish, as well as many people from the continent. Germans, Moravians, Huguenot French, Swiss, and the Dutch from Holland. Moreover he would note that many of the English were unlike those of the Anglican South or those of Puritan New England for they were English Quakers.

Our tourist would find that this was a proprietary colony, owned and governed by a private individual or his appointees and descendants, and that it was one of the newest yet most populous and prosperous colonies. It encouraged a variety of ideas and people. These ideas and innovations were reflected in a variety of customs, religions, and architectural styles in houses, barns and churches. Pennsylvania stood as a living example of what could happen when men were left to their freedom and conscience; man was given an opportunity to work and enjoy the fruits of his own labor. This "Holy Experiment", as it was named by its founder, had its roots and background in the nature of William Penn.

William Penn was born near the Tower of London on Oct. 14, 1644 of Admiral Penn and his Dutch wife. Lady Penn, a daughter of John Jasper who was a merchant of Rotterdam.

The times were turbulent. The ideas of government to which we are accustomed and which the experiences of time have tested and proved, were in their embryonic stage. Conflicts among those with diverse opinions on political and religious subjects, kept the country in constant economic turmoil. Many dissenters who believed in their cause did not confine it to verbal defense, but prepared by force to implement their beliefs or suffer and die as martyrs in their cause. Royalists supported the king who was attempting to extend his power and privileges against the Parliament and the people.

The Reformation created a multiplicity of religious ideas. The Church of England broke from the Church of Rome and spawned many other religious ideas; many of these ideas felt that the Reformation had not gone far enough. Out of this nursery came the Puritan sects, Presbyterians, Independents, Congregationalists, Quakers and others seeking a better way to worship and practice their religious beliefs. This religious conflict was compounded in various degrees by some people and several kings who attempted to return to the Church of Rome, often with the aid of foreign enemies of England. Political intrigue, religious reform, corruption in business and government, with little toleration for dissenters, provided the scenery on the stage for the life, times, and role of William Penn.



William Penn

Admiral Penn served his country well during the religious wars of the time, but in so doing had little influence on the life of his son. William Penn went to school at Wanstead and probably studied the regular subjects of that time; Latin, Greek and mathematics. The country around Wanstead was intensely Puritan and this influence modified the royalist opinions William received from his father. The Puritans spent long hours debating religious subjects, much of it rejecting ceremonies and forms and urging a greater reliance on individual judgement. Under these influences Penn had a religious experience at eleven which would be difficult to trace to the teachings of the Church of England. On his return from an expedition to Jamaica the Admiral was put in the Tower by Cromwell, Lady Penn and William moved closer to London to be near him. Upon his release the father went to his Irish estates and at the

age of sixteen his son was sent to Christ Church College at Oxford which lessened the exposure to his father's influence. His father sent him to Oxford hoping that he would learn the standards and tastes of a gentleman of the aristocracy and that this would enable the father to get William a position in the court.

The restoration of the King happened the same year young Penn went to Oxford, and the University, which had been under the control of the Puritans, was now under the control of the royalists. New standards and practices were introduced which were completely counter to the Puritan ethic. Amusements, games, drinking, swearing, wagering, revels and plays were in excess as a reaction to the Puritan codes of conduct. In this atmosphere Penn met and heard the preaching of Thomas Loe who questioned and opposed these activities. Penn adopted Quaker beliefs and actions regarding respect, due authority, and the relationship of the government to the individual. William was expelled from Oxford for some conduct relating to his religious ideas and he returned to his father in London. The Admiral, by persuasion, threats, and blows, attempted to change the boy, but to no avail.

William was sent, by his father, to Italy and France in an attempt to expose him to the gay and aristocratic life found in the French court. While there he studied religion and picked up the polish of the cavalier. He became an excellent swordsman and on one occasion was forced to defend himself against a thug in Paris.

On William's return to London the Admiral was well pleased with his son's new outlook on life, and while he and the Duke of York went to war against the Dutch, young William was sent to Lincoln Inn to study law. While there he was forced to flee the plague, saw all the problems associated with it and, while in the country, once again the religious and contemplative mood gained the upper hand. His father saw the relapse when he returned so he sent William to his Irish estates to help manage them. Penn did very well in this work, he helped quell a mutiny among the troops and seemed to enjoy this new life. However, he attended a Quaker meeting where his old friend Thomas Loe preached the sermon "There is a faith which overcomes the world and there is a faith which is overcome by the world." Penn was converted.

From this day on Penn was an odd combination of cavalier and Quaker. As a cavalier he was rich, wore fine clothes, was educated, engaged in politics, and led the good life. As a Quaker he was one of their leading preachers and writers of pamphlets expressing and clarifying their point of view in religion, and their relationship to the government. 'I his double character enabled him to be effective in the court and to help his people; and at the same time to adopt the standards and values of his chosen faith.

For his attendance at the illegal meetings of the Quakers, Penn was put in jail. The judges were willing to let this well dressed cavalier go free on bond, but Penn questioned the legality of the action and remained with his friends. These arrests reached the ear of his father who ordered his son home. After his failure to take his hat off to him or the king, he was ordered out of the house. There followed a period in which William was at home, in jail, and other times travelling in Germany and Holland. Penn wrote numerous pamphlets and preached at many meetings defending his belief in religious freedom and freedom of conscience. After one stint in jail his father paid the fine, and on his return home, the young Penn found his father had only a few more days to live. There was a reconciliation and in one last desperate effort to save his son from probable future imprisonment he wrote his friend, the Duke of York, requesting that he intercede for William with the King when he needed help. This was one of two important acts the father did for his son, for the Duke agreed and this served the young Penn well on many occasions. It also was a point of trouble for Penn since he defended the Duke who became King James the II and later was deposed and exiled to France. The other event that the King appreciated was when the Admiral, in the service of Cromwell, was on his way to the West Indies. The Admiral sent a message to the King in exile and offered him the fleet and the army that accompanied him, if he wished it. The offer was turned down but was always remembered and appreciated by both Charles and James and this helped Penn in his relations with them later.

In 1672 Guilielma Pennington and William Penn were married. She and her mother had been Quakers and in Penn she saw the hero who could defend her faith. For a while they lived in wealth and contentment far from the politics and the filth of London. Persecuted fellow Quakers again found Penn using his influence in court for their defense and after traveling in Holland and defending his brethren, he decided the only way to bring freedom to the persecuted was to settle them in a new land. The king owed Admiral Penn 16,000 pounds for services and William asked that this debt be settled with a grant of land. On the 4th of March in 1681 Penn received the charter to Pennsylvania. Since the original grant, the boundaries have been modified, for it included large parts which were claimed by Maryland, New York, Connecticut and Virginia.

Penn was in a position similar to that of an English Lord of an English manor. The land was all his, the settlers were to be his tenants and pay him rent. For this privilege he was to pay the King two beaver skins each year and the king was to get one fifth of all the gold and silver mined in the province. As proprietor, Penn was to be Governor and appoint the judges, magistrates, and other officers. The people through the legislature were to make the laws but Penn had a veto over them.

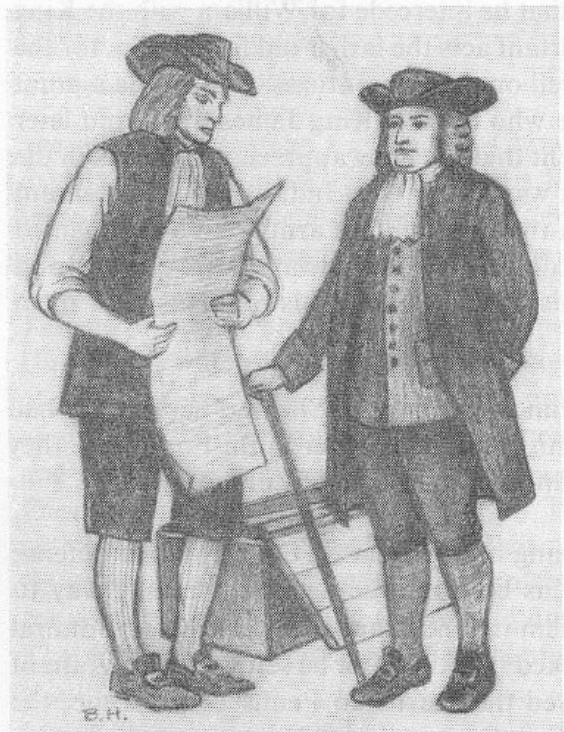
Penn made it easy for settlers to purchase land, 100 pounds for 5,000 acres and an annual rent of one shilling per hundred acres. He planned that Pennsylvania should be a refuge for people of all faiths, where the arts, agriculture, and commerce could flourish. He wished to show that government could be maintained without an established church, ministry, cruelty, dogmas, ritual and persecution; that the teachings of Christ as interpreted by each person, through the "inner light," would lead to a prosperous province that would make his and his family's fortune greater than ever.

Europeans already living here were to be permitted to keep their lands and Indians were to be paid for theirs. Disputes between Indians and whites were to be settled by a jury of twelve, half of whom were to be Indians.

Remembering the diligence and the suffering for their beliefs, he invited the people in Holland and Germany to the province. On Oct. 24th, 1683 he entered the Capes of the Delaware and a few days later he landed at what is Chester. On his arrival in Philadelphia at Dock Creek, where his commissioners had already planned the city, he met with the Indians and delighted them with running and jumping skills.

Penn made several treaties with the Indians, the most famous was supposed to have taken place under an elm tree at Kensington in Philadelphia. The spirit engendered by the treatment of William Penn toward the Indians resulted in a peace period of almost seventy

years. Not until the French and Indian War in 1755 was there Indian warfare in Pennsylvania. Penn wrote extensively about the province, the Indians, the land, the flora and fauna, the climate, soil, and other observations that helped people decide whether to come to Pennsylvania or stay in Europe.



*William Penn and James Claypole
Reading a Deed, 1682*

In 1684 Penn was forced to return to England to take care of an ailing wife and to defend his province against the land claims of Lord Baltimore in Maryland. Persecutions had started again and he was forced to take the defense against them. Before leaving, he planned and laid out his country home at Pennsbury about 20 miles up the river from Philadelphia. Construction of his mansion continued during his absence and it is from his letters of instruction that we know the exact plan of the manor.

Charles II died and his brother, the Duke of York, Penn's friend, now became King. With his influence in court he was able to defend

WILLIAM PENN DU
MANOR OF WILLIAMSTADT

PLYMOUTH
TOWNSHIP

John Smith
Richard Whitman
Major Jasper Ferguson

Delaware River

Holme's Map 1681

Penn was not prudent in money affairs, he lost heavily on his Irish estates and since he had paid the salaries of government officials and spent a lot of money on his manor, he was deeply in debt. The rent had not been collected efficiently. In 1701 Penn returned to England to defend his colony against a new ruler: his debts were so great he was forced to spend some time in debtors prison. In 1712 he testified that Pennsylvania had cost him 50,000 pounds more than he had received from it and in the following year he tried to sell it to the crown. Before arrangements could be made he had a stroke which left him an invalid until he died in 1718. His wife continued to act as Governor in a very capable fashion until her death in 1727: she being the only woman Governor Pennsylvania ever had.

Whitpain is just a small part of Pennsylvania and yet, it is an excellent example of the founder's work and purpose. It was purchased from Penn by a land speculator, Richard Whitpain, who sold it to a variety of settlers and farmers who built their own farms and estates, bringing prosperity to the area.

On the border to the Southeast, in Whitemarsh. the Anglican English Major Farmer and his son owned the land. To the Southwest in Plymouth were the English Quakers, and on the northwest the Schwenkfelders developed their life and freedom in Worcester township. in the northeast the Welsh Quakers settled Gwynedd. In all these areas German Lutheran and Dutch Reformer joined with the inhabitants of Whitpain to worship in our two colonial churches. Boehm's Reformed in Blue Bell and St John's Lutheran in Center Square. The prosperous farms, developed by all ethnic and religious groups, are a living example of how Penn's desire to allow all to worship according to their conscience, free from government established churches, would lead to a high level of achievement and economic security. We can call Whitpain a successful microcosm of Pennsylvania: William Penn's 'Holy Experiment.'

Whitpain Township - "What's in a Name?"

By Marjorie H Gerhart

Whitpain Township received its name from Richard Whitpain, citizen of London, who probably never came to this land. There is no other place in the country with the same appellation - Whitpain, and it is unusual for any township to bear the name of an individual.

Little is known of Richard Whitpain or Whitpaine as his name is spelled on early maps. He is described as a "butcher of London." However, this might have meant only that he belonged to the Butchers Guild that was open for membership to anyone who might have had a butcher in his family's history. He was certainly a land speculator. He purchased more than 4000 acres which became the nucleus of Whitpain Township. The Hulin's Map of Pennsylvania of 1681 shows he held about 2500 acres in West Chester County. It is also known from a letter written by Robert Turner, a merchant in Philadelphia, that Whitpain had a house built in Philadelphia: "John Reedman is building one brick house for Richard Whitpain of sixty foot long and fifty-six foot wide."

It can be ascertained that Richard Whitpain overextended his financial resources because following his death in 1689, a year after his fine house was commissioned, his wife Mary had to sell the entire tract in Whitpain to his creditors. In that same year William Penn wrote in a letter to the governing body in Pennsylvania: "I must recommend to ye government the case of the widows Jeff and Whitpaine in which believe me ye' honour of ye Province is deeply concerned especially the last, because of her husband's creditors whose expectations are much from you there."

Zachariah Whitpain, probably Richard's son, did come to Philadelphia and also had some association with Whitpain Township. He evidently occupied the grand house Richard had ordered constructed in the city. An article in the Pennsylvania Magazine reads: "In the early years of the Province the General Assembly had no permanent place for its meetings and met in private houses. Homes of Whitpain, Carpenter, Norris, and Shippen, according to Assembly Minutes, and at Makin's Schoolhouse." The house was described as being "between 7th and 8th street from the Delaware."

The Colonial Records of the Pennsylvania Archives mention that on December 24, 1688, Zachariah Whitpaine gave a deposition relative to the abdication of James the Second. In 1691, according to the Pennsylvania Magazine, it seems that Zachariah Whitpaine was nominated and appointed as one of the Twelve Common Councilmen of Philadelphia.

After Zachariah died, there is evidence that the Whitpain house was still used as a meeting place of the Assembly. A notation in the Pennsylvania Archives dated March 16. 1693. reads that "the Assembly held at Philadelphia adjourned to the Widow Whitpain's House." Another entry reads: "Whereupon it was moved that three Members should treat with Sarah Whitpain, for to hire her Room to sit in met at Sarah Whitpain's House"

Bean, in his History of Montgomery County, indicated that Zachariah had a plantation in Whitpain Township where he settled tenants. However, it appears he lived most of the time in the city.

In 1686, Zachariah had married Sarah Songhurst, daughter of John Songhurst who came to this land with Penn on the Welcome. In his marriage, the births of their children, and Zachariah's death in 1693 are all recorded in the Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy. He died intestate and Letters of Administration were issued in Philadelphia which can be seen at the Department of Wills in shreds, indiscernible, but by the number of pieces ascertain that he was a man of property.

The house in Philadelphia evidently became the home of Joseph Shippen, uncle of Peggy Shippen, who married Benedict Arnold a number of years after Zachariah's death. Zachariah and Sarah had three children; Mary. John. and Zachariah who died in 1711. In the early 1700's John questioned the disposition that had been made of Richard Whitpain's lands in Whitpain. In 1718 by a new agreement, the entire tract was awarded to John Whitpain, Anthony Morris, and Rees Thomas.

John who died in 1719 designated his wife Ann as his executrix. He left two children, Zachariah and Sarah. Detweiler describing a deed for a land transaction in Whitpain Township in 1740 stated: " . . . was given to Yost by Rees Thomas of Merion; Anthony Morris, Philadelphia brewer; Zachariah Whitpain, Mariner; Stephen Armitt, Philadelphia. Joiner, and his wife Sarah (latter being only children of John Whitpain, late of said city. gentleman, and Adolph Shambaugh, Whitpain, weaver "

It is not known what became of this third Zachariah Whitpain. The last mention uncovered for the name of Whitpain was for a William Whitpain, midshipman on board the ship Montgomery in 1776 who requested a discharge to go into the Continental Service. He received a discharge from the service of the State of Pennsylvania and evidently became a soldier in the Revolution.

John Whitpain's daughter Sarah, according to records of The Institute of American Genealogy, married Stephen Armitt, first cousin of Charles Brockden Brown, first American novelist. Their daughter, Sarah Armitt, married a Samuel Worth of Chester County. In 1881, this line of descendants produced Smedley Darlington Butler who became a distinguished general of the Marine Corps during the First World War. He was awarded two Congressional Medals of Honor and the Distinguished Service Medal.

European Settlement of Montgomery County

By Graham Swift
Artwork by Becky Huttinger

Townships do not grow in isolation and Whitpain did not suddenly spring up in the middle of an unpopulated wilderness. In order to get a true perspective of the European settlement of Whitpain, it is necessary to briefly review the early settlements in eastern Pennsylvania, the arrival of Penn, and the settlers in neighboring townships. Then, by narrowing the field of vision, focus can be brought on Whitpain Township and its development in Colonial America until the time of the Revolution.

Pre-Penn Settlers

Before the arrival of William Penn, what is now known as eastern Pennsylvania was successively in the hands of the Swedes (with the Finns) and the Dutch.

The earliest explorers were the Dutch traders who left no permanent settlements. They penetrated the forests along the Schuylkill (which is Dutch for "hidden creek") River and established a lucrative trade in beaver skins, which were available in enormous quantities. The Indian name for the Schuylkill was Manaiung, a name which survives today as Manayunk.

The Swedes and Finns were the first permanent settlers in this part of America. In 1643, a year before William Penn was born in England, the Swedes established a foothold along the shores of the Delaware. The Swedish Governor, Johan Printz, started the settlement on Tinicum Island in the mouth of the Schuylkill in 1643. Settlements were also established at Uplands, later changed to Chester by Penn, and Christiana which is present day Wilmington. The most precious monument left by the Swedes is Gloria Dei Church in present day Philadelphia, a few blocks south of Independence Hall. It is of interest that these early Swedes were often convicts deported from their homelands.

The Swedes were neither numerous nor well-equipped to maintain control of the Delaware Valley. In 1655, the Dutch came from New York to gain control for nine years until 1664. At that time, the Duke of York (later King James II of England) took control of the Delaware Valley, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania for the English. Within a few years, English settlers began to arrive in the Delaware Valley. When William Penn came in 1683, the Swedes were the largest group established in the area. It is believed that about 400 of the 1000 Swedes living in the Delaware Valley, lived within the limits of present day Philadelphia.

Post-Penn Settlers

William Penn, because of a large debt owed by the English crown to his late father, Admiral Sir William Penn, was able to obtain a charter to all the lands of Pennsylvania as a debt settlement. Penn decided to use the land to fulfill a vision he had of a secure and peaceful haven for all the religious out-casts and persecuted of Europe. This was a bold experiment for these early times when freedom of religion and democratic governments were rare.

Most of early recorded history after Penn's arrival deals with settlements in Montgomery County in general, though our township, Whitpain, is mentioned as early as 1701. Hence a general immigration pattern in Montgomery County is established here, and later the growth of Whitpain will be taken up separately.

Montgomery County has always been close to Philadelphia which was, in the beginning, a trading center, seat of government, and distribution point from which the new province was settled.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, after Penn arrived, the first wave of settlers swept into Montgomery County. These were predominantly English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh and Germans. The English were mostly Quakers, Presbyterians and Baptists, while the Germans were mainly Lutherans and other sects including Mennonites, Brethren (Dunkers) Schwenkfelders and Moravians. For the most part, the different nationalities settled in different areas, each group preserving its language and customs.

Generally, these first settlers bought large tracts of land and villages were not established. However, with the building of mills to grind grain and inter-connecting roads, villages and towns gradually grew around these focal points.

Welsh Settlements

In 1682 when Penn was granted the charter to Pennsylvania, a group of Welsh Quakers met him in London and obtained a verbal agreement to 50,000 acres of land. This informal agreement to a Welsh Barony was never fully realized. Eventually, the Welsh Tract totaled 40,000 acres bordering the southwest bank of the Schuylkill River just inside present day Philadelphia's city limits.

The first group of the Welsh settlers arrived on this continent before Penn in 1682. They landed at Upland (now Chester) under the leadership of Doctor Edward Jones on a ship called the Lyon.

The immigrants grouped themselves into companies of about twenty and land grants were made to trustees representing these groups. Members of each company received tracts of 100-300 acres with the members of the first group who arrived on the Lyon with Doctor Jones getting the choice river bank property.

The settlement prospered and Doctor Jones left a record of the "splendid timber and rich soil" and noted that the Indians were friendly and readily traded venison. However, the self-governing Barony never developed and, in 1689, the Provincial Council in Philadelphia split the Welsh settlement: Haverford and Radnor became part of Chester County while Merion Township remained in Philadelphia County.

Later, Welsh settlements were widely scattered throughout Montgomery County, e.g., Lower Merion, Bryn Mawr, Bala Cynwyd, Haverford, Narberth, Wynnewood, and Gladwyne. Other Welsh settlements in Montgomery County include Montgomery, Plymouth, Moreland, Limerick (which later became German), Norriton, Towamencin, Upper Dublin, Hatfield, and Jenkintown. The closest settlement to Whitpain was that at Gwynedd (which is Welsh for North Wales). Hugh Roberts, a Quaker from Lower Merion, was responsible for forming this township.

Swedish Settlements

Swedish settlements in Montgomery County did not remain separate from those of the English and Welsh as did those of the Germans. As mentioned earlier, the Swedes and Finns had settled along the Delaware long before Penn arrived. Their later settlements were in Upper Merion, including what is now Conshohocken and Bridgeport. As early as 1684, Penn granted Peter Yocum (originally Joachim) 500 acres in that area. In the same year, Penn also sold 1000 acres to Lassekok (Cox) and Company, who sold half of this to another Swede, Gunnar Rambo, in 1701.

Lesser Swedish settlements in Montgomery County were in Gulph Creek, King of Prussia, north of Bridgeport, and near Abrams, all of which were established in the eighteenth century. Abrams community was named for the Abrahams family which arrived in Montgomery County from Bucks County shortly after 1700. Matson's Ford, where Conshohocken now stands, was another Swedish settlement.

German Settlements

Penn's visit to Holland and Germany, in 1677, was probably remembered with enthusiasm by many of the groups that he met there. His dream of a "New World Haven" for the depressed of Europe became a beacon for these people who numbered many. Hence, within a year of Penn's landing in America, the great migration of Germans began. Eventually, more than half of Montgomery County was settled by Germans, the vast majority arriving after 1700. They came for religious freedom, to escape the absolute power of the German princes and to avoid war and heavy taxes prevalent in the Holy Roman Empire. (Germany was not united at that time but separate states in that political unit.)

The same year Penn arrived, in 1683, thirteen German families (thirty-three people in all) arrived in Pennsylvania and settled in present day Germantown. Most of the men were unusually ambitious and well-educated. For example, Daniel Pastorius, a Lutheran preacher could read and write in eight languages, and David Rittenhouse built the first paper mill in America. He was the father of the David who became a world renowned mathematician, astronomer and philosopher. This first settlement on one of the branches of the Wissahickon became one of the most cultured in North America. It was here in 1688 that Pastorius voiced the first anti-slavery sentiments heard in this country.

Penn granted these German settlers not only self-government, but also additional lands totaling 48,000 acres in Upper Montgomery County, between Bucks County and the Schuylkill River at Pottstown. This tract of land became known as the Frankfurt Land because Penn had originally promised the land to the Germans in the town of Frankfurt. Pastorius was the agent in charge of this land.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, German immigrants began to arrive in such numbers that the Provincial Government adopted certain restrictions. All males over the age of sixteen arriving in Philadelphia had to pledge allegiance to England and give up their citizenship.



The Barn at Dawesfield, Built in 1796

Becky Huttlinger

The waves of German settlers moving out of Germantown into present day Montgomery County spanned out over the area. The German families arrived in Whitpain Township where some of them stayed while others settled in the Skippack area, the Perkiomen Valley, and the Upper tier townships.

George Shoemaker settled in Cheltenham in 1685. Reymer Tyson, one of the founders of the Germantown settlement, resettled his family in 1700 on land that included part of present day Glenside. Springfield became the home of Herman Grolthauser and other Germans followed him there. The Rittenhouses lived in East Norriton Township. Germans moved into Upper Dublin. Dreshertown got its name from George Dresher. Whitmarsh and Whitpain received the influx at about the same time. the Conard family arrived in Whitpain in 1711, the Yost family settled in Centre Square in 1727. The push of the pioneers continued out into Gwynedd Township. Alexander Wilson, an early American student of birds, stopped at the Spring House Tavern and was amazed at the "torrents of Dutch spoken there."

English Settlements

Before the end of the seventeenth century, the English Quakers began to occupy tracts of land in what is now Abington, Cheltenham, Whitmarsh, Plymouth, and Lower Providence Townships. These early Quaker settlements had a sense of unity, through their religion. Neighbors worked together, cleared trees and built cabins. Much of their lives revolved around their meeting houses.

Abington had twenty-two landowners on the map of 1696. The original meeting house was in use by 1700 and meetings have been held there ever since. Cheltenham, founded in 1683, is probably the oldest township in the County. It is claimed that one Toby Leech, a pioneer settler, named the township after his native parish in England. Springfield Township was settled by both English and Germans.

Whitemarsh was settled before the end of the seventeenth century. A major landowner was Major Jasper Farmer who never actually lived in the township. His widow lived there with a son, Edward, and built a thriving lime business, shipping lime to Philadelphia as early as 1687.

The first Europeans to live in Whitpain were probably English. Other local townships settled by the English include East Norriton, Horsham, Upper Dublin and Pottsgrove.

This, then, was the setting for the growth of Colonial Whitpain. The land was part of an English proprietary colony, but the people living in this area were of diverse background, predominantly English, German, Welsh and Swedish.

Growth of Colonial and Early Post-Colonial Whitpain

By Graham Switt
Artwork by Becky Huttinger

In 1681, 1682 and 1683. William Penn. the owner, executed leases and releases to Samuel Fox for 1500 acres. Charles Marshall tor 2000 acres, and James Clay pole tor 1000 acres. Subsequently, all the properties came into the possession of John Marshall, presumably a relative of Charles Marshall, who then owned 4500 acres. Richard Whitpain, a London butcher, received this tract of land as a debt-payment. There is no record that Richard Whitpain ever visited his lands in America. However, there is evidence that Richard Whitpain had a fine house built in Philadelphia shortly before his death. He also owned land, as it appears on Scull's map. in what is now Chester County. This property, in present-day Montgomery County, was known as Whitpain's Creek to identity it from his other holdings and was slightly over one hall of the area of present-day Whitpain. Other original landowners in Whitpain as shown on Holme's map of 1681 included: John Basly. Jonas Smith, John and Elizabeth Palmer, William Palmer, Thomas Fitzwater, John Goodson, John Denne, Charles Marshall. Thorn Cox, and Mary Bradwel.

Richard Whitpain in his last will and testament on April 27, 1689, willed the payment of his debts and funeral expenses and authorized his wife Mary, his executrix, to sell as much land in the provinces as necessary to pay these debts. Shortly afterwards, he died.

Mary Whitpain, by her indenture of July 3, 1689, sold the entire 4500 acres to Mary Dvice, John Eldridge, William Ingram, John Blackball, and John Vace, all of whom were creditors. Shortly thereafter, John Blackhall, the sole surviving trustee sold the entire tract to William Aubrey of London.

William Aubrey, by his indenture of April 24, 1713, sold the tract of land to Anthony Morris, maltster and brewer of Philadelphia and to Rees Thomas of Merion Township. John Whitpain, a relative of Richard Whitpain, became dissatisfied with the sale by Aubrey and an agreement was entered into, dated May 28, 1718, whereby the entire property came into the hands of Morris, Thomas, and Whitpain. They then requested that the land be resurveyed. The land survey by Nicholas Scull on May 23, 1727, found that the area was 4858 acres rather than the heretofore accepted 4500 acres.

John Whitpain's last will dated December 20, 1728, left the property due to him, according to the prior agreement with Thomas and Morris, to his two children, Sarah and Zachariah. His wife, Anne, was executrix. Whitpain is among the oldest townships in Montgomery County. In Holmes'a map of

168] it is called Whitpain's Creek and by 1701 it appeared in public records as Whitpain's township. The first to actually settle in the township was probably Thomas McCarty, a member of Richard Whitpain's family through marriage, described as a butcher and surgeon. The land he acquired was 450 acres located between Skippack Pike and the border of Plymouth Township.

Geographically, Whitpain is towards the center of Montgomery County, bordered to the north by Worcester, to the east by Ambler, Upper Dublin and Lower Gwynedd, to the west by Plymouth and Norriton, and to the south by Whitemarsh. It has a regular rectangular shape, approximately four and a half miles by three miles, which is approximately 12.8 square miles or 8640 acres in area. These boundaries have been much the same for 275 years.

Geologically, the soil is shale and loam with sandy soil predominating in the southern corner. On most of the farms in the Stony Creek area, good quantities of building sand can be found. A limestone deposit underlies most of the southeastern part of the township.

Two watersheds are to be found in the township. The eastern and southern sections of the township are drained by the Wissahickon Creek. (Originally known as Whitpain's Creek. Wissahickon is an Indian name meaning catfish stream or stream of yellow water.) Two branches of the Stony Creek drain in the western and northern portions of Whitpain.

According to Bean, in his History of Montgomery County, by 1734 Whitpain Township had twenty-four landowners, as listed below:

Philip Boehm (Pastor of Boehm's Reformed Church) 200 acres
Peter Indehaven (DeHaven) - 200 acres
Cadwalader Morris - 200 acres
John Rees - 150 acres

William Coulston - 100 acres
Humphrey Ellis - 50 acres
William Robinson - 150 acres
Thomas Fitzwater (later owned Waggon Inn) - 150 acres

Henry Levering - 100 acres
Alexander Till (Dill) - 100 acres
Henry Conard - 200 acres
Jacob Yost - 80 acres

George Franks - 200 acres
William Roberts - 100 acres
Daniel Burn - 40 acres
John David - 170 acres

Isaac Williams - 100 acres
George Castner - 200 acres
William David (Davis) - 100 acres
Peter Hoxworth - 100 acres

John Thomas - 100 acres
John Mircle (Markley) - 100 acres
Jacob Levering - 100 acres
Abram Dawes - 350 acres

Eight or nine of the above were Welsh, six or eight were German and the remainder were English. The first to settle were the English, followed by the Welsh.

According to tax rolls, the growth of the township to the Revolutionary period was steady. In 1741, fifty-six taxpayers were present in the township and 1762 and 1785 the numbers had grown to 80 and 158, respectively. By 1788 there were approximately ninety farms, the largest of these was 350 acres and was owned by James Morris. Population growth continued steadily through the 1800's up until 1950, increasing from 771 persons in

1800 to 3063 persons in 1950. The last few years has shown dramatic population increase, reaching 9,295 persons in 1970. (See Whitpain Township Comprehensive Plan.)

Slavery was never very important in the northern states and Whitpain had little history of slavery. However, in 1763 it was claimed that three slaves resided in the township. Slavery continued through the Revolution as attested to by the notice in the Pennsylvania Packet, September 26, 1777, when David Knox offered "a reward of \$20 for the recovery and return of a mulatto wench, twenty-six years old, named Steffany." The last slave in Whitpain was freed by James Morris, before he died in 1795.

As already implied, the early settlers in Whitpain were farmers. However, industry came early when Jacob Yost and his son Daniel began a weaving enterprise in a small cabin in Center Square in 1727. In 1732, Jacob purchased the Yost farm and extended his business and eventually changed to the manufacture of farm implements. From 1760 to 1816 hand forged scythes, sickles and edge tools attested to the family's mechanical genius.

After the Revolution in 1804, Charles Math-
er's mill was built on the Wissahickon.

The assessment of 1785 mentions the pre-
sence of two tanneries and one oil mill in the
township.

Other post-Revolutionary industries worthy of note are John Conard's auger
business which flourished from 1806 to 1857 when his sons moved it to Fort
Washington, and Samuel F. Shaeffs threshing machines made in 1847.

The first Justice of the Peace in Whitpain was Abram Dawes who was commissioned
on May 25, 1752. One early Justice of the Peace, Andrew Knox, was appointed on
June 6, 1777, and held the position through the Revolution until his death in
January 1808.

The Township had two churches prior to the Revolution. Boehm's Reformed
Church founded by John Phillip Boehm was erected in 1740 in its original form as a
small stone building. St. John's Lutheran Church was founded west of Center
Square in 1773. Both churches served as hospitals after the Battle of Germantown and soldiers who died of
wounds or disease were buried in their churchyards.

It is of interest to note that Whitpain Township was part of Philadelphia County until
Montgomery County was formed on September 10, 1784, and hence early records of
Whitpain are in Philadelphia. The township is a composite of several small communities
established before and after the Revolution, the major ones being Center Square, Blue Bell,
Broad Axe, Custer, Franklinville, Washington Square, and Belfry. The last four are
post-revolutionary communities.

Center Square was previously known as The Waggon and is located at the intersection of DeKalb Pike formerly known as State or Swedes' Ford Road, and Skippack Pike. Nicholas Scull mentions the Waggon Inn on his map of 1758 and the British, also, called it by that name on their maps of 1777. Thomas Fitzwater was the first recorded inn-keeper of the Waggon Inn; in 1762 he is recorded in the tax register. In 1777, John Porter was the inn-keeper and requested the protection of his premises by soldiers of Washington's army, in order to keep American soldiers from entering. This action by "Tory John Porter" caused resentment by the local population and resulted in the failure of the business.

Blue Bell is situated at the intersection of Blue Bell-Penllyn Pike and Skippack Pike. In Scull's map of 1758, the White Horse Inn was located there and was called by that name in the British maps of 1777. This is the present day Blue Bell Inn which was founded in 1743. A "sister inn," the Black Horse, was built in 1774 by James Bartleson as a private home on the west side of Skippack Pike. It was licensed as an inn at the May sessions in 1796. Writing in the book commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Center Square Fire Company, Mears noted that Blue Bell could never have been described as a one horse town as its two colonial inns were horses.

For many years Blue Bell was known as Pigeontown. The name was supposedly derived from the presence of large flocks of pigeons in the area. Morgan Morgan, a resident of the area, was noted for pigeon trapping and for his gun smithing. Not until 1840 was the name changed to Blue Bell, probably after the Blue Bell Inn.

Broad Axe is situated in the eastern end of the township at Skippack and Butler Pikes, immediately adjacent to Whitemarsh Township. The name derives from the Broad Axe Inn established at least as early as 1681 and appearing on Reading Howell's map of 1792 by that name.

Mears, former local historian, recorded the inns of Whitpain in the pun: "Broad Axe had the "Broad Axe" to chop the wood of Whitpain Township to fill "The Waggon" of Center Square for the "Black and White Horses" of Pigeontown or Blue Bell to pull."

Belfry is located near the Worcester boundary line, dividing that township from Whitpain, and Skippack Pike. It had in 1880, a post office, a steam mill for grinding grain, a flour, feed, coal and lumber yard owned by Theodore Harrar; a blacksmith shop and several houses. The former station of Belfry on the Stony Creek Branch of the Reading Railroad once existed there.

Franklinville is situated near the eastern portion of the township at the intersection of Morris Road and DeKalb Pike. In 1880 it contained an Inn, the country estate and model farm of William M. Singerly that is now Normandy Farms, a store operated by W. Corson, a blacksmith shop and five dwellings.

Washington Square is partially in East Norriton Township, located at the intersection of Township Line and DeKalb Pike. In 1880, it had one inn (still here), a school house and five dwellings.

Prior to the Revolution, two schools appear to have been established in Whitpain. The first school house was located near Skippack and Union Meeting Road and was taught by W. Knox as early as 1766. The other was attached to Boehm's Church and was a parochial school in the tradition of the early German settlers. Nicholas Korndoffer taught the school in 1777.

Most of the major roads in the township were started in pre-Revolutionary times. Skippack Pike is one of the country's oldest east-west highways. It was built at the request, dated 1713, of twenty nine German settlers living in Skippack to enable them to have access to Farmer's Mill in Whitemarsh. Several years later, in 1725. the road was extended out beyond Skippack to Swamp Creek.

Morris Road was laid by the court order of September 1741 to commence at Garret Clemens' mill in Upper Salford township and end at Samuel Morris' Mill on the Wissahickon in Whitemarsh Township. 'The same Clemens family reside in the area today and own the Clemens Supermarket chain.

Butler Pike which forms the south-eastern boundary of Whitpain and is the main street of neighboring Ambler and Conshohocken was constructed about 1739. It connected Matson's Ford (now West Conshohocken) on the Schuylkill River and Butler's Mill in Chalfont. DeKalb Pike, which was formerly called by the names Old Swedes' Ford Road and State Road was laid out in 1730.

One railroad ran through the township just one hundred years ago. The Stony Creek Railroad was chartered in 1868. April 14. and opened to traffic January I, 1874. The line commenced at Main Street in Norristown and connected with the Reading Railroad in Lansdale, running across the entire width of the northern part of the township, with a station at Yost Road, named Custer, and one at Belfry.

As already mentioned, Whitpain has been an independent township since 1701. However, for a brief period in 1762. Whitpain and Plymouth, by act of the assembly, became one district with two supervisors, one from each township. Their duties were to act jointly in tax levying and road mending. Total dissatisfaction by the populace of both townships dissolved the ill-considered act. in 1763.

Whitpain's overall role in the Revolutionary War was minor, but George Washington and many of his generals did spend time in the township and gave the township a place in history.



Whitpain and the Revolution

By George C. Taylor, Jr.
Photography by George C. Taylor, Jr.
Artwork by Becky Huttinger
George C. Taylor, Jr.

This section relates some details of the direct relationship between this township, its people, and the American Revolution as represented by the Continental Army led by General Washington. This relationship was not always smooth and, in fact, was occasionally abrasive.

All of the history concerning this period, as well as anecdotes and stories which could be found, have been included. Some of this material may be disputed for accuracy but, since it exists, it has been recorded.

To provide proper historic perspective and clarification, brief resumes of war events that occurred preceding, during, and following the period directly related to Whitpain are also included. It is hoped that this section will add an understanding of "the way it was" in Whitpain during the Fall of 1777.

The author wishes to acknowledge the help of many interested persons in preparing this material. He especially wants to thank Mr. Arthur R. Driedger, Jr., teacher, historian, and resident of Whitpain, for supplying his material collected over many years of research.



Revolutionary War - Prelude

After the war started at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, the British under General Gage defeated the Americans in a Pyrrhic victory at the Battle of Bunker (Breed's) Hill, June 16, 1775. This led to a stalemate; the Americans occupied Dorchester Heights southwest of the city and the British occupied Boston. On July 12, 1775 George Washington assumed command of the army.

When Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold captured Fort Ticonderoga and its cannon on May 10, 1775, Henry Knox undertook to move those much needed artillery pieces to the Boston war theater. His struggle across the mountains with some fifty cannon during the winter of 1775-76, is one of the great marches in the annals of military history. The artillery was finally emplaced on Dorchester Heights by March 5, 1776. The British immediately began evacuating Boston by sea for Nova Scotia.

The next major action was the successful British attack from the sea, first on Long Island, then New York City, and finally across New Jersey during November of 1776. The British went into winter quarters on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River.

Washington's successful surprise attack on Christmas morning against the Hessians at Trenton and the subsequent British defeat at Princeton, New Jersey, drove the British back to New York while the American army wintered at Morristown, New Jersey.

In September of 1777, after a summer of inactivity, the British army left New York by boat, destination unknown to the Americans. They (the British army) finally landed at Elkton, Maryland, drove quickly northward and met Washington's southward moving army near Chadd's Ford on the Chester Road for the Battle of Brandywine. The Americans were outflanked and retreated, first to Chester, then into Philadelphia along the Schuylkill River. A young French Marquis named Lafayette, who had joined the American army during the summer, was wounded in the leg during the Brandywine Battle.

When the British began to move northwestward, in a feint that seemed to threaten the American arms suppliers in Lancaster and Berks Counties, the Continental Army went to meet them. The almost disastrous "Battle of the Clouds" on September 16 near Malvern, Pennsylvania, resulted. A torrential rainstorm turned the potential field of battle into a quagmire and wet down the powder of both armies. The Americans escaped another potentially dangerous flanking attack under cover of this storm and retreated to the vicinity of Warwick Furnace,

Washington next moved the army eastward, crossing the Schuylkill River at Parker's Ford to camp at what is now Trappe-Collegeville-Evansburg along the Ridge and Germantown Pikes. Meanwhile, on September 20 the British launched a surprise night attack on General Wayne's brigade which had been left south of the river to watch the British troop movements. The "Paoli Massacre" resulted, with Wayne routed by a vicious bayonet charge by British troops under the command of General Grey. The British under General Howe's command, moved to the vicinity of Valley Forge; Washington moved his men into camp north of Pottstown (Pottsgrove



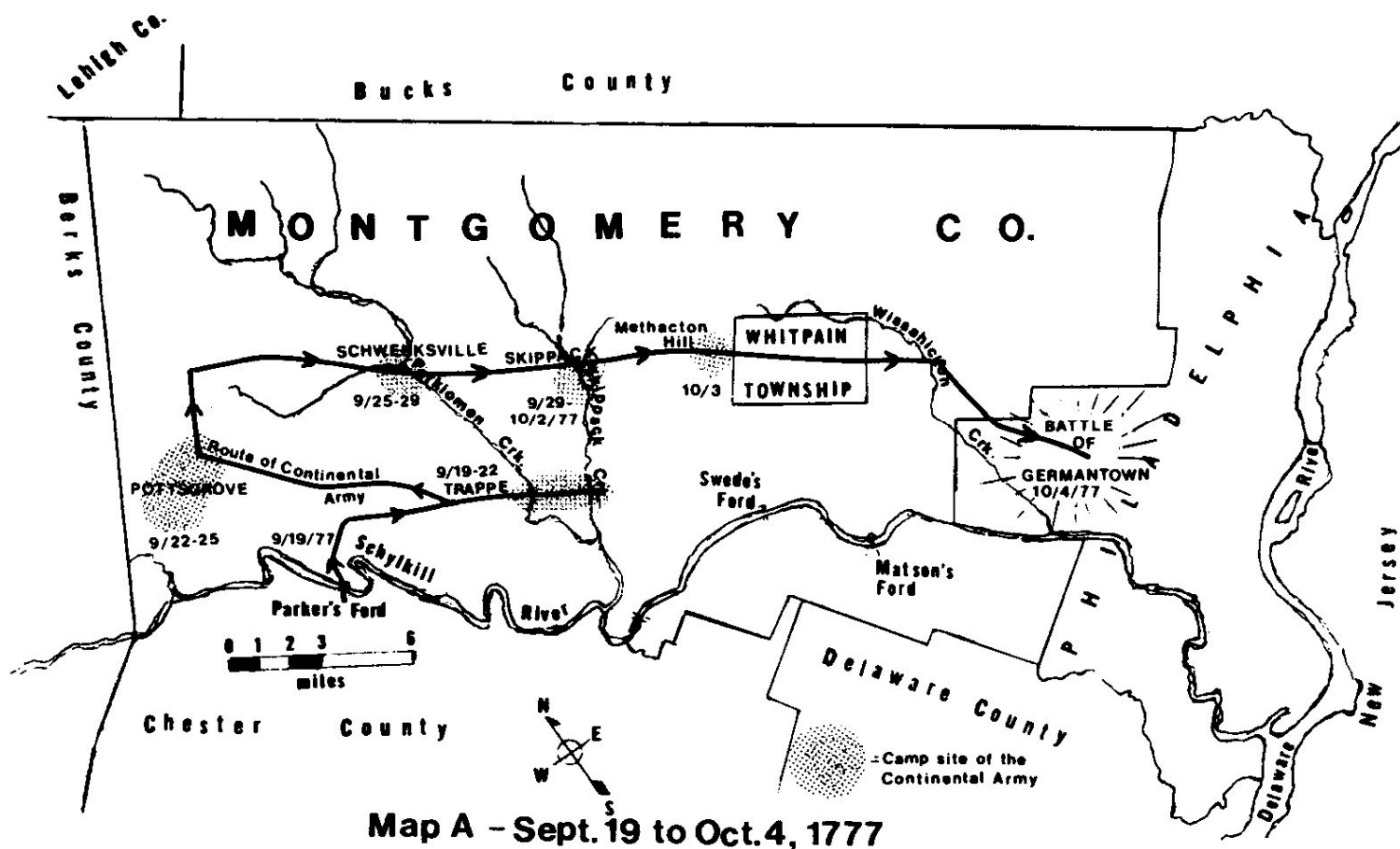
Gen. Anthony Wayne

Camp) to again block the British from Berks County. General Howe then crossed to the north side of the Schuylkill River for the first time, overpowering the American militia guarding Gordon's and Fatland's fords; he then moved east to occupy Philadelphia.

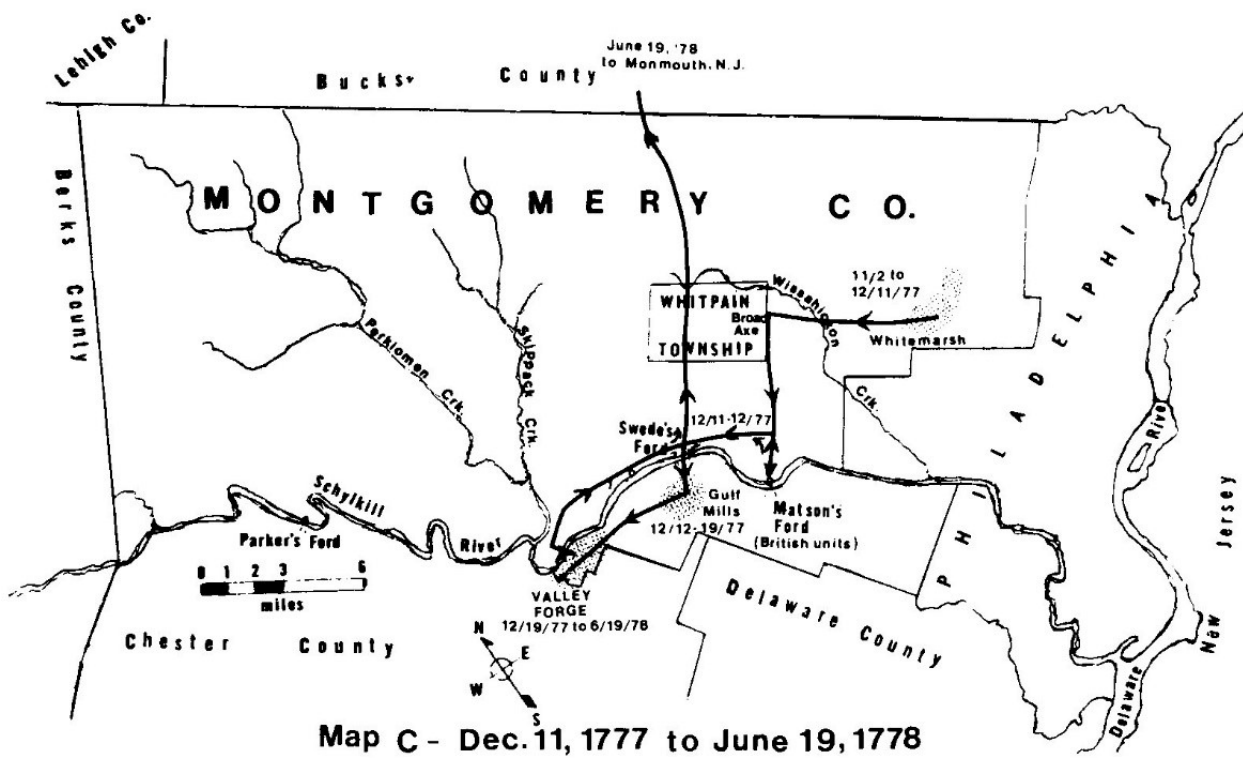
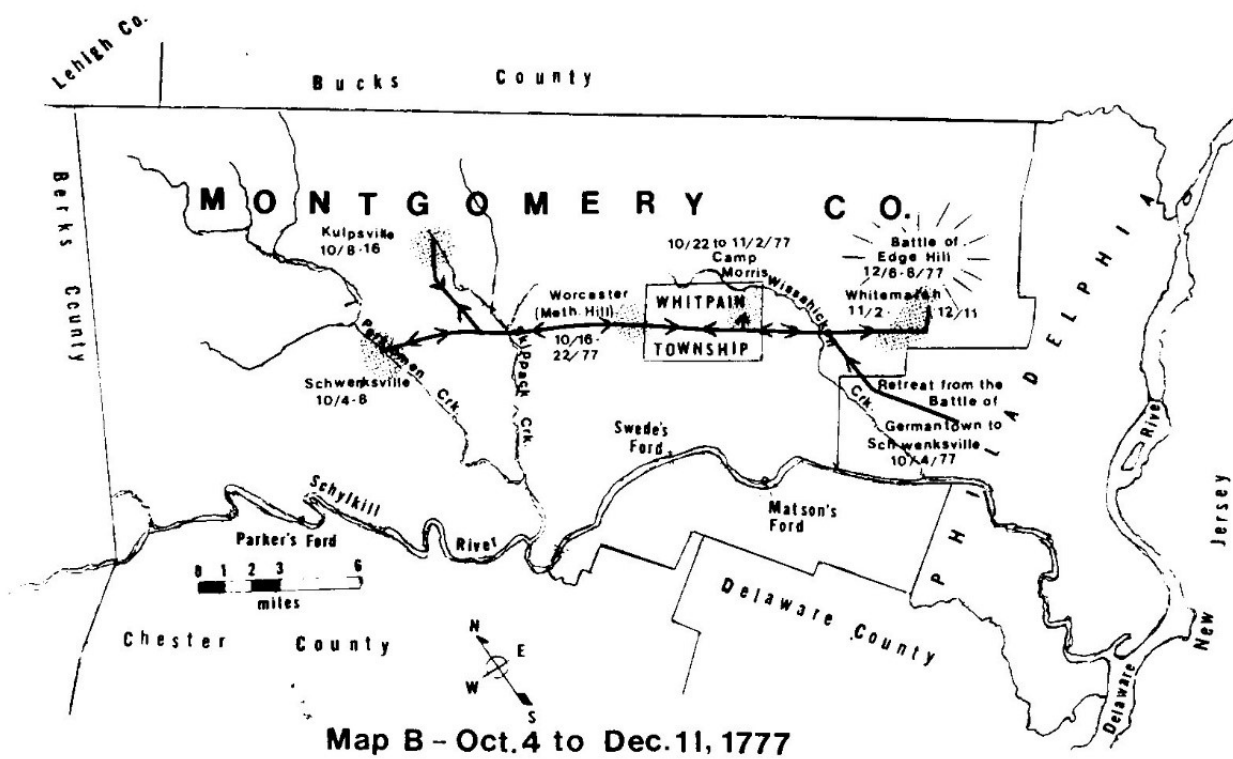


Sir William Howe

Washington now began a cautious movement down Skippack pike toward Philadelphia - camping near Pennypack Mill (Schwenksville), then on to the town of Skippack for one day (October 2, 1777), and finally to Methacton Hill in Worcester Township, where he planned the Battle of Germantown with his staff in the Peter Wentz house on October 3rd. That night he launched the attack, sending the Continental Army through Whitpain Township for the first time.



Map A - Sept. 19 to Oct. 4, 1777

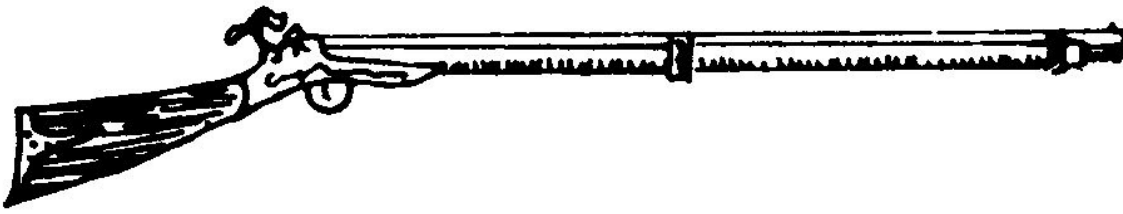


The Continental Army in Whitpain Township

The Continental Army under the command of General George Washington marched through Whitpain Township six times . . .

- First, on the night of October 3, 1777, the army marched down Skippack Pike, through the center of Whitpain, from its camp in Worcester Township (adjoining Whitpain on the northwest) to the ill-starred "Battle of Germantown."
- Second, on October 4 the army retreated in disorder back up the Skippack Pike through Whitpain, all the way to its former camp near Schwenksville.
- Third, it marched down the Skippack Pike again on October 19 or 20 to "Camp Morris or Witpen" in Whitpain Township.
- Fourth, the army broke camp in Whitpain and moved on November 2nd to Whitemarsh and the successful confrontation with Howe's army in what is known as the "Battle of Edge Hill."
- Fifth, on December 11, 1777, the Continental Army moved from Whitemarsh to Broad Axe Village on the Skippack Pike, turned southwest along the Whitpain border formed by what is now Butler Pike and proceeded toward Matson's Ford (Conshohocken). The army was forced to move west along the river to Swede's Ford (Norristown) when British forces were encountered opposite Matson's Ford. The army was on its way to camp at Gulph Mills and then on to final winter quarters at Valley Forge.
- Sixth, and for the last time, on June 19, 1778, the Continental Army left Valley Forge in pursuit of the British who had evacuated Philadelphia and were moving north across New Jersey toward New York. The army moved across Fatland's Ford and Sullivan's Bridge; it continued north on DeKalb Pike through Whitpain Township, into Bucks County, then to New Jersey and finally, to the "Battle of Monmouth."

An interesting sidelight of this period . . . General Wayne, during the winter of 1778, when the troops were suffering so much at Valley Forge, went on a foraging expedition with some of his men into southern New Jersey, near Salem. He found and rounded-up approximately 400 head of cattle and fifty horses which he then drove back to Valley Forge via Trenton, Morristown, Montgomeryville and travelled DeKalb Pike through Whitpain Township.

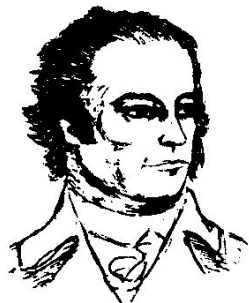


The Continental Army in Whitpain Township and Vicinity

The American Army in the Fall of 1777 was not the same army it was to become later in the war. It had suffered a series of near disastrous defeats since its one major victory at Trenton in December of 1776, and as a result was demoralized. The hard core of that army was a relative handful of federal troops from various states numbering, at the most, about 8,000 officers and men. This elite core of the army was augmented by state militia, which ranged from useless to very good, depending on their individual leadership. Finally, there was the local militia, which usually fought only when the theater of war moved into their local areas. These troops were invariably poor, perhaps able to get off one round of musket fire before they turned and ran. However, from the ranks of the state and local militia came the men who were to become federal troops and replace those killed wounded, captured, deserted, or those whose term of service had run out.

The equipment of this army was also quite variable, consisting primarily of muskets (often captured British "Brown Besses"), rifles (which Washington disapproved of because they were much slower to load than a musket and, at this time, could not accept a bayonet as a musket could) and artillery (mostly captured from the British). The leather goods that the army received was often virtually rawhide and substitutes were found for it with many items such as belts and straps made of the plentiful woven flax. Washington was particularly concerned about the cartouches (cartridge boxes) which were not sufficiently waterproof. This concern was quite acute after the "Battle of the Clouds" when the downpour of rain made both armies inoperable because their powder was wet. Later in the war these deficiencies were largely overcome by huge infusions of arms and other military necessities from the French.

At Pennypack (Penneback) Mill, Schwenksville, where the Continental Army was camped on September 28, 1777, it was a pitiful sight with only 5,472 officers and men fit for duty. The Army was also suffering from its chronic lack of supplies and arms, but more importantly, it was suffering from lack of confidence. Fortunately, it was reinforced while there up to a strength of approximately 8,000 officers and men in federal service plus 3,000 militia for a total of about 11,000 men. It was also resupplied and re-equipped by a nervous Continental Congress driven from Philadelphia by the British occupation to York, Pennsylvania, in late September.



Gen. John Sullivan

On the march to Germantown, October 3, General Armstrong's forces (including General Smallwood's and General Foreman's regiments) were to constitute a northern flanking force, moving on Whitmarsh Road to Jenkin's Tavern and then south to Market Square in central Germantown (Bethlehem Pike to Church Road to Limekiln Pike to Jenkintown, down York Road to Washington Lane to School House Lane in Germantown).

General Sullivan's and General Wayne's divisions under the command of General Conway formed the right or southern wing, moving down the Manatawny Road (Germantown Pike).

General McDougal commanded the center with General Greene's and General Stephen's divisions, moving down the Skippack Pike.

General Lord Stirling (Alexander of New Jersey) led the reserves which consisted of General Nash's and General Maxwell's brigades, following McDougal down Skippack Pike.



Gen. Nathaniel Greene

When the troops proceeded down Skippack Pike through Whitpain Township on the night of October 3, orders were sent ahead

that all residents in Whitpain along the route of march were to extinguish all of their candles, and guards with drawn swords were placed at the Waggon Inn (now Reed's Store in Centre Square) owned at that time by John Potter, so that no soldier would stop for food and especially not for drink.



*Gen. William Alexander
(Lord Stirling)*

Issac McGlattery of Whitpain met the army in what is now Centre Square and acted as a guide for Maxwell's Brigade of 1,100 Maryland and 600 New Jersey militia as they moved to the north through the woods so that they would rendezvous with the main body of troops in Chestnut Hill at 2 A.M. on October 4. He

continued as a guide for this unit until it reached the vicinity of Chew House which was the principle focal point of the Battle of Germantown.

Adam Lotz (Lutz) who lived near Centre Square reportedly opened his fence to permit the army to march through part of his land so as to avoid a particularly muddy section of Skippack Pike, which might have bogged-down the army's horses.



The heavy morning fog of October 4, 1777, which could have aided Washington's attack by providing concealment until the last moment, instead acted against his plan. In clear weather it might have worked, but with troops as undisciplined and inexperienced as his, Washington's plan (a duplicate of what had worked so well at Trenton, but on a much grander and more complex scale) was too difficult to be carried out successfully in the blinding fog. The northern flanking force under General Armstrong became lost (some say because it had a guide who was secretly a Tory sympathizer) and arrived in Germantown just in time to add to the confusion of an already retreating Continental Army. The right flank under General Conway never did become seriously engaged. Finally, Washington made a tactical error which threw away his advantage of surprise. He listened to General Henry Knox's advice and attempted to reduce the fortress-like Chew house where Colonel Musgrave made a determined stand, before proceeding against



Gen. Henry Knox

the main British camp. This enabled the British to organize and execute an effective counter-attack. However, one point should be made, the crack British and Hessian units under Howe had retreated under the initial American assault, proving that they were defeatable.

The American retreat unfortunately became a rout, with officers and non-coms unable to control their men as they ran pell-mell up Skippack Pike through Whitpain. The story of an eye-witness account given in "Watson's Annals" page fifty-nine, follows: "The English cavalry pursued the Americans on Skippack road 10 1/2 miles from Philadelphia, into Whitpain township, as far as the Blue Bell. We have heard from an old friend, a witness, now at that place, that our militia was already there when the British cavalry arrived, and wheeled about to make good their retreat and return."



The battle of Germantown at the Chew House, October 4, 1777

"He describes the confusion that existed among the Americans as past the power of description; sadness and consternation was expressed in every countenance. While the dead and dying (which had preceded this halt at the Blue Bell) were before seen moving onward for refuge, there could be seen many anxious women* and children rushing to the scene to learn the fate of their friends, and to meet, if they could, the fathers, brothers or other relatives who had been before sent forward for the engagement.

"Again and again the American officers were seen riding or running to the front of the militia with their drawn swords, threatening or persuading them to face about and meet the foe; but all efforts seemed to fail; and officers and men were still seen everywhere borne along on the retreat. They broke down fences and rushed away in confusion, as if determined no longer to hazard the chances of war in another onset."

A Major John White, continental officer from Philadelphia, and an aide to General Sullivan, along with a Lieutenant Smith were both wounded in the Battle of Germantown but were able to ride back to Whitpain Township on Skippack Pike to reach the home of Abraham Wentz (Captain of Whitpain Militia) where Major White had been quartered. The account in Watson's Annals continued: "As the alarm of the pursuing army came onward, he undertook to ride six miles further, when he took a fever from his exertions, of which he died. A lady who saw him at the Wentz house, and who is still alive has told me he came there with General Forman, and that the Major was gay and cheerful, and declined either bed or assistance.

* Camp followers were always close-by any army at this period in history. They served a useful purpose in aiding morale, in nursing the sick and injured, and in performing camp housekeeping duties; they were always tolerated by the army command.

"In the same company there was a very young officer from Virginia, wounded in the shoulder, who also went onward (supposedly Lieutenant Smith)."

Both of these officers, along with General Nash and a Colonel Boyd who had also been wounded, died of their wounds and were buried in the Mennonite Cemetery near Kulpsville.

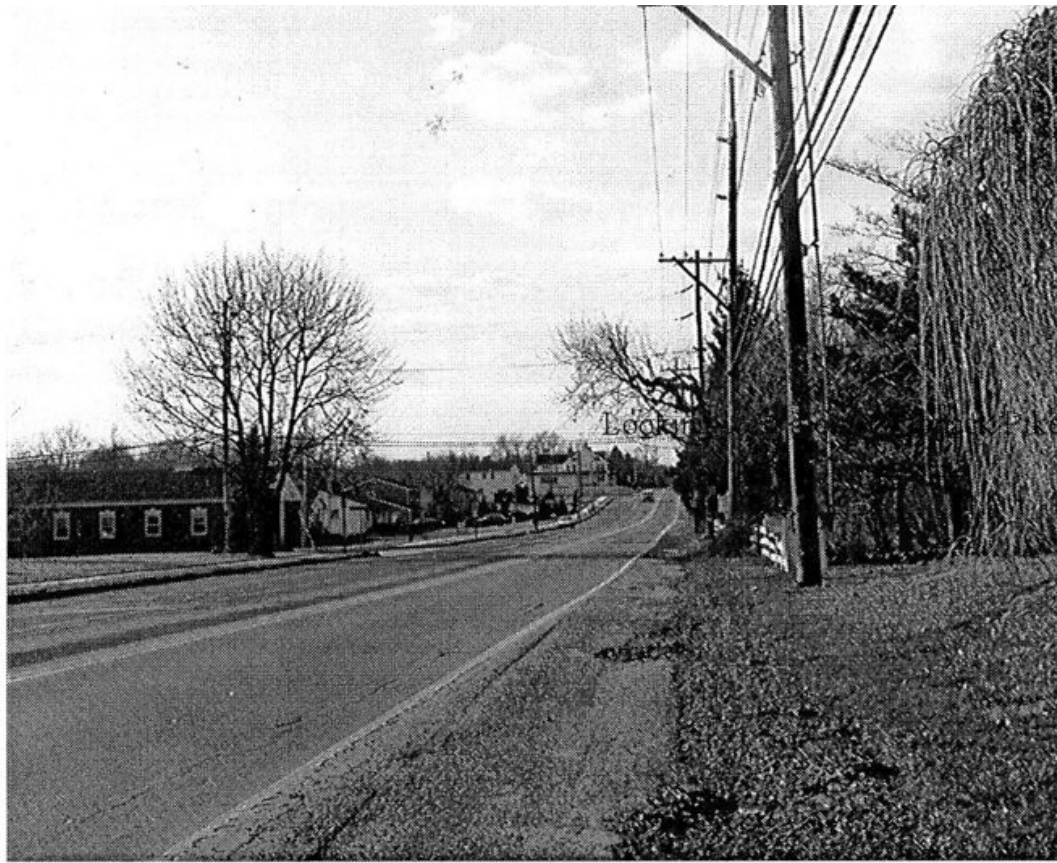
On Oil Mill Run (now called Prophecy Creek) at Rex's Bridge where Skippack Pike crosses the creek between Broad Axe and Blue Bell, American cavalry under General Pulaski skirmished briefly with pursuing British dragoons (cavalry) to attempt to halt their advance after the fleeing army. After this skirmish, the British horsemen continued their pursuit until they finally turned-back at "Nolan's Hill" (now where Cathcart Road intersects Skippack Pike).

The Continental Army retreated all the way back to their former camp at Pennypacker's Mill in Schwenksville.



Prophecy Creek

This creek was called "Oil Mill Run" in 1777, a skirmish took place here on October 4, 1777 between British Dragoons chasing the retreating Continental Army and Pulaski's Cavalry screening the retreat.



Looking west along Skippack Pike from Blue Bell toward Nolan's Hill - the furthest point of pursuit by British Dragoons against the American troops following the Battle of Germantown on October 4, 1777.



Looking NW along Skippack Pike toward Prophecy Creek



Gen. George Washington

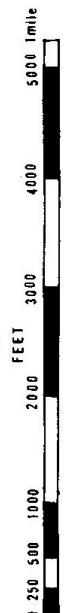
On October 6, 1777 General Washington, from his headquarters at Pennypacker Mill (Schwenksville), wrote the following note to British General Sir William Howe in Philadelphia: "General Washington's compliments to General Howe. He does himself the pleasure to return to him a dog (reportedly an English bull), which accidently fell into his hands, and by the inscription on the collar, appears to belong to General Howe." Apparently a letter of thanks was returned to Washington from Howe.

On October 8, the army moved up Forty-foot road to the vicinity of Kulpsville. On October 12, General Varnum arrived from Peekskill, New York, with five State of Virginia regiments and 1,200 men from Pennsylvania. Four days later, on October 16, the reinforced army moved down Forty-foot road to Skippack Pike, east through the town-of Skippack to its former camp of October 3 on Methacton Hill in Worcester Township, just northwest of the Whitpain Township line. Here the still disheartened troops heard news that boosted their morale - news of the American victory over Burgoyne at Saratoga, New York.

A celebration called a "Feu de joie" was held on Washington's order. This standard military celebration of that time consisted of having all the troops line-up along a road and fire their weapons in sequence down the line.

On October 20, 1777, Washington moved the army into camp in Whitpain Township at "Camp Morris," with his headquarters at "Dawesfield," the home of James Morris whose father-in-law was Abraham Dawes, Jr. This house is not only still standing but is still owned by descendants of Mr. Dawes who built it (See section in this book on "Dawesfield").

This original, principal campsite consisted of James Morris' 350-400 acre farm, but when reinforcements arrived from General Gates victorious Northern Army an adjacent property, Gregar's farm, of about 300 acres was added. This meant that the camp stretched from what is now the Blue Bell-Pennlyn Pike on the northwest to Butler Pike on the southeast, and from Skippack Pike on the southwest to Morris Road and the Wissahickon Creek on the northeast.



The following units and commanders were probably in or near Camp Morris:

Knox's Regiment of Artillery
Webb's Regiment
Maryland Militia Regiment
Smallwood's Brigade
The Second Brigade
Wayne's Brigade
The Second Pennsylvania Brigade
Learned's Brigade
Weedon's Brigade

Muhlenburg's Brigade
Maxwell's Brigade
Conway's Brigade
Woodford's Brigade
Scott's Brigade
Huntington's Brigade
Varnum's Brigade
Sumner's Regiment
Major Generals Sullivan and
Alexander (Lord Stirling) with their men
as well as the Marquis de Lafayette.

Morgan's Rifle Corp arrived from the north with only 175 effectives out of an initial force of 500. This Corp was later brought to full strength by taking five men from each infantry musket company and rearming them with rifles. (Some sources say that this corp arrived later, after the army had moved to Whitemarsh.)

On October 29, the British estimated that Washington's army then consisted of 8,313 regulars (Continental or state troops), 2,717 militia north of the Schuylkill River, plus Colonel Potter's 500 militia south of the river, for a grand total of 11,530 officers and men.

Some of the commanding officers in the First Brigade of General Wayne's Division were First Regiment, Colonel James Chambers commanding; Second Regiment Major Henry Miller; Fourth Regiment, Captain John Patterson; Fifth Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel William Butler; Seventh Regiment, Colonel Fra Johnston; Eighth Regiment, Major Samuel May; Tenth Regiment, Colonel Daniel Brodhead; Eleventh Regiment, Colonel Richard Humpton; and State of Pennsylvania Regiment, Colonel Walter Stewart. (See section later in this chapter about Walter Stewart.) The First Brigade commander was Colonel Thomas Hartley. On November 1, 1777, General Wayne's Division had a total strength of 1,708 officers and men plus fifty-seven prisoners.



British Gen. Cornwallis

Cornwallis and 3,000 "redcoats." Unfortunately, the wily Cornwallis did the job at night and the raiding force was too late; however, they did collect a sizeable "booty" in cattle and horses during the operation.

Pulaski's cavalry consisted of Bland's, Baylor's, Sheldon's and Moylan's dragoon regiments.

While at Camp Morris, General McDougal was sent with General Greene's and Colonel Potter's troops from "other areas," a total force of 4,000, to attempt a raid at Gray's Ferry where British supply ships were unloaded by General

At Washington's headquarters in Dawesfield, the Marquis de Lafayette slept in the entrance hallway on the first floor because the wound he had received in the leg at the Battle of Brandywine had not healed sufficiently to permit him to climb stairs. Whitpain Township had a reputation for fine horses and the army began appropriating them until the residents complained to General Washington. He then issued the following order on October 24: "Henceforth no horses shall be impressed by any member for the army without an order from the Quarter Master General, one of his deputies or assistants, or a special order from the Commander-in-Chief."

At his own request General Anthony Wayne was court-martialed at Dawsfield for his responsibility in the so-called "Paoli Massacre." General Sullivan was the presiding officer with the following officers hearing the evidence . . . Generals, Muhlenburg, Weedon, Conway, and Huntington; Colonels Stephens, Dayton, Stewart, McClennachen, Bradley, Davis, DeHart, and Thackston. The charges against General Wayne were ... "that he had timely notice of the enemy's intention to attack the troops under his command on the night of the 20th (of September, 1777 at the so-called "Paoli Massacre") and notwithstanding that intelligence, neglected making a disposition until it was too late, either to annoy the enemy, or make a retreat without the utmost danger and confusion." The trial required four days with the following result: "The court having fully considered the charge against Brigadier General Wayne and evidence produced to them, are unanimously of the

opinion that General Wayne is not guilty of the charge exhibited against him, but that he, on the night of the 20th ultimo (i.e. of Sept. last) did everything that could be expected from an active, brave and vigilant officer under the orders he then had. The court do acquit him with the highest honors. The Commander-in-Chief approves the sentence."

Other officers tried at Camp Morris were:

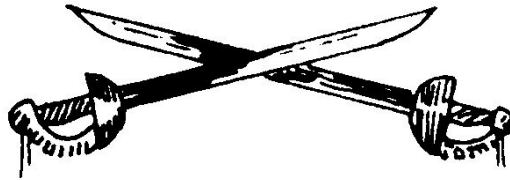
- Major General Adam Stephens was charged and found guilty of intoxication and lack of judgement during the Battle of Germantown — he was dismissed from the service and his command was given to the Marquis de Lafayette. (This was Lafayette's first field command with the American Army.)
- Lieutenant Nathan Ferris of Colonel Swift's Regiment was charged with being drunk and incapable of doing his duty at Germantown. He was found guilty and cashiered.
- Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Fish of Colonel Durkies' Regiment was charged with leaving the regiment and platoon to which he belonged on the march to Germantown and also "with being much disguised with liquor." He was acquitted of the first charge, but found guilty of the second. He was sentenced to be reprimanded by the Brigadier in the presence of the other officers of the Brigade.
- Lieutenant John Markhan was charged: "lost his head badly at -Chew House' while in command of the 8th Virginia Regiment." He was found guilty of leaving his regiment in time of action and also with delay when ordered to support the advanced guard. He was cashiered from the service.
- Captain McCormick of the 13th Virginia Regiment was charged with "laying down in time of action and behaving in a cowardly and unofficer-like manner." He was acquitted with honor.
- Lieutenant Thomas Moore was charged with "encouraging his men to breed mutiny and otherwise behaving in a manner unbecoming the character of a gentleman and officer." He was acquitted.
- Lieutenant Ambrose Crane of the 5th Virginia Regiment was charged with "disobedience of orders and breaking his arrest." He was acquitted.
- General William Maxwell was court-martialed with General Greene presiding. Charged by Lieutenant Colonel Heath, a fellow-officer, as follows: "Maxwell was in liquor while commanding the Light Corp to such an extent as to disqualify him in some measure from doing his duty, and once or twice besides, his spirits were a little elevated by spiritous liquors." He was acquitted.



Marquis de Lafayette

Common soldiers were also tried . . . Thomas Roach, matross (the common soldier of the artillery, a rank no longer in use) in Colonel John Crane's Company of Artillery was charged and found guilty of "desertion and an attempt to go over to the enemy." He was sentenced to death within twenty-four hours, but this was postponed and he was eventually pardoned by Washington and returned to his unit for duty. On October 31, Archer Henley, William Patterson and Judah Gudley were convicted of stealing and, as punishment, were made to run a gauntlet between two rows of mounted cavalrymen (100 on each side) who smote them with the flat of their swords ... at the Artillery Park of Camp Morris.

Also at this camp. Brigadier Generals Robert Howe and Alexander McDougal were both promoted to the rank of Major General,

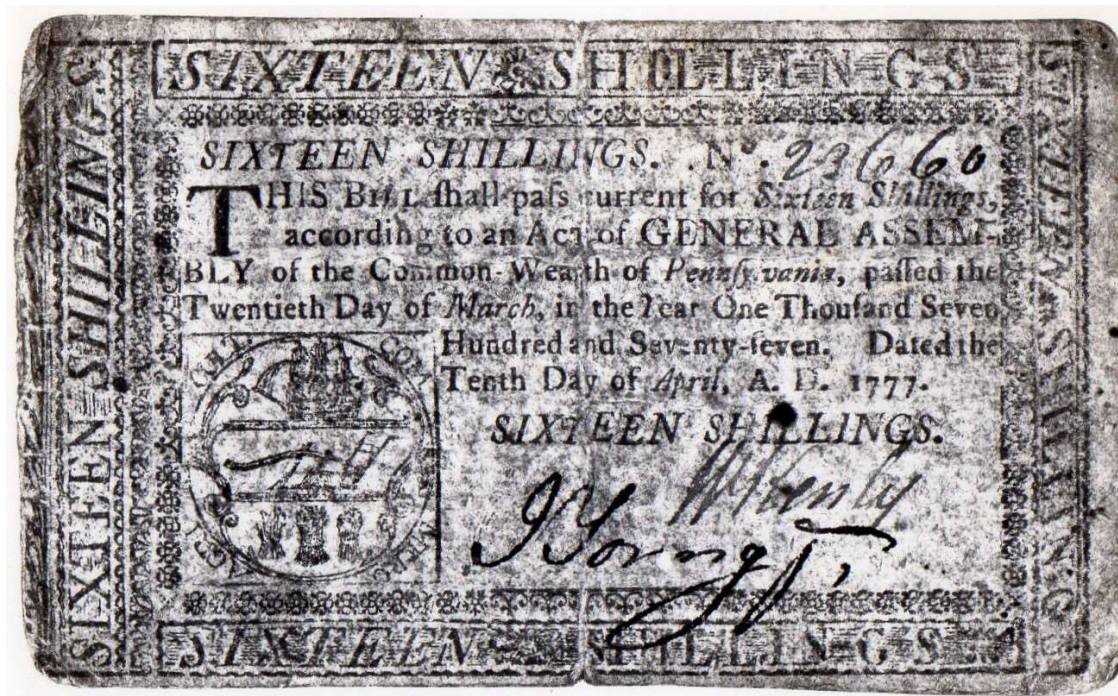


On October 30, General Wayne wrote to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania requesting that they "do every means in our power to increase recruiting of service in our state." He suggested the institution of drafts for needed manpower and further requested uniforms and blankets for his own troops, as well as the other Pennsylvania troops in the army.

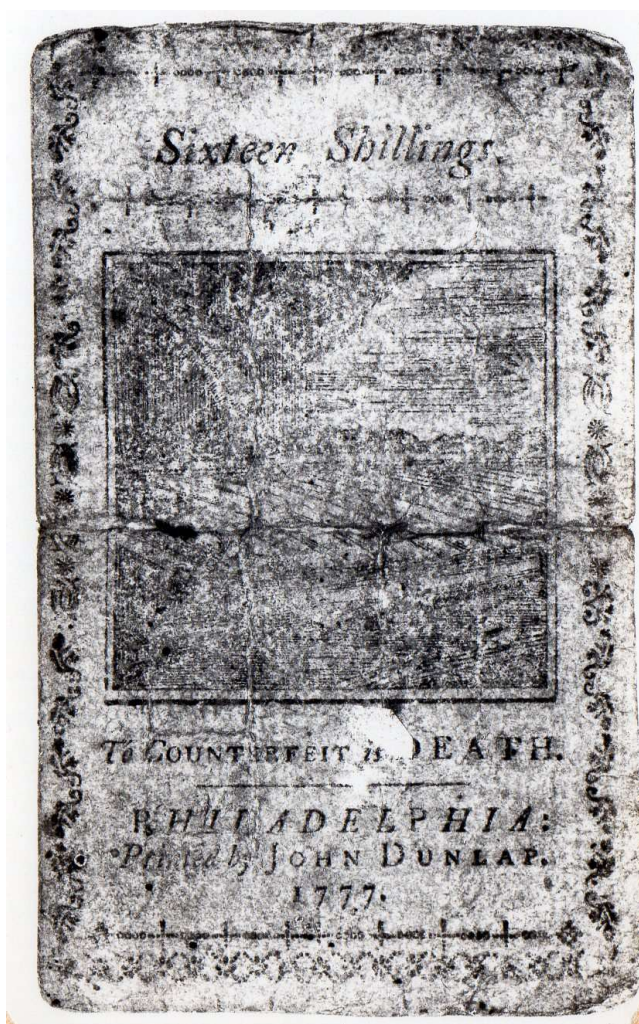
On October 21, 1777, a council of war was held at "Dawesfield." General Varnum's Brigade (or at least half of it) had been sent to reinforce Fort Mercer in New Jersey. This council was to decide "if it will be prudent to attempt a general attack to dislodge the enemy from Philadelphia and, if it is and we are unsuccessful, where shall we retreat to?" The council decided that an attack would be unwise, but that the army should place itself in a strong defensive position in order to watch General William Howe in Philadelphia and to harass his outposts and supply lines whenever possible.

While at Camp Morris, General Washington was concerned about Fort Mercer at Red Bank, New Jersey, and Fort Mifflin on Mud Island in the Delaware River which were under assault by the British. Washington wrote to General Newcomb of the New Jersey militia telling him of the dispatch of half of General Varnum's Brigade (614 officers and men) to reinforce the Fort Mercer garrison. Hessian Colonel Carl Emil Ulrich Von Donop with his brigade of 1,228 officers and men attempted to take this fort from the land side on October 22, 1777. Von Donop was severely defeated losing at least half of his brigade including most senior officers and Von Donop, himself, who was hit by thirteen musket balls. Colonel Von Wurmb of the Hessian Jaeger Corp became commander of this depleted brigade after this action.

Two British warships which came upriver to support this assault with their cannon fire ran aground, were set afire and exploded on October 23. The roar of this explosion is said to have been heard in Germantown many miles away. Despite this impressive American victory, both Fort Mercer and Fort Mifflin eventually fell to the British a month later, clearing the way for unimpeded British shipping to their garrison in Philadelphia.



Front of Commonwealth of Pennsylvania currency issued in 1777 with value 16 shillings. Not to be confused with less valuable Continental currency



Back of Commonwealth of Pennsylvania currency

There was apparently some ill-feeling between General Pulaski's Polish officers and the American soldiers while they were at Camp Morris, because a fist fight developed between these two factions.

Colonel Thomas Hartley, Commander of the First Pennsylvania Brigade under General Wayne, wrote during this time that "a lethargy seems to prevail among the people and if there was a true spirit of liberty in this state (Pennsylvania), the army under Howe (in Philadelphia) would be in an even more dangerous position than Burgoyne (General Burgoyne, British Commander defeated by the Americans at Saratoga, New York on October 14, 1777) ever was."



*Gen. Casimir Pulaski
Chief of the Continental
Army*

James Morris' primary interest was in farming his 350-400 acre "plantation" The Revolutionary War partially altered his plans for his chosen vocation. When the Army was camped on his property and General Washington was using his home (Dawesfield) as his headquarters, for two weeks in late October of 1777, it was cold and rainy for most of the time. This imposed a great discomfort on the troops there, particularly since they were not well supplied with boots, warm uniforms, blankets or tents. General Weedon's Virginia troops, used to a somewhat warmer climate, suffered perhaps more than most. They thought also that this camp might become their winter quarters, so they began to cut timber on the Morris property to build huts. Some accounts say that all the trees then on this land, were cut down. However, before Weedon's men could build their huts, the army was moved on to "Whitemarsh" and the cut timber was left behind. James Morris could not let the wood go to waste and used the timber to build a grist mill (which was completed in 1778) on his property. After his death his widow sold this mill, along with about fifteen acres of ground, to Adam Werstner in 1796. The mill was on Morris Road where Prophecy Creek crosses it, and was operated until 1877, just 100 years after Weedon's men had cut its original timbers.

Prophecy Creek was called Oil Mill Run in Revolutionary times, undoubtedly because it had an oil mill on its banks. Montgomery County had quite a few oil mills at this time to grind flax seed and produce this useful byproduct of linen making. Flax was grown extensively because it served as the mainstay for cloth, particularly in hot weather Cotton was not imported into the North until about 1850, when it quickly supplanted linen because it was cheap, easy to use, and did not require valuable farmland to produce. The oil mills went out of existence at this same time.

On November 2, 1777, the Continental Army moved closer to General Howe in Philadelphia by occupying a strong position in Whitemarsh (Wide Marsh) Township directly northeast of Whitemarsh. Washington, while at Camp Morris, had sent his Chief of Engineers, French Chevalier Louis Du Portail, ahead to scout and begin fortifying this position. It consisted of three adjacent hills and a ridge line extending from one of them. The first was



Chevalier Louis de Portail

Militia Hill with the then wide Wissahickon Creek* at its base; next came Fort Hill and then Camp Hill with Sandy Run at their bases. The ridge line extended northeastward

* Rivers, streams, creeks, and marshes at this time contained more water than they do today when industry and a greater number of people divert their waters. There may also have been some climatic changes which have occurred naturally, or as a result of man's excessive building, which have reduced rainfalls.

from Camp Hill and paralleled Edge Hill ridge about one mile eastward. This was an extremely strong position which Colonel Du Portail fortified with skill and genius. The Army marched out of Camp Morris and Whitpain on November 2, going down both Skippack and Morris roads into Whitemarsh. The Order of November 1, 1777, stated: "The army to march tomorrow at ten A.M. with all baggage, each division is to open a road into the nearest and best main road leading into the country (Whitemarsh) by which wagons and troops may move with the greatest ease and dispatch." General Sullivan led his division over Morris Road; General Washington led the rest of the Army including General Greene's troops. General Maxwell, General Muhlenberg and his Pennsylvania Germans, and Generals Knox, Scott, Potter, Conway, Smallwood, Varnum, Huntingdon, Woodford, Wayne, Weedon, and Alexander (Lord Stirling) down Skippack Road.

More troops joined Washington from the Army which had defeated Burgoyne at Saratoga. The Emlen House along the banks of Sandy Run was chosen as the Army's headquarters (now owned by Mr. Edward Pizek, President of Mrs. Paul's Kitchens).

Early in December, intelligence began to reach Washington that Howe was preparing to move against him. The story of Lydia Darragh's courageous trip from Philadelphia to the Rising Sun Tavern in the Northeast, where she repeated the plan she had overheard the British talking about in her home to an American officer who rushed it on to Washington, is probably true. At any rate, Washington was ready when Howe moved on December 5. The British first advanced to St. Thomas' Episcopal Church at the intersection of Skippack Road and Bethlehem Pike. A skirmish on this day, near Church Road, resulted in the death of Pennsylvania General Irvine, who was greatly mourned by the Army. Howe is said to have studied Washington's positions with his spy glass from the steeple of the Church on top of a small hill there, lobbed a few cannon balls toward the Three hills, and withdrawn to Chestnut Hill.

The next day he did nothing, but on December 7, Howe moved his army via Washington Lane and York Road to Abington in an attempt to outflank Washington's left. However, this was the ridge line extension from Camp Hill and the Continentals moved into prepared fortifications along this line, then sent their left flanking force consisting of Colonel Gist's Regiment (some accounts indicate that this was, instead. Colonel Potter's unit) of musket-armed infantry and Colonel Daniel Morgan's recently reinforced Corp of Riflemen to the woods on top of the Edge Hill ridge, a mile forward of the main American line. Howe attempted to send his flanking force along Susquehanna Road late in the afternoon, but Morgan's rifles, supported by Gist's muskets and bayonets, soon stopped them and the British retreated to York Road at dusk. The following day, Sunday, December 8, 1777, Howe withdrew to Philadelphia - he was afraid of another Bunker Hill or worse, against such a well-entrenched army of virtually equal strength. The attack on Edge Hill was made by Colonel Von Wurmb, General Grey (of Paoli fame), and General Grant leading the British and Hessian Grenadiers. English intelligence at this time estimated Washington's forces at 11,200 men with 52 guns.

The British Army facing Washington at Edge Hill consisted of:

British Light Infantry

British Grenadiers (assault troops)

Hessian Grenadiers Commanded by General Cornwallis

Fourth English Brigade

Two light twelve pound guns and two howitzers

English Guards Brigade Commanded by General Von Knyphausen

First English Brigade

Seventh and twenty-sixth Regiments

Two light twelve pound guns

Hessian Lieb Regiment

Von Donop's Regiment Commanded by General Grant

One officer and twenty horse of the seventeenth Regiment of Dragoons

The Rear Guard

Third English Brigade

Hessian Jaegar Corp Commanded by General Grey

Queen's Rangers

The Continental Army advanced west to Broad Axe, then turned left toward Matson's Ford on December 11, 1777 as part of their march to Valley Forge.



Broad Axe Tavern in 1976 at Skippack Pike and Butler Pike looking NW. The Continental Army advanced to here, then turned left toward Matson's Ford on Dec. 11, 1777 as part of their march to Valley Forge.

It was obvious to all (and especially the French) observers that Howe had been beaten without a full engagement.

Thus, the often overlooked "Battle of Edge Hill" defeat of Howe, coupled with Burgoyne's defeat in New York, undoubtedly contributed greatly to the French decision to ally their nation with the fledgling American Republic. This good news was received by Washington at Valley Forge just two months later in February of 1778. It was obvious, also, that Howe was not going to sally forth again that winter from his snug quarters in Philadelphia and Washington had to decide quickly where his own army was to winter.

This decision was still being debated on December 11, 1777 when the army moved from its Whitemarsh fortifications to Skippack Road and on to Broad Axe Village, Whitpain, then along the township's northeastern border on what is now Butler Pike, to Matson's Ford (Conshohocken).

In the meantime, Colonel Potter with his Pennsylvania Militia Regiment was astride Gulf Road south of the Schuylkill River when on this same day, the head of a British column under Cornwallis, out on a foraging expedition, appeared on the crest of the next hill. Potter fought an astute and highly successful delaying action as he moved backward from one hill to the next on Gulf Road. But Cornwallis' 3,000 men and cannon were too much for his much smaller unit and eventually, at Ithan Road, the remnants of his gallant force were routed, with Potter barely escaping the pursuing British Dragoons. He learned later, as he got to Matson's Ford, that Sullivan's entire division was across the river and only a few miles distant on Matson's Ford Road when they heard the action and promptly turned-around and recrossed the ford. Potter was most upset at what he considered to be Sullivan's cowardice. It was explained to him that Washington had ordered Sullivan to withdraw immediately if he came upon any opposition so that the army would not be caught divided by the river in the face of a possible strong enemy force.

The army then moved further westward to Swede's Ford (Norristown) where they camped for the night, crossing on December 12 and moving to the Gulf Mills Camp. The exact



Baron Frederick von Steuben

area of the winter camp was still undecided. Finally, the army moved upriver to Valley Forge for the duration of that miserable, gallant ordeal from which there emerged a different army. Hardened by adversity and strengthened by the discipline of Baron Von Steuben, they became virtual professionals ... the match of any army extant at that time.

Finally, on June 18, 1778, when spring mercifully alleviated their suffering and General Howe left his gay winter partying in Philadelphia to cross into New Jersey, the Continental Army left Valley Forge via Sullivans Bridge (a pontoon bridge of

wagons and boards) and Fatland's Ford in pursuit of their foe with new confidence and spirit. They trod again through Whitpain Township for the last time, up the Swede's Ford Road (now Route 202) into Gwynedd, Bucks County and New Jersey for their next encounter at Monmouth.

Colonel Walter Stewart

A brief history of one of the officers who presided at the court-martial of Anthony Wayne is interesting to relate because a letter he wrote to President Wharton of the Pennsylvania Assembly on October 27, 1777 from "Camp Morris" still exists. Colonel Walter Stewart, Commanding Officer of the Pennsylvania Regiment of Foot, was born in County Derry, Ireland, in 1756. While at Camp Morris, his regiment was attached to Brigadier General George Weedon's Brigade of Virginia Troops which was, in turn, part of Major General Nathaniel Greene's Division. Colonel Stewart's regiment, along with the Tenth Virginia Regiment, had successfully formed the Rear Guard for the Continental Army in their retreat from the Battle of Brandywine to Chester and, the next day, from Chester to Philadelphia, fighting sharp and valiant delaying actions. The letter he wrote to President Wharton reflected his attitude toward his men and officers:

"I have been lucky enough to have received a good many recruits, which is the cause of my being able to keep (his regiment) so well up in numbers. Amongst the sick are twenty-two wounded, these I expect will in a short time be again able to join me, as I am informed their wounds are in general but slight.

I have been able as yet to engage but two hundred and seventy men to enlist for the War, rather than for the shorter terms of enlistment previously instituted, but expect to have a much larger number by the 1st of January. Indeed, should we get into winter quarters shortly I doubt not but I may engage the greater part, shall use every endeavor in my power to effect it as I must say they are as fine a set of men as in the Army. Am sorry to inform your Excellency, I was necessitated to have a few of the Officers broke for misconduct, the vacancy's, however, should not wish to have filled until winter, when probably I shall be able to get some young gentlemen of family and reputation to join me, as I would much rather go into the field half-officered than take people who were not well known, and whose principles could not be depended upon."

At Whitemarsh Camp on November 13, 1777, Stewart's Regiment was transferred from the State of Pennsylvania to the Continental Army and designated as the Thirteenth Pennsylvania Regiment.

Despite Stewart's letter quoted above, at Valley Forge, his regiment lost 300 men when their enlistments expired on December 31, 1777.

Colonel Stewart was subsequently wounded very severely at the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey on June 28, 1778, where he was regarded as a hero of this action. He recovered to take command of a combination of understrength Pennsylvania regiments which were then brigaded with Wayne's First Pennsylvania Brigade. He married during the War and afterward settled in Philadelphia where his career was distinguished by various high offices. Unfortunately, he died at the age of 40, leaving a widow and many children. (His first-born son had George Washington as his Godfather.)

Military Organizations and Units in 1777

In the American Army, the Table of Organization was constantly undergoing changes during the war. In late 1776 and in 1777, it was basically as follows:

- Company - Four officers with a captain as commander, eight non-commissioned officers, and sixty-eight privates for a total of eighty officers and men.
- Regiment - There were supposed to be eight companies and one staff unit consisting of six officers, including the colonel or major in command, with four high-ranking non-commissioned officers for a theoretical total of 650 officers and men in each regiment. In January, 1778, the Continental Army organization was changed again to nine companies for each infantry regiment, with eight as regular musket companies plus one light infantry company carrying rifles, but each company's strength was reduced to sixty-four officers and men which with the regimental staff totaled 585 in each regiment.
- Brigade - Two or more regiments made up a brigade commanded by a Brigadier General.
- Division - Two or more brigades constituted a division commanded by a Major General.
- Battalion - The term "battalion" was used interchangeably with "regiment," but it often referred to a unit of less than the standard number of companies.

There was no system of replacement so that when regimental strengths became too low due to casualties, sickness, enlistment expirations or desertions, the regiments were combined to form new regiments.

A regiment of cavalry was supposed to contain six troops (companies in infantry vernacular) and staff for an approximate total of 270 officers and men. In February, 1778, there were four regiments of dragoons (cavalry) in the American Army for a total of 475 officers and men:

- Sheldon's (the Second) with 138 officers and men.
- Moylan's (the Fourth) with 108 officers and men.
- Bland's (the First Virginia) with 118 officers and men.
- Baylor's (the Third) with 111 Officers and men.

These regiments were always short of horses so that some of the men were invariably on foot. Later these units were formed into "legions" with staff plus four troops mounted and two troops on foot. This was partly due to the lack of good horses as cited previously. General Casimir Pulaski of Poland was the overall commander of the American cavalry.

Colonel Henry Knox was the Commander-in-Chief of the American Artillery which consisted of one regiment containing ten companies of approximately five guns per company: There were forty-eight officers, fifty-nine non-commissioned officers, one

hundred and nineteen artillery men and two hundred and fifty-seven matrosses for a total of 483 officers and men. The artillery never was used as a unit but fought instead as individual companies in support of various other units.

Rifle companies were designated as "light infantry" and formed into corps of about 500 officers and men. After some bad earlier experiences in the war, when rifle units had been overwhelmed by enemy musket units using bayonets which a rifle at this time was not made to accommodate, a musket-bayonet unit was always assigned to fight with a rifle unit so that it could be protected from bayonet assaults. The most famous of these rifle corps was Daniel Morgan's made up of Western Virginians, Pennsylvanians and Marylanders.

The "Hessian" soldiers totaling 30,000 officers and men were allied with the British in the American Revolution. They came from the following principalities and districts:

- Brunswick
- Hesse-Cassel (15,000 men)
- Hesse-Hanau
- Waldeck
- Anspack-Bayreuth
- Anhalt-Zerbst

12,000 of these men never returned to their native lands; of these, 5,000 deserted and became American citizens.

In action in Pennsylvania during 1777 was Colonel (Count) Carl Emil Ulrich Von Donop and his brigade (1,228 officers and men) consisting of; The Prinz Carl Regiment, The Knyphausen Regiment, and The Landgraves Third Guards.

Count Von Donop was killed leading his brigade at the Battle of Red Bank, New Jersey on October 22, 1777. His command passed to Colonel Von Wurmb of the Hessian Jaeger Corp. The overall commander of Hessian troops in this theater was General Philipp Von Heister.

In the British Army, a regiment consisted of ten companies — eight line companies with muskets ("Brown Besses") and bayonets, one light infantry company lightly armed and equipped for fast movement to reconnoiter and one grenadier company used as assault or shock troops. The British also used troops of cavalry called "dragoons" and artillery with each division or wing of the army.

Both the American and British Armies were deployed in the conventional manner of their times with a center wing, a right wing, a left wing, and a reserve force all supported by cavalry and artillery. The standard method of attack by infantry armed with muskets was to advance en masse to within range and then to discharge all muskets at one time, on signal. If successful, this would be followed-up by a bayonet charge into the enemy lines. The cavalry would scout before battle and chase retreating enemy after battle. The artillery was used before the infantry to break down enemy fortifications with solid or explosive cannon balls or loaded with "grape shot" to fire directly into massed enemy troops. (Firing grape meant loading these smooth bore muzzle-loaders with all kinds of metal pieces and firing them like a modern shotgun with a scattering effect as the range increased.)

Whitpain People and Anecdotes

The Whitpain Militia

A Militia Company was organized in Whitpain Township in 1777. There may have been other men from the Township who fought in the Revolutionary War, but these men were at least available during the time when the Army was in this area and aggregated at least 92 officers and men:

- Captain Abraham Wentz (Commanding Officer)
- Sergeants - Jonathan Markee (Markle), Jacob Shoemaker and Andrew Dill
- (Dull or Doll)
- Clerk - Jonathan Rushong
- Privates - Jonathan Ambler, Peter Bisbing, George Berkheimer, George Bisbing, Abraham Bennett, Michael Bisbing, Adam Boyland, Conrad Boas (Booz), Jacob Boas, Henry Conrad, Philip Corndorfer, Samuel Coulson, Jonathan Davis, Malachi Davis, Samuel DeHaven, Jesse DeHaven, Moses DeHaven, David DeHaven, Jonathan DeHaven, Jonathan Davis, Benjamin Dickinson, Henry Dawson, Amos Ellis, Isaac Ellis, Jr., George Eldridge (Etris), Peter Fluck, Jonathan Fisher, George Fitzwater, Jonathan Greenawalt, William Hallowell, Joseph Hallowell, Michael Hoofacre, Abel Harmar, Elias Horning, Robert Knox, David Knox, John Lynn, Jonathan Later, James Morris (owner of Dawesfield), Jacob Martin, Isaac Martin, Richard Meigs, Leonard Matz, Morgan Morgan, Isaac McGlathery (guide to Maxwell's Brigade to Germantown), Jonathan Osborne, James Nettles, Jonathan Porter (owner of the Waggon Inn), Philip Paff (Puff), Jonathan Phipps, Joseph Paul, Ludwig Rhinebolt, Frederick Reemy, Joshua Richardson, Aquilla Roberts, Daniel Roberts, Job Roberts, Nicholas Rile, Edward Roberts, William Robinson, Peter Steringer, Henry Styer, Jonathan Styer, Stephen Styer, Jonathan Shay, Mathias Shoemaker, Jacob Slaughter, Nicholas Sisler, Christian Singer (Saiger), Henry Stitt (Still), Henry Shade, Conrad Stem, William Smith, Jacob Shoemaker, Morris Taylor, Ludwig Terewith, Robert Thomas, Thomas White, Jonathan White, Jacob Walter, William Williams, Jacob Yost, Baltzer Yetter and Christopher Zimmerman.

NOTE: From "Penna. Archives." Series six. Vol. i, page 902.

Joshua Richardson (Richards) owned what later became the farm of Henry Hoover. He was accused of harboring the refugee gang of Doans.

Jonathan Phipps lived in the Stephen Jones house opposite the toll gate at Boehm's Church.

Many of the names above are found on the Whitpain landowner's lists of 1734 and the 1785 list of taxables in Whitpain. Some of these surnames are still to be found in Whitpain Township on the roads that bear these names, in the phone directory, and in the old church cemeteries. By 1777 Whitpain was a well established community of farmers and small, home-type industries. The war, when it came to this prosperous and peaceable area,

was not very popular. Fences were broken down and used for firewood; horses and cattle were "appropriated" with worthless receipts, "money not worth a continental," given by the Army foragers if they were caught. Food and grains were taken, and in the late fall of

1777 with winter coming, this could be serious for a farm family dependent on their stored food and animal fodder to see them through the cold season. It was undoubtedly with a collective sigh of relief that the residents of Whitpain saw the last of this Army in December of '77 (except for one day, June 19, 1778, when it marched North along what is now DeKalb Pike in pursuit of Howe's Army as it crossed New Jersey for New York). Yet despite these hardships, most of the men in the township apparently belonged to this local militia unit, indicating a strong spirit in support of the American cause. Many of these people were from Germany, or their antecedents were, with a strong religious background and a hatred of war which had caused their initial removal to this new continent; and yet, in spite of all this, they seem to have been in general support of the Continental Army, despite its occasional excesses in the countryside.

The presence of this Army must have been pretty general throughout this whole area; a reading of Sally Wister's diary, written while she was at the Foulke Mansion, just across the line from Whitpain in Penllyn, indicates that there was a great coming and going of military units almost daily while the Army was in this vicinity. Various parties apparently were sent out all of the time on foraging, scouting, and other missions from the main camp site so that virtually every citizen of the region was affected by the Army's presence.

Andrew Knox's Door

Andrew Knox, Esq. lived on a farm in Whitpain Township in the southwestern part, just off of what is now Township Line Road, west of Swede Road. His nearest neighbor was Isaac McGlathery (the guide to Maxwell's Brigade at the Battle of Germantown). Squire Knox, having served as the Captain of a volunteer company, was selected by General Washington to prevent supplies from reaching the British Army in Philadelphia. Because of his activities on behalf of the American cause, a reward of 400 pounds was offered by the British for the capture of Captain Knox, dead or alive.

On the night of February 14, 1778 (some accounts say this event occurred in late January), Captain Knox successfully defended himself from an attack by five armed Tories who had been ordered to take him prisoner. During this assault, the Tories forced the front door of Squire Knox's house partially open with their bayonets and fired five bullets through the door at the good Squire.



The Tories who engaged in this attempt were Enoch Supplee, Robert Jones, John Stuthers, Abisha Wright, and William Thurlow. There had been a light snowfall and Stuthers was wounded. He was tracked to Thomas Livesey's cellar, in Plymouth Township where he was captured. Stuthers identified the other participants and was allowed to go free. Supplee and Jones escaped to the British lines below Barren Hill. Wright and Thurlow were captured by Isaac McGlathery, Henry Houpt, Abraham Weirers and Peter Sterigere.

The road from Plymouth to Knox's leads by the Ellis School House (in the "Y" between Swede Road and DeKalb Pike, occupied in 1976 by a small super market. In the front of it was a large Walnut tree where his captors hanged Thurlow when he refused to come along peaceably. Wright went along to the Knox house and was sent by Captain Knox to the Provost Marshal of the Continental Army. After court-martial proceedings, he was hanged from an Oak tree at Penn Square (a shopping center containing Genuardi's Market in 1976).

This door, that helped Captain Knox defend himself, so successfully, with its five bullet holes, is on exhibit in the Montgomery County Historical Society.

John Laurens, aide de camp to General Washington, wrote to his father from Valley Forge dated February 17, 1778:

"My Dear Father:

I must not omit informing you of a gallant defense made by a justice of the peace in Philadelphia County (on the other side of the Schuylkill), known by the appellation of Squire Knox. This gentleman's house was surrounded early in the morning some days ago by a party of traitors, lately distinguished by the title of royal refugees; he was in bed in a lower room, and upon their demanding admittance, was going to open to them, when his son, who was above, and perceiving from the window fixed bayonets, called to him to keep his door shut and warned him of danger. The villains in the meantime pressed against the door, the old man armed himself with his cutlass; and his son descended with a gun. The door was at length forced half open by one of the most enterprising; the father kept it in that position with his left hand, and employed his right in defending the passage. After some vigorous strokes, his cutlass broke; the bad condition of the son's fusil had prevented his firing until this moment. He was now prepared to salute the assailants, but the old man thinking all was lost by the failure of this weapon, called to him not to fire; upon farther examination, however, he says he found that by being shortened, it (the cutlass) was only better adapted to close quarters, and renewed the fight.

The villains fired seven shots through the door (the door actually shows only five bullet holes), one of which grazed the squire's knee, which was all the damage done. They then threw down their arms and took to their heels; they were pursued by the Knoxes and a party of militia, and one of them who was concealed in a cellar was taken.

The besetting of Mr. Knox's house is a matter of civil cognizance, but it appears that the prisoner has held correspondence with the enemy, and supplied them with provisions, and he will probably suffer death for those offences by sentence of court-martial.
Your most affectionate, John Laurens."

NOTE: Two Knoxes are listed as members of the Whitpain Militia Company of 1777, namely David and Robert, but not Andrew

who perhaps belonged to a state or other volunteer company.
Andrew Knox is also not on the list of land holders in 1734 but is on the list of taxables in 1785 so he may have moved into the township after 1734.

Boehm's Reformed Church, Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike, Blue Bell, the oldest church in the township and St. John's Lutheran Church, Skippack Pike, Belfry, as well as many private homes along the major township roads served as hospitals for the Continental Army's sick and wounded after the Battle of Germantown and later, when the army was in the area for two weeks of late October, 1777, before proceeding to Whitemarsh. In the nineteenth century, when walks were being laid out in the Boehm's Church cemetery adjoining the Church, the remains of Revolutionary War soldiers were found and removed to a common site which was marked with a headstone by the Valley Forge Chapter, D.A.R. on July 4, 1967.

An ad in the "Pennsylvania Packet" August 29, 1778 read:

"Thirty dollars reward, stolen from Camp Wippen, 20th of October, 1777, a bay horse, fourteen hands high, with a bald face, and is six years old. The reward will be paid by applying to Andrew Porter, Capt. of Artillery, or Stephen Porter, Worcester Township."

Skippack Road was opened to traffic in 1712. It was built at the instigation of Pennypacker who owned the mill in Schwenksville and Farmar who owned the mill at Fort Side to connect their mills in as straight a road as possible to accommodate the farmers of the area in bringing their grain to the two mills. This very straight way was used by Washington's Army at least four times during 1777, in both directions.

Whitpain Township along the Skippack Road as far west as Center Square had a reputation for spookiness during and after the time of the American Revolution. Much of this tradition probably stemmed from the heavy fogs and mists which shrouded the heavily timbered forests of oak that lined this roadway. Also, during the retreat from the Battle of Germantown, any wounded soldier who died on the march was unceremoniously buried on the spot, by the side of the road. An intersecting road now called Stenton where it begins in Whitpain Township was apparently, at one time, called "Clout" Road, an archaic reference to a way where the Devil walked.

There is a story that an eccentric old man named George Bisbing, a member of the Whitpain Militia of 1777 and listed as a farmer on the Whitpain roll of taxables in 1785, lived in a house at the 18th mile stone in Whitpain on the Skippack Road. He is said to have made a hearth in his house constructed of fifty flat tombstones from an abandoned nearby cemetery (perhaps the original burial ground of Boehm's Church which was on the Rev. Boehm's farm, on the southwest side of Cathcart Road, just north of Skippack Road. The History of Boehm's Church by Jones Ditwieler, mentions that only two gravestones of many were found on this site and that these two stones have subsequently disappeared. The family name on the two stones was Kress). The story goes on that the ghosts of those fifty dead would gather each night at George Bisbing's fireside.

The Super Patriot Pastor

The Rev. John H. Weikel (Wickle), Pastor (1775-1778) of both Boehm's Reformed Church on Blue Bell Road in Whitpain and Wentz's Reformed Church on Skippack Road in Worcester, was a very militant patriot. He preached fiery sermons against the Crown and British cabinet officials, urging his congregations to immediate action. One Sunday, he led his flock outside to where his horse was tethered, took out his pistol and began firing it close to the horse's ear.

"It's time," he cried to his congregation, "that peaceful farm horses are made ready to be used in battle. I cannot waste time when war is here teaching this animal to stand still while I shoot. When we are called upon to fight I hope my horse will be a soldier too!"

This tirade and eccentric behavior did not sit well with many of his parishioners; half of them demanded his dismissal. So great was this pressure, that he resigned but continued to live in the parsonage - firing his pistols from the windows near his horse's head from time-to-time.

One day, as Gen. Washington passed this parsonage, a fusillade of shots rang out. Fearing an ambush, Washington ordered the place surrounded by his staff and sent his aide to demand the sniper's surrender. Some of Rev. Weikle's loyal parishioners came forward at this time and explained his actions and his zealous loyalty to the American cause.

Sally Wister's Journal

Sally Wister was a sixteen year old Quaker lass, dispossessed from her home in Germantown to an Aunt's home in Penllyn because of the possible danger to her and the rest of the Wister family due to the British occupation of Philadelphia. The Wisters resided with their relatives, the Foulkes, from September, 1777 through June of 1778. During this time, Sally kept a journal intended for her friend Deborah Norris who was still in Philadelphia. Miss Norris later became Mrs. George Logan and did not get to read Sally's journal until about 1830, long after Sally had died, a spinster at the age of 43, in 1804.



Sally Wister as she may have looked based on her only known likeness, a silhouette.

During the encampment of the Continental Army in Whitpain Township, October 19 through November 2, 1777, Sally's journal recorded events as they affected her just across the Whitpain Township line in what is now Lower Gwynedd Township. Hannah Foulke, Sally's aunt, was a widow of two years; her son Jesse was running the 700 acre Foulke farm and grist mill. Jesse Foulke also had two younger, unmarried sisters, Pricilla, thirty-three, and Lydia, twenty-one who was Sally's special friend. Sally had four younger siblings - Betsy thirteen, Hannah ten, Susanna four, and John one and one-half years old. The Foulke Mansion was quite large and enabled the two families to live in the home, separately. In 1976, this home is still standing in Penllyn, unoccupied and in a deplorable state of repair; the mill has long since disappeared.

Sally used the Quaker designation for days of the week: "First Day" for Sunday, "Second Day", Monday, etc. This has been changed to present usage for clarity. Here follow the accounts given by Sally Wister in her journal during the time of the Whitpain encampment.

- Monday, October 19, 1777

"Now for new and uncommon scenes. As I was lying in bed, and ruminating on past and present events, and thinking how happy I shou'd be if I cou'd see you, Liddy came running into the room and said there was the greatest drumming, fifing and rattling of waggons that ever she had heard. What to make of this we were at a loss. We dressed and downstairs in a hurry. Our wonder ceas'd.

"The British had left Germantown, and our Army was marching to take possession. It was the general opinion that they wou'd evacuate the Capital. Sister Betsy and myself, and George Ernlén went about half a mile from home, where we cou'd see the army pass (down Morris Road). Thee will stare at my going, but no impropriety in my opine, or I wou'd not have gone. We made no great stay, but return'd with excellent appetite for our breakfast.

"Several officers call'd to get some refreshments, but none of consequence till the afternoon. Cousin Prissa and myself were sitting at the door; I in a green skirt, dark short gown, etc. Two genteel men of the military order rode up to the door; 'Your servant, ladies,' etc.; ask'd if they cou'd have quarters for Gen, Smallwood. Aunt Foulke thought she cou'd accomodate them as well as most of her neighbors, said they cou'd. One of the officers dismounted, and wrote •SMALLWOOD'S QUARTERS' over the door, which secured us from straggling soldiers. After this he mounted his steed and rode away.



*Gen. William Smallwood
of Maryland*

"When we were alone our dress and lips were put in order for conquest, and the hopes of adventure gave brightness to each before passive countenance.

"Thee must be told of a Dr. Gould (Doctor David Gould of Virginia, Hospital Surgeon in the Continental Army.) who, by accident, had made an acquaintance with my father, - a sensible, conversible man, a Carolinian, - and had come to bid us adieu on his going to that state. Daddy had prevailed upon him to stay a day or two with us.

"In the evening his Generalship came with six attendants, which compos'd his family, a large guard of soldiers, a number of horses and baggage-waggons. The yard and house were in confusion, and glitter'd with military equipments.

"Gould was intimate with Smallwood, and had gone into Jesse's to see him. While he was there, there was great running up and down stairs, so I had an opportunity of seeing and being seen, the former the most agreeable, to be sure. One person, in particular, attracted my notice. He appear'd cross and reserv'd; but thee shall see how agreeably disappointed I was.

"Dr. Gould usher'd the gentlemen into our parlour, and introduced them, Gen'l Smallwood, Capt, Furnwal, Major Stodard, Mr. Prig, Capt. Finley (Captain Ebenezer Finley of the Maryland Artillery), and Mr. Clagan (Horatis Clagett, Ensign of the Third Battalion, Maryland Flying Camp), Col. Wood, and Col. Line. These last two did not come with the Gen'l. They are Virginians, and both indispos'd. The Gen'l. and suite are Marylanders.

"Be assur'd I did not stay long with so many men, but secur'd a good retreat, heart safe, so far. Some sup'd with us, others at Jesse's. They retired about ten, in good order.

"How new is our situation. I feel in good spirits, though surrounded by an army, the house full of officers, very peaceable sort of men though. They eat like other

folks, talk like them, and behave themselves with elegance; so I will not be afraid of them, that I won't.

"Adieu. I am going to my chambers to dream, I suppose, of bayonets and swords, sashes, guns, and epaulets."

Wednesday Morn, October 20

"I dare say thee impatient to know my sentiments of the officers; so, while Soninus embraces them, and the house is still, take their characters according to their rank.

"The General is tall, portly, well made; a truly martial air, the behaviour and manner of a gentleman, a good understanding, and great humanity of disposition constitute the character of Smallwood.

"Col. Wood (James Wood, born 1750, son of Colonel James Wood, Founder of Winchester, Virginia) from what we hear of him and what we see, is one of the most amiable of men; tall and genteel, an agreeable countenance and deportment. These lines will more fully characterize him; How skil'd he is in each obliging art. The wildest manners and the bravest heart.

"The cause he is fighting for alone tears him from the society of an amiable wife and engaging daughter; with tears in his eyes he often mentions the sweets of domestic life.

"Col. Line (George Lyne of King and Queen County, Virginia - Virginia Assemblyman in 1775) is not married; so let me not be too warm in his praise, lest you suspect. He is monstrous tall and brown, but has a certain something in his face and conversation very agreeable, he entertains the highest notions of honour, is sensible and humane, and a brave officer; he is only 7 & 20 years old, but, by a long indisposition and constant fatigue, looks vastly older, and almost worn to a skeleton, but very lively and talkative.

"Capt. Furnival (Alexander Furnival of Baltimore, Maryland) I need not say more of him than that he has, excepting one or two, the handsomest face I ever saw, a very fine person; fine light hair and a great deal of it, adds to the beauty of his face.

"Well, here comes the glory, the Major, so bashful, so famous, etc. He should come before the Captain, but never mind, I at first thought the Major cross and proud, but I was mistaken. He is about 19, nephew to the General, and acts as Major of brigade to him; he cannot be extol'd for the graces of person, but for those of the mind he may justly be celebrated; he is large in his person, manly, and an engaging countenance and address (William Truman Stoddert, born 1759).

"Finley is wretched ugly, but he went away last night so shall not particularize him.

"Nothing of any moment today; no acquaintance with the officers. Col. Wood and Line and Gould din'd with us. I was dressed in my chintz, and look'd smarter than night before."

Wednesday, October 21st

"I just now met the Major very reserv'd; nothing but 'Good morning,' or 'Your servant. Madam;' but Furnival is most agreeable; he chats every opportunity; but luckily has a wife!

"I have heard strange things of the Major, Worth a fortune of thirty thousand pounds, independent of anybody; the Major, moreover, is vastly bashful; so much so he can hardly look at the ladies. (Excuse me, good sir; I really thought you were not clever; if tis bashfulness only, we will drive that away)."

- Fifth day, sixth day and seventh day

"These days pass'd. (Thursday, Friday and Saturday). The Gen'l still here; the Major still bashful.

"Prepare to hear amazing things. The Gen'l was invited to dine, was engag'd but Col. Wood and Line, Maj. Stodard, and Dr. Edwards din'd with us.

"In the afternoon, Stodard, addressing himself to mamma,' Pray, Ma'am, do you know Miss Nancy Bond?' I told him of the amiable girl's death. This Major had been to Philad' College, (now the University of Pennsylvania).

"In the evening, I was diverting Johnny at the table, when he drew his chair to it, and began to play with the child. I ask'd him if he knew N. Bond. 'No, Ma'am but I have seen her very often.' One word brought on another, and we chatted the greatest part of the evening. He said he knew me directly he saw me. Told me exactly where we liv'd. (in Philadelphia). It rains now, so adieu."

- Monday Morning, Oct. 26

"A very Rainy morning, so like to prove. The officers in the house all day."

- Monday, afternoon.

"The General and officers drank tea with us, and stay'd part of the evening. After supper I went into aunt's where sat the Gen'l, Col. Line, and Major Stodard. So Liddy and I seated ourselves at the table in order to read the verse book.

"The Major was holding a candle for the Gen'l who was reading a newspaper. He look'd at us, turn'd away his eyes, look'd again, put the candlestick down, up he jump'd out of the door he went.

"Well, said I to Liddy, 'he will join us when he comes in. Presently he return'd, and seated himself on the table. Pray, ladies is there any songs in that book? Yes, many. Can't you fav' me with a sight of it? No, Major, tis a horrid book. Miss Sally, can't you sing? No.

"Thee may be sure I told the truth there. Liddy, saucy girl, told him I cou'd. He Beg'd and I dey'd for my voice is not much better then the voice of a raven. We talk'd and laugh'd for an hour. He is very clever, amiable and polite. He has the softest voice, never pc-onouces the R at all.

"I must tell thee, today arrive'd Col. Griest and Major Letherberry; the former smart widower, the latter a lawyer a sensible young fellow, and will never swing for want of tongue.

"Dr. Diggs came Second — day; a mightily disagreeable man. We were obliged to ask him to tea. He must needs prop himself between the Major and me, for which I did not thank him. After I had drunk tea, I jump'd from the table, and seated myself at the fire. The Major followed my example, drew his chair close to mine, and entertain'd me very agreeably.

"Oh Debby, I have a thousand things to tell thee. I shall give thee so droll an account of adventures that thee will smile. 'No occasion of that. Sally,' me thinks I hear thee say, 'for thee tells me every trifle.' But child, thee is mistaken, for I have not told thee half the civil things that are said of us sweet creatures at 'General Smallwood's Quarters.' I think I might have sent the gentlemen to their chambers. I made my adieus, and home I went."

- Tuesday, October 27

"A polite 'Good morning' from the M——, more sociable than ever. No wonder; a stoic could not resist such affable damsels as we are.

"We had again the pleasure of the Gen'l and suite at afternoon tea. He (the Gen'l, I mean) is most agreeable; so lively, so free, and chats so gaily, that I have quite an esteem for him. I must steel my heart. Capt. Furnival is gone to Baltimore, the residence of his belov'd wife.

"This eve came a person belonging to the Army, he is (how shall I describe him)? near seven foot high, thin and meagre, not a single personal charm, and very few mental ones. He fell violently in love with Liddy at first sight; the first discovered conquest that has been made since the arrival of the Gen'l.

"Come, shall we chat with Col. Giest? He's very pretty; a charming person; his eyes are exceptional; very stern; and he so rolls them about that mine always fall under them. He bears the character of a brave officer; another admirer of Liddy's, and she is of him.

"When will Sally's admirers appear? ah! that indeed. Why, Sally has not charms sufficient to pierce the heart of a soldier. But still I won't despair — Who know what mischief I yet may do?"

"Well, Debby, here's Dr. Edwards came again. Now we shall not want clack; for he has perpetual motion in his head, and if he was not so clever as he is, we shou'd get tired."

- Wednesday, October 28th

"Nothing material engag'd us to-day."

- Thursday, October 29th

"I walked into aunt's this evening. I met the Major. Well, thee will think I am writing his history; but not so. Pleased with the encounter, Liddy, Betsy, Stodard, and myself seated by the fire, chatted away an hour in lively and agreeable conversation. I can't pretend to write all he said, but he shone in every subject that we talk'd of."

Friday, October 30th

"Nothing of consequence."

Saturday, October 31st

"A most charming day. I walk'd to the door and recieved the salutation of the morn from Stodard and other officers. As often as I go to the door, so often have I seen the Major. We chat passingly, as, 'A fine day. Miss Sally.' 'Yes, very fine. Major.'"

Saturday night October 31st

"Another charming conversation with the young Marylander. He seem'd possessed of very amiable manners; sensible and agreeable. He has by his unexceptional deportment engag'd my esteem."

Sunday morn, November 1st

"Liddy, Betsy and a T. L., prisoner of this state, went to the mill. We made very free with some Continental flour. We powder'd white, to be sure. Home we came.

"Col. Wood was standing at a conversation with a young officer. He gave him a push forward, as much as to say, 'Observe what fine girls we have here.' For all I do not mention Wood as often as he deserves, it is not that we are not sociable; we are very much so, and he is often at our house, dines or drinks tea with us every day.

"Liddy and I had a kind of an adventure with him this morn. We were in his chambers, chatting about our little affairs, and no idea of being interrupted: we were standing up, each an arm on a chest of drawers; the door bang'd open! — Col. Wood was in the room; we started, the colour flew into our faces and crimson'd us over; the tears flew into my eyes. It was very silly; but his coming was so abrupt. He was between us and the door.

"Ladies, do not be scar'd I only want something from my port manteau; I beg you not to be disturbed.

"We ran by him like two partridges, into mamma's room, threw ourselves into chairs, and reproached each other for being so foolish as to blush and look so silly.

I was very much vex'd at myself and so was Liddy. The Col. laughed at us and it blew over.

"The Army had orders to march today; the regulars accordingly did. (This was the movement to Whitmarsh.) Gen'l Smallwood had the command of Militia at that time, and they being in the rear, were not to leave their encampment until

Second — day.

"Observe how militarish I talk. No wonder, when I am surrounded by people of that order.

"The Gen'l, Colonels Wood, Line, Giest, Crawford, Majors Stodard and Letherberry, din'd with us today. After dinner Liddy, Betsy, and the smart journalizer, put on their bonnets determined to take a walk.

"We left the house. I naturally look'd back; when behold, the two Majors seem'd debating whether to follow us or not. Liddy said, 'We shall have their attendance,' but I did not think so. They open'd the gate, and came fast after us. They overtook us about ten pole from home, and beg'd leave to attend us. No fear of refusal. 'They enquir'd where we were going. To neighbour Roberts's. We will introduce you to his daughters; you us to Gen'l Stevens.'

"The affair was concluded, and we shortened the way with lively conversation. Our intention of going to Roberts's was frustrated; the rain that has fallen lately had rais'd Wissahickon too high to attempt crossing it on foot. We alter'd the plan of our ramble, left the road, and walk'd near two miles thro' the woods.

"Mr. Letherberry, observing my locket, repeated with the energy of a comedian.

"On her white neck a sparkling cross she wore.

"That Jews might kiss or infidels adore.

"I repli'd my trinket bore no resemblance to a cross.

"Tis something better, Ma'am.

"Tis nonsense to pretend to recount all that was said; my memory is not so obliging; but it is sufficient that nothing happen'd d-uring our little excursion but what was very agreeable and entirely consistent with the strictest rules of politeness and decorum.

"I was vex'd a little at creasing my muslin petticoat. I had on my white whim, quite as nice as a First-day in town. We returned home safe.

"Smallwood, Wood, and Stodard drank tea with us, and spent the greatest part of the evening.

"I declare this Gen'l is very, very entertaining, so good natur'd, so good humor'd, yet so sensible; I wonder he is not married. Are there not ladies form'd to his taste?

"Some people, my dear, think there is no difference between good nature and good humour; but, according to my opinion, they differ widely. Good nature consists in a naturally amiable and even disposition, free from all peevishness and fretting. It is accompanied by a natural gracefulness, — a manner of doing and saying every-thing agreeably; in short, it steals the senses and captivates the heart. Good humour consists in being pleas'd, and who wou'd thank a person for being cheerful, if they had nothing to make them other ways. Good humour is a very agreeable companion for an afternoon; but give me good nature for life.

"Adieu."

NOTE: Sally Wister's dates here are two days wrong, and as the reader may perceive for himself, are inconsistent with those heretofore given, which were only one day wrong.

- Monday morning, November 1st

"To-day the Militia marches, and the Gen'l and officers leave us. Heigh Ho! I am very sorry; for when you have been with agreeable people, 'tis impossible not to feel regret when they bid you adieu, perhaps forever. When they leave us we shall be

immers'd in solitude.

"The Major looks a dull."

- Monday noon

"About two o'clock the Gen'l and Major come to bid us adieu. With daddy and mommy they shook hands very friendly; to us they bow'd politely.

"Our hearts were full. I thought Major was affected.

"Good-bye, Miss Sally.' ' Spoken very low, he walk'd hastily and mounted his horse. They promised to visit us soon.'

"We stood at the door to take a last look, all of us very sober.

"The Major turn'd his horse's head, and rode back, dismounted.

"I have forgot my pistols, pass'd us, and ran upstairs.

"He came swiftly back to us, as if wishing, through inclination, to stay; by duty compeli'd to go. He remounted his horse.

" 'Farewell, ladies, till I see you again, and canter'd away.

"We looked at him till the turn in the road hid him from our sight. 'Amiable Major,' 'Clever fellow,' 'Good young man,' was echo'd from one to the other. I wonder whether we shall ever see him again. He has our wishes for his safety.

"Well, here's Uncle Miles (Samuel Miles, Colonel in the Continental Army, made prisoner at the Battle of Long Island and later paroled to his farm in Spring Mill, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, married to Sally Wister's aunt). Heartily glad of that am I. His family are well, and at Reading."

- Monday Evening

"Jesse, who went with the Gen'l, return'd. I had by him a letter from my dear Polly Fishbourn. She is at George Emlen's. Headquarters is at their house. We had compliments from the Gen'l and Major. They are very well disposed of at Evan Meredith's, six miles from here. I wrote to Polly by Uncle Miles, who waited upon Gen'l Washington next morn."

- Tuesday Morning, November 2nd

"It seems strange not to see our house as it used to be. We are very still. No rattling of waggons, glittering of musquets. The beating of the distant drum is all we hear.

"Cols. Wood, Line, Giest, and M. Letherberry are still here; the last two leave us today. Wood and Line will soon bid us adieu. Amiable Wood; he is esteemed by all that know him! Every body has a good word for him.

"Here I skip a week or two, nothing of consequence occurring. Wood & Line are gone. Some time since arriv'd two officers. Lieutenant Lee and Warring, Virginians. I had only the salutations of the morn from them.

"Lee is not remarkable one way or the other; Warring an insignificant piece enough. Lee sings prettily, and talks a great deal; how good turkey hash and fry'd hominy is — (a pretty, discourse to entertain the ladies), extols Virginia and execrates Maryland, which by-the-by, I provoked them to; for though I admire both Virg and Mary, I laugh'd at the former and prais'd the latter. Ridicules their manner of speaking. I took great delight in teasing them. I believe I did it sometimes ill-natur'dly; but I don't care. They were not, I am certain almost, first-rate gentlemen. (How different from our other officers.) But they are gone to Virginia, where they may sing, dance, and eat turkey hash and fry'd hominy all day long, if they choose.

"Nothing scarcely lowers a man in my opinion more than talking of eating, what they love and what they hate. Lee and Warring were proficient in this science. Enough of them!"

This concluded the entries in Miss Wister's Journal for the period when the Continental Army was in Whitpain Township; in fact, the next entry in her diary was on Saturday, December 5, 1777. It seems a shame that so flirtatious a Miss never married and left no descendants with whom to share the thoughts she so articulately expressed.

Postlude

After 1778, the action of the Revolutionary War shifted south and continued there until final victory. The residents of Whitpain were probably glad to be out of the mainstream of this action and yet, gradually to become proud of their part in this most important series of events. That pride extends to the present day. This article is dedicated to those men who fought in that greatest of all our nation's struggles, who died as a result of that fight and who lie under the soil of Whitpain Township ... in Boehm's and St. John's Churchyards ... in unmarked graves, that may never be known, along the sides of Skippack and other roads in this township where they fell. Let us never forget what they did and take pride in the fact that the residents of this township, in the Fall of 1777, helped them to accomplish their task.



The Blue Bell Post Office

Township Services for a Growing Community

The Township grows into a land of farms and estates; then it takes on the air of suburbia.

From six one-room schools, the prestigious Wissahickon School District emerges, combining with Ambler and Lower Gwynedd.

A system of sending messages extends from the fleet-footed horse of the post rider to a postal system with a whole fleet of red, white, and blue jeeps.

Education — Schools and Libraries

Charlotte G. Peck
Photography by George S. Peck
Artwork by Becky Huttinger

Chronology of Whitpain Public Schools

Early education in Whitpain took place mainly in the home. Some of the more well-to-do families hired school masters to tutor their children and some of 'their neighbors' children. Some children were sent to Boehm's Church School or away to private schools. The Boehm's Church School, Blue Bell, was founded in 1760 and was the earliest school of any kind in Whitpain Township. Gradually, groups of supporters of education in various sections of the Township petitioned for school houses to be built. A statement of their educational philosophy was made in a statement by school trustees in 1800. Subscriptions for a new school in Blue Bell urged citizens to perform "the most important and dignified of all parental duties: to fit the child for acting his part wisely and worthily as a man, as a citizen, and as a creature of God." One hundred and sixty-eight years later, in their Ten Year Developmental Plan, the philosophy of the Wissahickon School District was expressed as follows: "To provide an educational program that will enable its students to recognize and accept their rights and responsibilities as participants in a free society."

By 1836, when Pennsylvania's Common School System was introduced in Whitpain Township, there were already five schools to include in the System:

Blue Bell Area

cl766- "The first school house was located along the Skippack Road where the road leading to the Union Meeting-House intersects," Bean's History of Montgomery County tells us. The teacher at this first school was William Knox.

Site: where the present school bus garages are located on School Road, north of Skippack Pike.

1800- CENTER SCHOOL erected near the original spot of the first school mentioned above and succeeding it. This school building was probably torn down in the early 1920's.

Washington Square Area

1787- ELLIS SCHOOL - Bean's History of Montgomery County tells us that this was "located in the forks of the Swedesford Road and the Centre Square and Norristown Turnpike Road" (later called DeKalb Pike). It was named Ellis School because it was first built on ground deeded by Isaac Ellis, Andrew Knox and his wife,

Isabella, for the sum of 6 shillings. Jones Detwiler, in his handwritten notes, writes that the deed also included "a free and uninterrupted privilege of water at the Spring below said Lot." The school was open to children from Whitpain, Norriton, and Plymouth Townships.

1856 - School was rebuilt.

1964 - The building was used as a private home after the consolidation of the schools. It was finally torn down in 1964.

Site: approximately where the present 7-11 Store is located at DeKalb Pike and Swedesford Road.



Ellis School as a Private Home of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Murphy.c.1952

Centre Square Area

1825- CENTREVILLE SCHOOL (later called CENTRE SQUARE SCHOOL) — this school was erected on Skippack Pike above DeKalb Pike on ground purchased by Rev. George Wack (Boehm's Church pastor) and Henry Hurst, trustees appointed by the District.



1859 - School was rebuilt.

Site: on Skippack Pike above DeKalb Pike, north side of Skippack. The school building is still standing and in use as a private home.

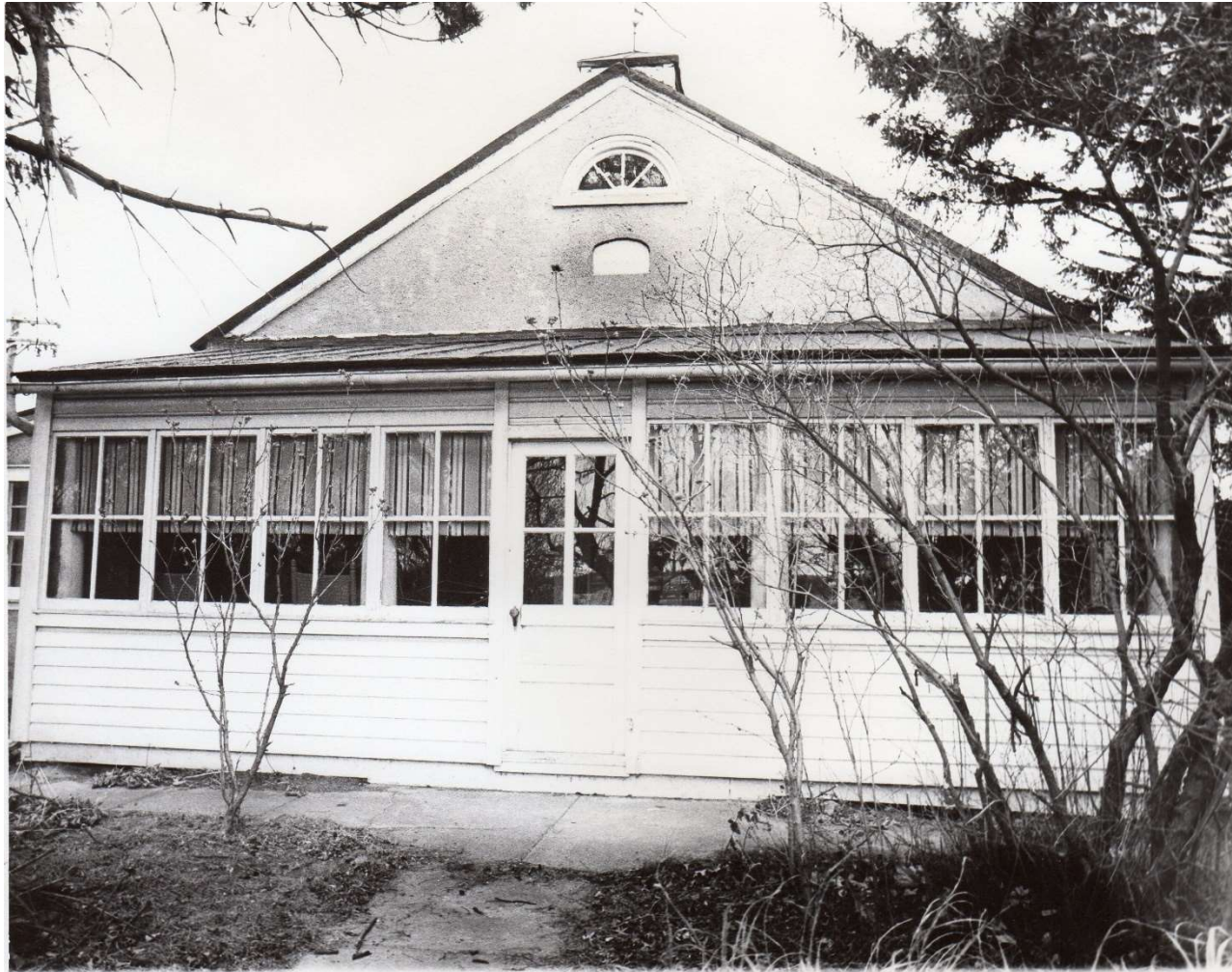


Lower Part of Township

1796- SANDY HILL SCHOOL — this was built on ground deeded by Joseph Lukens and his wife to Trustees and Members of Plymouth Meeting and Society of Friends.

1859- Rebuilt by School Directors of Whitpain Township.

Site: at Five Points (Narcissa Road, Stenton Avenue, Norristown Road, near Wings Field.) This school building still stands and is in use as a private home.



Sandy Hill School today as a private home

cl786- JAMES SCHOOL (later called MOUNT PLEASANT SCHOOL; still later SHADY GROVE SCHOOL) - The earliest mention of a school in this area says that it was located in a room of the spinning house on the property of Dr. James (present site: Dawesfield). Hannah James and her brother Joseph were taught there, with Thomas and Martha Mifflin, by a schoolmaster who taught Latin and Greek. This spinning house was torn down when the course of

the lane was changed and moved out, but a school was still maintained. Jones Detwiler notes that from 1820-1825 "Standish Jennings taught school in the house then owned by Elizabeth, wife of Dr. Thomas C. James, at Mount Pleasant."

1837- The JAMES SCHOOL was finally obtained by the School District for public school purposes. Negotiations for this had been going on since 1836 when the Common School System was put into effect, In 1838 the school's name was changed to MOUNT PLEASANT SCHOOL.

1849- It would appear from the School Board minutes that this school again changed its location, but was still called MOUNT PLEASANT SCHOOL. The minutes of June 2, 1849 state: "On motion John Kibblehouse was appointed to contract with Albert Thomas for the use of Mt. Pleasant School house, the house to be put to good clean order, and repaired, also to agree with a teacher lor one month at the wages last mentioned." In April of 1850 the rental was renewed: "Resolved that John Kibblehouse contract with Albert Thomas for the use of Mt. Pleasant School House lor one year." The location of the school during this period, and until 1855, was probably on Mt. Pleasant Avenue near the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. The 1848 map of the Township shows a school house in that vicinity.

Also, a mention is made in the history of Dawesfield and its surrounding properties that "an old school house existed opposite Sunset Hill." Sunset Hill, we believe, was the house name lor the present home of Dr. and Mrs. Caro/.a at Morris Road and Mount Pleasant Avenue, and "an old school house" opposite this would place it on the Albert Thomas property, the northeast corner of this intersection.

1855- SHADY GROVE SCHOOL (former MOUNT PLEASANT SCHOOL) — the Mount Pleasant School on the Albert Thomas property was sold and a new school built on an acre of ground, 1/2 mile from Skippack Pike on Lewis Lane, purchased by the School District from Jacob L. Rex and his wife, Sarah. "From the shaded conditions of the surroundings and being built in the woods, the name Shady Grove was applied to the school." Thus Jones Detwiler explains the choice of the new name.

Site: This school was located in the woods on the right-hand side of Lewis Lane behind the existing Shady Grove School. The old building was torn down in 1971.



Map of Whitpain School Districts, 1871



Shady Grove School, 1884. Miss M. Taggart, Teacher

1836 - CENTER SCHOOL, ELLIS SCHOOL, CENTREVILLE

SCHOOL, SANDY HILL SCHOOL and MOUNT PLEASANT

— these five schools were the schools existing when it was decided to adopt the new Common School System in May of 1836. This was the beginning of free education in Whitpain Township. The above noted schools had been private, independent schools, and the parents had paid for their children's tuition. An example of this tuition was in Center School. Blue Bell. where the charges from 1808 to 1812 were 3 or 3 1/2 cents a day per child and 20 cents a year extra for firewood. There were also small additional charges for paper, quills, and ink.

On June 9th, 1836 the members of the Committee handling this early jointure were sent to consult with the Trustees of each of the five schools. The Pennsylvania Common School Law, passed in 1834, allowed the school districts the option of acceptance or rejection. On June 13th the Trustees reported back, agreeing to adopt the Common Schools System for a trial period of 6 months. As noted in the School Board minutes, a typical report: "John Styer reports that Ellis School is offered for the use of the common schools if, the directors will do the repairs and make the hours comfortably for the scholars." The following month the committee drew up boundaries for the various schools. After this, at each subsequent election on the public school issue in Whitpain, there was a majority for the schools, although there was also considerable opposition. The opposition came from those who were opposed to new innovations and who preferred to have their children educated in private or church schools. Many of the German residents preferred to have their children attend Boehm's Church School, where the German language and culture were maintained. The last election on the subject was held on March 19, 1841, when 89 votes were given in favor, and 55 against.

1858 - FRANKLINVILLE SCHOOL - this was built on Morris Road on one acre of land purchased from William and Elizabeth Greger by the Whitpain School Directors. There had been a school operated in Franklinville in a house owned by Joseph W. Shearer for some years before this time.

Site: on Morris Road above DeKalb Pike on the Normandy Farm estate. This school building is still standing.



Franklinville School



1888 CENTRE SQUARE SCHOOL - an additional story was built on this school for \$1,296.48. Jones Detwiler records that "a High School opened in this building until it went to the Center School in 1895."

1895 WHITPAIN HIGH SCHOOL - this building was erected on Skippack Pike at School Road. It was described in one of the Montgomery County Historical Sketches as being "a rather artistic modern school building, having somewhat of a Moorish appearance." The Center School was then no longer used for elementary grades and was eventually torn down. The first floor of the High School building was used for the first eight grades; the second floor used for the High School classes. The High School was limited to three years; to eleventh grade. At that point, students in the lower end of the Township went to Ambler High School for twelfth grade; those in the upper part of the Township went to Norristown High School. All high school activities ceased in the Blue Bell complex in 1950 and moved to Ambler High School.

This building cost \$3,698.54, six stalls cost \$239.99; the wall in front and grading cost \$231.82; a total of \$4,219.85. The School Board cut the salaries of the six teachers in the District from \$45.00 to \$40.00 per month to defray the great expense. This salary scale apparently was maintained for ten years, indicating that the teachers contributed \$2,700 toward the new high school building. The first principal of the new school was William D. Beyer.

Site: This building is still standing and at present is used by the Whitpain Branch of the Wissahickon Valley Public Library. "The 1895 building has been used at various times for Township and Police Department purposes.

1916 WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL - this two-story building was built next door to the 1895 building and became the consolidated elementary school for the Township. The six neighborhood schools closed when it came into existence. It had four large rooms; two on each floor. Two classes were held in each room. There was also a basement which contained the Principal's office, a Teachers' room and bathrooms, with indoor-plumbing-of-sorts.

1927 Additional rooms, an auditorium, and a cafeteria were added to the back of the 1916 building. With population and school schedule changes, various classes, at times, had to move over from this building back into the 1895 building. Through the 1940's to 1960's, the 1895 building housed, at various times, a sixth grade, a Kindergarten, and a class of mentally retarded pupils.

1952 Renovations were made to the Whitpain Township Consolidated School. By this time, it was referred to as the Blue Bell Elementary School.

Site: At present this building stands empty and for sale next to the Whitpain High School Building.

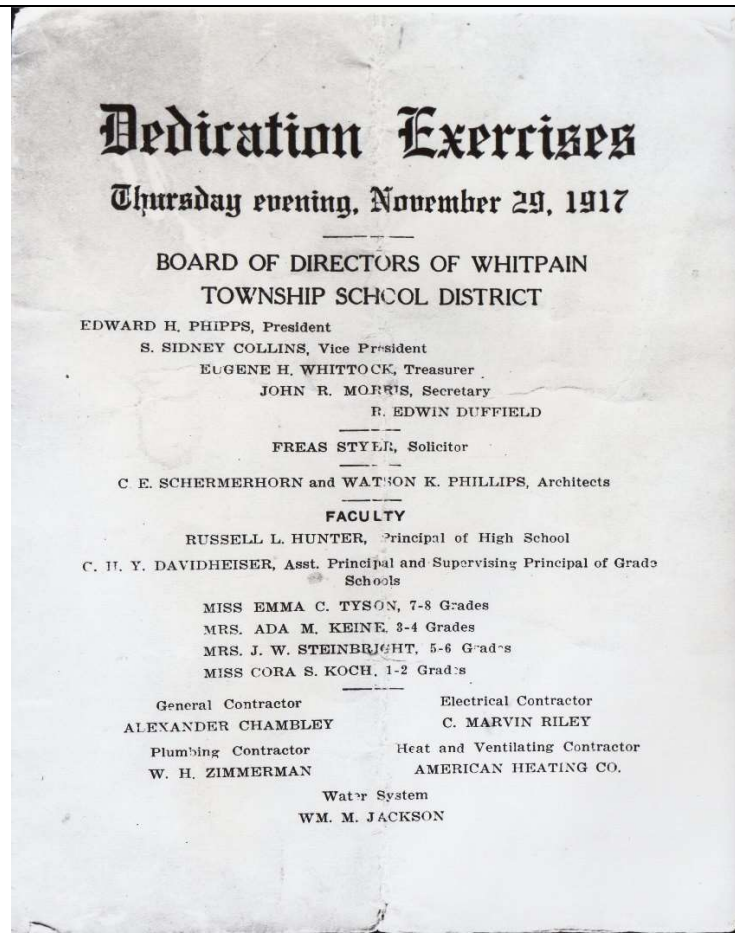
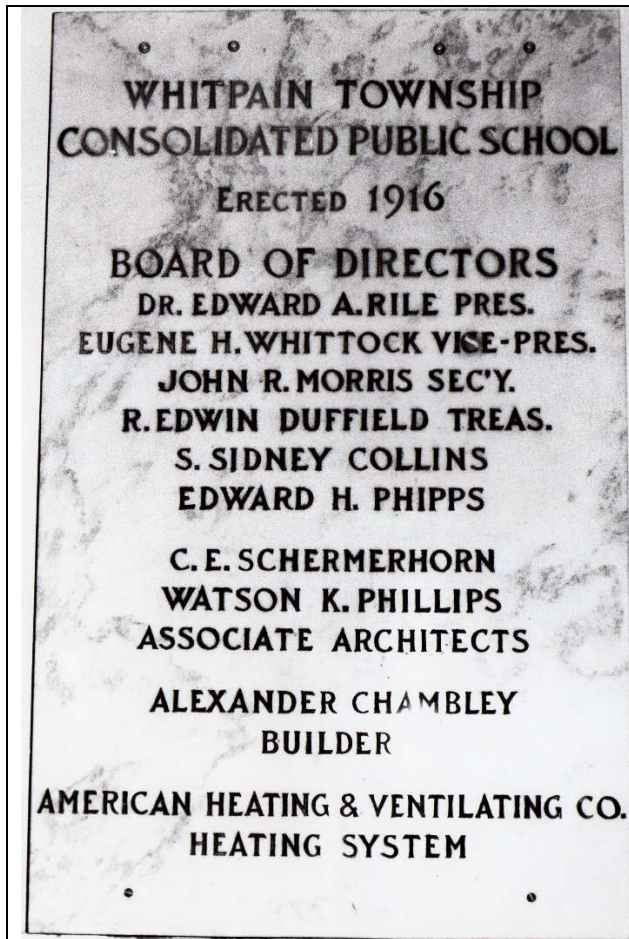
1957 BLUE BELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - the new Blue Bell Elementary School was built behind the "1927 Building," with the entrance on Symphony Lane. The elementary grades were now divided; grades Kindergarten through four in the Symphony Lane Building; grades five and six in the 1927 Building. At the present time, this school houses Grades Kindergarten through four.

1959 Renovations were made.

1957 SHADY GROVE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - located at Skip-pack Pike and Lewis Lane, this school was constructed and used for grades seven through nine. With the present arrangements of schools, it now houses grades five and six for the entire Wissahickon School District, and is again called Shady Grove School.

1964 STONY CREEK SCHOOL (Yost Road) - this elementary school was constructed and at first used for a Kindergarten through sixth grade school. It now houses grades Kindergarten through four.

1966 WISSAHICKON SCHOOL DISTRICT - this district was formed by the reorganization of the existing school districts of Ambler Borough, Lower Gwynedd Township and Whitpain Township.



Dedication Plaque 1916



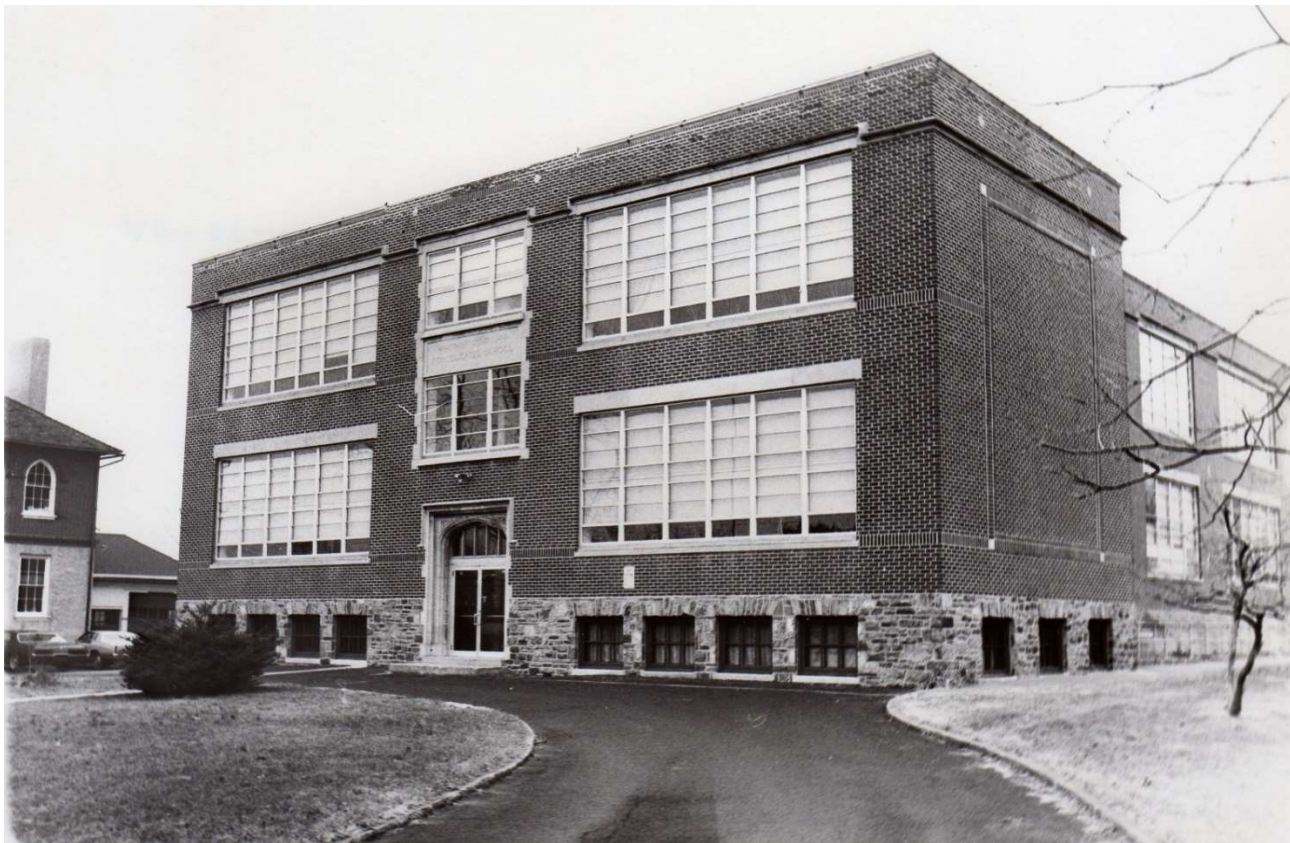
Whitpain High School, c. 1915



Stony Creek School, Yost Road



Blue Bell Elementary School, Symphony Lane



Whitpain Township Consolidated School Today



Shady Grove School

Teachers and Scholars

The early minutes of the School Directors show that most of the teachers of the one-room school houses were from local families. The names of Conard, Roberts, Styer, Ellis, Miller, Baker, Thomas, Beyer, Rex, Hoover, Bean, Weidner, Rhoads, Rossiter, Phipps, and others appear frequently in the teacher appointment lists. Few descriptions are available of the very earliest teachers, but descriptions of their jobs can be put together from such excerpts as this one, a School Board resolution on November 11, 1839, "that the teachers of our public schools have the houses opened and fires kindled by eight o'clock in the morning." Occasionally, a teacher would be paid for chopping wood or cleaning the school house in addition to his regular teaching salary.



THE CLASS AT SHADY GROVE SCHOOL IN 1912

Teacher, on left: Edith Phipps

Front Row: Alberta Thomas, Mary Tyson, Conrad Shoemaker, Thomas Wilson, Ralph Cooper and Leonard Cooper.

Middle Row: Townsend Tyson, Emma Cassel, Ralph Cassel, Violet Shoemaker, Thomas Tyson and Helen Fisher.

Back Row: Mahlon Cassel, Oliver Eliassen, Gladys Hellinge, Lillian Wilson, Worthington Vogdes and Edith Wilson.

Not Present: Albert Cooper, Mary Cooper and Harriet Tyson.

There was In-Service training in the early days, too. Every alternate Saturday was to be devoted to attendance at the Township Institutes, which teachers were required to organize and attend or they were to forfeit their pay for each day of the Institute they missed. There were County Institutes, too, held in Norristown. These were important affairs with occasional outside speakers from Normal Schools, educational magazines, etc. The teachers were kept abreast of new innovations in their field, and took back the information to their school boards. For example, when blackboards were introduced in the 1880's, a resolution was introduced that school directors provide a blackboard for every school room.

10th Mo. 1st. 1828

Whereas Charles M. Roberts has an intention of teaching a school and has applied to us the Subscribers hereto for a recommendation this is to certify that he is in our opinion a suitable person to conduct a school and well qualified to perform the duties thereunto appertaining his Education consisting of a Knowledge of Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Mensuration, Surveying, Navigation, Algebra, and Book Keeping by single and double entry.

Alan McVerson
Benjamin Conard
Joseph Foulke

Teaching Certification of Charles M. Roberts, 1828

The Whitpain School Directors also saw to it that their teachers were provided with reading material to enrich their professional educations. In 1858, they subscribed to the

Pennsylvania School Journal and ordered five copies; one for each teacher.

A random sampling of salaries in the early days of the Township shows that in 1836 the salaries were \$20.00 per month; in May 1851 the minutes state: "the wages for the school year of 1852 in no case to be less than \$18.00 nor more than \$24.00 for Male Teachers. And Females to be \$18.00 per month." In 1884 Jones Detwiler reports salaries ranging from \$30.00 to \$38.00 per month. In this year five out of the six teachers were women.

Teacher loads were sometimes heavy. In 1836 Sandy Hill School, which drew pupils from Whitemarsh and Plymouth as well as from Whitpain, had an enrollment of 106 scholars, all taught by Benjamin Conard. The next year they hired Mary Farr as an assistant teacher for Mr. Conard. By the mid-nineteenth century, there was a definite procedure of teacher certification which had to be fulfilled. This was done through examination by the County Superintendent. Before that time, however, certification appears to have been done by the local trustees. In the days before the Common School System, school minutes refer to the teachers as preceptors.

The teaching methods would appear to have been centered around the lecture/recitation method. When the Trustees visited the schools to supervise, they usually commented on

"order," "cleanliness," and "the exercises performed by the pupils." Indicating the importance placed on "order" are the following rules for discipline drawn up at Center School, Blue Bell. in the early nineteenth century. These rules, incorporated in the School Board minutes, were to be read by the teacher to the scholars on the first school day of every week:

ARTICLE 1 - "Every scholar must be at the school house as near the time appointed as may be, decent and clean, free from every infectious disorder. The latter on peril of dismissal.

ARTICLE 2 - "No discourse shall be admitted of amongst the scholars in school time except when speaking to the master.

ARTICLE 3 - "Scholars must not go about the house from place to place, but each one be to their particular seat and attend to their respective business except leave by the master.

ARTICLE 4 - "The large scholars must not impose on the smaller, mock nor divide, but on all occasions behave with kindness, civility and respect to each other.

ARTICLE 5 - "Profficking, gaming, lying, quarreling, swearing and every kind of saucy and ill language and fighting, must absolutely be avoided on peril of correction.

ARTICLE 6 - "At noon time and in going to and coming from school, scholars must avoid all impudent and indecent behavior towards each other, and to every person they meet on their way, but must address each other, and persons they meet in a decent and becoming manners.

ARTICLE 7 - "No playing, nor any avoidable noise shall be allowed of in the school house at noon time.

ARTICLE 8 - "At noon time, and in going to and from school, scholars must not ramble about.

ARTICLE 9 - "In coming to say the lesson, spell or read, in breaking up school at noon and night, let there be no hurry nor noise that can be avoided, but let the whole be done quietly and in regular order by the direction of the master.

ARTICLE 10 - "No scholar must leave the school during school hours without leave of the master.

The foregoing rules to be binding on every scholar in school of every age and degree, and if any think themselves above correction and do disregard and willfully break them after sufficient admonition, they shall be dismissed from the school by the master, and if such scholar, parent or guardian of such scholar think themselves aggrieved thereby, they shall have a right of appealing to the Trustees, who hearing both parties Judge between them."

Before 1836 the usual subjects taught were spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic. A few scholars studied grammar, mensuration, and surveying. Some of the textbooks used were Comly's Primer and Spelling Book, Pike and Rose's Arithmetic and three geography textbooks.

In 1858 some of the textbooks used were Sander's series of Readers, The New Testament, Town's Analysis of the English Language, Burleigh's American Manual, Wilson's series of Histories, Parker's Revised Edition of Philosophy, Webster's School Dictionary, Stoddard's Mental and Intellectual Arithmetic, Emmersen's Arithmetic, Davy's Algebra, Bonny Castle's Mensuration, and Gummere's Surveying. Apparently, these didn't suit everyone, because in 1860 there was a resolution adopted that Town's Analysis of the English Language, Parker's Philosophy and Warren's Physical Geography were more suited to High Schools and Academies than elementary grades. "The criticism was that "they monopolize too much of the teacher's time and deprive the youth who requires more attention and care that ought of right to be devoted to them."

School Directors

The story of Whitpain's early schools is the story of its children and the teachers of its children. It is also the story of groups of interested and dedicated men, the School Directors, who administered the school system. These men were the movers and shakers in the early community, not only in the schools, but also in its industries, its churches, its Post Offices, its Library Company and its community life in general. As far as the schools were concerned, they saw to their building, repairing and re-building. They had the power to hire teachers and to fire them. They supervised the teaching process on a regular schedule. They purchased coal, wood and stoves for all the schools. They occasionally took a turn at teaching. They examined and paid all bills, and they raised money for running the schools through taxes. The following mention is made of taxes in the School

Board minutes:

April 20, 1850 — "a tax of twenty-five cents on the hundred dollars be leveyed for the ensuing school year."

July 28, 1856 — "It was then unanimously resolved: that a tax of three mills on the dollar be assessed for the school and two for building purposes, to meet the wants of the School System for the School year ending on the first Monday of June 1857, being the school year 1857."

The School Directors took their jobs very seriously. They laid out certain rules for themselves, especially about attendance at meetings. Regular meetings were held on the first Saturday of each month in the early nineteenth century, but special meetings could be held when circumstances required them. If a member missed two succeeding meetings for reason other than illness, he was notified of this in writing and required to attend the next meeting. If he missed this one without a satisfactory excuse, his seat was considered vacant and the vacancy was filled by someone else.

The regular meeting place for the School Board meetings in the early days was in various public houses (inns) in Whitpain. From 1836-1854 the official meeting place was the Public House of Peter Acker. At least one School Board meeting during this period was held on Christmas Day. It is recorded in the minutes of December 3, 1838: "Resolved that the next meeting of the Board be held on Christmas Day at 10 A.M. in order to make out the annual report to the superintendent, and that Acker provide a dinner for the members."



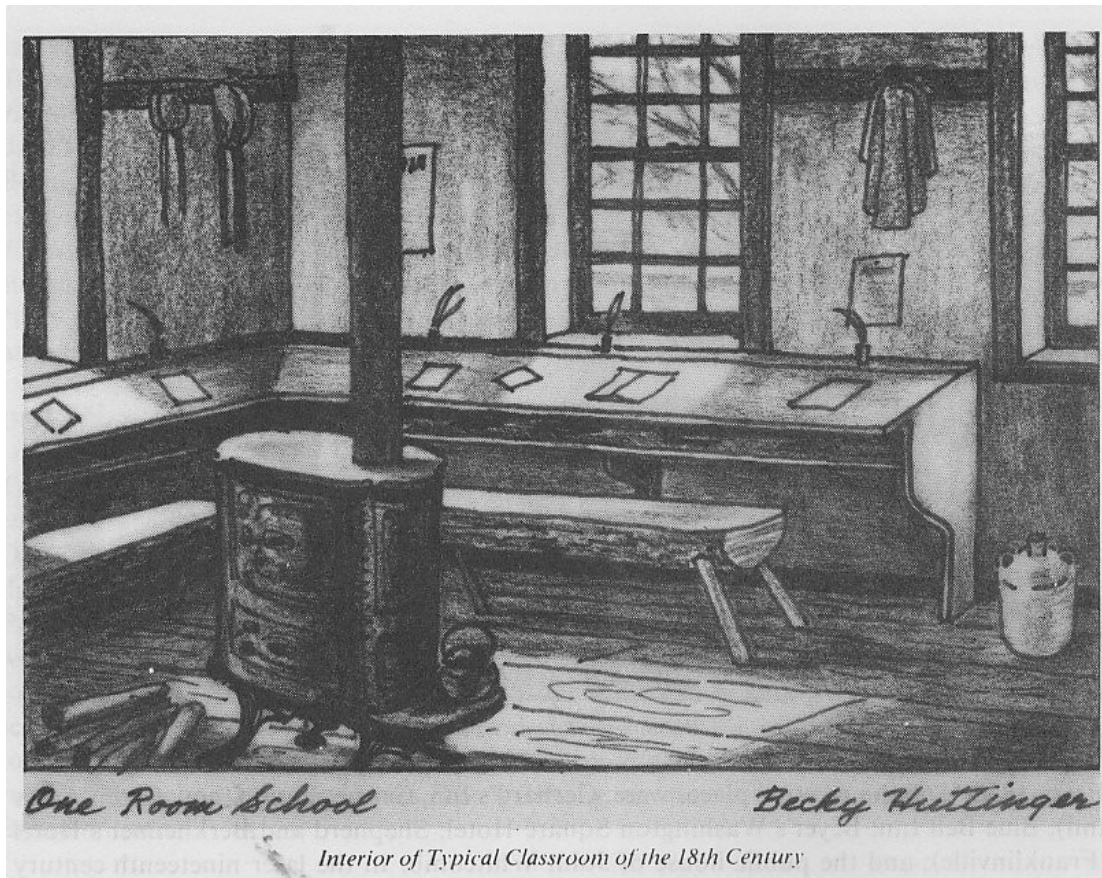
From 1858-1860 the meeting places were: Gerhard's Inn, Centre Square (now Green Acres Inn); Blue Bell Inn; Beyer's Washington Square Hotel; Shepherd and Berkheimer's Hotel (Franklinville); and the public house of John Whitcomb. In the later nineteenth century the School Directors had a room in the Whitpain High School building where they held their regular monthly meetings. The present public meeting of the School Board of the Wissahickon School District is held on the 4th Tuesday of the month at Wissahickon High School.

The members of the first School Board after the Common School System had been organized in 1836 were: John Rile, President; H.C. Evans, Secretary; Abraham Wentz, Treasurer; Charles Greger, Jacob Fisher, Peter C. Evans, John Styer and John Heist.

School Buildings and School Life

As one visits the three existing old school houses, Franklinville, Centre Square, and Sandy Hill one immediately notices a similarity in design except, of course, for the fact that the Centre Square School building has had a second floor added to it. The recently torn down Shady Grove School also followed pretty much this same pattern. The Centre Square School building originally had the typical belfry tower on top. This was blown off and damaged during a severe windstorm in the early 1920's and not replaced. The damaged belfry was repaired and made into a playhouse for his children by Mr. Charles Baker whose property was across Skippack Pike from the school.

The specifications for the rebuilding of Sandy Hill School and Centre Square School in 1859 were decided upon by the School Board and included in their minutes of June 11, 1859. They give a detailed description of how these school buildings were constructed:



"Specifications for two School Houses to be built in Whitpain Township, the one on Sandy Hill, and the other on the Skippack Turnpike, near Gerhard's Tavern.

"Said Houses to be of Stone, 25 feet side by 32 feet deep or long, with solid foundations, walls (at Sandy Hill 20 inches deep) 24 inches deep and deeper if necessary, 20 inches thick to the laying on of the joice, and from thence up 18 inches, to be built of good stone, on mortar having not less than one bushel of lime to every perch of stone wall, and to be not less than ten feet high from the top of the joice to the bottom of the raising plate. The joice to be not nearer to the ground in any place than one foot. The joists to be of hemlock of the best quality 3 by 9, and laid not more than 20 inches from centre to centre, with a partition wall lengthwise of the building for the joice to rest on 20 inches thick. The floor to be of best quality 1 1/4 inch thick yellow pine boards, and a platform raised the whole width of the North East gable 8 inches high and 6 feet wide. There shall be 8 windows - 3 back and 3 front - equally spaced and 2 in the S.E. gable one each side of the door. Each window shall have 12 lights of 9 by 14 inch hooks with staples, for outside fastenings all made of 1/8 inch wrought iron, and 10 inch shutter bolts and rings for inside. There shall be one door in the South West Gable and said door to be 7 feet high, and 3 wide, and 3 inches thick, hung with 3 good 4 inch butt hinges, with heavy thumb latch, and 8 inch lock with key in good order. Said door to have a substantial marble sill. The roof to be of best pine shingles and raised on 6 inch brackets framed into 6 inch joice put on the inside of the wall, similar to the other new houses already built in the- District."

A description of how the interior of Sandy Hill School looked can be found in a handwritten essay by Anna V. Walton (1874-1932), written in beautiful script about 1890 and kept in the archives of the Montgomery County Historical Society, Norristown. Anna

was a pupil at Sandy Hill and calls her work "History of the Sandy Hill School." She first describes how the original school, started in 1796, looked. This information would probably have been passed down to her verbally by relatives or friends of a previous generation. She describes a school which sounds quite like the beautiful pictures

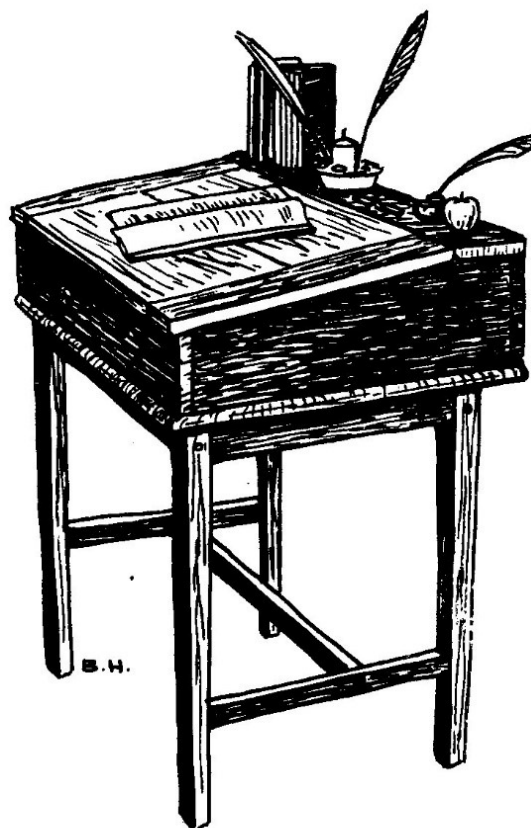
Marguerite de Angeli has drawn of the Christopher Dock School in her book "Skipack School". Anna's words are: "The room was heated by a large wood stove which stood in the centre; and furnished with long desks, which were placed against the wall all around the building at which, with their faces to the wall, the larger scholars sat on long benches, then there was a row of benches around the stove on which the small scholars sat.

"The teacher's desk stood on the southeast side on a small platform about 4 ft. square and was high enough for him to stand up to write."

She then continues to talk about the 1859 building, in which she was a student: "This school house (1796) stood until 1859 when it was torn down and the present one erected, about 25 yd. northeast of it, on ground purchased of Jacob and Tacy Berkhimer (then owner of the Lukens property). This is also a one story stone building and stands northeast ^and southwest. In the centre the ceiling for 20 feet is parallel to the floor and stands at an angle at 140 degrees for about 3 ft. on each side. The wall on the northeast end of the room has been painted black to be used as a blackboard, and then there is also a small board which is fastened against the wall. The room-is heated by a coal stove which stands in the centre, the pipe running up to the roof. The room is furnished with eighteen desks, each large enough for two scholars. The Teacher's desk stands on the platform which is in the northeast end, then there are four large class benches. In the west corner of the room is a small closet in which we put our kettles.

The grounds are triangular, situated between roads, one heading to the Skipack road and the other to the Broad Axe. Around the school house are twelve large trees which keep the sun from the roof. It would be well if several of them were cut down. A porch at the southwest end would improve the looks of the building."

Jones Detwiler helps us fill in our picture of the early Whitpain school interior. He notes that every school had "a bucket, tin cup, splint broom and what was called a 'pass,' a small paddle having the words 'In' and 'Out' written on opposite sides." The larger boys cut wood at noontime and put it under the desks; the larger girls took turns helping with cleaning the school room. At least one school, Shady Grove, had a basement under it for storing coal and wood. Some of the larger pupils could have been "bound" or indentured boys and girls, as old as 18-20 years of age. As indentured servants they got board and clothing from their employers and three months schooling a year in the winter season.

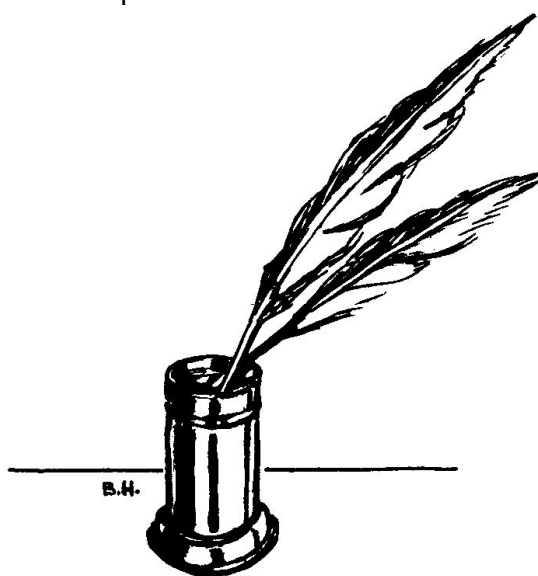


Teacher's Desk of the 19th Century

School hours in the nineteenth century were long, lasting from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. There was a lunch hour from Noon to 1 P.M. and a recess in mid-morning and mid-afternoon. There was school every weekday and every other Saturday, and the school year lasted for 6 1/2 to 9 1/2 months. The Saturday sessions ended in the 1860's. Most of the morning session was taken up with arithmetic. Actually, since the pupils were of such varying ages, the teacher spent much time moving about the room and checking each one's work. The graded system wasn't adopted in Whitpain until March 1888. The boys and girls worked out their solutions to problems on slates. When completed, they transferred their work into Cyphering books. There was an opportunity in the one-room school for what today's educators call "cross-age tutoring" since the older students sometimes helped the Master check the work of the younger students. The afternoon was spent in reading and spelling. The last thing in the afternoon was a spelling lesson in which all the students took part. Friday was a special day - Table Day. On this day arithmetic tables were said by everyone.

The average pupil's supplies and books cost about one dollar in the early nineteenth century Whitpain school. Students paid for their own books up until 1885 when books were furnished from the school funds. The pupil also had to have his Cyphering Book for sums, six sheets of foolscap (a size of paper typically 16x13 inches) paper stitched together for writing, and a small well of ink in a broad cork stand and a goose quill.

The goose quill pen was used for writing up until around 1850, at which time the steel pen took its place. The Master had charge of sharpening the quills and of making the ink. Ink was made from a material called Ink Powder and kept in a large bottle and dealt out into the pupils' cork ink stands, which had small glass inserts in their centers. The quills were tied together in bunches of 24, 50 or 100, and sold by the Master to the pupils at the price of 2 for a cent. When steel pens



Quill Pens in Ink Well

were first introduced in Whitpain, they were too stiff and hard. Pupils found them difficult to manage; they tore through the ragged paper in use and blotted and spattered ink easily. The teachers were happy with the new pens, though, because they were relieved of their labors of sharpening quills, a chore that had formerly been attended to during the lunch hour.

All was not grim arithmetic tables and blotted ink in the early school. They had their fun times, too, and their celebrations. Anna Walton, in her account of Sandy Hill School, tells of one teacher, Florence Snyder, who put on "2 entertainments, one in 1885 for the purpose of buying a dictionary and the other in 1886 to buy an Encyclopedia. The first entertainment was held in the schoolhouse, and admission of fifteen cents was charged and we realized \$21.85. The second entertainment was held in the Creamery Hall (Centre Square), the same admission was charged and this time we made \$20.90."

The first Commencement of 8th Grade graduates was held in Whitpain Township in 1890. The graduates were: Walter DePrefontaine, Frank Beyer, Katherine A. Miller, Rachel Shoemaker, Annie Steinbright and Ella Tippin. The exercises took place over a

horse stable in Washington Square Hall in Washington Square. The Norristown Times Herald carried full coverage of the gala affair. Professor Lloyd's orchestra of Norristown played, Boehm's Church choir sang. The horses in the stable below stomped, and "their fragrance wafted upward in the warm summer evening of Thursday June 5, 1890." There were recitations by Clara Baker, Annie Walton, Frank Beyer and Anna Steinbright; a eulogy on Alexander Hamilton by Walter DePrefontaine; Ella Tippin read her essay "Live's Pivots"; Katie Miller gave the valedictory, "Eminent Women."

This same Katie Miller later completed her high school education at Whitpain High School, went on to West Chester Normal School, University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University. Her first teaching job was at Shady Grove School. She lived in a house, still standing next to Boehm's Church Cemetery, and each morning would walk across the fields from Penllyn Pike down to her school on Lewis Lane. Miss Miller also taught at Franklinville School, at two schools in Cheltenham, and then was principal of the Wyncote School for 36 years.

Many of the other graduates from Whitpain's one-room schools went on to become lawyers, doctors and outstanding members of their communities. Quite a few of them are still living in our community.

There are also many Whitpain residents who attended the Whitpain High School and the Whitpain Consolidated School, which took the place of the six original schools. These graduates, too, have memories which can give a glimpse of school life in Whitpain at a slightly later time — the early twentieth century. Questions asked of a few of these former students have evoked the following memories:

Behind the brick Consolidated School and the High School was a play area which extended all the way back to the woods. Of course, the woods have all but disappeared. At recess time these 1920's children played the games of the era: Tag, Hide-and-go-seek, Prisoner's Base, Tiger, I Spy Sheepie, snowball fights. Fox and Geese, jump rope, etc. The High School students had organized sports: volley ball, soft ball, baseball, soccer and basketball.

Many of the children walked to school; some rode bicycles. On rainy days parents had mercy on their little ones and picked them up at school. One of our long-time Whitpain residents remembers that on rainy days the front of the school yard would be full of "teams" as parents picked up their children. This same gentleman also relates that on deep-snow days, some children were gathered up in bob sleds or farm sleds and taken to school. School bussing began about 1918. One former student describes the two buses: "one makeshift Ford that rocked and one Reo, slightly better." Another former student further explains the "rocking" of the Ford bus. When too many students sat in the back of the bus, the front wheels left the ground and there had to be a hasty re-distribution of students.

Apparel of these rugged country children was sensible and suited to the seasons. In winter, long under-drawers were standard equipment for all the younger children. The boys wore knickers, long brown stockings and high laced shoes; the girls long stockings, dresses and high shoes.

The children of present-day Whitpain have favorite gathering places. So, too, did the turn-of-the-century children. Zimmerman's pond, a pond behind Reed's Store, which has been filled in, and Whitpain Farm pond were great places for ice skating. The hills on Skippack Pike in Centre Square were ideal for sledding in the days when traffic consisted mainly of horses and wagons. There was an old sand quarry in the woods behind the two Blue Bell schools. One highly respected member of our community remembers that the local boys loved to run down the steep slopes into the quarry and jump out from behind trees to scare each other. A girl student of the same era states that "we were not allowed to go into the woods." As the old adage goes — "boys will be boys."

In the 1920's Whitpain High School had a very active Alumni Association. They had an annual Christmas party on the second floor of the High School Building and a Picnic Supper and games on the School grounds in early June. In this way, graduates and families, especially with children, kept in touch. In 1922 a PTA was organized, which took over most of the social life surrounding the school.

There is still enough of the "natural" Whitpain left to give joy to today's children. There are still frozen ponds to skate on, hills to sled on, wildflowers to come upon in the small patches of woods that are left and hundreds of small animals and beautiful birds among us to give modern residents a taste of country living.





Montgomery County Community College, Founded 1964

Pennsylvania's Community College Act of 1963 authorized the establishment of a Commonwealth system of public two-year colleges. This Act made possible the founding of Montgomery County Community College on December 8, 1964. The newly founded College opened temporary quarters in the former Conshohocken High School in the fall of 1966. In December of 1971 the College moved into its new campus in Blue Bell, and was ready for occupancy for the 1972 spring semester. The College offers a comprehensive two

year program, and, at present, has over 6,600 students. The campus is comprised of four multi-purpose, environmentally controlled buildings.

The historical background of the land on which the College has been built (the Bernhard, Greenawalt and Walker farms) is covered in this book in the article on those farms.

Church Schools and Private Schools in Whitpain

Boehm's Church School, Founded 1760

As mentioned before, the very first school in Whitpain Township was the church school built by members and officers of its earliest church, Boehm's Church. Once the church was established, its congregation soon felt the need for a school. Land was purchased from Philip Dottera and his wife for 5 shillings on April 16, 1760, and a stone school was erected shortly after that. This school, open to all who chose to comply with its regulations, used the German language in its teaching. The schoolhouse was torn down in 1844 and a sexton's house and Sunday School room was built on the same spot.

Site: the center section of Boehm's United Church of Christ, Blue Bell

Centre Square Seminary, 1879-1884

This private school for young ladies was housed in what had formerly been a public house or inn. A public house was originally opened here in 1804 and in 1816 it was sold to Henry W. Groff, a fuller from Upper Salford. Henry Groff, a number of years after his purchase tore down the original inn and built a large brick structure which was called the "brick tavern" or the "Big Brik." It was a short distance above Centre Square on the left-hand side of Skippack Pike. This was a huge undertaking for Groff and nearly ruined him financially. In 1834 the property was sold to Philip Gerhart who remained its owner for many years. The brick walls were later plastered.

In 1879 the property was sold to Rev. D. Levin Coleman, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church. Centre Square. Rev. Coleman, together with Rev. J. Sechler, of Boehm's Church, conducted a nourishing private school for young ladies in this school for five years. 'The local nickname for this school was "The Little Ritz."

Site: The building still stands on Skippack Pike above DeKalb Pike and is now called The Green Acres Inn.

Oak Lane Day School, Founded in Philadelphia, 1916

This school was an independent day school in Philadelphia from 1916 until 1922. At that point, it was taken over by the University of Pennsylvania and later, in 1930, became a Temple University Laboratory School. In 1960 it once more became an independent day school, and in September of 1964 opened in Blue Bell, after building new quarters on the John Cadwalader estate. This school's program includes children from age three up to ninth grade. (For the history of the Cadwalader estate where the school is located, see the Chapter on Houses.)

St. Helena's School, Founded 1948

Msgr. Thomas P. Kelly became pastor of St. Helena's Church after the death of its founding father. Father Francis Higgins. It was Msgr. Kelly who started a building

program designed to educate the children of the Parish. Three Sisters of Mercy; Sister M. Teresa, Sister Mary Assisium and Sister M. John Aloyse came from the Mother House in Merion and laid the groundwork for the school. On September 1, 1948, St. Helena's School opened in the convent (which was then in a large house across DeKalb Pike from

the church). There were forty-four pupils from grades one through four. On September 1, 1949 the new school building adjoining the church was opened and included grades, Kindergarten through six. Seventh and eight grades were added in 1950.



St. Helena's School



Center Square Seminary

Nursery Schools

In the past decade several nursery schools have been established in Whitpain for the education of the pre-school child.

Libraries

Whitpain Library Company

The Whitpain Library Company was founded on December 16, 1817 at Blue Bell and was incorporated with thirty-five charter members. In 1884 there were 2,000 volumes. For eighty-four years the book collection was housed in the Blue Bell Store (later the Blue Bell Post Office).

After a period of inactivity, the books were transferred to the Whitpain High School building in the early 20th century. In 1922 the last surviving member of the Whitpain Library Company donated the library to the Whitpain High School and Alumni Association. In 1923 the catalog, minutes books and other records of the Library were presented to the Montgomery County Historical Society, Norristown, and in July of 1952, the collection itself was donated to the Society by the Whitpain School Board.

The book circulation records of the old Whitpain Library Company were kept in script, a page for each patron, with his name at the top. When a book was taken out, a note was made on the left-hand side of the patron's page, noting the book's accession number, number of volumes, date taken out, and number of days it could be borrowed (usually six or eight). On the right-hand side of the page, it was recorded when the book was returned. Records of fines for overdue books were kept for patrons on a separate page. Each book had the label of the Whitpain Library Company stamped in the front and an accession number written near the label.

Certain of the Library Company directors took care of having books repaired and rebound and paying for books purchased. In 1835, Jones Detweiler's notes relate: "Christian Slingluff was appointed Librarian for the current year with the usual salary of ten dollars." The directors of the Library Company in 1838 were: John Fitzgerald, Jesse Spencer, Franklin Foulk, Abraham Wentz, David DeHaven, Jonathan Styer and Henry Rile. They held quarterly meetings.

The Library of Whitpain

On January 18, 1967 the Woman's Club of Whitpain opened a library on the second floor of the building owned by Dr. Eugene Leoni at Centre Square. At this time, the Library became a station of the Montgomery County-Norristown Public Library. In 1968 this library collection was moved to the 1895 Whitpain High School Building where the second floor was rented to house it. In 1969 the Wissahickon Valley Public Library (Ambler) took over the Library of Whitpain collection. In 1972 a professional librarian was hired for Whitpain, and in September of 1975 the whole Whitpain High School building was rented for the Library.

The Library of Whitpain is now operated as a branch of the Wissahickon Valley Public Library, and includes a community outreach program (The Library-Without-Walls) and an Audio-Visual Department. There are, at present, approximately 10,000 volumes in the Whitpain collection and 33,000 volumes a year are circulated.

1842 Abraham Wentz

Oct 6 417 " 1 " 6	Nov 1 417 " 1 " 6
" 6 217 " 1 " 6	" 4 417 " 1 " 6
Dec 9 260 " 1 " 8	" 3 417 " 1 " 8
" 9 33 " 2 " 6	" 3 417 " 2 " 6
Dec 3 464 " 1 " 6	" 14 417 " 1 " 6
" 3 163 " 2 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
Dec 14 467 " 1 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 14 189 " 2 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
Jan 7 268 " 3 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 7 468 " 1 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
Feb 4 503 " 1 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 4 164 " 1 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 25 122 " 1 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 25 482 " 1 " 8	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
Mar 18 148 " 2 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 18 352 " 2 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
April 8 478 " 2 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 8 694 " 1 " 8	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
1843	
May 16 366 " 2 " 8	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
June 7 484 " 2 " 8	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
Sept 4 506 " 2 " 8	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
Oct 25 320 " 1 " 8	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 25 487 " 2 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
Nov 4 389 " 2 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 4 411 " 2 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
Dec 8 359 " 1 " 8	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 8 333 " 1 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
March 5 415 " 1 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 5 334 " 1 " 6	" 14 417 " 2 " 6
" 25 523 " 2 " 8	" 14 417 " 2 " 6

transcribed



Book circulation record, Abraham Wentz, 1842

Wissahickon Valley Public Library Whitpain Branch



Blue Bell Post Office, 1960



The Postal Service

By Becky Huttinger

Photography by George S. Peck

Artwork by Becky Huttinger

Before the white man came to America, there were no ^mailmen." The Indians sent messages either by runners or by smoke signals. It wasn't until our European ancestors came here to stay that there was postal service. What did evolve was very similar to that which already existed in Europe, but with a uniquely American quality.

In this area, William Penn took the necessary measures to provide his followers with mail delivery. In 1683 he established limited service between Philadelphia and New Castle, Delaware. New routes were soon added because the old ones, the Indian trails, were narrow, winding and very bumpy. Usually they followed rivers, streams or mountain ridges. Penn ordered notices be displayed which gave the people information regarding arrivals or departures of the mails. These notices were to be found on the Quaker Meetinghouse doors or at public houses along the way. Such publications no doubt appeared at Gwynedd or Plymouth Meeting where the Whitpain members of those congregations could have seen them. William Penn, as Governor of the Province, issued an order in 1683 for establishment of a post office in Bristol and shortly after, two more in Philadelphia and Chester.

Colonel Andrew Hamilton was Postmaster General of Pennsylvania for several years. The residents of Whitpain received their mail out of Philadelphia. Either they rode the twenty-some miles into town to get it themselves, friends picked it up for them, or, perhaps a messenger brought it out to them for a commission. The gentry in Whitpain usually got it themselves. Most of the mail in those early days came from, or was sent to, Europe by way of warship and merchant vessel.

Because of the unreliability of the service, agents and couriers received payment on delivery, and it was expensive. In time, post roads were built to carry the mail between important cities along the coast. Before this, it was said that they (Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston) were closer to Europe than to each other. The first such road connected New York to Boston in 1673. By 1717, another post road ran south from New York to Williamsburg, Va. Wherever the rider carrying the mail stopped to rest, it was necessary to have a hitching post for his horse. These posts were placed at regular intervals along the route. Naturally, both man and beast needed to rest and to have sustenance. As a result, in this area as well as in New England or in the South, a network of roads were built. Skippack Road which runs northwest through the center of Whitpain Township was one of these routes.

In 1710, William Penn, realizing the need for government regulation of the accommodations available, passed an act stipulating, "that no public house or inn within the province be kept without a license," according to William J. Buck in *The History of Montgomery County*. He also goes on to say that Queen Anne of England confirmed this legislation in

1713. In the same paragraph, he states that nearly all post offices were originally established in public houses. Since Skippack Road was a major highway the taverns along its way must surely have prospered. According to the official records as noted in the above mentioned book, there were several in Whitpain, including the White House (1734) and the Black Horse (1774) in Pigeon Town, the Waggon Inn (1758) in Centre Square, Wentz Tavern (1764) near Cathcart Road, and the Broad Axe Hotel (1792), although it was known to have been an inn long before that. We know that licenses were granted to John Porter, John Rynear and to Abraham Wentz to be innkeepers in 1779. However, in 1786 only one license was issued but no special man or place is mentioned.

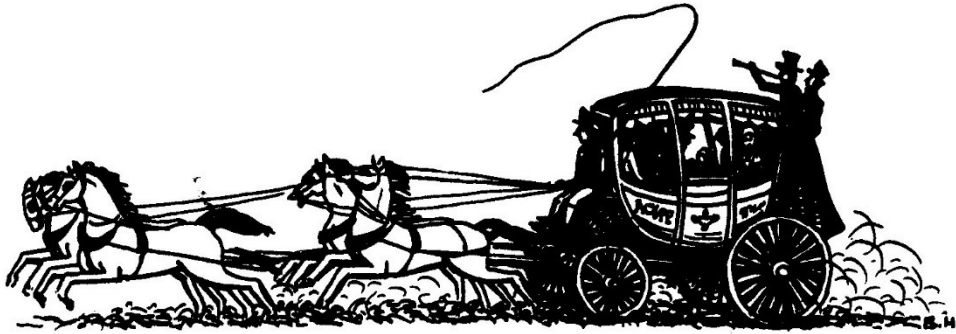
The people living in Whitpain in the Colonial Period, and later, were mostly of Welsh, English, or German origin. Many of them were literate folk who saw to it that their children went to school. However, for those who had not learned to read or write, there were clergymen like John Philip Boehm or teachers like Charles Roberts and Henry Conrad to help them read their mail or to write letters for them when necessary. 'The larger settlements had notaries or scribes who would do the same thing for a fee.

Benjamin Franklin was appointed Postmaster General of Philadelphia County (which included Montgomery County) in 1737 when he was only thirty-one. At first the colonists resented the system because they saw it as just another form of taxation. However, Franklin and his very capable associate, William Hunter, made a number of worthwhile reforms. One of them permitted free delivery of newspapers and pamphlets to printers. In this way, news and information of general interest to the public was posted or otherwise made available in print shops and at the neighborhood taverns throughout the colony. This had a marked effect toward influencing public opinion. They also set up a more reliable accounting system and a more dependable, faster moving, delivery service.

In 1775, the Continental Congress made Benjamin Franklin Postmaster General of the U.S.A. with virtually unlimited authority to reorganize the American Postal System. Sixteen months later he turned the office over to his son-in-law, Richard Bache, who, incidentally did a very good job. By 1812, the Postal System was probably the largest single business in America. Postage rates in 1816 were as follows: one sheet (no envelope then) not over thirty miles cost 6 cents; not over eighty miles cost 10 cents; not over one hundred fifty miles cost 12 cents; and not over four hundred miles cost 25 cents. In 1837, the Postal System was no longer a subdivision of the Treasury Department and its leader was a member of the President's cabinet.

The early postmasters usually owned property and were respected members of the community. As a rule, they were innkeepers and storekeepers, or both, and their families lived with them at their places of business. It was almost inevitable that wives and daughters became involved with the innkeeping chores or with tending store as you will see later. In the 1790's women were appointed postmasters for the first time thus setting a precedent and providing perhaps the only professional work open to a respectable woman, according to Arthur E. Summerfield in his book, *U.S. Mail, The Story of the U.S. Postal Service*.

Shortly after the American Revolution (1785), the stage coach practically replaced the express rider (with his double saddle bags) as carrier for the U.S. Mail. The system became so efficient and useful for the next ten years that the number of post offices increased from 75 to 453. Staging, as they called this newer means of transportation, was very popular and colorful. The coaches were often Troys, described as being painted red with ornate gilding, the owners name blazoned on the side panels. Usually, there were four handsome, speedy, but durable horses per coach. To add even more color, the coachmen sometimes announced their expected arrival by blowing their "long horns" a mile away.



It isn't hard to imagine the hustling and excitement which prevailed at the Blue Bell Inn, for example, as the hostlers watered and fed the animals, the passengers disembarked briefly for refreshment and the drivers attended to the mail. All of this had to be done with the utmost urgency because the stages had to meet unbelievably exacting schedules. It was possible that a competing line (and there was much competition) was stopping at the Broad Axe down the road or another one at the Waggon Inn up the road in Centre Square. After Swedeford Road was built in 1756, the Washington Square Inn and the Franklinville Inn appeared. In 1799, the stages were able to bring mail to Whitpain from the new Norristown Post Office. This mail was carried to Norristown by river boat or packet along the Schuylkill from Philadelphia.

In 1816 another official post office was opened in Whitemarsh on the Bethlehem Road and by 1820, Flourtown had grown into a major stagecoach terminal. One of these stages ran up Skippack Road and, upon prior arrangement, would detour along Lewis Lane to pick up or deposit both passengers and mail at "Dawesfield."

Jacob Acuff had a daily mail run in 1828 which sped from the Broad Axe Tavern to Evan's Tavern on Race Street in Philadelphia. Its time each way was three hours. Another stage also ran further up Skippack Road as far as Kutztown. It started in Philadelphia at five o'clock in the morning and returned the following day. The coaches traveled through Nicetown, Germantown, Chestnut Hill, Flourtown, Whitemarsh, Broad Axe, Pigeon-town, Centre Square, Skippack, Zieglerville, Sumneytown, and Trexler's Furnace.



The Broad Axe Inn, Established 1685

Although the Industrial Revolution had by this time made a strong impact upon its people's lives, Whitpain was still basically a rural and agricultural township. Norristown had grown to be a large town with the advent of river traffic and the railroads. It was also an important staging center. In 1830 Swedeford Road became State Road. The coaches made regular trips three times a week through Whitpain to Montgomeryville and points East. The stagecoach enterprises not only improved mail service but also brought closer communication between the many towns and villages they went through. The stagecoach driver had a very special responsibility and rapport with his passengers and with the people he dealt with along his route. In Whitpain, Worcester, and other settlements in this area it was essential that he be bi-lingual because many residents spoke only German. The coachman delivered much more than people and mail. He also delivered newspapers, parcels, and sometimes personal messages. The villagers benefitted in other ways, too. Where there was stagecoach service, men and women found opportunities for employment away from the farm as hotel keepers, store keepers, maids, grooms, smiths, carriage-makers, drivers and harness-makers.

The villages in Whitpain all developed where inns happened to be, and by this time the country store was a necessity, too. Thomas Humphrey who had settled in Centre Square in 1800 bought thirty-eight acres across the Skippack Road from the Waggon Inn. He built a house with a store on the corner. After his death his daughter, Elizabeth Went/, rented the store to James Bush. He became the first postmaster in the township in 1828. Eliza who was a widow and a capable business woman, managed the inn after her husband's death and in 1840 turned the store over to her son, Thomas Went/-. Like his grandfather and his mother, he was an enterprising person. In 1855 he sold the store with the post office to Ephraim Shearer. By 1885 a Mr. Rouff owned the store and was the postmaster. At the turn of the century, F. Clifford Bernhard owned the property and was in charge. Clara, his daughter, and her husband, Norman MacMullan, continued the business and raised their children there.



The second official post office in the township was opened in Blue Bell in 1840, the same year the village was renamed. It was located on the corner across Plymouth Road (Blue Bell Road) from the Blue Bell Inn. The property had been a "store stand" since before 1812 and included two dwellings. The smaller house was set back from the corner but was close to Plymouth Road. It was reportedly built in 1740. The other larger house was located closer to Skippack Pike. It was a general store but in addition to that became a community meeting place. In a large room on the second floor, the Whitpain Library Company was formed in 1817. Benjamin Hillan, a New Englander by birth and ex-member of the Legislature, was the owner of the store and the inn and is said to have hung the sign of the Blue Bell in front of his tavern in 1840. The people of the settlement liked the ring of it so well that soon both village and post office had a new name. He was also the postmaster.

During the Jackson Administration (1829-1837) an element of lawlessness pervaded the nation. The establishment of The Horse Company - For the Recovery of Stolen Horses and the Detection of Thieves was certainly indicative of the times. There were chapters of this organization in Whitpain and one first met at the Blue Bell Post Office in 1841. It should be noted that the Postal System went into a sharp decline and reforms had to be made. Bootleg operators were interfering with the mails and reforms were needed. The laws were repealed to make tampering with the mails punishable by flogging in public for first offenders and capital punishment for second offenders. Franking privileges were curtailed, and in 1847 the first postage stamps were printed



A Flower Which Grew
in the Area in Abundance

They were for 5 cents and 10 cents and they pictured Ben Franklin and George Washington, respectively. Stamps became a form of currency during the troubled times ahead.

In Blue Bell, Levi Miller owned the store in 1848, according to a contemporary map. Shortly after the Civil War, Charles De-Prefontaine took over the business. At first he rented the store but in 1875 he bought the property. He was a prosperous merchant and postmaster for thirty-seven years. He is remembered with much respect and affection. Next to the market on the corner was a pump and watering place for the horses. There was also a large scale which was designed to weigh produce, grain, etc. Mr. DePrefontaine no doubt bought wholesale from the farmers for the large back room of the store was equipped with many bins to



Charles DePrefontaine, 1925

keep all sorts of commodities. The villagers, as the story goes, came to the store every Saturday night to swap yarns and to spend a social evening. They sat on benches in front of the store. The post office was just a small cage-like booth which occupied one corner as one came into the room. Harold Hoover, who was Charles DePrefontaine's son-in-law, succeeded him. He and his family lived in an apartment in back of the store. Mr. Hoover had a difficult time, especially during the 1930's Depression. Oliver Reiner and Alfred Gamp, also tax collector, were in the post office for a while. Business in the store was not very encouraging during the period before World War II and after. In the early 1950's, Mr. and Mrs. Carlin DeHaven ran the post office for several years, even after the grocery business had been phased out. In 1959, Mr. Edward J. Esmond, Jr. became acting postmaster until the old Blue Bell Post Office was closed in 1961.

The third post office in Whitpain opened in Broad Axe in 1855, John Cadwallader being the first postmaster. According to the 1877 map, J. Hobensach had the store (with post office). The building they occupied was on the north corner of the crossroads and was a two-story frame building. The Plymouth to Upper Dublin Turnpike became Butler Pike in 1853 and the Reading Railroad came through Ambler in 1856. Traffic increased through the village after that. Jacob G. Dannehower owned the store in 1885. Some of the older residents remember when James Murray, who had come from Conshohocken, ran the grocery store and post office in the 1920's.

The Belfry Post Office, the fourth one, came into existence in 1880. It was located on Skippack Pike near North Wales Road just a short walk from the Belfry Station of the Stony Creek Railway. The old house is still there. At one time, the Jeannes sisters lived there and later, in the 1920's, Henry Annear was postmaster. It is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. David Beers.

Perhaps two of the best innovations in modern mail service were Rural Free Delivery (in 1897) and house-to-house delivery shortly thereafter. R.F.D. was largely responsible for the rather extreme decrease in the number of post offices in the U.S. (from 76,945 to 52,641) by 1920. The casualties in this township were Broad Axe and Belfry.



Former Belfry Post Office

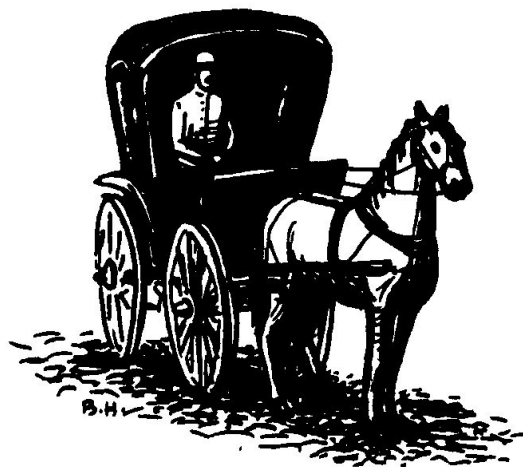


Blue Bell Post Office 1976



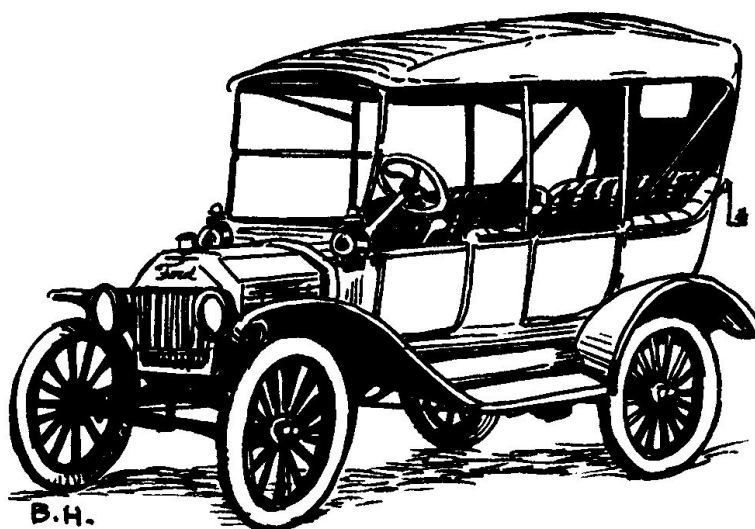
Blue Bell Store and Post Office 1870

For a while, mailmen traveled over country roads by horse and buggy but when the motor car era arrived, the flivver took over. This system created a new link between the isolated people of agricultural areas with the more "cultural" advantages of the cities; and "what they got more of were mail order catalogues," among other things. In 1913 the U.S. Parcel Post Service came into being and packages were delivered to the house. In Whitpain the first R.F.D. agent was Charles Preston. It was his responsibility to pick up the mail at the Reading Station in Ambler and bring it to the Blue Bell

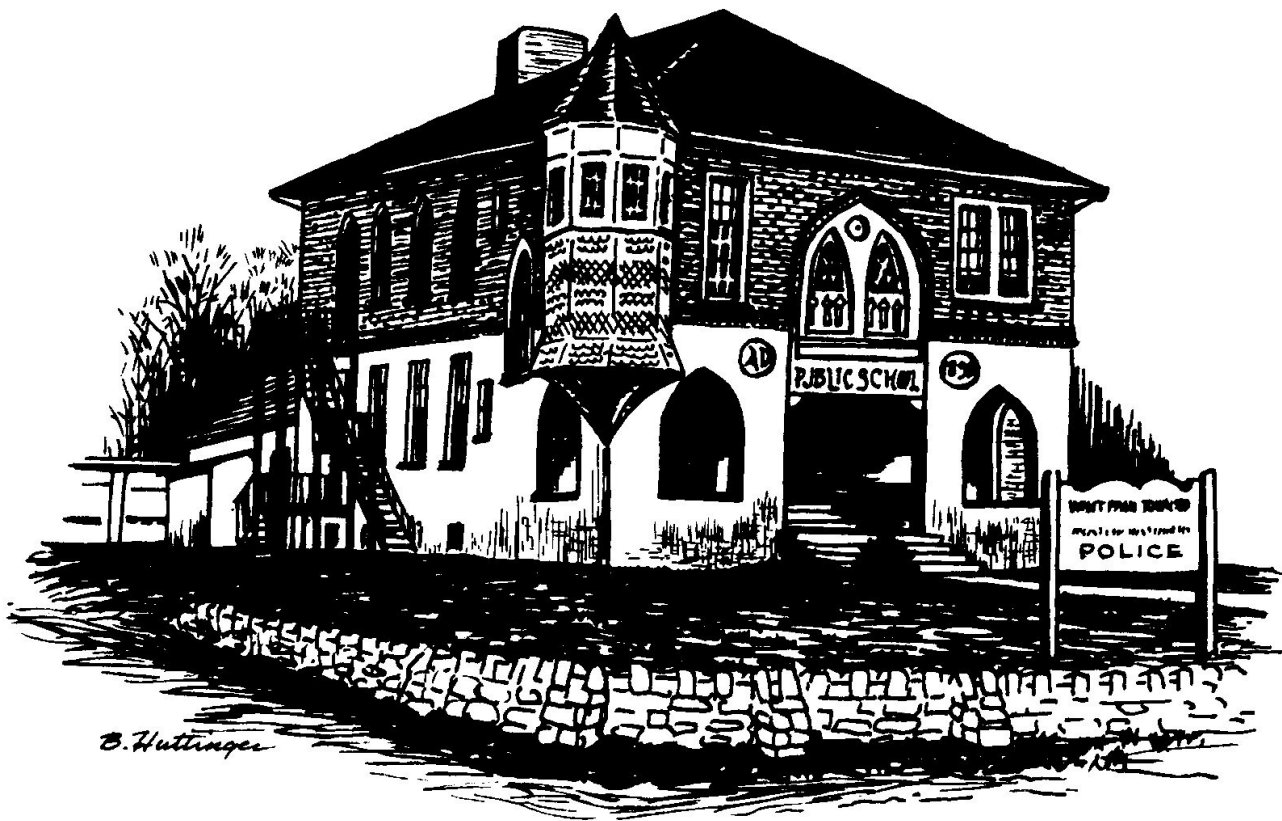


Post Office. He was married to Esther Hoover, daughter of the postmaster. By the late 1950's the Blue Bell Post Office had increased its volume of mail to such an extent that a larger facility had to be built. It was relocated on Skippack Pike at Union Meeting Road. Thomas P. Lowery, III was appointed postmaster in 1961. Today, this is the only post office within Whitpain's boundaries. Broad Axe receives mail service from Ambler and Center Square from Norristown. The Center Square Pharmacy still retains a rural station inherited from the Mac Mullans after they closed their store. Significant of the era, there are gas stations where the post offices once stood in Blue Bell, Broad Axe, and Center Square.

Whitpain is today, a part of the suburban sprawl of Philadelphia with many private homes, a few apartment complexes, and a number of businesses including Sperry Univac, Ford, Yarway, and Henkels and McCoy. To accommodate this volume of mail, we now have a first-class post office with all of the modern means for handling it, at the agency's disposal. Down through the years much progress has been made for improving the system in spite of periodic difficulties, and the mails do go through!



Early Motorized Mail Delivery



Whitpain Township Police Department, 1959

Recent Development of the Township

By Davenport Plummer
 Photography by George S. Peck
 Artwork by Becky Huttinger

Township Administration Building

After meeting for a number of years in the upstairs meeting room of the Center Square Fire House, with the Township records kept in a desk in the home of the Secretary-Treasurer, the Board of Supervisors decided it was necessary to have a full-time office to accommodate the expanding functions of the Township with its files and paperwork as well as providing a headquarters for the Police Department. Accordingly, the Supervisors in 1958 entered into a lease with the Whitpain Township School Board for the majority of the second floor of the 1895 school building, at the corner of Skippack Pike and School House Road.

By 1964 it had become evident that the Township had outgrown the 1895 school building and a new Township building had to be found. From time to time various locations had been examined by the Supervisors with the final selection being the Township Property on Wentz Road, where it was planned to build a proper Township Administration Building. While negotiations for the Township Property were in progress, the Supervisors were informed of the availability of the Cook tract of 62 acres on Yost Road, behind the land of St. Helena's Church. This tract was obviously highly desirable as open space.

With the Township's borrowing capacity limited by statute, it was impossible for the Township to finance and purchase the two properties and at the same time construct the new Administration buildings. Accordingly the Municipal Improvement Authority was brought into the picture.

At this time, the Municipal Improvement Authority was reorganized and its charter enlarged. Prior to the reorganization, its only real function had been to develop, own, and operate Wissahickon Park in West Ambler. Under the enlarged charter, its expanded functions included the purchase of Township Property for the Administration Buildings, the purchase of open space land, and the construction of the new Township building.

The Township was given an outside figure for the cost of construction. This, added to the cost for the two properties, was the basis for a study of the whole package by the Supervisors and the Municipal Improvement Authority. Based on the existing bond market and projections of increased property assessments in the Township, it was concluded that the whole project could be handled by the Township using the Municipal Improvement Authority as the financing agency.

While the financing negotiations were going on, the Township purchased the Wentz Road property, and on July 20, 1966 a ground breaking ceremony was held. The contracts for construction had been signed July 14, 1966 and the building was ready for occupancy June 10, 1967. At that time, a formal ribbon cutting ceremony was held where the Municipal Improvement Authority, as owner of the land and buildings, turned them over to the Township, as tenant for a rental sufficient to service the bond issue floated to finance the entire operation.

The new Administration Buildings housed the Township Administration with the Administrator, the Police Department, the Township Engineer, various inspectors, the Sewer Authority and for a time the District Justice.

With the increase in Township functions and the enlargement of the Police Department, the Administration Building became cramped, necessitating an addition. This was undertaken and, upon its completion in 1976, the physical rearrangement of the Township activities was carried out.

The construction of the addition was coordinated with the Municipal Improvement Authority and the trustee for the bond issue. The cost of the addition was financed by the Township without recourse to borrowing.



Whitpain Township Administration Building, 1977



Wissahickon Park

Looking at Wissahickon Park in the northeast corner of the Township today, one finds it difficult to remember what it looked like prior to 1961.

About the time of World War 1, Keasbey and Mattison Co., then the largest manufacturer in the area, built two rows of small houses on both sides of the block of West Chestnut Street in West Ambler, in Whitpain Township. These houses were built for their employees and, in common with the times, had few if any of the amenities considered today as essential for decent housing.

During the Depression the houses on West Chestnut Street were all sold to an individual, not a resident of the Township, who rented them. Due to the nature of the houses the rent was low, though it was said that the landlord received a gross annual rental equal to the purchase price of the block of houses.

Through the years the condition of West Chestnut Street continued to deteriorate. The area had become a police problem, a school problem, and a potential health hazard. This situation was the source of great concern to the Board of Supervisors, but whenever it was considered, any plan for ameliorating the problem broke down on the matter of cost.

Matters stood at this point, with much talk and concern but with no real progress, until 1960 when the Chairman of the Planning Commission, uncovered an "anonymous donor" who expressed an interest in helping the Township clean up West Chestnut Street. Numerous meetings were held with the representative of the anonymous donor. It was finally agreed that the donor would purchase the houses on West Chestnut Street and deed them to the Township, provided the Township agreed to spend at least \$50,000 over several years to remove the houses and improve the area.

A meeting was then held with a representative of the absentee owner. After considerable negotiations, helped by the Township's reminder to the owner that he would be forced to install indoor plumbing and to connect each house to the new sewer system, the owner agreed to sell the houses on both sides of West Chestnut Street for \$ 125,000.

For many years the area between West Chestnut Street and the Wissahickon Creek had been used as a dump for the slag and waste materials resulting from the manufacture of asbestos products by Keasbey and Mattison Co. This dump was a smaller replica of the "White Alps" dumps on the outskirts of Ambler. After extended negotiations, the Keasbey and Mattison Company agreed to deed the property containing the dump to the Township.

Since the demolition of West Chestnut Street, the rehabilitation of the area into a park, and its subsequent operation might divert the efforts of the Board of Supervisors from other operations and problems affecting the Township as a whole, an Authority was created for this purpose. Known as the Whitpain Township Municipal Improvement Authority, it was given the right to own, acquire, and operate park and recreation areas in the Township.

The M.I.A., as it was popularly known, received title to the houses on West Chestnut Street and the former Keasbey and Mattison Co. dump and then went to work. The West Chestnut Street residents, with the help of Montgomery County, were all relocated. The houses were then demolished and that part of West Chestnut Street was closed and removed from the Township map.

Initially, the removal of the dump was considered but the cost turned out to be prohibitive so it was decided to level the existing slag by spreading it through the area, covering it with a layer of top soil and seeding the plot.

Through the years various improvements have been made, including; the open shed, the comfort station, the baseball diamond, the basketball area, all accomplished through the care and attention of the Township employees.

Through the generosity of the anonymous donor and the Keasbey and Mattison Co., plus the thought and hard work of many people in the Township Administration, a dump and a health hazard have been transformed into a decent recreation area known as Wissahickon Park.



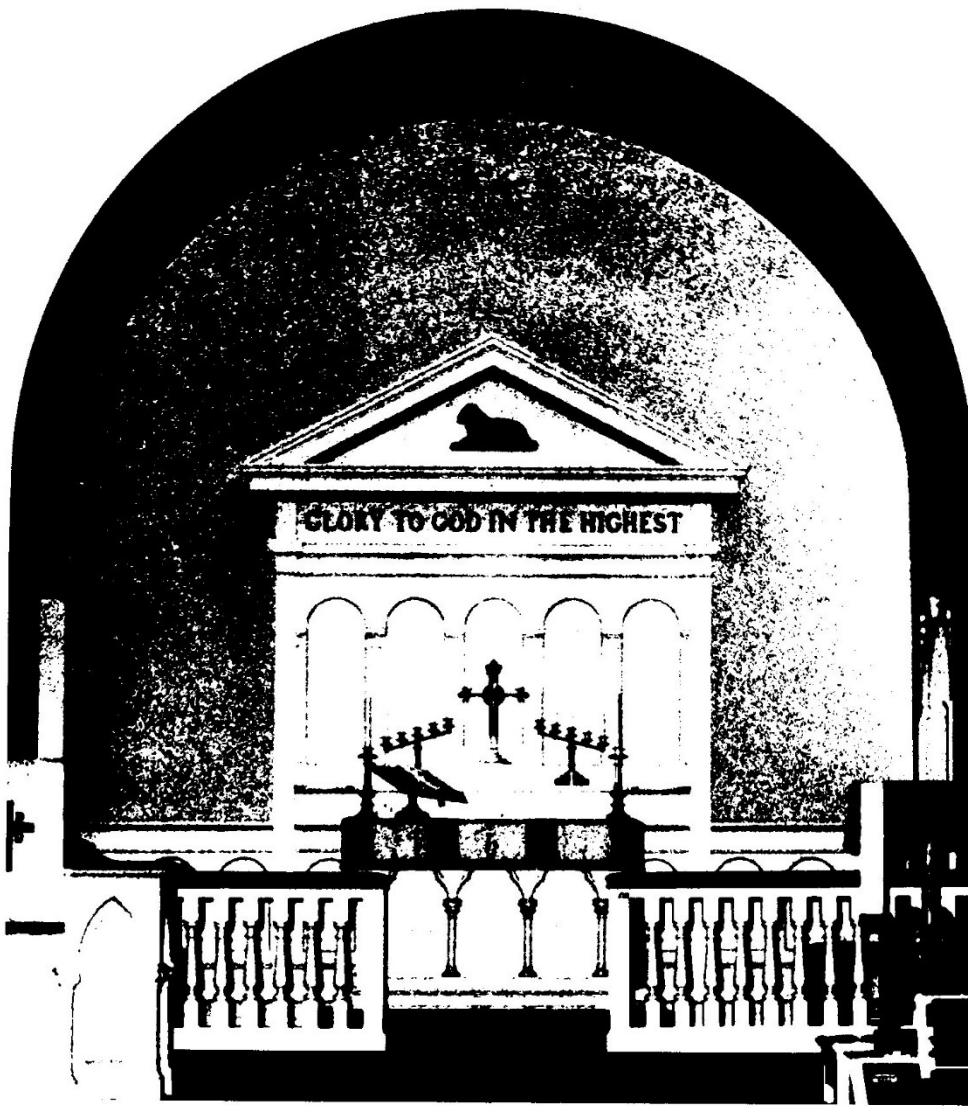
The Miller's House at Werstner's Mill

Sites and Families

"Men and women may sometime, after great effort, achieve a creditable lie; but a house cannot say anything save the truth of those who have lived in it."

.... Rudyard Kipling

A history of any township or nation is the history of its people. Here we have Whitpain's people in their homes, their farms, their industries, and in their places of worship. We see them at work and at leisure. We catch glimpses of some of the happy moments and the sad moments in many generations of Whitpain's families.



Churches



Sketch of Boehm's Church as it Appears in 1976

History of Boehm's Reformed United Church of Christ

By George C. Taylor, Jr.

Photography by George C. Taylor, Jr

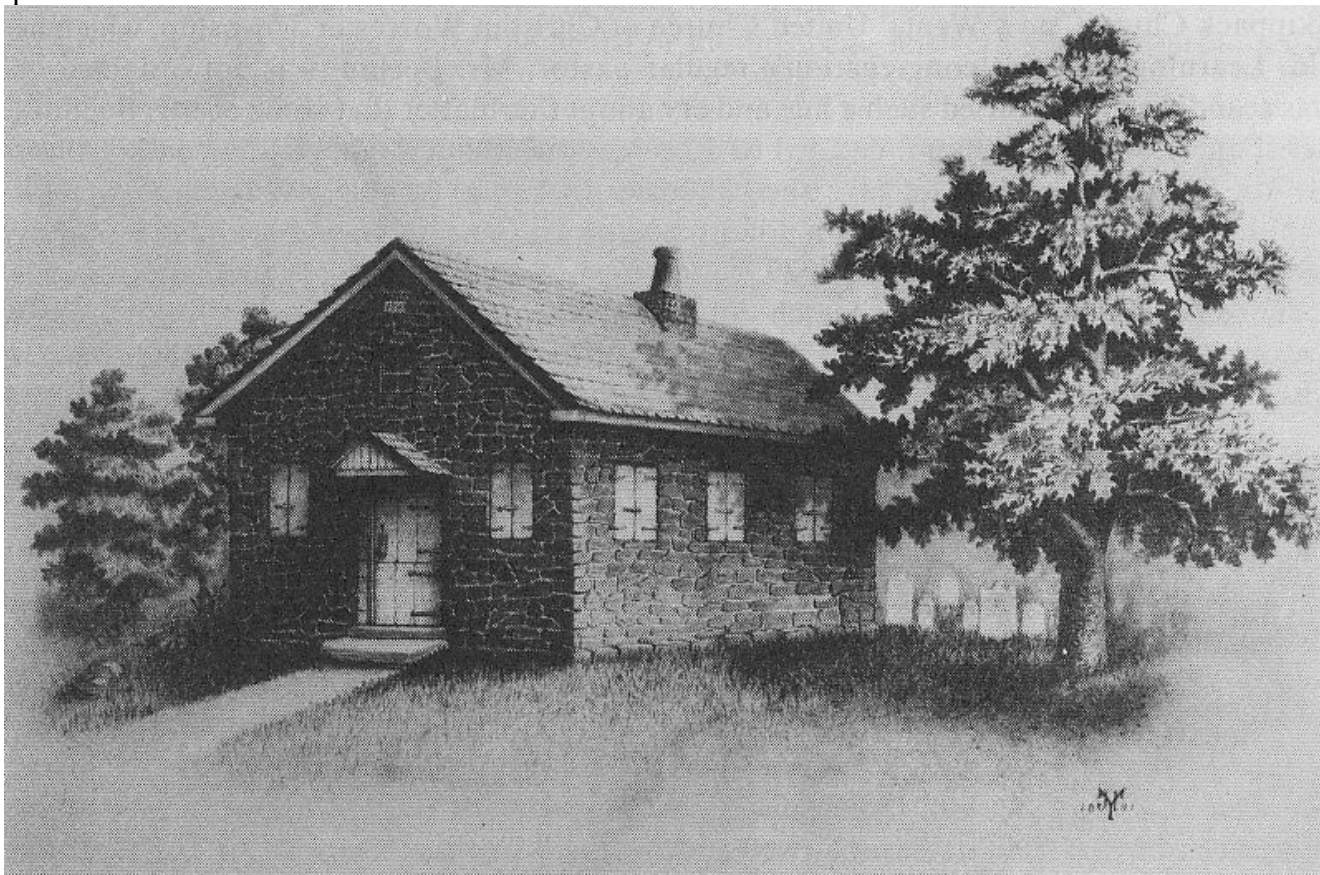
The United Church of Christ denomination is a combination of the previous Evangelical and Reformed Church with the Congregational Church. Earlier, the Reformed Church in America united with the Evangelical Church. Boehm's was originally a Reformed Church; first, Dutch Reformed under the auspices of the Classis of Amsterdam, then in 1790, under the German Reformed Synod of America in Philadelphia. The Dutch and German Reformed Churches are virtually identical in doctrine and theology, both following the teachings of the Heidelberg Catechism. The Reformed Church was founded shortly after Martin Luther fathered the Lutheran Church in Germany but, the father of this denomination is generally regarded to be Huldreich Zwingli of Switzerland.

In 1740, the Reverend John Philip Boehm lived on his 200 acre farm in Whitpain Township, between what is now Cathcart Road and School House Lane, just northeast of Skippack Pike. One of his sons farmed this land while his father rode circuit and attended to the affairs of various churches which he had founded and serviced as often as he could. As he approached his sixtieth year, the hardships of long rides on horseback in all kinds of weather began to catch up with him, and he was forced to spend more time closer to home. His neighbors petitioned him to hold services for them whenever he was at home on Sunday and he complied, beginning in 1740. Finally, this little congregation grew to the point that a building was necessary and, where the Blue Bell Pike meets Plymouth Road, a

one acre plot was purchased from John Lewis for four pounds, ten shillings. The deed, still in the possession of Boehm's Church, is dated February 8, 1747 and is given to Rev. John Philip Boehm, minister; Michael Clime, Arnold Ruttershaw, and Andrew Acker, church wardens. A small stone church building was erected by the congregation, with the Reverend Boehm helping to build the structure with his own hands despite his infirmities. his original church building is described as follows: "The building was one story high, built of stone and mud for mortar, with remarkably heavy walls and a very long steep roof. The church stood with gable-end facing southwest. There was a large double door, opening with a very heavy handle and thumb-latch."

Some of the earliest names appearing on the church records along with the dates of their arrival in America are: Yosts, 1729; Engart (Engard), 1728; Clime, 1731; Sheive, 1737; Rumer, 1741; Kurr, 1743; Shearer, Eberhard (Everhart), Etris, and Korndeffer, 1748; Dull, Greger, Lotz (Lutz), Klarr, Houser, Martin and Seltzer, 1749; Shaub, 1750; Schlater, Ernst, Gruber, 1751; and Singer, 1752.

From 1740 until 1747, burials were made along what is now Cathcart Road, near Skippack Pike. Beginning in 1747, the one acre plot purchased for the church was also used as a cemetery. Some of the names on the oldest tombstones are: Knorr, Etris, Martin, Greenawalt, DeHaven, Doll, Eberhard, Singer, Sheive, Greger, Yost, Rumer, Schlater, Shearer, Klair, Spitznogle, Engard and Remig. Note the correlation between most of these names and those from old church records listed previously. In 1834, nine additional acres were added to the original one acre at a cost of \$364.21, willed by Casper Schlater, second pastor of Boehm's Church.



Original Boehm's Reformed Church, Blue Bell, Pa. Built 1747, Torn-down 1818.

Drawing by J. Irwin Yost in 1891 — Details from description in church history plus memory of Mr. Thomas Geatell, an older member of the congregation in 1891, who had seen the building

When walks were laid out in 1876, remains of Revolutionary War dead were found in shallow graves; these bones were reinterred in one place near the church and in 1967, the Valley Forge chapter of the N.D.A.R. erected a commemorative stone over this mass grave (see chapter on Revolutionary War for photo illustration of this marker). In 1965, there were 1,211 grave markers in this cemetery representing several thousand individual burials here.

John Philip Boehm was born in Germany (probably the Palatinate) about 1685. He was supposedly the son of a Reformed Church pastor and was a schoolmaster and foresinger at a parochial school and church in Worms, Germany. His emigration reportedly occurred because of a disagreement with the Church fathers in Worms. At any rate, he arrived in Philadelphia about 1720 and moved into Whitpain about ten years later, renting the farm which he later purchased in 1736. He had begun to preach much earlier than this and served his first communion at Faulkner Swamp in 1725.

In 1727, an ordained minister of the German Reformed faith arrived in Philadelphia and began to preach. This minister, George Michael Weiss, was invited to preach at the Skippack Church, now Wentz' United Church of Christ in Worcester Township, which he did. Learning that this congregation's regular pastor, Mr. Boehm, was not ordained he was scandalized and raised such a hue and cry about this matter that some of Mr. Boehm's parishioners, with his consent, decided to do something about it and petitioned the Classis of Amsterdam, Holland, to have their minister ordained by this classis through their ministers in New York City. John Philip Boehm traveled to New York and was duly ordained there on November 23, 1729. Thus began the association of the many churches founded by Boehm with the Dutch Reformed Church. This tie lasted until it was dissolved, by mutual consent, in 1790 and an independent American Reformed Church was set up.

An excerpt from the translation of the hearing of the case of John Philip Boehm before the Classis of Amsterdam, held in New York City in July of 1728 by the Reverend T.W. Chambers, pastor of the Collegiate Protestant Dutch Church, states:

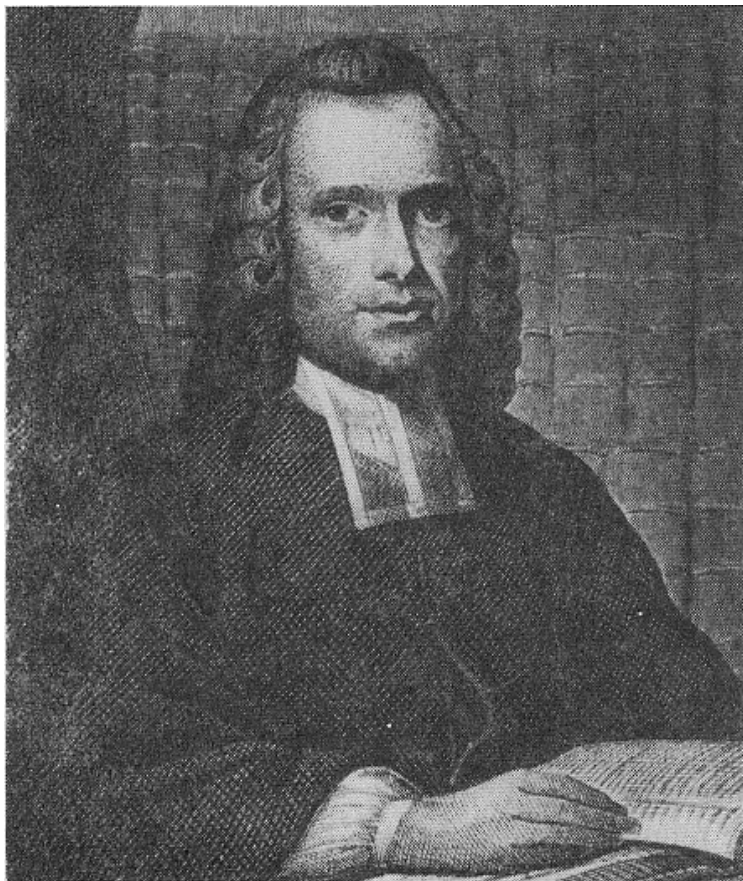
"From this document it appears that Mr. Boehm arrived in this country as early as the year 1720. He came from the Palatinate, having been schoolmaster and foresinger in Worms, a city in Germany, for about seven years, he found a demand for his services as reader (Vorlezer) upon his arrival here. The Reformed people around him were destitute of the means of grace, and he became a sort of pastor to them, without receiving any compensation for his services. So well did he perform these services for the destitute Reformed people that they besought him to assume the functions of this ministerial office. This he did in 1725, receiving as compensation only the voluntary contributions of the people."

A word about the character of this unusual man; he was probably the best educated person in Whitpain Township when he lived here; his sermons were undoubtedly fiery and he was completely devoted and loyal to the teachings of the Reformed Denomination. He regarded the "sect" religions as heretical, particularly, the teachings of Count Zinzendorf who attempted to organize all German religious denominations in Pennsylvania into one unified body. This effort was not successful, but only led to the formation of one more denomination, the Moravians.

The Reverend Boehm is known to have entered the church of a sect denomination, strode down the aisle to the pulpit, and denounced the minister as a heretic and agent of the Devil to the entire congregation. He combined a violent temper with stubbornness but, he was a tireless organizer who always looked out for the welfare of his various flocks. When he died, on April 29, 1749 at his youngest son's house, the only minister available for the funeral service was one Martin Kolb, a Mennonite "Instructor" (minister) who performed this duty. The old man would have been most unhappy at this turn of events, if he had known.

The Reverend Michael Schlater, who had been sent to assist Boehm in 1746, made amends after returning from a missionary trip, by preaching a funeral oration for the Reverend Boehm in the Germantown Church. This same Michael Schlater became the second pastor of Boehm's Church. The Reverend Boehm was buried beneath the altar of this original church where his remains still rest under the floor of the present church (although the exact spot of this interment has never been located). He is regarded as the "Father of the Reformed Church in Pennsylvania."

The Reverend Schlater (mentioned above) wrote in his journal, "Shortly after my arrival in Philadelphia, I went to visit Mr. Boehm, one of the oldest ministers of the Reformed Church, and the old man, after he heard of my business, felt very glad and promised to assist me in my labors."



Michael Schlatter, 1749 - 1753

The Reverend Boehm was present at the organization of the first Reformed Church Synod in Philadelphia, September 29, 1747. He became secretary of this body in 1748; copies of the minutes, in his precise handwriting are still in existence.

Unfortunately, Mr. Boehm regarded the church records he kept as his own; after his death, they were put into a single chest which, in 1834, found its way to the attic of a house at Second and Quarry Streets in Philadelphia. Someone, probably cleaning out the attic, burned the entire contents of this chest including any likeness that may have existed of the Rev. Boehm. The best record we have of Mr. Boehm comes from Holland, where his copious correspondence is to be found in the files of the Classis of Amsterdam.

The church records under Reverend Schlater did not fare any better; he was taken prisoner by the British during the Revolution and all of his records were burned by them in Chestnut Hill. In fact, there are virtually no records for the first five pastorates, of Boehm's Church. In 1764, the Reverend George Alsentz, pastor of this church from 1762 to 1767, began to keep the first church records that have come down to us and which, in 1976, are on exhibit in the church's museum. The Reverend Alsentz was pastor of both Boehm's and the Germantown Churches. He lists the following as consistorymen at this time: John Marten, Frederick Doll, Jacob Gubler, John Edtarts (Etris) as Elders; Philip Rittersham and Casper Schlater as Deacons; with a total membership at Boehm's of twenty families.

In 1760, Boehm's Church congregation purchased land adjoining the church building and erected a school, reputed to have been the first in Montgomery County. This building was torn down and replaced by a Sunday School addition with adjoining Sexton's House in 1844.

In 1776, the congregations of Wentz' and Boehm's Churches jointly purchased fifty-five acres of ground in what is now Center Square, from William Zimmerman, for a parsonage, which was built. This property was held by both Churches until 1840. when the Reverend George Wack purchased it for his own use, paying \$3,842.93. The Boehm's Church subscribers for the above property are listed in 1778 as John Marten, John Etris, Sr., John Shaub, Valentine Shearer, Adam Lotz (Lutz), Henry Rumer, Frederick Doll, Peter Troxel, Peter Rock, George Kreiger (Greger), George Etrisch, John Etrisch, Jr., John Casper Schlater, John Troxel, Matthias Marten, Daniel Yost, Marten Schwenk, Jacob Schmidt, Sr., George Riley, George Goor, John Shearer, Nicholas Korndoefer, Jacob Schmidt, Jr., Edwardus Huth (Host), Nicholas Seltzer, John Wentz and Lawrentius Shaner. This is probably a full list of the heads of congregation families at that time.

In 1857, a parsonage was built northeast of the church property on the Blue Bell-Pennlyn Pike. This house was sold in 1890 and is still in use as a private home. A new parsonage was built this same year on two-thirds of an acre on the southeast side at 830 Blue Bell Pike between the church and the village of Blue Bell. In 1969, this building was, in effect, traded for the present (1976) parsonage on Grant Avenue, Center Square, by the Eichler & Moffly Real Estate Company, which has converted it for commercial office space rental.

In 1836, sheds were built along Pennlyn-Blue Bell Pike to hold twenty-two horses. Twelve more stalls were added in 1854. A tremendous wind storm blew all of these sheds flat in 1878, but they were rebuilt in the same year. Again, in 1899, another terrible storm destroyed the sheds and again they were rebuilt. Time, and the automobile, conspired to eliminate the need for horse sheds and in 1964 all but three of these stalls were removed.

The three remaining were repainted and fixed as reminders of the past and were also useful for storage. In 1975 they were burned to the ground, either through carelessness or arson — whoever was responsible was never learned.



Horse Sheds

The original church building was refurbished inside to repair the destruction wrought by the soldiers of the Revolutionary War when they used this building as a hospital. All of the pews had been removed and these were replaced along with other renovating. In 1818, it was decided that a larger building was necessary to accommodate a growing congregation and a new building was erected, in part, on the foundations of the old. The new church faced southeast toward Blue Bell-Pennllyn Pike, in contrast to the one, which faced southwest toward a now extinct road called "Booz Road" (which was an extension of what is now "Boehm's Road" through the present parish house-Sunday School complex).

Note: the pictures on pages 128 and 129 are missing.

This 1818 building was fifty feet long by forty feet wide, two stories high with two side and one end gallery. The pulpit was of the elevated type, reached by stairs, and was in the northwest end of the sanctuary. In 1853, this building was remodeled with the high pulpit replaced by the modern raised-end platform.

In 1870, extensive renovations were made, including the addition of an eighty-foot high spire with bell (the present church bell), two massive chandeliers were hung inside which could be pulled-down for lighting because they were counter-balanced (see counterweight box filled with rocks in the Church Museum). After this alteration, the Church had a seating capacity of 500. This is basically the same building as the present main church building. It has been modified from time to time over the years ... In 1891, central steam heat was installed; in 1903, a new Sunday School room was built and the present brownstone front was added; the high spire was replaced by the present lower one in 1908 when the roof was also rebuilt; electricity was put in during 1913 and the old cabinet organ was replaced by the present pipe organ in 1915. The Sexton's House was converted to a Parish House in 1963 and in 1971, the addition of the Community Hall with its 150-seat auditorium was added, together with the upstairs Museum. A modern kitchen was installed in the Parish House, connected to the Community Hall for ease in serving functions held there.

The old basement complex under part of the church, and the Sunday School section were converted for use by the Montessori House School which teaches three- through five-year olds in pre-school skills, until 1977.

In 1976, the Reverend Robert E. Pauli left to accept a call at a larger Church in the Upper Darby area of Philadelphia. Boehm's Church was served by various supply pastors until December, 1976 when the Rev. Milton F. Schadegg accepted the call to this pastorate.

Some information about various pastors has come down to us in the records, a few samples follow:

William Stoy — Rev. Stoy, one of the supply ministers for Boehm's Church in the 1756-1762 period, took up the study and practice of medicine later in his life. He gained special prominence with his cure for hydrophobia. "General Washington's account book shows that he sent to him one of his servants for cure." Dr. Stoy was also noted for his famous drops for hysterics, his salve for itch and his activities with inoculation for smallpox.

John Gabriel Gebhard (1772-1774) — The entry of baptism of his eldest son appears on Rev. Gebhard's baptismal records in the Whitpain Congregation. "Jacob, born April 20, 1774, baptized May 7, 1774: May God make out of him an instrument of his own honor." Rev. Gebhard left Boehm's Church for a congregation in New York. He was an ardent patriot during the Revolution, and he preached the righteousness of the cause of the colonies.

John W. Ingold (1774-1775) - Rev. Ingold's pastorate at Boehm's was short "doubtless because of his manner of life: for he was given to intemperate habits and his behavior was such that nothing good could be said of him."

John H. Wickel (1775-1778) - The charge of Rev. Wickel, too, was short. Difficulties growing out of the Revolutionary War lead to his leaving the congregation. "At the breaking out of the war he preached a sermon from Eccl. IV, 13: 'Better is a poor and wise child, than an old and foolish king who will no more be admonished.' This sermon caused a great excitement and no doubt led to the course referred to." (Also see Chapter on Revolutionary War about this pastor.)

John Herman Winckhaus (1784-1789) - "Rev. Winckhaus was pleasant in his manners, quick in his movements and in his speech, cheerful and sprightly in social circles and a man of considerable learning." After leaving Boehm's Rev. Winckhaus had a brief ministry in Philadelphia. A plague of yellow fever broke out in Philadelphia in August 1793. "The Reformed Congregation alone lost 17 members in August, 92 in September and 143 in Oct. 1793. Among the last was the pastor himself."

Philip Reinhold Pauli (1789-1793) - Rev. Pauli was known to be an eloquent preacher. "His sermons were generally simple and affecting, especially at funerals, where he seldom preached without weeping, or causing others to shed tears. His church was generally well filled. He devoted Sunday afternoons to teaching the catechism to the young people and required a 2 month period of instruction before of confirmation."

George Wack (1802-1834) - Rev. Wack had the longest pastorate in the history of the church. In the early days of his ministry his congregations were unable to give him the necessary financial support. He had to carry on farming and quarrying stone through the week, and on Sundays rode many miles to fill his appointments. He was skillful in mechanical crafts, often manufacturing his own farm implements. He spent many hours following his love of music, and owned a large organ which he had made himself. From 1817-1820 he held the office of Register for Montgomery County. With all his many abilities, he was a modest man and was "ambitious, not to shine as the oracle of wisdom, or as some great one, but simply to be found faithful." Rev. Wack is buried in Boehm's churchyard.

Samuel G. Wagner (1855-1868) - Rev. Wagner, in his first sermon at Boehm's Church said: "Insinuations I will never hear; hints I will merely regard, but in the language of another, 'honest, frank and manly dealing will, I trust, meet with honest, frank and manly dealing in return.' This course of action must have been successful, for when the Rev. Wagner gave his parting sermon at the church he was so highly esteemed by congregation and community alike that the church was overfilled, additional chairs brought in, and many had to stand outside."

Edward Rutledge Cook (1926-1940) - Rev. Cook was the only pastor in the history of the church to marry a member of the congregation and the only one married in the church.

St. John's Lutheran Church

By Ellen Pittenger Gladeck
Photography by George S. Peck

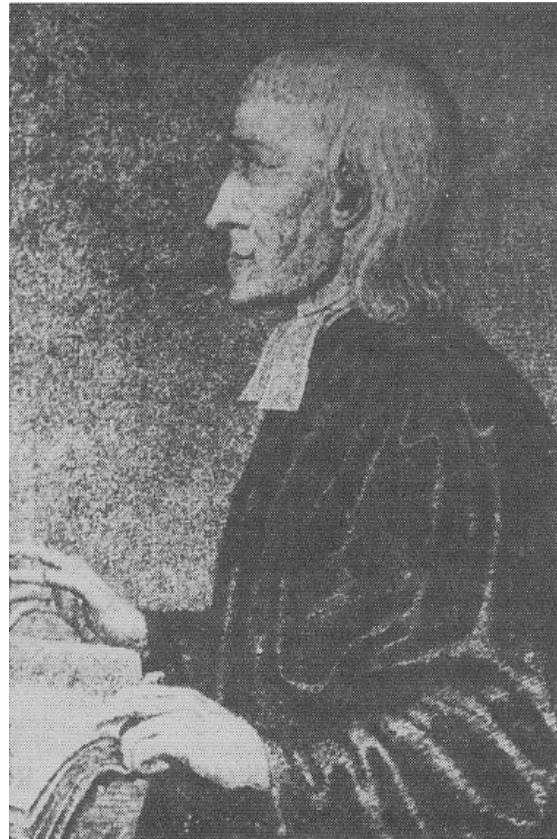
St. John's Lutheran Church stands by the side of Skippack Pike about one mile above Center Square. This, however, has not always been true. In the Seventeen hundreds there were many German Lutheran settlers in Whitpain Township. They found that they must either ride on horseback to Trappe, or down the Skippack road to Germantown to worship in a Lutheran Church. Because the Skippack road made traveling easier, most of the settlers went to Germantown to attend services at St. Michael's.

In the year 1769, a congregation was established in Whitpain and included in St. Michael Parish. This first congregation met in private homes or even out of doors to worship. The Reverend Jacob Van Buskirk was the Pastor of St. Michael's and its parish included St. Peter's Barren Hill 1752, "Puffs" Upper Dublin 1752-54. St. John's Center Square 1769, and St. Peter's North Wales 1772-5. Services were held about every two weeks. In 1769 the Reverend Van Buskirk resigned the pastorate of St. Michael's.

In April 1769, the Reverend John Frederick Schmidt arrived in America from Halle, Germany to accept the call of the people of St. Michael's.

St. John's had no formal church building until 1773. However, in 1771 plans were formulated and excitement ran high in the congregation in anticipation of owning their own building.

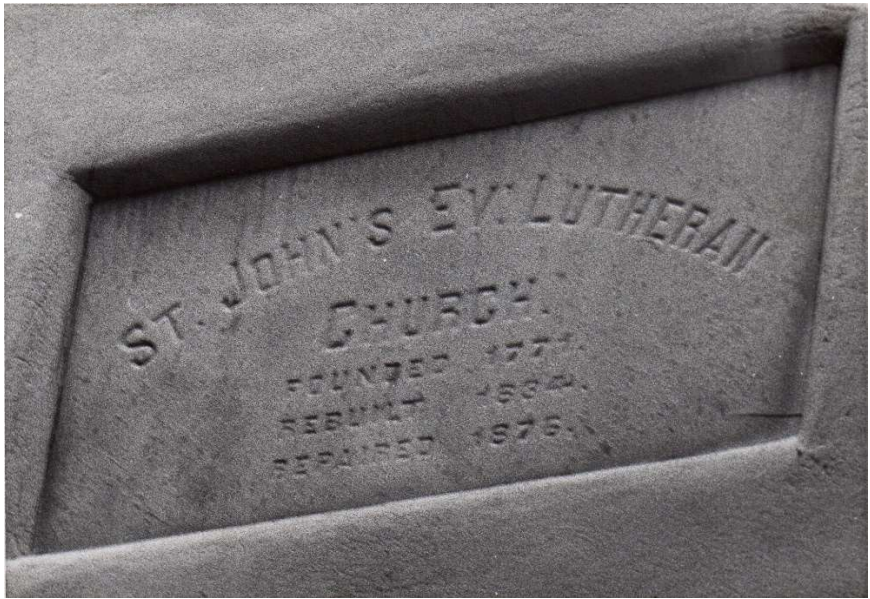
The deed for the property, containing one acre, was given by George Kastner and wife to Philip Bower and George Berkheimer, of Whitpain; Michael Henkey, George Gos-singer, Adam Fleck, and Peter Young of Gwynedd and George Heyberger of Worcester, building committee. After the church was finished, on the 28th of June, 1773, the building committee conveyed the building and grounds to Abm. Dannehower, of Gwynedd, Michael Hufacre, Jacob Carr and Philip Shenaberger, of Whitpain and Leonard Berkheimer and Philip Hoffman, of



Reverend John Frederick Schmidt

Worcester, trustees of the congregation.

The Colonies were on the verge of the Revolutionary War and Pastor Schmidt was an outspoken critic of England's attitude. When the British took possession of Philadelphia, he fled with his family to the home of a Jew who had been converted to Christianity and was living in Upper Milford, Bucks County.



The British vented their feelings against him by using St. Michael's Church in Germantown for their barracks.

They, also, defaced the pews, demolished the organ, destroyed his pulpit, plundered the parsonage and stole his furniture.

On Oct. 4, 1777, after the battle of Germantown, General Washington's troops made their retreat principally in a direct line into Whitpain and over the Skippack road to Pennebacker's Mill. St. John's church served as a refuge and temporary hospital for the dying and wounded. Those who did not recover were buried in the cemetery adjoining the church.

In 1923, the Daughters of the American Revolution dedicated a boulder in commemoration of the Revolutionary soldiers buried in St. John's cemetery.



Pastor Schmidt faced another crisis in 1793 when the dreaded yellow fever wiped out the greater part of his congregation at St. Michael's, including his wife and seven children. He, too, contracted the disease. However, he recovered and served St. Michael's church and its parish for thirteen more years. His ministry covered forty-three years, seventeen of which were given to St. John's from 1769 to 1786.

The Reverend Anton Hecht became the second Pastor of St. John's — 1787 to 1792. He was succeeded by the Reverend Jacob Van Buskirk who also had charge of "Puffs" Upper Dublin and St. Peter's, North Wales.

Van Buskirk was the first native-born preacher to receive ordination in the Lutheran Church in America with the exception of Muhlenberg's sons. In 1763, Van Buskirk made a handwritten copy of the English liturgy by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg in 1748. At the present time there are only three surviving copies. Pastor Buskirk remained at St. John's until he retired in 1797.

The Reverend Henry A. Geissenhainer followed Pastor Van Buskirk as minister of the three churches. During his ministry at St. John's, around 1797, the first pipe organ was installed. According to the records of the congregation, the organ had a cost of \$525.88 and had been paid for in English money.

The keyboard of this organ caused problems for the organist because the natural keys were black and the sharps and flats were white; just the opposite from the normal keyboard.

The Reverend Dr. Charles Wildbann followed Pastor Geissenhainer in 1803, but his pastorate was brief. He passed away a few months after his installation and was buried in St. John's Cemetery.

After Dr. Wildbann's death, two divinity students, Solomon and David Schaeffer, brothers, served St. John's from 1804 until 1806.

In 1806, Reverend J. C. Rebanach took charge of the congregations at Centre Square, North Wales and Upper Dublin. Five years later, in 1811, he was succeeded by the Reverend John Weiand. It was in this year that Upper Dublin separated from North Wales and Center Square. Pastor Weiand resigned in 1826.

In 1829 Reverend George Heilig was called. He instituted a drive for a new church. Reluctant approval was given by the congregation and the old structure, which was of similar style as St. Peter's Barren Hill, was torn down. The new building was modeled after St. Michael's in Germantown which had been built in 1819. It is believed that the plans and specifications were borrowed by St. John's since the interior and exterior were very similar, though not as elaborate.

The pulpit was placed at the back of the church in an alcove, reached by two straight flights of stairs, one on each side. The chairs used on either side of the altar were the gift of the great-grandmother of the late Reverend George D. Faust, who was Pastor of the North Wales congregation from 1880 to 1890. The chairs are still in use today.

The pews were high backed, paneled and painted white. The seats were narrow, unpainted and uncushioned. Every pew had a door. A pew renting system was adopted which divided the congregation into two classes; subscribers and renters. Price of sittings varied according to location. If you could afford to pay \$10.00 per year you could become a church politician.

Heat was supplied by two large iron stoves with earthen pots neatly whitewashed every fall. The heating system was a "hit or miss" affair and always was too hot or too cold.



Altar Chairs

On rare occasions when services were held at night, the church was lighted by means of oil lamps. There was a large chandelier suspended from the center of the ceiling and it consisted of four lamps, each set in a brass receptacle from which dangled many colored prisms.

The floor of the pulpit and center aisle were carpeted, but the rest of the floor was bare.

The Communion Service consisting of Flagon, Chalice and two plates for the Communion bread was of pewter. The lettering, although nearly defaced, on the reverse side of one of the plates reads, "Fenchurch Street London, John Townsend and Thomas Giffen" and has their Touch Mark. They were pewtersmiths who worked in England during the mid-seventeen hundreds. The second plate has the name of B. Barnes, Philadelphia and his Touch Mark. Mr. Barnes was an American pewtersmith who worked in Philadelphia from 1811 to 1815.

The Flagon and Chalice have no Touch Marks and therefore, must have been made in this country, because American pewtersmiths were not required by law to have a Touch Mark as were the pewterers in England. The Baptismal bowl was also made in America.



Pewter Communion Service



Pewter Baptismal Bowl



Church in 1894

This Communion Service was in constant use until 1876 when subscriptions were solicited for the purchase of a new silver service.

The offering was "lifted" at this time in little black bags which were attached to long poles. This made it possible to reach from one end of the pew to the other. The bags were later discarded in favor of boxes lined with velvet. One of those little boxes, minus the velvet, is still to be found in the church.

This story has been told before, but it is so entertaining that it bears repeating. In 1834 when the new church was being built, the trustees decided to economize on the cost of building by having an old-fashioned "church raising." All of the men in the congregation, as well as all of the men in the neighborhood not members of the church were invited to lend a hand with the heavy work. It goes without saying that a strong incentive to this free contribution of labor was found in the bountiful supply of good things to eat that had been prepared by the women of the church.

Now the gentlemen of the "church raising" period were used to quenching their thirst with something more satisfying than water. So, one day during the course of the construction, they sent one of their number for some liquid refreshment. He found it at the "Waggon Inn" down at Center Square. He was in a hurry to get back up to the tired, thirsty men at the church site and he was careless in stowing it for transportation. As he was driving up the hill toward St. John's, the tail board of his wagon slipped its moorings; the barrel of "refreshment" rolled out, broke and the contents ran back down the hill.

For a time after that, the hill was known as "Grog Hill." Reverend Heilig tried to overcome the embarrassment to the congregation by having a large sign painted and put up at the bottom of the hill lettered in large letters-CHURCH HILL. This ploy failed and for quite a time the name, "Grog Hill" stuck.

During the pastorate of Reverend Heilig, the congregation found itself in extreme financial difficulty due to building the new church. Unable to meet the demands by its creditors, the building was advertised for sale under the Sheriff's hammer. When the struggle to keep the building seemed hopeless, two trustees of the congregation, Mr. John Miller and Mr. Charles Hallman, visited every member the day before the sale and secured pledges from them. These two men gave their personal bonds as security and it was not until 1843 that these men were released from the obligation they had assumed to free the church from debt. It was in this year that Pastor Heilig resigned.

Pastor Jacob Medart was called in 1843. He was the first minister unable to preach in the German language and so from that time on services were conducted in the English language.

The Reverend John Hassler followed Pastor Medart in 1856. At the beginning of the Civil War he resigned to accept a call to the post of Army Chaplain. During the Civil War period, 1862 to 1868, Reverend P. M. Rightmeyer served the congregation. In 1865 the church purchased a large lot adjoining the church on the West. A house was on the lot built of logs, dating back to pre-revolutionary days. The sexton used it until the present house was built in 1883 and the old one demolished.

Reverend E. L. Reed succeeded Pastor Rightmeyer in 1868. During Pastor Reed's pastorate, St. John's, Center Square and St. Peter's, North Wales decided to separate. This took place in 1870. Reverend Reed remained Pastor of St. Peter's and Reverend Dr. H. Bickle of Philadelphia was called to St. John's. During his pastorate the clerical robes and bands were worn for the first time. Also, in 1870 the vestry purchased land and a house adjoining the church on the East, thus supplying the Pastor with a parsonage.

The Reverend David Levin Coleman was the next pastor and served St. John's from 1875 to 1881. Following him was the Reverend Harry B. Strodach, who remained for only one year. He later accepted a second call to St. John's in 1884 and remained until 1888.

Reverend James C. N. Park succeeded Reverend Coleman in 1889. The congregation had sold the old parsonage and since Reverend Park married soon after his arrival at St. John's the present parsonage was built on the lot adjoining the church. Reverend Park served for five years.

In 1894, Reverend Charles C. Snyder came to St. John's and remained ten years until 1904.

In June 1904, Reverend Jeremiah Ritter, Bath, Pennsylvania accepted a call to St. John's and remained until June 1911, when he took up work at the Good Shepherd Home in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

From 1911 to 1915, the church was served by the Reverend Theodore Hoffmeister and was followed by Reverend Frederick Haworth under whose pastorate extensive changes were made to the interior of the church.

The floor of the church was raised in order to make room for church school rooms in the basement.

In 1917, the side and singing galleries were removed. St. John's original pipe organ gave up the ghost one Sunday morning during the service in the year 1888. It was taken down, broken apart and its parts sold at auction to the members of the congregation. An organ was purchased from a Roman Catholic church in Bethlehem, Pa. for \$250.00. This organ was, at this time, moved from the singing gallery to the alcove back of the pulpit and was later placed at the right side of the pulpit.

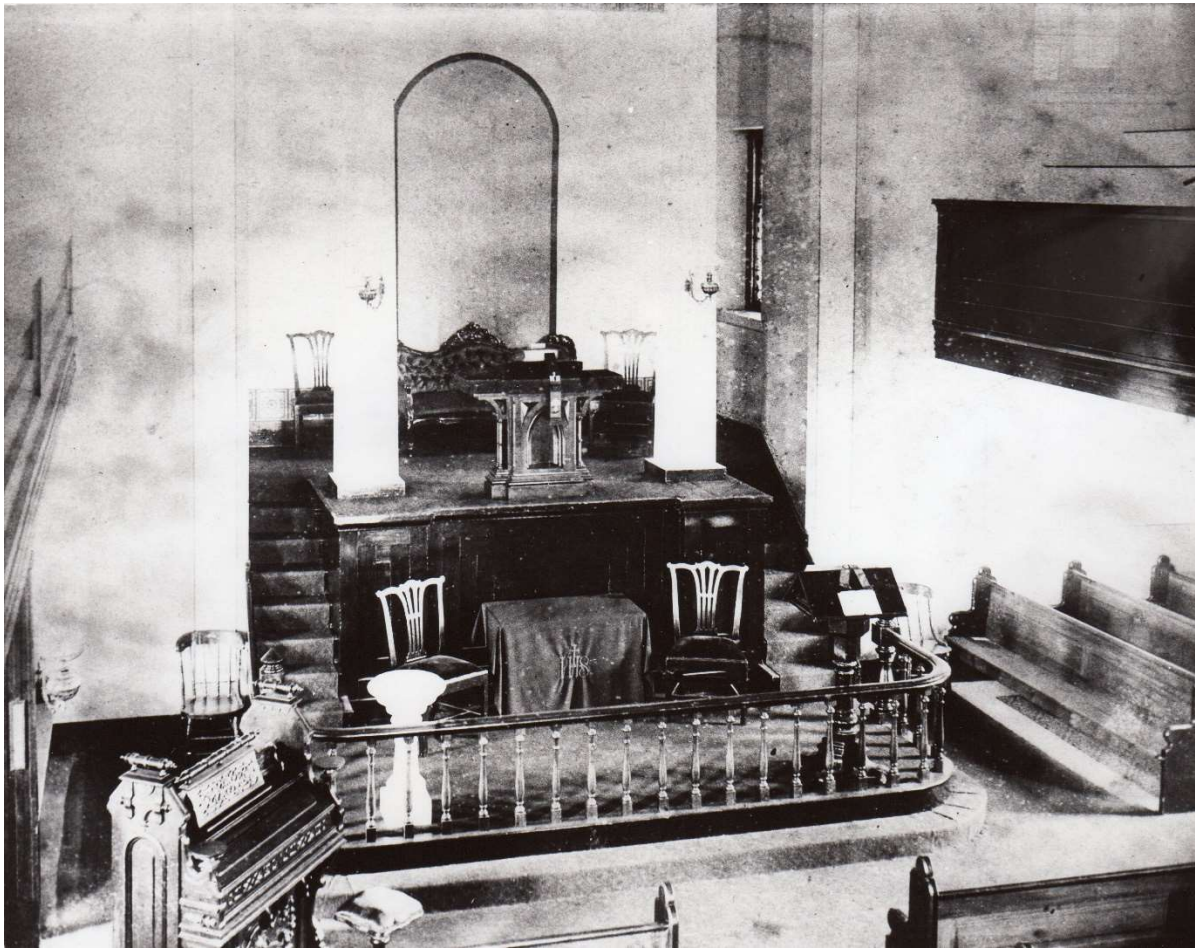
In 1920, Pastor Haworth resigned and Reverend C. C. Snyder returned to St. John's in 1921.

During Pastor Snyder's second pastorate, the individual Communion Service was inaugurated.

In 1926, a new organ was purchased for the sum of \$5,230.00 from the Mudler-Hunter Co. of Philadelphia.

The organ previously purchased from the Roman Catholic Church in 1888 again changed church affiliations when it was given to Bethel Hill Methodist Church.

The first recital on the new organ was given by Adam Giebel a blind organist from Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia.



Church Interior 1897



Church Interior 1976



St. John's Organ



St. John's Church 1976

Pastor Snyder resigned in February of 1936 due to ill health.

In March 1936, Reverend Herbert D. Cressman was ordained and installed as the Pastor of St. John's. During his pastorate the interior as well as the exterior of the church were remodeled and renovated at the cost of over \$5,500.00.

Choir stalls were built and the organ was moved to face the choir. Colonial design chandeliers replaced those in use and a Vox Humana stop was added to the organ.

In April of 1945, Pastor Cressman resigned and in June of 1945, a call went out to the Reverend Ernest E. Miller. He served the congregation until May 1961, having received a call to St. Peter's in New York City.

During Pastor Miller's pastorate, a Parish Church School Building was constructed in the year 1955. It was the first time in over one hundred years that the congregation had incurred an indebtedness. The members of the building committee were Mr. Lewis T. Troster, Mr. Charles E. Cassel and Mr. Howard L. Baker. These men gave unstintingly of their time and energy and a great deal of credit should go to these men.

In November of 1961, the Reverend William A. Fluck began his ministry at St. John's church. During his pastorate modern church offices were constructed in the basement of the Parish Church School Building.

In 1975, it was decided that the 1926 organ should be enlarged and rebuilt. Mr. Brantley A. Duddy, a member of the congregation and, also, an organ builder by profession, volunteered his services for this project and the work was started.

Pastor Fluck resigned August 1975 and the call went out for a new minister.

The Reverend William P. Welther answered St. John's call and was installed Sunday, March 14, 1976. Pastor Welther had the distinction of being installed in this colonial church during our nation's celebration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution.

During his ministry at St. John's, the work on the organ was continued under the direction of Mr. Duddy with the help of a group of enthusiastic, would be "organ builders."

When completed, the organ will contain a new three-manual console, five additional ranks of pipes placed in the gallery above the Narthex of the church and twenty ranks of pipes in the Chancel.

Much credit should be given to those members who have devoted many hours of labor toward the completion of this project.

As you walk in the well-kept cemetery to the rear of the church, you will see graves, old and new. Perhaps the grave of one Christian Moser will catch your eye. This inscription can be seen on his head stone—

"Christian Moser, an American Patriot Soldier who periled life and fortune in the eventful struggle of the Revolution to secure the Independence of America.

"He personally shared in the sanguinary conflicts at the Paoli Massacre and at the taking of Stony Point-and was also in the Battle of Germantown and several other engagements during the R——War.

"After exemplary life of 83 years 10 months & 12 days he was called from this Sublimery sphere December 22, 1838.

The names that are to be seen on the grave stones are as familiar on the membership rolls of St. John's now as they were in Colonial times



Grave of Christian Moser

Most of the inscriptions on the newer stones are short, and to the point, but there is one inscription that brings a chuckle to the lips of all who read it and, therefore, bears repeating here. The grave is that of Albert B. McMullin who died May 1, 1967. The lettering reads thus:

"Some Said That He Was Sour And Sullen,
While Others Claimed He Was Too Gay,
Now It Doesn't Matter Either Way,
Pause Smile Pass On But Shed No Tear,
It's Just Old Al That's Lying Here."

The present active confirmed membership numbers three hundred and forty-six and there are one hundred and thirteen students in the Parish Church School.

The budget for the year 1977 is \$55,000.00.

St. John's Lutheran Church is, at this point in time, two hundred and eight years old. The Bicentennial of the American Revolution was commemorated during Pastor Welther's ministry with two Colonial Services. The liturgy used was prepared in 1748 by Henry Melchoir Muhlenburg and was taken from the three surviving copies that were handwritten by the Reverend Jacob Van Buskirk, a former pastor of St. John's.

The colonial pewter Communion Service was used and the members of the congregation attended, suitably attired in colonial dress.

To quote from Reverend William A. Fluck, "What does the history of a somewhat small, quiet congregation in Whitpain Township mean? It means that here in this place one thing has remained constant through the shifting tides of human affairs. Here the Gospel has been preached, babies baptized, marriages solemnized, funerals performed—all in the name of the eternal Christ. Yes, here countless Christians through their faithfulness have merited the name of Saint."





Community Orthodox Presbyterian Church



Old Photo Union Meeting Church

Union Meeting Church

By Elizabeth M. De Vincent
Photography by George S. Peck

The Union Meeting Church is located on Union Meeting Road below Hoover Road in Blue Bell. The deed conveying the land containing one hundred and twenty-one perches was given on September 4, 1813, by James and Elizabeth Buck to the trustees of the Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church.

The next year a stone meeting house was built. The date-stone says "Union Meeting House," built 1814. The pastors of the Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church preached here every two weeks. However, the intent of having a Union Meeting House was to accommodate ministers of all the Christian denominations when not in use by the Methodists.

During the excitement and at the time the division among the Friends took place, Edward Hicks frequently preached within its walls.

The building was remodeled in 1882 under the direction of the Reverend G. S. Schaffer. The cost was a thousand dollars and the church then had a seating capacity for two hundred and fifty people.

For quite a period during its earlier history, it was a flourishing society but later its membership was seriously decimated by deaths, removals, and other causes. The entire membership by 1884 did not exceed twelve people. Shortly thereafter the remaining congregation joined the Bethel Church in Worcester.

The graveyard is behind the church and the names most common on the tombstones are those of Zimmerman, Supplee, Brown, Smith, Fitzgerald, Shaeff, Kibblehouse, Roberts and Beck.

This church remained vacant for many years, the only activity being a World War I military burial in 1918 of a man from Norristown. The cemetery deteriorated and was densely overgrown. The church was desecrated and vandalized to the point that it would have met the same fate as the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, if it were not for the appointment of five trustees who were called upon to save the structure. Of these five only two are remaining, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Walter Shaeff, Jr.

In 1947, the church was rented to the Community Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Extensive work was done to restore the building to useable condition and the cemetery to its former appearance. It is now a building that is an asset to the community.

The Community Church came into being on July 12, 1936 at the Norristown home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Loughin with eleven charter members. Most of these had withdrawn with their pastor from the Port Kennedy Presbyterian Church, because the Reverend Kelly G. Tucker had been asked to resign due to his opposition to "Modernism."

The church has met in various places (the Tucker home in Norristown, Norristown's Odd Fellows Hall, 710 Swede Street) before moving to the present location in 1947 under the leadership of Pastor Henry Tavarase. Since that time, the church has been served by several pastors, the most recent being Reverend Ronald Jenkins who left in September of 1976 after an eight-year ministry.

Morning and evening worship are held on the Sabbath with Sunday School and a midweek prayer meeting. The church also serves the community through its Vacation Bible School program and its paper "The New Community."

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church

By Rev. David C. Laubach
Photography by George S. Peck

On Sunday, April 20, 1834, at the home of Phillip Matthias, with Rev. John S. Jenkins as Chairman and Levi G. Beck as Clerk, eighteen persons united in organizing the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. Their names were Jacob Conard, Mrs. Conard, Jane De Haven. Mrs. Catherine Greger, Mrs. Elizabeth Jones, Mary Lewis, Philip Mathias, Mrs. Margaret Mathias, Charles Mathias, Benjamin Mathis, Mrs. Hanna Mathis, Jacob Mathis, David Mathis, Eliza Mathis, Catherine Mathis, Mary Mathis, Mrs. Mary McCocl, and Enoch Moyer.

The oldest minute book of the church, on its first page says, "Mount Pleasant is an eminence, commanding an extensive prospect of a fertile part of the county in Whitpain Township, Montgomery County, Pa., which the church was constituted and from which it took its name." Prior to 1834, the property had the following history: William Penn executed leases and releases to Messrs. Fox, Marshall, and Claypole representing the land that is now Whitpain Township. Richard Whitpain, citizen of the town of London, obtained a 4500 acre tract.

July 30, 1689, Mary Whitpain, wife and widow of Richard, sold the entire tract to creditors. John Blackball, surviving trustee sold the great tract to William Aubrey of the town of London.

April 24, 1713, William Aubrey sold the tract to Anthony Morris, maltster and brewer of Philadelphia, and to Rees Thomas of Merion Township.

May 28, 1718, John Whitpain, (descendant of Richard), and Anthony Morris and Rees Thomas divided the Whitpain acreage by common agreement.

1734: The census shows Cadwallader Morris to be proprietor of land (200 acres) in the area of Mount Pleasant.

1750: (Approximately) Jonathan Taylor purchased 186 acres from the Cadwallader Morris tract.

1760: Jonathan Taylor is listed as one of the largest landowners in Whitpain Township. He was the father of over eight children.

February 19, 1776, Jonathan Taylor's land passed to his sons at his death. Sons Issac and Morris inherited the central part of the homestead comprising 100 acres.



Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Early Days



Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church and Graveyard

As the revolutionary struggle drew on, the sympathies of Isaac Taylor were with the mother country. He proved a Tory, and having the courage of his convictions, he left his home and entered the British Army. Before this, probably went some act such as selling supplies to British troops. He was arrested by American authorities, but released. This warning did not avail. At a meeting of the Supreme Executive Council in Philadelphia, January 28, 1779, "Isaac Taylor was ordered to be arrested for high treason for aiding and assisting the enemies of the State and the United States of America, by having joined their armies within this State." His property was ordered to be confiscated, and that they be sold as the lands of a traitor. This sale, however, did not take place till two years after the strife was over. Fifty acres (his share of the land left to him by his father) was sold to the University of Pennsylvania, September 22, 1785. Isaac Taylor died in 1789 having returned home at the end of the war.

August 19, 1789, the University of Pennsylvania (which was authorized to purchase the land by act of assembly) sold its one-half of the Taylor tract to Isaac's brother, Morris, for £ 100. This land was known again as the "Taylor Plantation." March 9, 1803, Morris Taylor, the younger, a yeoman, the sole surviving heir of the deceased Morris Taylor, the elder, sold 103-3/4 acres for £ 1,141, 5 Shillings, current gold and silver lawful money, to Henry Harner (wife, Margaret), a yeoman of Whitpain Township.

October 15, 1807, Henry Harner, a miller, sold 9-3/4 acres 75 perches to Miles Abbott of Whitpain for \$297.18.

September 5, 1808, Miles Abbott (wife, Mary), a yeoman of Whitpain Township, sold a parcel of 9-3/4 acres 25 perches to George Moss, a cooper, of Whitpain Township for \$400.00.

April 20, 1809, George Moss of Upper Dublin, a cooper, sold the Abbott tract to Edward Morgan, a millwright, for \$125.00 cash plus a \$300.00 mortgage to be paid in four equal installments.

November 27, 1809, Edward Morgan (wife Sarah), of Upper Dublin, sold the same tract to George Ellicott, a school master of Whitpain.

November 7, 1815, George Ellicott of Gwynedd sold a portion to Henry Harner, a sawyer, of Whitemarsh for \$533.33. This parcel, 1-3/4 acres, 25 perches.

November 12, 1817, Henry Harner sold the now small parcel to Dr. Thomas Chalkey James, a Doctor of Medicine from Philadelphia, and five generations removed from Abram Daws, and fewer from James Morris, for \$600.00.

July 3, 1834, Dr. James conveyed 3/4 acre to Philip Matthias, Benjamin Mattis, and Jacob Conard, Trustees of the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, to erect a meetinghouse and provide a burying place for the dead "in consideration that the establishment of a place of worship at Mount Pleasant may tend to the increase of safety and morality in the neighborhood."

April 17, 1877, Jacob Conard, sole surviving trustee named in the deed of land for Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, sold the 3/4 acre piece of land and building to the newly incorporated Mount Pleasant Baptist Church of Montgomery County for \$1.00.

The Church on Morris Road, at the foot of Lewis Lane, was built during the summer and fall of 1834 and services were held regularly thereafter. In 1872 the pastor purchased a lot "in the village of Ambler, on which we propose as soon as practicable to erect a mission chapel." The church began to spread out from this time on. Mission schools were established at Ambler and near the Spring House.

In 1877, a chapel, 30 X 40 feet, was erected in Ambler upon the eligible plot.

Services, Bible School, and Prayer Meetings were held in both churches. It was difficult for members to break away from the earlier Mount Pleasant location, but in May 1884, regular services were permanently transferred from Mount Pleasant to the newer Ambler facility.

Annual meetings continued to be held at Mount Pleasant until May 28, 1961 when it became unsafe. More recently the original church had become the target of vandals, and in August 1976, 142 years after its construction, the meetinghouse was torn down.

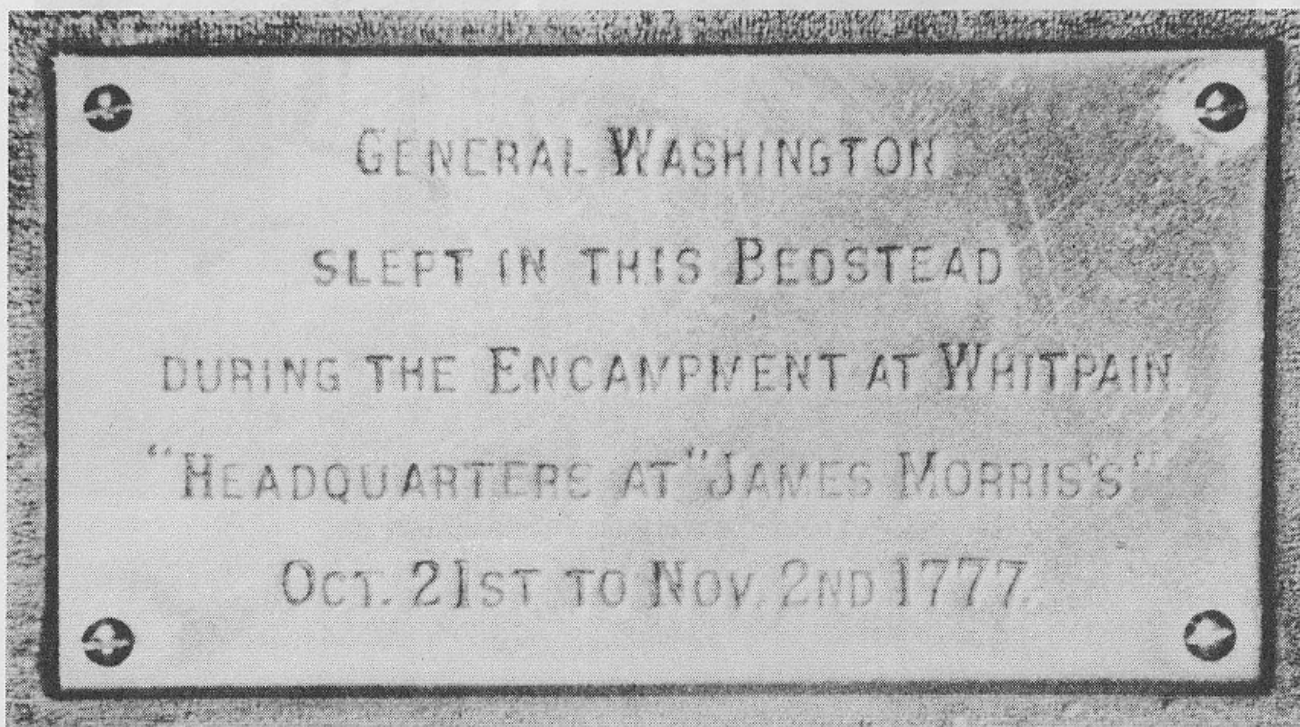


Shoemaker – Mercer Home

Homes



Dawesfield in 1976



Dawesfield

By Marjorie H. Gerhart
Photography by George S. Peck
Artwork by Becky Huttinger

Because it was Washington's Headquarters for a short time during the Revolutionary War, a most important historic house in Whitpain Township that remains from Colonial and Revolutionary times is Dawesfield. The house is situated on Lewis Lane between Skippack Pike and Morris Road about one mile west of Ambler and one and a half miles north of Broad Axe. It was here that Washington had his headquarters, with his troops encamped on the grounds, from October 20 or 21 until November 2, 1777, following the Battle of Germantown. His office was in the north parlor. He occupied the front room on the second floor that still contains his bed. General Le Marquis de Lafayette was quartered in what is now the front hall as a leg wound he had suffered in the Battle of Brandywine a few weeks earlier necessitated his remaining on the ground floor. Other officers and staff slept on the floor of what is the present dining room.

In the north parlor, which was a little larger than it now is, several court-martials were held, the most memorable being that of Brigadier General Anthony Wayne, at his own request, to investigate his action at the "massacre at Paoli." He was honorably acquitted by a court presided over by General Sullivan. In the same room on October 29, 1777, a Council of War was held at which time it is believed a decision was made that it was not advisable to attack the British in Philadelphia.

Years later Hannah Morris told her daughter, Phoebe James, how she remembered sitting on George Washington's knee when she was about four years old and being kissed by him.

In the north parlor today, there is a framed order from Colonel Pickering dated November 18, 1779, commanding that a Hessian soldier, a farmer, be delivered to James Morris:

"Sir:

You will please deliver one Hessian Prisoner, who is a farmer, to Joseph Morris for his son James Morris at Whitpain to whom the prisoner is to be immediately sent.

Mr. Thos. Bradford
c of Prisoners

By order of the Board
Tim Pickering"

It is thought that this was to partially repay James Morris for the use of his property.



It was believed that several Hessian prisoners who died during the encampment were buried in the northeastern corner of the field just north of the house. Over the years tales of seeing "Headless Hessians" in the nearby woods, known as Camp Woods, grew. None of the neighborhood children wanted to be in that area when it was dark.

Today, Dawesfield is a lovely mansion with beautiful iron grillwork on several porches. In 1777 it was the smaller, plainer, but comfortable home of Elizabeth and James Morris. The name Dawesfield came from the last name of its first owners, but the estate was not always known by that name. During the Washington encampment, it was referred to as "James Morris's" or "Camp Wippen (Wippen)." Before the death of Elizabeth Morris, the name Dawesfield was used occasionally. Later it was known as "Montgomery," probably after the name of the county. In 1867, however, Saunders Lewis decided to revive Dawesfield to give the estate a more distinctive title.

The first Abraham Dawes was one of three brothers, Abraham, Francis and Edward, who came to this land from Wales about 1702 or 1703. William, thought to be the son or grandson of Francis or Edward, was one of the three patriots in Boston, Paul Revere, Dr. Samuel Prescott, William Dawes, who rode on April 18, 1775, to warn people of Concord and Lexington that "the British are coming."

In 1713 Abraham, who sometimes spelled his name Daws or Dawes, purchased 250 acres in the county of Philadelphia, province of Pennsylvania, adjoining the lands of Richard Whitpain, from Jeremiah Hopton. The property was situated near Broad Axe on both sides of the present Butler Pike, which road was not constructed until 1739. In 1728 he



North Parlor As It Is Today

purchased 419 acres in Whitpain Township adjoining his other property from Rees Thomas and Anthony Morris for "£ 250, 16 shillings, lawful money." He and his wife, Edith, were Quakers. He was identified as a "Yoeman (farmer) and Maulster of Whitemarsh." He built the original section of the Willow Lake Farmhouse located in Whitemarsh on Butler Pike. There is an inscription stone in the southern wall with "A.E.D. 1715" which stands for Abraham and Edith Dawes. They had seven children according to the records of the Gwynedd Friends Meeting.

A son, Abraham, survived two other sons who died without issue. He came into possession of the land upon which Dawesfield was built in 1731, upon the death of his father. In 1734, this second Abraham who always spelled his name "Dawes," was listed as owning 350 acres in Whitpain. It is thought that Abraham, the second, built the original house that would become known as Dawesfield between 1728 and 1736. There is no date on the house, but the springhouse, a short distance south of the residence, has an inscription, "A.M.D. 1736" for Abraham and his wife, Mary.

The second Abraham Dawes had married Mary Harry, daughter of David Harry, at Plymouth Meeting on August 20, 1731. They had seven daughters and no sons. After Mary died, Abraham married a woman named Hannah but had no children by this marriage. After Abraham died, the name "Dawes" died out in Whitpain township. While he lived, he was a man of importance in his community. In 1752 he was made Justice of the Peace. When he became ill in 1775, he moved to Philadelphia with Hannah and a daughter, Judith. He turned his farm over to his son-in-law, James Morris, who had married his daughter, Elizabeth.

The obituary in the Pennsylvania Gazette, dated October 30, 1775, for Abraham Dawes, the second, described his contribution to the province. It reads: "... In the early part of his life he was engaged in the fatigues of improving an uncultivated country, which he encountered with fortitude and seeing his labour blessed, was encouraged to persevere by which means, in the emphatic language of Scripture, he made the wilderness to appear like Eden ..."

His will gave to his wife his negro "Wench Porthena;" to his daughter, Edith, his young negro girl, Esther; to daughter Mary his negro boy named Jeppo. The inventory filed contained among other things: "£ 2,432, one negro wench named Dinah, 20 years old, and at James Morris's, a variety of farming utensils."

Although members of the Society of Friends which condemned the ownership of slaves, James Morris and his wife continued to own a few as house servants for a time. It is not known when these slaves were freed, but the Society of Friends made several reports that the slaves were well treated and during the lifetime of James Morris reported that no slaves were any longer held by any members.



Gwynedd Friends Meeting recorded the marriage of James Morris and Elizabeth Dawes on October 1, 1772. James Morris, a miller in Upper Dublin Township, was the son of Joseph Morris, a merchant on Front Street in Philadelphia. Their daughter Hannah was probably born in 1773 before the family moved to Dawesfield where their only son, Joseph, was probably born. This was the family when Washington made the home his headquarters and a portion of the American Army was camped in the area. James Morris was thirty-four at the time.

James Morris was censured several times for his interest in the American Cause by the Gwynedd Meeting. One entry: "At the Monthly Meeting held 26th of the 3rd mo: 1776, 15 Plymouth Friends acquaint the Meeting that James Morris has acted in the Military way and says he does not think he was wrong in so doing."

Case was brought before each Monthly Meeting for the next four months.

Entry: "27th, 8th mo: 1776. James Morris appeared in this Meeting and gave a paper wherein he acknowledged that he deviated from his profession in meeting to learn the Military exercise, and condemns the said act which was read in this meeting and received for satisfaction."



In the minutes of the Meeting through the end of 1779, there was no mention of James Morris, even during Washington's encampment at Dawesfield. In the Meeting minutes of February 29, 1781, there was the following statement: "James Morris paying fine in lieu of personal Military Service. Serving the Office of Assessor and Supposed to have taken the Test of Allegiance." The case was brought before the Meeting until on June 27, 1780 it was noted: "Whereas James Morris had a Birthright amongst Friends but for want of taking heed to the dictates of Devine Grace in his own Heart so far deviates from our Christian principles as to pay fines in lieu of Military Service, Served the Office of Assessor and is under the imputation of taking the Test, for which misconduct he has been much laboured with, but it hath not had the desired effect. Therefore for the clearing of truth and our Christian profession we do hereby disown the said James Morris from having any right of membership amongst us until by unfeigned Repentance and Amendment of Life he Recommend himself worthy, is what we desire."

James Morris continued to hold military and civilian offices. In 1782 and 1783 he was elected to the General Assembly. When Montgomery County was formed, he was commissioned one of the first justices of the peace and a judge of the Common Pleas Court. He was a delegate to the Pennsylvania Convention in 1787 to ratify the Federal Constitution. He was Recorder of Deeds and Registrar of Wills for Montgomery County in 1791. He was a captain of the Montgomery Troop of Light Horse. In 1794, joined by his son Joseph, he took part in an expedition to western Pennsylvania to help put down the Whiskey Insurrection. He died July 10, 1795, at the age of fifty-two and was buried at Plymouth Friends Meeting.

The estate was bequeathed to his widow, Elizabeth, and to their two children. The son, Joseph, died a year later at the age of twenty-two, unmarried.

The daughter, Hannah, married Dr. Thomas Chalkley James at Plymouth Meeting on June 10, 1802, and it is recalled that friends were "sumptuously entertained at Dawesfield." Dr. James was the son of Abel and Rebecca James. The father was said to have furnished Washington, at one time, with a large sum of money to meet pressing needs. His mother's father, Thomas Chalkley, was an eminent member and preacher in the Society of Friends. Dr. James had graduated in 1787 from the University of Pennsylvania. He had also studied in London and Edinburgh. On the Western Expedition against the Whiskey Insurrection, he had served as a surgeon. In 1810 he became the first Professor of Midwifery at the University of Pennsylvania which position he held for twenty-four years.

This was the first specialty recognized in the hospital. He was a Fellow of the College of Physicians in Philadelphia and its president in 1835. He had an extensive medical practice in Philadelphia where he lived with his family. Dawesfield was visited in the summer. Dr. James' visits were usually short as he would drive out of the city in his gig and return the next day.

His mother-in-law, Elizabeth Morris, moved to Philadelphia when she was older where she died at the age of eighty, in 1826, and was buried in the Friends' burial ground at 4th and Arch Streets. Hannah inherited the estate. Hannah's husband, Dr. James, died at the age of sixty-nine and was buried at Friends' ground at 16th and Race Streets. He left everything to his wife with the advice to dispose of Dawesfield as she saw fit stating, "It is valuable but not productive." There was a financial depression and it was feared that the estate would have to be sold. It was divided into three parts and advertised for sale. However, this was decided not to be necessary, but a good deal of the furniture was auctioned.

After Hannah died, in 1842, her will gave a sixth of the estate to each of her surviving children and a niece, Elizabeth H. James. The will was administered by a son, Thomas James, who received \$10,000 as his portion of the estate. Martha James, who was married to William Jackson, died a year after her mother, and her husband accepted \$2,000 in return for his interest in the property.

In the summer of 1842, Rebecca and Phoebe James and their cousin, Elizabeth, moved from the city to live at Dawesfield. In October Phoebe married Saunders Lewis in

Philadelphia at St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Phoebe had already been disowned by the Society of Friends for attending Episcopal services and Saunders Lewis was disowned at this time. In 1845 there was an amicable agreement among the remaining heirs that gave Phoebe and Saunders Lewis the Dawesfield Farm, which at that time included the residence and a little more than 336 acres. Later, she inherited Westside, another house Dr. James had built on the original property.

Since Saunders Lewis practiced law in Philadelphia, the family used Dawesfield mostly as a summer home. They had five children, none of whom was born there. When they were at Dawesfield, the family attended services at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Whitemarsh although they did not become members. Saunders Lewis had a distinguished career in law. He also served in Philadelphia as a member of Common Council from 1845 to 1848 and as a member of the Select Council from 1849 to 1852. For a period from 1854 until 1857, because he suffered poor health, he lived the year round at Dawesfield. However, when he recuperated, the family returned to the city.

Phoebe and Saunders Lewis had five children. One daughter, Bessie Lewis, married Colonel George G. Meade when she was about twenty-seven, sometime after the War Between the States was over. Colonel Meade was the son of General George G. Meade who commanded the Northern forces that defeated the forces of Robert E. Lee at the Battle of Gettysburg. It is related that the wife of General Meade and their children spent two summers in a house across the road from Dawesfield. It is not certain that General Meade ever visited at Dawesfield. However, his descendants have lived in Dawesfield and homes nearby.

After Abraham Dawes, the home came down through the distaff side. There were male heirs who might have inherited it; but they died, did not want it, or could not afford to keep it up. It has been owned continuously by descendants of Abraham Dawes. It was probably occupied every year since it was built, although sometimes as a summer home. Some of the original furniture is in the house. Some was sold; other pieces were inherited by other members of the family who did agree that the bed George Washington had used should stay in its original place. There is a Peter Stretch clock, built circa 1741, and historical mementos such as a framed original land grant signed by William Penn and a lock of Washington's hair.

Uninterrupted possessionary interest in Dawesfield to the present, is as follows:

- 1728 — 1731 Abraham Dawes and his wife, Edith
- 1731 — 1775 His son, Abraham Dawes and his wife, Mary
- 1775 — 1826 His daughter, Elizabeth Dawes and her husband, James Morris
- 1826 — 1842 Their daughter, Hannah Morris and her husband. Dr. Thomas
C. James
- 1842 — 1901, Their daughter, Phoebe James and her husband, Saunders Lewis
- 1901 — 1912 Their daughter, Bessie Lewis and her husband. Colonel George
G. Meade
- 1912 — 1937 Their daughter, Elizabeth Lewis Meade and her husband,
George J. Cooke
- 1937 — 1967 Their daughter, Elizabeth L. Cooke and her husband, James
Cheston
- 1967 — James Cheston, now married to Laura J. Wayne

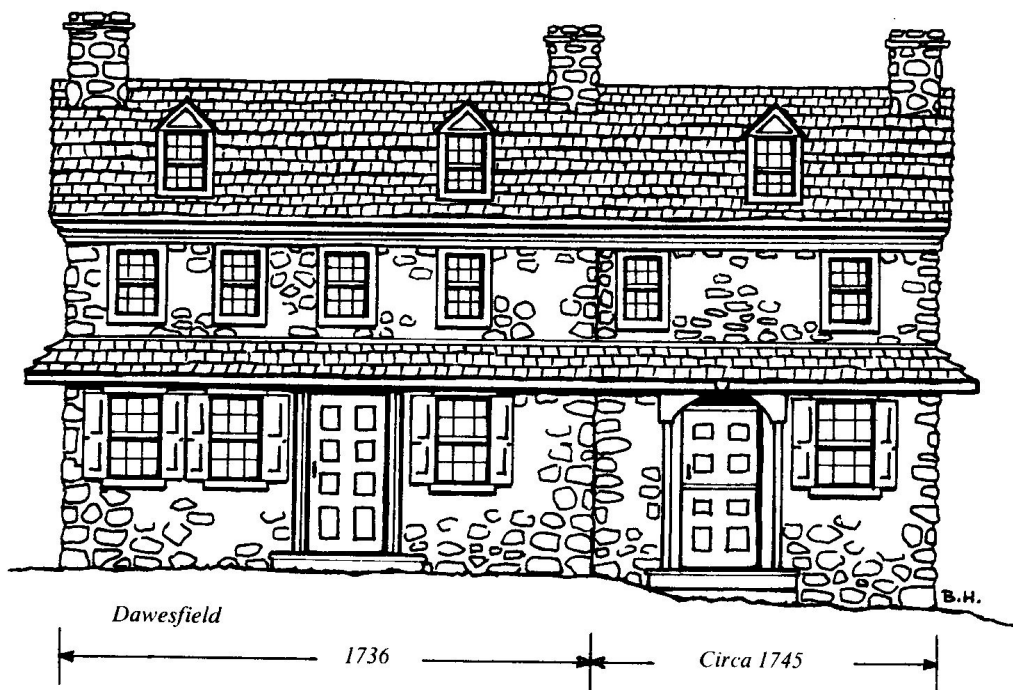
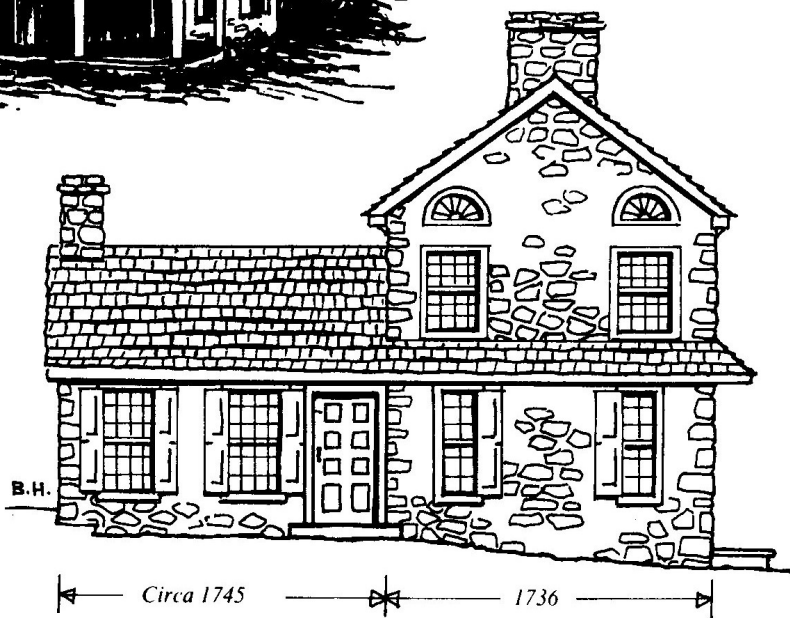
Many changes and additions have been made at Dawesfield. Originally, the house was thirty-six feet across the front, which faced south, with a depth of twenty-two feet. There were only two rooms on the first floor. It was two stories high with garrets and dormer windows. The kitchen was added a few years later. The additions can be noted from the different appearance in the stone work. A small one-story wing, which was later used as Washington's office, was built on the north side at an undetermined date. The second story, above this wing, was not added until 1785-86. *

The south wing was not built until about 1821. A long pent house (overhang), part of which still remains over the kitchen window, extended across the entire southern side of the house. It widened into a portico over the front door which had seats on each side in the manner of the old-fashioned "Germantown stoop."



Becky Hutteringer

Dawesfield, The Green Portico, 1821



In a novel. The Quaker Soldier, published anonymously in Philadelphia without a date, but thought to be the work of John Rickter Jones who lived between 1803 and 1863, there is a description thought to have been inspired by Dawesfield:

"Colonel Lynneford soon reached the house which he rightly supposed to be 'Head Quarters' and springing from the saddle committed his horse to Tobby. Before he approached the door he paused an instant. It was one of those farm-houses erected by the better class of 'first settlers,' in infinitely better style than the more gaudy edifices of the present rural generation: of stone, mortar pointed; two stories high, a broad cornice, or pent house running all around between the stories, sheltering all the lower windows, and expanding into a portico over the front door; the roof high peaked, with pointed dormer windows. The windows of the second story square, with projecting eaves, the broad pent house diminishing much the apparent height. Such a building, and a few such may still be found — erected only by the first settlers who had the old English manor-houses in their mind's eye, and were not imitated by their American-born descendant . . ."

In 1821, the south wing was built, and the front door was changed from the south to the west side of the house, and the building took its present shape. The alterations upset a friend, Mrs. William Meredith, to the extent that she wrote the following note dated August 16, 1821, to Elizabeth Morris: "I pity your state of confusion and I grieve sincerely that the old porch has not been held sacred from the hand of modern improvement. I am so much of an antiquarian that I prefer what belonged to other times to any present convenience. Good chambers are great comforts certainly, but they will never associate in my mind with the heroes of the Revolution, and no feeling of patriotism will revive in my bosom on being in them, for Washington never hallowed them with his presence . . ."

In 1867, the veranda was built. The front porch with the lovely Louisiana grillwork was added in 1872.

Running water was brought into the house about 1870 from a tank mounted over a well to the north, pumped by a windmill. The plumbing and heating were gradually installed over a seventy year period.

After a fire damaged some of the floors in 1938, the front door became the outside door to the coatroom and the front entrance was changed to the north. The size of the north parlor, Washington's office, was reduced by the size of the closet. Also at this time, a partition was built between the hall and the dining room. In 1947, a new shingle roof was put on replacing a slate roof and restoring it as it had been originally. The stone terrace to the east was built in 1954 out of flagstones found in a pig pen and in the bottom of the springhouse.

The owners of Dawesfield built a number of buildings on the grounds, some of which have disappeared while others are still standing. As mentioned earlier, the two-story stone springhouse bears the date, 1736. The lower room is into the ground while the upper room is at ground level. It was used for butter making and as a smoke-house. The narrow opening in the west wall was probably for ventilation, but legend tells that it was intended to be used as a loop-hole in case of trouble with Indians. It is also told that a child was born here to a soldier's wife during the Washington encampment. There is a lovely buttonwood tree standing nearby that was planted in 1754 by Elizabeth Dawes.



Barn Built by James Morris



Dawesfield Tenant House Built 1845



Westside



1796 datestone

There was a log hut on the northwestern part of the property that served as slave quarters, but that has disappeared.

It is said that the soldiers cut down most of the trees on the land to erect huts in preparation for a long encampment. When they departed for Emlen House after a short period, James Morris used the lumber to construct a mill on the southeastern part of the property near Morris Road on Prophecy Creek. This is the mill that was purchased, in 1798, after the death of James Morris by Adam Wertsner and was well-known for the next century as the Wertsner Mill. Adam Wertsner paid 1,000 pounds sterling for the grist mill and fourteen and three quarters acres of land. The deed mentions the dam, mill pond and a mill race 3,432 feet long.

Dr. James built several buildings that still stand. A 120 acre section of the farm to the west was divided into a separate tract and called "Westside." A house and barn were built but the barn later burned down. The house, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ross L. Campbell, bears the inscription on the original date stone: "T. C. J. 1819."

A tenant house was built in 1821 in a southeast section, corner of Lewis Lane and Morris Road. This is now the property of Dr. and Mrs. F. Otto Haas.

In 1834, Dr. James and his wife deeded land to the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church: "That establishment of a place of worship at Mount Pleasant may tend to increase the piety and morality in the neighborhood." The church was demolished in 1976 after standing vacant for a number of years.

Saunders Lewis continued building on the Dawesfield property and in the vicinity. Still part of the Dawesfield estate is an attractive tenant house built in 1845 near the stone barn.

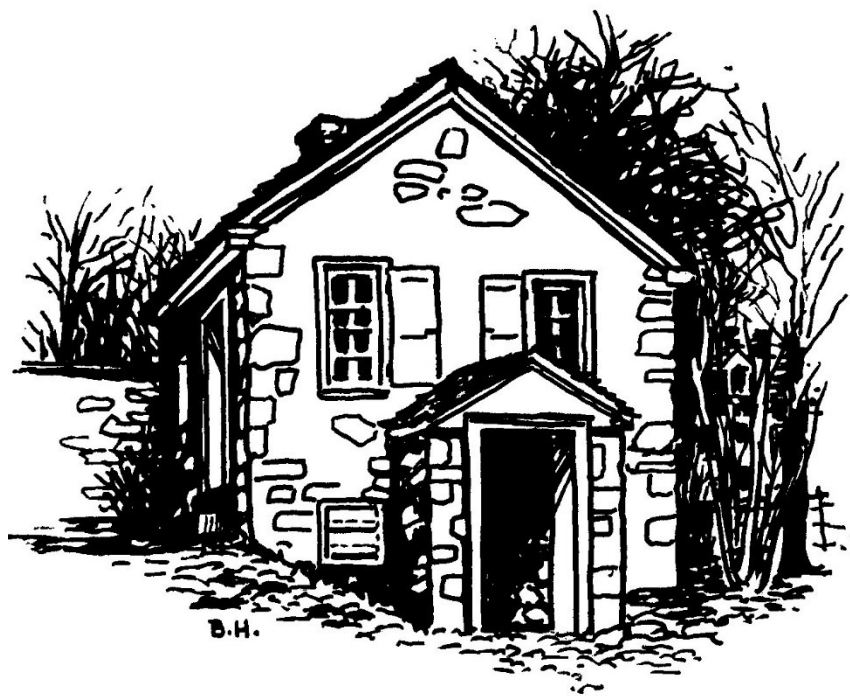
"Sunset Hill" was built for Mr. Lewis's mother, Rebecca C. Lewis, in 1855 on Morris Road and Thompson Lane on land bought from James Bartleson. It is now owned by Dr. and Mrs. Harry Carrozza.

Dawesfield had its beginnings as a working farm. Saunders Lewis recalled that a Squire Schoenberger, an old neighbor dead many years, told him he remembered when he and thirteen others sat down at James Morris' table during harvest time and that James Morris would place a silver quarter of a dollar as the day's wages in front of each plate. At the time of Dr. James' death the property was described as "valuable but not productive."

The wall around the place was once much higher but has been reduced to a retaining wall. Flowers have been grown from the earliest days in the box-bushed garden. Indian "Love Apples" were grown here for their ornamental value long before it was considered safe to eat them as tomatoes in the middle of the nineteenth century. There was a vegetable garden next to the flower garden that is now used as a picking garden for small vegetables, grapes, raspberries and flowers. In the early days, vegetables were also grown on the

present lawn below the flower garden. At one time the 1786 stone garden house had a wooden addition where the laundress and her family lived. The Italian fountain-head was installed in 1920. In 1952, an old ice house was converted into a greenhouse. There are still many old trees besides the famous buttonwood on the property. Some of the lindens were planted in 1821 and an osage orange tree is one of the largest in the area.

As Mr. Cheston, the present owner, has written, "The property in the last century was much larger than at present including lands to the south and west with farm buildings thereon. The deed to the property contains the privilege of cutting ice on the Wissahickon Creek one half mile away. However, the descendants of the Daweses and their families still own about a hundred contiguous acres."



Stone Garden House Built In 1786

Acknowledgement

The account of Dawesfield and the Dawes family has been written from material given by the present owner of Dawesfield, Mr. James Cheston, and from a book in his possession *Reminiscences of Dawesfield and Vicinity*, by Saunders Lewis, Illustrated and Elaborated by Morris J. Lewis, M.D., 1896. This book was written after careful research into deed; and wills which are listed in this document. Mrs. Carroll Wetzel, a direct descendent of the Dawes, Morrises, and Meades, also contributed information.



Datestone found and placed in wall of barn and restored Carlson House 1976



Pointed Field Stone Barn

North Section

By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck

One cannot visit the north section of Whitpain Township along North Wales Road without coming away with a feeling of having just witnessed another era. So much is left or preserved as it was about one or two hundred years ago. The land and terrain remain unspoiled by modern times, except for a railroad track which carries a train perhaps once a week. Some trains do make a detour over this route; likewise, in the event of an emergency, this line of the Reading Railroad is then used.

The Stony Creek flows through three properties. Its source is in a spring house on the other side of the road in the adjoining township. The three major properties make this area—the area deeded from Ann Whitpain to Thomas Cox and Charles Marshall and Rees Thomas—the last area to be settled in the township.

Wallace Carlson Property

The E. W. Carlson and David Greger lands at one time were one. The earliest settler, Rees Thomas, willed it to sons William and Richard, thence to Owen and Evan Thomas, as early as 1712 to 1720. At some point, when the Owen and Evan Thomas families grew, the farms were divided, for the Carlson barn, house, and outbuildings date from 1712, 1722, and 1730, while the Greger main house is 1734, and the date shown in David Greger's large barn is 1815. Owen Thomas William, probably a grandson who followed the Welsh tradition of putting first names last, left his initials on a stone in the barn—O.T.W. 1815.

Upon entering via the Carlson driveway, one is impressed with the low slanted roof of the main house, which was restored to its present condition largely by a former owner, E. A. Wright. The most recent owners, Wallace Carlson (deceased July 4, 1976) and his wife, Emily Haines Carlson, were pleased to show the two corner fireplaces — one in the kitchen and one in the dining room — and four fireplaces in the upstairs low-ceiling bedrooms. The main beam which runs the length of the house is exposed and painted, as is all the woodwork, in a rich Williamsburg blue.

The barn and attached garage are all pointed field stone. Mr. Carlson pointed out the stone marked 1722, and then with a puzzled look explained that in the upper corner of the barn are some scratchings which he cannot decipher: "Geo.III////Almighty////. . .etc." Since we know that Owen and Evan Thomas were Welsh, we assume that the writing was in their native script. This fact no doubt explains that the Thomas' had no desire to communicate during the Revolution, and hence they were labeled "Tories."



The "Little House in the Valley" west of the barn predates the other buildings. It is a spring house with living quarters above it, built with the same native stone and log rafters. The rustic heavy door is still intact. Emily Carlson drew attention to the fact that the stone was quarried in a field on the land.

With the stream, the lawn, the shrubbery, and the swimming pool, designed in an appropriate setting, and the well-cultivated fifty acres surrounding it, the Carlson place is a picturesque reminder of a yesteryear.

After the division, the indefinite ownership can be picked up about 1890 when a Seidner owned it, and a Hamilton family lived there in the early 1900's. Later, R. B. Strassburger bought it for a Mr. Driver, a tenant farmer in the 1920's. In the 1940's E. A. Wright restored it, and the Carlsons have lived there and owned it since 1954.

David Greger Property

David Greger's place, adjoining the Carlson's approximately forty-five acres, came to him through his father, Garfield Greger, who was an adopted son of the McCandless family.

If it is assumed that the Owen and Evan Thomas families, who built the dwellings and outbuildings, acquired the land from the early Thomas and Jacob Kurz in 1746 (note found elsewhere), then we can also make the assumption that the property was in the hands of Owen and Evan Thomas until July 17, 1776, because that is the date of the first deed in David's possession.

First Deed: July 17, 1776

Owen and Evan Thomas to Crosdale and Bell

Second Deed: October 7, 1851

Crosdale and Bell to Abram and Isaac Fermer et al John and Jane Jordan

Third Deed: April 5, 1859

John and Jane Jordan to Showaker

Fourth Deed: 1859

Samuel Showaker to James McIntyre

Fifth Deed: April 5, 1865

James McIntyre to David McCandless

In St. John's Cemetery, David and Margaret McCandless, of Scotch-Irish descent, apparently had three sons, according to the tombstone. They were David, Isaac and John; David and Isaac were bachelors and took Garfield MacGreger (later Greger) as their charge. John McCandless married Johanna Von Stutterheim, who had three sons, two of whom died in childhood and the third, Isaac II, died at about 26 years of age. (He was this writer's father's best man in a 1910 wedding.) The John McCandless' resided in the house on the McCandless property that extended in a long narrow strip to Skippack Pike. That house was built in the mid-1850's and is in excellent restoration. The Ferguson family now live there.

It is evident from the tombstone that the David and Isaac McCandless bachelors lived until about 1930. The writer remembers them farming and marketing their products until their deaths. They willed the property to Garfield Greger. Thus, David Greger, his only son, is now the proud owner of a parcel of land that has had practically only two families who possessed it.

David Greger's main house is virtually the same as when it was built; two rooms downstairs with a large open fireplace and two small bedrooms upstairs with a curving staircase. The outside measurements make it seem nearly square. A pitched roof suggests something that came from an English or Welsh countryside.

David and his family live in what was the quaint little spring house and butcher shed. He has added a two-story wing on either side, and a second story over the main room which is now the living room. A large chimney corner fireplace dominates this room.



Greger House Built 1734



Greger Barn Built 1815

A great tall pine tree and many other ancient trees enhance the buildings. David told how his father one day noticed something was disturbing the chickens. Thinking a hawk was lurking in the top of that nearby pine tree, Mr. Greger took aim and shot the nasty bird. To his amazement when it dropped to the ground, he found it to be a bald eagle. Because it was one of the last of its kind in the area, he had it mounted and presented to the school for the children to observe.

The legend of the Thomas' being "Tories" in the Revolutionary struggle stimulates the imagination as to what could have happened here while the neighbors were fighting in the War. There are also colorful stories about an Indian hideaway on the grounds. Later, the Stony Creek Railroad produced many interesting occasions when the trains went by so close to the houses. All these events haunt the visitor as he drives out the long lane to the very different present.



Spring House and Butchering Shed .c.1880



David Greger Home, formerly Spring House / Butchering Shed

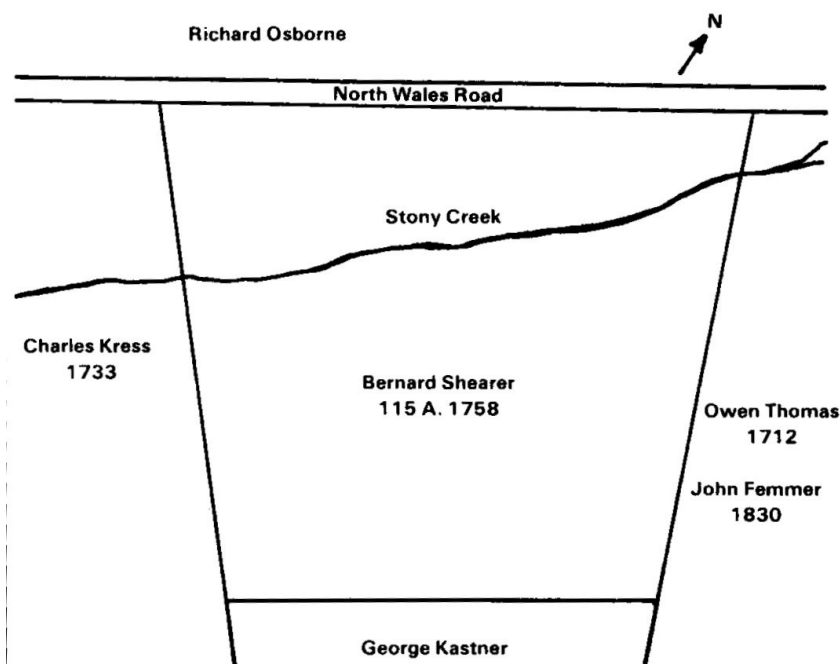


Charles and Mary-Ellen Jensen Property (Jensen Sod)

The third location on North Wales Road presents a unique set of buildings, people and circumstances.

On page 448 of the Pennsylvania German Pioneers, there is a list of 132 passengers who arrived in Philadelphia on the ship "Edinburgh" on September 15, 1749. On that list was Bernard Shearer. This man purchased the last unfilled, unclaimed land in the Penn grant that was to become Whitpain Township. He and his family "became the resident owners of 115 acres of ground wherein they lived in a dwelling which measured 60' X 56'."

Prior to this time the English land speculators, Anthony and Phoebe Morris, John and Sarah Armite, Rees and William Thomas held the land which had been allotted to them from the Ann Whitpain group in 1712. It was in 1758 that Bernard Shearer, his wife, and large family acquired the land from the above speculators and, because of necessity in maintaining the children, he added some indistinct tracts surrounding it.



By 1760, "B. Shearer had cleared fifty acres but had left sixty acres still in forests, with thirteen acres of grain, and owned three horses and five cows."

By 1768, Bernard Shearer died leaving six children, the eldest of whom was Lawrence. The five children and their spouses signed the property to Lawrence. The will has a stipulation that a "sizable and ample" house should be built for the mother. It is important to note the names of these heirs because they appear often in the future history of this part of the county.

They are:

Valentine and Mary Shearer
 John and Dorothy Shearer
 Ludwig Shearer
 Barbara S. and George Renner
 Regina S. and Adam Renner

Lawrence Shearer died in 1783 and left the plantation to John's son Jacob. He, in turn, sold his share to another cousin, John, with himself as a trustee. The farm remained in the hands of the Shearer's for over sixty years when, in 1849, it was sold to Henry Frick. Then in 1895, Ephraim Slough, an attorney, transferred it to William and Ida Frantz. Two years later, John and Elizabeth Heilman owned the main tract.

1909 Harry Summers
 1909 Henry Stille and Charles Gotuals
 1916 Rebecca Schultz
 1925 Adam Workheuser

Other tracts and owners confuse the line of succession, but sometime in the 1920's Henrietta Potter James owned six tracts of land, a barn, two houses, and other outbuildings.



Jensen's Home



Jensen's Barn

In September 1943, having lived in the city all their lives, Charles and Mary-Ellen Jensen decided to try their luck at farming. They purchased the aforementioned property and became the "pioneers of the 40's and 50's." After raising pigs, cows, crops, and restoring all the structures, so that now it can be labeled a show place, the Jensen's now operate it as a Sod Farm.

Unique is the word for this spot. First, it is the only sod farm which supplies much of the lawns for houses that have been built here in the 1960's and 1970's. Its gently rolling slopes of closely cut grass with the Stony Creek flowing through it, with mischievous ducks and graceful Canada geese on its banks, make a pastoral setting unequalled anywhere. Two very old trees are markers on certain boundaries. These sixteen-foot-trunk trees and many arrowheads found as the soil is cultivated, are reminders of the continuity of some land in Whitpain that is unchanged for at least 200 years.



Secondly, the buildings-.all have roofs of a special cut shingle that resembles the rustic hand-hewn shingles which were used in colonial days.

Thirdly, the white and green-trimmed barn, which is kept in excellent clean condition has the huge beams that have been cut with great care by some outstanding builder. The main house, probably constructed in two sections, is beautifully restored and furnished. It shows evidence that the Jensen family are lovers of handsome and lovely "colonial things." The "little" house retains its quaint charm and overlooks a well-kept real farm garden. To the north of the main house is a grove of formally planted trees which the Jensens call "the park." To the west of the house is a long cave — the kind used for winter storage and summer cooling.

Yes, as one drives out the maple-shaded lane, he feels as though he has visited another era.

Yost Road

By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck

As one crosses Skippack Pike, the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike "slashes" its way and "rushes" across the township from Plymouth to the Poconos. Several hundred feet farther, on North Wales Road going southwest, the Philadelphia Electric Tower Line "marches and struts" its way from Arch Road and the Zimmerman farm up across the Worcester hills and beyond! Nestled under these towers are acres of modernistic steel columns that flash from the Power Plant, suggesting something for a setting for a science-fiction movie. The Stony Creek branch of the Reading Railroad winds its way along this part of the stream called the Stony Creek. Snaking and crawling across all this is the Texas Eastern Gas Line! What Price Progress!

All this, where once beautifully rolling farm lands graced the hillsides, where there was no continuous drone of-raucous sounds, no danger of explosion, no ozone and no air pollution.

Yet, Yost Road retains some semblance of colonial days. Despite the growth of new housing developments and the two modern schools and a Day-camp, there remain four or five "bits" of the past.

Yost Road extends at a right angle from North Wales Road to DeKalb Pike (Rt. 202) and it is believed that at one time the Yost family owned both sides of the road. The houses, barns, shops, and the mill combined, all made up the Yost Plantation. Three visible structures and other small buildings still stand, and concerning them, there are some fascinating stories.



Site of Old Log Cabin

As one turns left from North Wales road, the first site on the left is where the William Knoll log cabin, which the Otto Haas' bought and moved to their place on Lewis Lane, formerly stood. Mrs. Jane Burris of the Montgomery County Historical Society re-searched this antiquated cabin in May 1966. The following are her words:

"THE LOG CABIN, Early 1700's. Located on Yost Road, off Dekalb Pike (Route 202) at St. Helena's Catholic Church and School, and between North Wales Road, in Whitpain township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The name on the mail box at the premises reads — William Knoll. The little stream close by is known as Silver Run.

"The first settler in the wilderness on the north side of Silver Run was Randall Osborne who bought 200 acres in 1731 of Thomas Anthony Morris and Ann Whitpain. This land extended to the Worcester township line and included in 1895 at least five farms. The map of 1848 by Morris of Montgomery County lists the owner of the property as 'J. Calp,' or correctly John Kalb. John Kalb appears in the 1850 census of Whitpain township, age 32, carpenter; Sarah, his wife 33, and children: — Amanda 5, Elizabeth 3, Joseph 10/12. Real Estate \$1800."

On the 1871 and 1877 atlases of Montgomery County, Whitpain Township, J. or Jas. Kingkiner is the owner of the location, with 30 acres of land. In 1893, the name listed as owner is — Boyer.

It is likely that this property was once a part of the old Yost homestead nearby."

The Log Cabin has been the subject of several artists. It is pleasing both in color and other artistic media. The Log Cabin was an attraction on the Whitpain House Tour in 1975 at its new location on the Haas grounds.

Yes, most of the land on both sides of the road at one time or another was owned by the prominent Yost family. But then there was the prolific Osborne family also. Both families' occupancy and holdings are so entwined, it is difficult to place them in any kind of order. So much has been written about the Yost family that it seems unnecessary to go into full record and genealogy here. And it goes without saying that the Yosts at the height of their land and industrial power, wielded a tremendous influence on the whole community.

To be specific: Bean's History (written by Jones Detwiler) tells about" the first industry that we have any notice, was that of weaving, carried on near Centre Square by Jacob Yost in 1727. In 1732 he purchased what is known as the Yost farm, and carried on the business more extensively." "The Yosts are famed for their sickles, scythes, and edge tools which were made from 1760-1816 at the old homestead. These implements were forged by hand. In 1746, the first grist mill was built along the creek. It was a saw, grist, and chopping mill. It is yet standing."



Yost Mill 1920



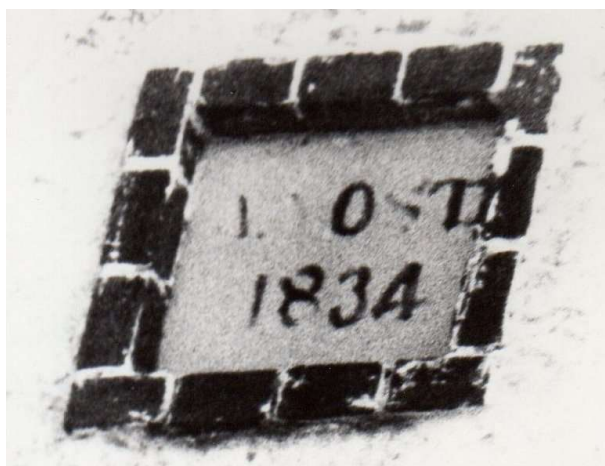
Restored Yost Home Owned by Charles Bruno

A Yost great-aunt told of manufacturing rifles at the time of the Revolution — some "of which are still in use by the neighbors in the area." This great-aunt also told stories about soldiers having horses shod in the blacksmith shop.

When Jacob Yost arrived in this country in 1727 on the ship "William" from Rotterdam, he came with the minister, George Michael Wies. From 1740 to 1900, six generations of this branch of the family owned and operated the farm and mill. The records of family reunions are sources of births, marriages, deaths, and family trees. Among the outstanding ones are Daniel, Abram, Peter, Isaac, Jacob II, and Joseph Irwin known as J. Irwin. He died in 1923, the last to bear the Yost name. Mary Yost Thomas, his only daughter, still living, now resides in Jeffersonville.

It should be noted here that Yost's daughters married into other eminent families, i.e. Jacob Yost's daughter, Maria, married John Philip Boehm, thus increasing the power of the landowners by merely possessing great numbers of acres. This is evidenced by the fact that in 1761 the tax records show that Daniel Yost, called a smith, owned 100 acres ... 50 of which were still in woodland.

The Yost farm buildings are located in a valley on a curve in the road near the Silver Run (where the mill once stood). They include the main stone house built in 1814 and now restored. The blacksmith shop, where Washington had his horse shod, and several small other buildings were built in 1740. One which may have been the first small barn is now a two-story apartment. The massive barn overlooks all of the other stone structures and has a datestone which says: A. Yost—1834.



Charles Heinsbaugh farmed the land and ran the mill for the last Mr. Yost for twenty years (1890-1910), and for a while the property fell into disrepair. Toward the end of World War I, the Reverend Father Francis Higgins purchased it, thus adding more ground to the St. Helena Parish. The mill was finally razed in the 1950's, before crumbling and blocking the flow of Silver Run.

What happened to this branch of the Yost family, to Jacob, Daniel, Abram, Peter, Jacob II and J. Irwin? The records in the Court House show that properties were sold all over the northwest part of the township from as early as 1787 to as late as 1916. In the Yost Road area, it was sold to Andrew Knox, Randall Osborne, Isaac Detwiler, and John Egbert. In the Centre Square area to Jeremiah Frantz, the Creamery Association, Dr. Samuel C. Seiple, Max Trinkle and George Loudon.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bruno and son Charles now own and occupy the "Yost Plantation," having moved here within the last several years from West Conshohocken. They carry on a sort of semi-retired gentleman-farming, stocking it with horses and beef cattle. They are "in love" with the spot and fully realize the richness of the history of it.

Before locating places along Yost Road, one must understand the Osborne family. Randall Osborne, in 1731, acquired from the Rees Thomas — A. Aiken — Anthony Morris — Ann Whitpain — group, a tract of "200 acres bounded by Worcester line," midway between Belfry and Custer Station. "Southeast was bounded by the later Yost purchase of 1740. It includes five present farms." When one views the area, it is easy to see a conflict could arise between the Yost's and the Osborne's, for in 1760, 170 acres of this 200 acres was still in forests, and both claimed land on both sides of the path that was called a road.

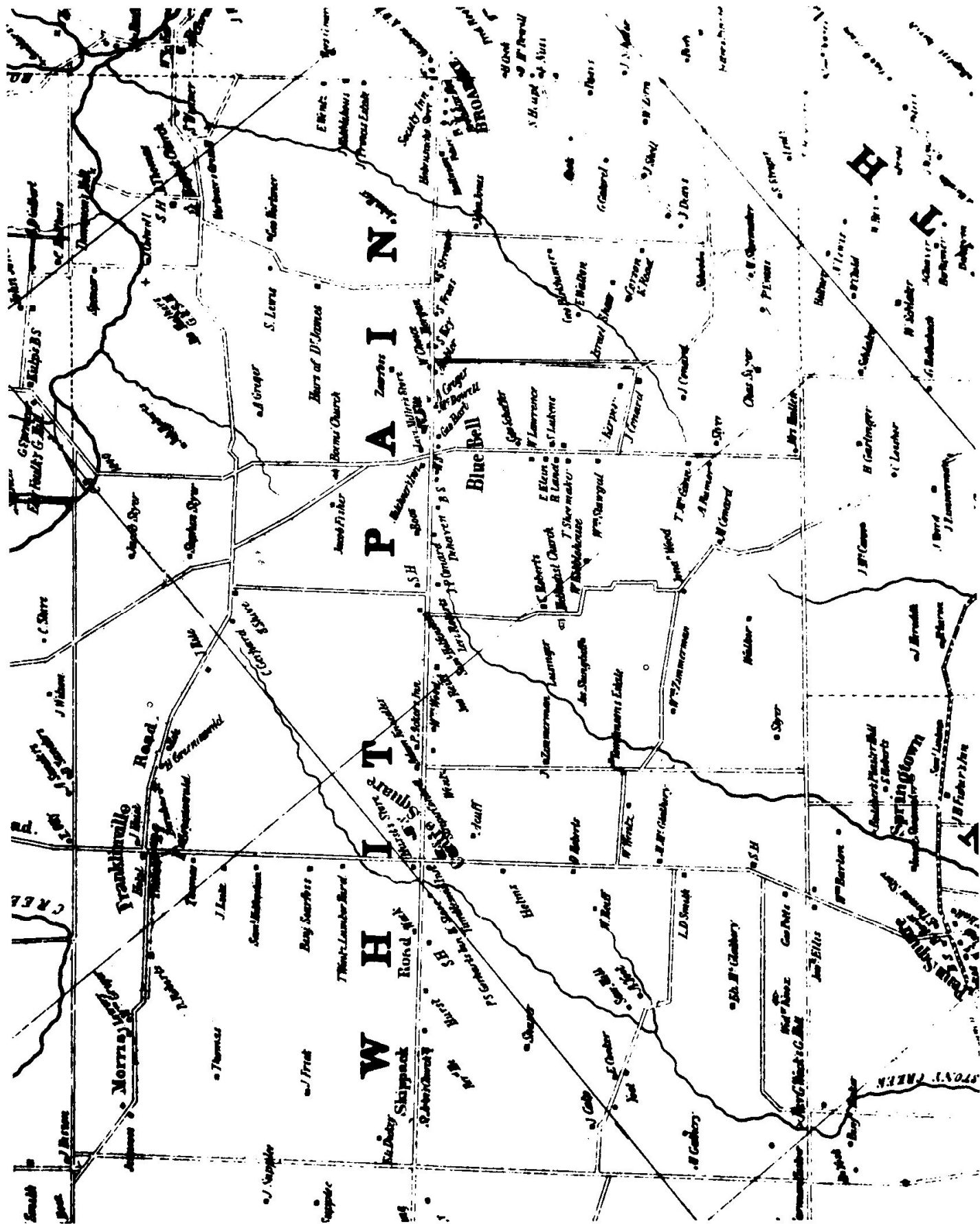
Randall III lived until 1815. However, in 179The sold 14 acres to Daniel Yost. When Randall died, he left a widow and several sons. The part of the land he claimed was divided into three parts. One must have been the Dougherty place (now Bonnie and Charles Taylor — 1722 Yost Road) and the other, the Spacht place (Florence and Donald Spacht — 1819 Yost Road).



Yosts Blacksmith Shop 1920



Structure 1976 on Bruno Property



Whitpain Portion Of Map Of Montgomery County, Pa. By William E. Morris, 1848



Florence and Donald Spacht

The Spacht's is the next "old house" southeast of the Log Cabin area. It is easier to trace the history of this house backward, because Florence possesses all the original copies of deeds to 1841. Beyond that, one comes upon some surprises that are significant, and some "tie-in" matters which were later uncovered. One should be aware that Florence was born in this house and has lived all her life in it.

In 1948, Mrs. Adelaide Knoll deeded the house and property to Florence and Don. Mrs. Knoll, formerly Mrs. John Cole I, had moved there with her first husband and family in 1904, at which time they had purchased it from a Francis and Elizabeth McLaughlin.

In 1888, Albert and Caroline Katz, one of the former owners of the "Waggon Inn," must have retired there. The Katz's were the grandparents of Mrs. Otis Fry, Edna Drake, (still living). According to the 1897 map, they owned a considerable amount of ground where the Philadelphia Electric tower line now stands.

From 1882 to 1888 — William and Sara Eisenberg owned the property

From 1859 to 1882 — Benjamin and Emeline Zearfoss lived there

From 1856 to 1859 — Elias and Marian Cooker held it for a short time

Then in 1841, confusion begins. Elias Cooker, through a Hestor Krupp in 1839, probably an agent or attorney of some kind, acquired it from a John Osborne. More perplexing is, what happened between 1839 when a George Fisher is named as acclaming twenty-two acres in 1830. For it was then that a Thomas Osborne tried to reclaim it from Christian Moser. But there is evidence in the Deed, Book 45, page 526, that Christian Moser owned and lived there before and during the Revolution.

The name of Christian Moser awakened interest. While the writer was wandering through the old section of St. John's Cemetery, she came upon the tombstones of Christian Moser and his wife, Margaret, with an American flag of the D.A.R. placed in front of Christian's marker. The inscription has been quoted in the St. John's Chapter. Christian Moser died in 1838 and his wife, Margaret, died in 1830.

It seems logical to assume that there is much truth to the legends about the events surrounding this place during the War. On the list of Militia-in-reserve from Whitpain, there are residents from this section. Some that are recognizable are: Samuel, Jesse, Moses, David, and Johnathan De Haven, Amos and Issac-Ellis, Robert and David Knox, George Fitzwater, Jonathan Greenawalt, and Jacob and Issac Martin. Close by are: Jonathan Osborne, Jonathan Porter, Jacob Yost, Christopher Zimmerman and Nicholas Rile. Issac McClathery was the guide to the Battle of Germantown.

The stories from the Yost and Cole-Knoll families say that Christian Moser's 22-acre farm was called "Camp Hill." Without a doubt, without having it written in history books, one can be convinced that a group of soldiers, probably under Capt. Abram Wentz's command, trained and awaited orders from Washington in Worcester or Valley Forge. The hill was used as a "look-out" under the directorship of Moser and Yost. The mill and blacksmith shop were sources of supplies for the soldiers.

The older part of the Spacht house dates between 1750 and 1760. It is placed in such a way as to receive the full benefit of the sun, as was the custom practiced by most builders in those days.

The Spacht house, with the newer wing added on the north side at a right angle to the old part, is beautifully restored and furnished. An oil painting of the Log Cabin is prominently placed in the long living room. The setting on a well-kept lawn and garden, among tall old maples and old-fashioned shrubbery, tells that this place has been inhabited for a long time. What a story this house could relate!

As mentioned before, Florence had lived here all her life. A poem she wrote sums up her feelings:

Reflections

How many of our modern folk to-day
At the age of fifty will be able to say
" Still sleeping in the same room where I was born"
Oh no, my friends, from these roots they've been torn.

These days are past but mem'ries stay
For better or worse, just who can say
For progress they call it has set a new pace
For an old timer this is hard to face.

Our open fields where cows once fed,
Have been up-rooted for homes instead.
The sound of the bull-dozer crushing the trees
So where do they go? — the birds and the bees.

"Population Explosion" is the popular term,
But all this turmoil just makes me squirm
For I know with the coming of these new invaders
Life really gets tougher for us old crusaders.

With food prices so high and taxes so great,
My ulcer gets worse when I think of our fate
For each new day, as we grow older
The burden gets too great to shoulder

You're wondering what prompted this bit of verse
Thoughts of a lady who feels that a curse
Has come upon our country-side
Where we so dearly love to abide.

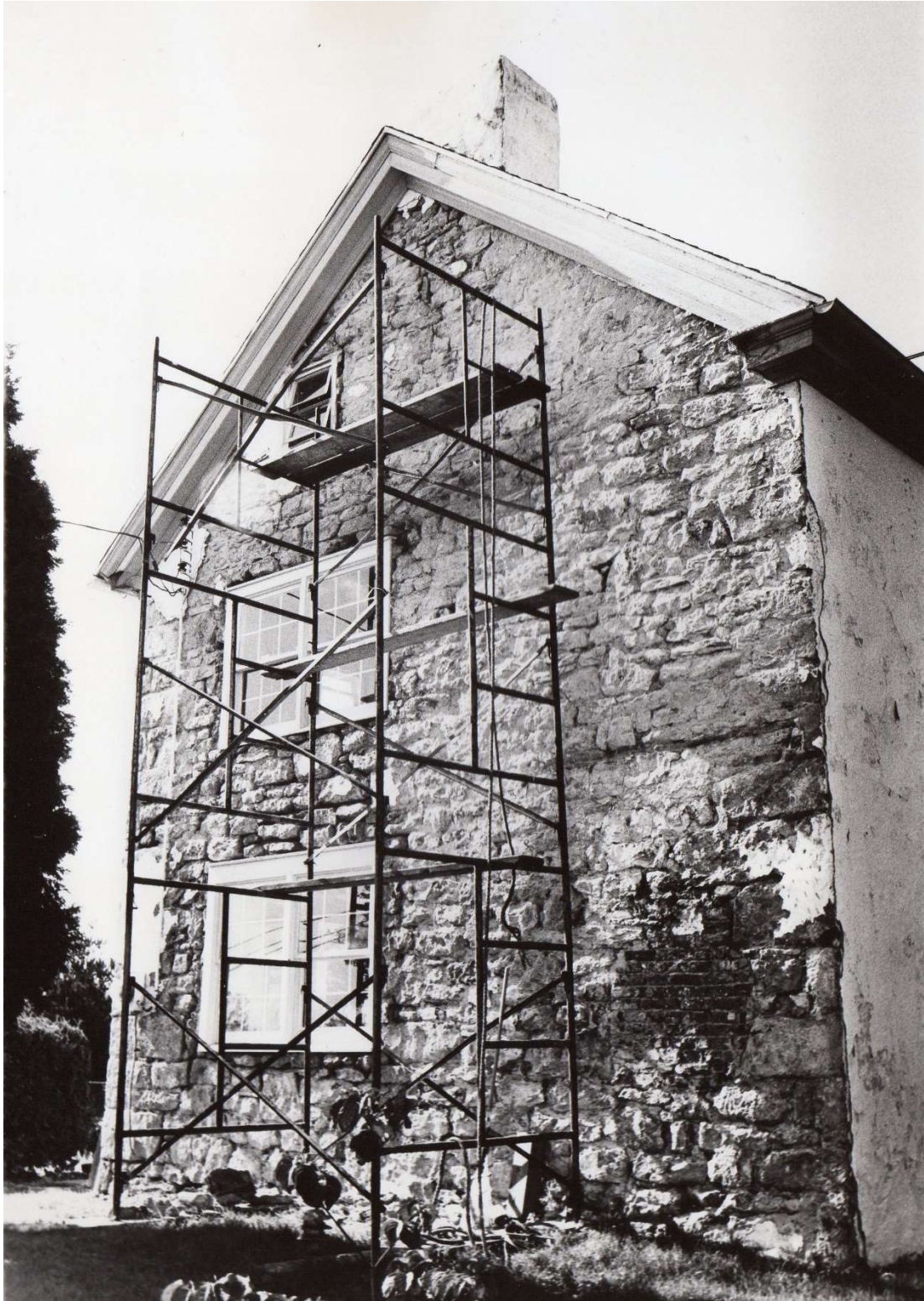
You know if you've read between these lines
I've never left home with these changing times
But now at the age of fifty-two
I must leave all of this and begin anew.

There is just one thing that remains the same
That's our CREA TOR above in His great "Hall of Fame"
So we'll put out faith and trust in Him
Life then seems brighter and not so dim!

Florence Knoll Spacht
Spring, 1976

Bonnie and Charles Taylor

Down the Yost Road a few hundred feet on the opposite side, across from the present Stony Creek School, and amid a new housing development, stands the "Taylor" house. Bonnie and Charles have only owned it since February 1975, and they are now in the process of restoring it.



Taylor Home Being Restored

The house, by method of elimination, is the Randall Osborne house. It is older, more crudely built, and dates almost as far back as the Log Cabin. Instead of all logs, it is constructed with huge logs and beams, and stone and mud plaster. The date is possibly as early as 1720, because it is a matter of record that the Osborne's were here before the Yost's.

The list of ownerships backward goes in this order:

1970 — Gambone Brothers bought from Harvey Rodenbaugh

1947 — Rodenbaugh bought from Mary Estock, widow of John Estock

1924 — John Estock bought from George and Joseph Schirmer

1904 — The Schirmer Brothers bought from Priscilla Dougherty widow of John Joseph Dougherty

Before 1888 — Daniel Dougherty, supposedly J.J.'s father, shuttled ownership back and forth to a John Coats and

Before 1843 — Henry Dotts and several different Osborne names appear

Mathews Scrapbook No. 91, on page 170 says; "that the Dougherty farm of 57A. has a very old homestead of unknown age. Randall Osborne, I may have arrived before 1731."

But what happened to the Osborne Family? Clara Beck hints that the "Osborne family became so poor that they divided the land, but could not hold it." One reads behind the words that possibly sickness wiped out many members of the line. Apparently, there was enough money left at some time to buy tombstones, for a Randall Osborne and wife lie buried in St. John's Cemetery.

There are records of land transactions in 1791 to Daniel Yost, to Isaac Detwiler in 1797, another to Daniel Dougherty in 1843, a sheriff sale in 1825, and another to Peter Yost in 1844. The last Osborne exchange appeared in 1888.

The Daniel, John Joseph, and Priscilla Dougherty's were evidently good farmers, having come from Ireland to find new ways of growing food. One of the accomplishments was the innovation of incubating the hatching of baby chicks by "artificial" heat. For a time this was known as the Chicken Farm.

The colonial house stands facing the southeast on 3/4 acre, all that is left of the original farm. The Taylors are taking time to repair and retain the dwelling as near as it was in the beginning. One noteworthy feature is the brick oven within the stone fireplace. Bonnie Taylor hopes to bake bread in it someday.

Other properties entwined in the Yost area are the John-Ellen Duddy one, and the Detwiler — Gotwals property. The house on the former property was donated to Father Francis Higgins about 1912, and became the St. Helena's Parish Church.



Former Duddy Home Now Part of St. Helena's Church



Former B. F. Gougler Home Now Sesame Day Care

On the Detwiler — Gotwals property, the old house was torn down to make way for the building of Whitpain Woods and the upper end of Centre Square Greene.

The southwestern part of the Yost farm became the farm of Benjamin and, in turn, Harvey Murphy. Upon the death of Harvey, the Altman Co. bought and erected the houses now known as Centre Square Greene. Parts of two other farms also make up this development. One is the B. Frank Famous, Sr. — Joseph Burke farm and part of the George and James Chalk farm.

The B.F. Gougler farm south of the Taylors — adjoining the creek — flourished in the 1870 to 1900 period. It is now the Sesame Day Camp
Ida Gougler and Harvey Murphy married. They had two children; Harold, who lived in the Ellis school house, and Ethel Murphy Walker.

It should be credited to the Zoning Board, under the direction of the Reverend Ernest Miller, St. John's pastor in the 1950's, who researched the names, that the streets of the section bear the names of Revolutionary heroes. It is satisfying to hear Lafayette Way, Pulaski Drive, Stirling Drive, Muhlenberg Drive, Daws Lane, and others.

It is the hope of the writer that the residents of this area relish this brief account of how the land they live on played a real part in the history of their country.



Former Harvey Murphy Home, Now Demolished



Dr. John and Sibyl Siegfried's House, Built in 1764

Near Custer Station

By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck

In the northwest corner of the township (North Wales Road and Township Line-West) there grew a little village known as Custer Station. It was Erb's Mill before the railroad made its stop there, but both these labels have a basis for being so-called because of the people that lived there and the events that happened there. The village had two mills, a feed house, and nine or ten dwellings, mostly built after 1875.

Dr. John and Sibyl Siegfried's House

"Pinecroft" today, borders the railroad tracks and is tucked in on a slope to the Stony Creek. To understand the story of this house one must consider it with Erb's Mill (demolished), now a pumping station next to the Cassel-Tate house.

In 1742, Rees Thomas, Zachariah Whitpain, and Stephen Armitage, sold 140/2 acres to John Phillips. The land was a long narrow strip 1 1/2 miles long, but only 960 feet wide. By 1746, Phillips had built a water-grist mill, and it is assumed a small house to live in nearby (part of the Cassel-Tate house). In 1750, Phillips sold to Jesse Morgan, who died in 1757. Jesse's wife remarried in 1762 to a John Robinson.

From Mathews, "between 1742 and 1762, ninety acres were sold from the southeast corner to Andrew Knox." On this particular section was built the house of his son Andrew, where occurred a stirring episode of the Revolution, when this patriot was attacked by a force of British and Tories under the leadership of Enoch Supplee's sons.

In 1762, Robinson and the former Mrs. Morgan sold to a Mathias Tyson, who quickly sold to Valentine Shearer. (See Jensen.) It was probably V. Shearer who built the first part of the present Siegfried house because the date-stone on that part is marked 1764.

Valentine and Mary lived in the house during the Revolution and it is reputed that grain was ground in Shearer's Mill to help feed soldiers at Valley Forge in 1777-1778.

The stone barn erected by him in 1776 was still standing and in use in 1895, but has since burned. Today, a garage is built on the foundation. The old house became insufficient for the Shearer's wants and size of the family, so an addition and two stories were added in 1792.

In 1895, Phillip B. Custer was the resident owner and farmer, but the mill and other house had become separated. An involved story transpired in those one hundred years concerning the mill and its house.

To finish the account of the Siegfrieds; The residents and owners of the Custer house since 1900 are: Kulholz, Marino, Himes, the Samuel and Margaret McCracken family (Charles and Robert) ... all tenants. In 1934, an A. Houseman purchased and restored the lovely old dwelling.

After the mill was torn down some of the stones were taken to the Siegfried place and today, these large stones form a rock garden and landscaping around the swimming pool. One huge stone has carved in it — B.F.C. — and an indiscernible date.

Clifford and Dorothy Tate — Cassel Place

Valentine Shearer died in 1809. His daughter, Mary, became owner of the mill and farm. She married the Lutheran pastor, Reverend Henry Geisenhainmer. But after eleven years, Reverend G's financial affairs were in bad shape, and the property was seized by the sheriff and sold at public auction, 68 acres — to Reverend George Wack, a Reformed Minister, for \$850.00. It was then known as Wack's Mill until 1850. During this time Rev. Wack sold 46 acres to Herman Custer for \$4,700.00. (Became Phillip Custer's place.) The mill and 22 acres were retained and sold to George Erb for \$3,500.00.

It was Erb's Mill for twenty-five years, but due to financial difficulties again it fluctuated between several owners. The Mill must have been a lucrative business for it seems it was "up for grabs" many times. It went from Erb to Adam Wierman, to Jacob Beideman, to Elias Moyer, to the sheriff, to Congressman Irving Wangert, then back to George Erb again. There are even records of earlier judgments by George Wack on George Erb. It must have been a real struggle for Erb to operate the mill continuously.

George Erb died in 1901. His daughter Mary inherited the mill. She married Edward Cassel. Edward and Mary had two sons, Mahlon and B. Frank. Mahlon signed off to Frank in the 1960's. After Frank's and Edna's (his wife) deaths, the Cassel girls, Dorothy and Thelma, became the owners.

But the mill is gone! The house is in comfortable well-kept condition, but like all old houses, it is very close to the road — Township Line. Some of the front, door, porch, and windows had to be sacrificed when the road was widened and became a busy thoroughfare.

Edward and Frank Cassel sold much of the land from the original acreage. Some went to the Joseph Burke farm. Some went to the Benjamin and Charles Cassel property (formerly the A. Knox land). Nonetheless, the house retains much of its charm, and the girls enjoy their "piece of antiquity". Both girls were born here and both, with the exception of a few years after Dorothy was married, have lived in the house all their lives.



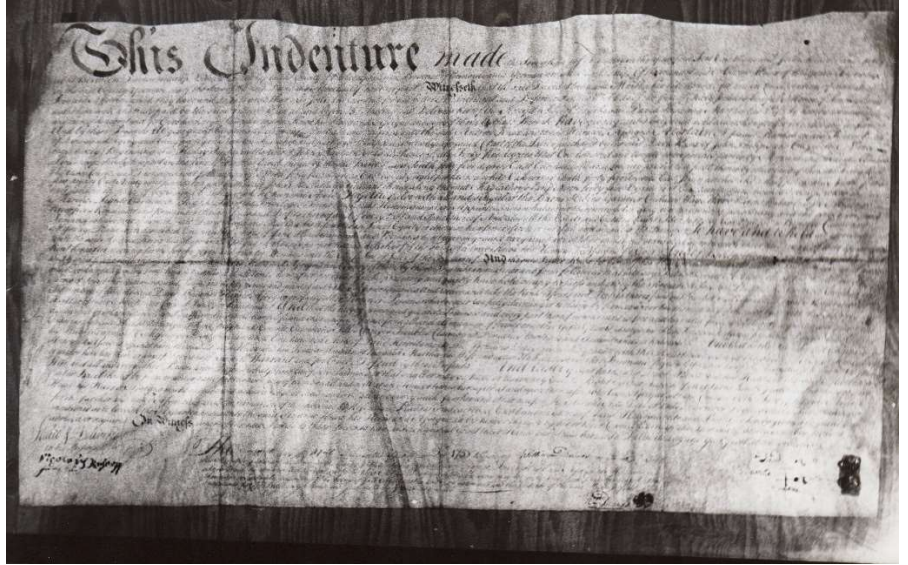
Cassel – Tate House

Walter Cassel Property

The Colonel Andrew Knox story is treated elsewhere in this chronicle. The Knox house, as it was, is no longer in existence, but the foundation is still visible in the meadow of the Cassel farm. In the general area, Walter has some relics found on the land . . . i.e., a stone-mortar and pestle type rock which the Indians could have used to grind corn. Arrowheads found in the soil are in his possession, too. He also has some deeds bearing land from David Knox, the immigrant, to his son, Andrew I or the elder. Bean's History refers to the colonel as "Andrew II who was the respected citizen." This plantation must indeed have been an active place.

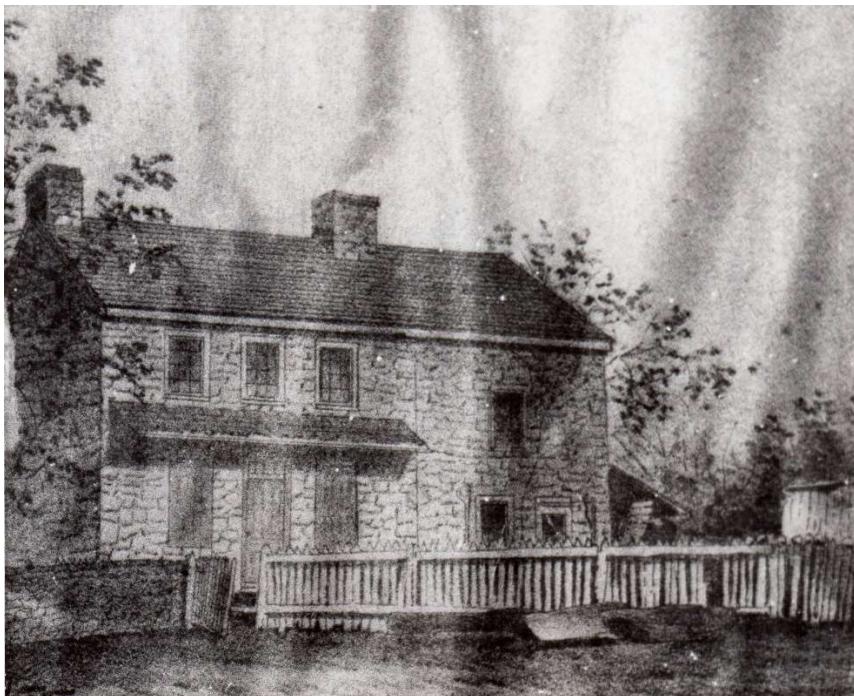
In reference to more recent times, about the Cassel barn, the writer vaguely remembers in the early 1920's, one spring afternoon, Victor Baker and his grandchildren observed a growing darkness. He remarked that it was not time for an eclipse, but as they looked to the west, a definitely angry, funnel-shaped cloud came whirling in their direction. Yes, it was one of those rare hefty tornadoes. It completely twisted and destroyed the Cassel barn.

No other major damage was done in the path of the storm



When viewed the next day, it looked like several of our present-day bull dozers had gone to work on it.

An excellent example of community spirit in time of disaster manifested itself. All the farmers in the upper-end of the township pooled their efforts and rebuilt the Cassel barn!



Going South on Dekalb Pike

By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck

By 1850, Clara Beck observes that "Centre Square had six houses in the village, beside the inns and two stores."

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. A machine shop | 4. A blacksmith shop |
| 2. A wheelwright shop | 5. A tannery |
| 3. A saddle shop | 6. A lumberyard |

All these were probably "commenced by the enterprizes of the promoter on the corner — Thomas Fitzwater."

Two Old Houses in Center Square

After passing the corner going south on Rt. 202, formerly Swedesford Road, two old houses appear immediately on the left. They are the present homes of Florence and Rodman Lentz and Marjorie (Bean) and Richard Strawhacker. On the 1877 map they are listed as being owned by J. Whitcomb and J. Conrad. In separate interviews with Rod and Marge, the writer found that one house was a wheelwright place and the other was a saddle shop. Then, checking the list of taxables in 1785, she found that there was one wheelwright in the township and two saddlers. Isaac Martin was the wheelwright and Joseph DeHaven and Frederick Rodemick the saddlers. It can be left to conjecture which was which house, and which was the saddler who lived here.

Later, a Jacob Biedeman, (once an owner of Erb's Mill), owned the Strawhacker house. One of his daughters, Mrs. Bertha Rezer, age 95 — still living with her daughter, Evelyn Geiger — told the Lentz' and Strawhacker's that the houses were built about five years after the first St. John's Church building. If the first church was built in 1773, it would place the date of these two dwellings around 1778. When no date-stone is found, this is a fascinating way of arriving at the origin of old houses.

Little more can be said of either one. Rod says there is evidence in the rear kitchen of a huge circular hearth, but it is difficult to say how it was used. Marge and Dick Strawhacker have removed the plaster and pointed the stone between the front section and the kitchen, which lends authenticity to living in this continuously occupied old house. They carry on a "Waggon Antique" business and are decidedly interested in old woodwork and antique furnishings.



Home of Rodman and Florence Lentz



Home of Richard and Marjorie Strawhacker

Concerning "DeKalb Farms'

One Thomas Fitzwater was the owner of "The Waggon Inn" at Centre Square between the years 1705 and 1761.

Thomas Fitzwater's sister, a widow, named Rose Fitzwater Karn, owned the land adjoining her brother's, there being no road at the time to divide the properties. This area became known later as the H. Dannehower farm in the 1859 to 1900 era, and then the McKelvey land and homestead after 1920.

"Rose Karn achieved fame for herself by introducing the farmerette idea in America. She accomplished the astonishing feat of clearing all her land, except one acre, which she left as woodland. She put the fields under cultivation, tradition charging her with 'fearlessly, recklessly, and extravagantly buying seed wheat enough to plant seven acres of winter grain'."

The Harry Dannehower family, in addition to being farmers, was prominent in the legal, financial, and educational affairs of both the township and county for many years. Harvey Dannehower, an early graduate of Ursinus College, was principal of the Eisenhower High School in Norristown for the greater part of his life.

Laura Dannehower, widow of Harry and mother of Harvey, sold the farm to the John McKelvey family. They, in turn, sold the property in the early 1950's to developers who named the area from Wentz Road to DeKalb and Cherry Lane — "DeKalb Farms."

The streets of this section are named for Civil War Generals and Presidents. For example:

Jackson, Grant, Lee, Cleveland, etc., which are good reminders of how the township planners are trying to keep alive the "best of the past."

The barn and out-buildings have been gone for a number of years — but the house, in sad gutted condition, was torn down in the latter half of 1976.

The Creamery

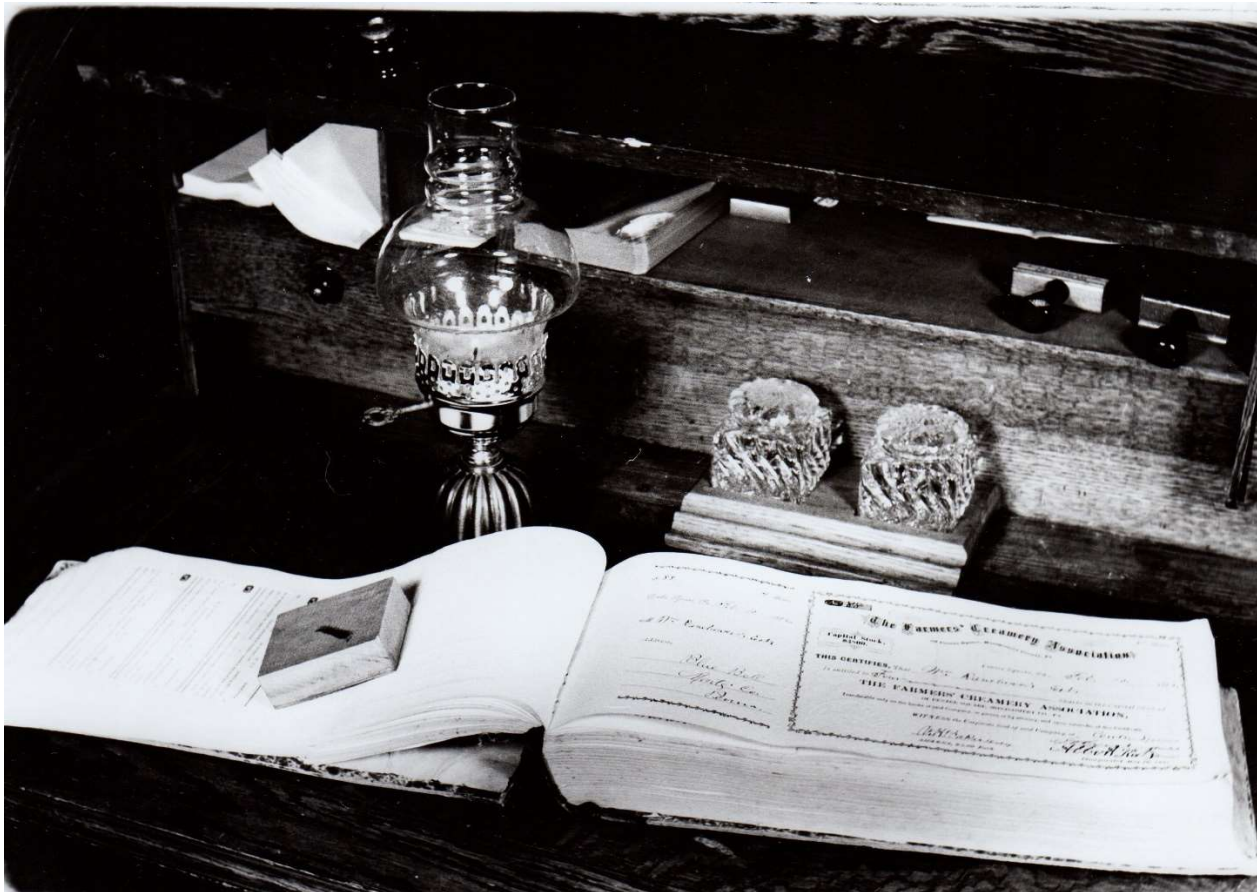
By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck

In Bean's "History . . ." page 1170, under Villages; Centre Square, it states that "the Creamery is located here and does a flourishing business." In the Recorder of Deeds office, a transaction states that land and building (indeterminate age) were acquired by the Creamery Association from Joseph Irwin Yost in 1881, the year indicated in the Creamery Ledger that the business was begun.

The actual Creamery Ledger, with Victor H. Baker as Secretary-Treasurer, is shown in the accompanying picture. It is now the property of Dr. Charles Baker, Victor Baker's grandson.

The Ledger is distinguished in that, it presents a simplified lesson in economics, i.e., how stock companies are formed and operated. It would make an excellent device to explain investing money to an elementary business class. Secondly, it contains the names of 92 members. These stockholders were locally prominent people who purchased stock at \$5.00 per share. The capital stock was \$3,800.00. The list of people gives an insight as to who lived and worked here approximately 100 years ago. Some names are of people who are descendants of old families from 100 years before that (1780) and some are the names of the ancestors of some of OJnr families still living here in 1976.

Not all stockholders were farmers. The local physician, Dr. Samuel E. Seiple, bought 25 shares. William Singerly, the owner of the old Philadelphia Record and former owner of what is now Normandy Farms, purchased 200 shares. Albert Katz, innkeeper, possessed 20 shares and the former Reverend D. Levin Coleman owned 12 shares.





Former Creamery Building Now Home of McKelvey Family

Robert McKelvey, the present owner and resident of the refurbished building, told the writer that cheese, butter, and other related dairy products were made and sold here.

The white-shingled structure is located along the Silver Run that flows through the village. The water from the stream was utilized in the cooling process. The central location was an ideal place for an infant industry to flourish with the source of supply — milk from large and improved dairy herds nearby — and a ready market in Norristown and neighboring villages. The cooperative efforts of this group of men had a favorable influence in the community and deserves attention here.

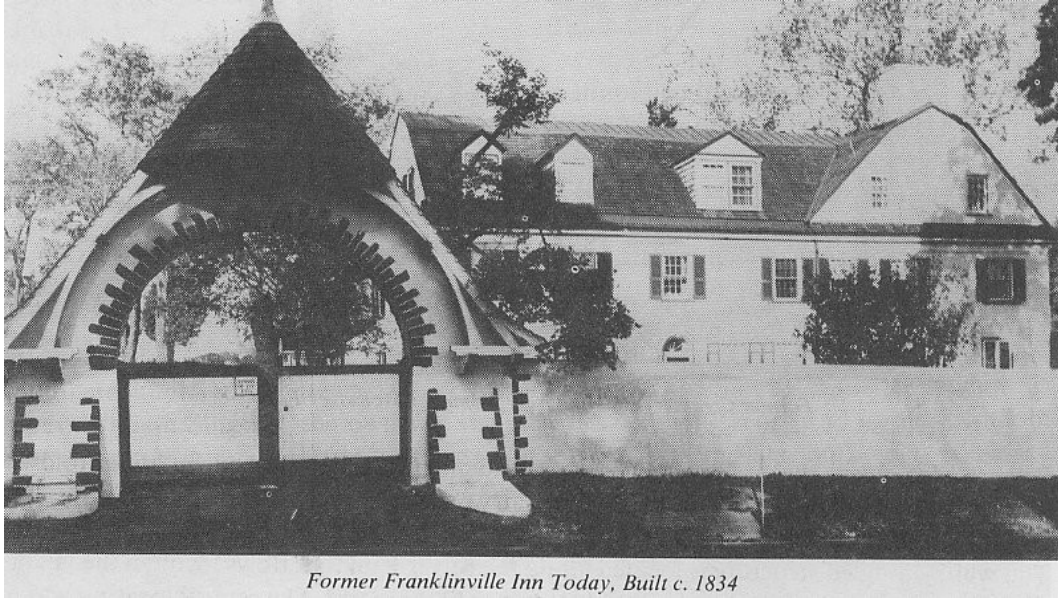
Robert and Betsy McKelvey live on one side of the two-dwelling arrangement, while the sister-in-law and niece, Marion and Joyce McKelvey, reside on the south side. Bob and Betsy take great pride in their continuous blooming of flowers — from crocuses, daffodils, tulips, petunias, begonias, right through the seasons to chrysanthemums.

Bob likes to relate the story of his birth. His parents emigrated from Ireland and his brother John was born here. When his parents returned to Ireland for a visit, Bob was born there and came to the United States as an infant. Much to his dismay, when it became time for him to vote, at age 21, he had to take out citizenship papers and become a naturalized citizen. His loyalties show he is a good one!

This pleasant home is the only really old building remaining along DeKalb Pike on the west between Reed's Country Store and St. Helena's Church.

Normandy Farms

By Agnes Baker Jefferson



Former Franklinville Inn Today, Built c. 1834

In Bean's History on pp. 1175—ff., there is a lengthy biographical sketch of William Singerly and a full page picture. In a flowery stilted discourse, the author extols the activities, achievements and accomplishments of how the sickly business man from Philadelphia came to the country to improve his health and made this his summer and weekend home.

Briefly, he brought a new kind of cultivation of crops called "soiling" and innovated a system of "dry" feeding of animals. He stocked and perfected the breed of Holstein-Friesian cattle and Cotswold and Southdown sheep. He bred horses for both working and racing, some of which came from the finest stock in Kentucky.

President Grover Cleveland was once a guest at the Singerly home. Singerly called the extensive holdings "Record Farms" after the Philadelphia Record, the newspaper which he controlled and published. The date of his occupancy is 1873 to probably early 1920. The full-page picture shows how the grounds looked at the height of his activities, before the next owner, Ralph Beaver Strassburger, took over the manorial enterprise and built the present high white wall.

However, before Singerly, Edward Mathews gives hints of early history in this area:

The property dates to 1730, when Jacob Levering bought 100 acres of Rees Thomas and Anthony Morris. This acreage extended southwest along the State road. Henry Levering, Jacob's brother, owned the continuous tract all the way to Centre Square. Some of this was sold to Adam Lutz in 1760. (Adam Lutz allowed the Continental Army to detour over his land on the way to the Battle of Germantown.) The first named tract remained in the family of Daniel Levering until 1776. Issac Martin, the wheelwright, was his son-in-law.

An involved account indicates that the descendants of the Levering family, through Catherine Levering Heist (married John Heist), created a stone house which was operated as the Franklinville Tavern in about 1834. John Hiest was a Justice-of-Peace and their sons, John and Dr. D/ Levering Heist, each attained prominence in his field.

The Tavern remained such until Mr. Singerly came to Whitpain in the early 1870's.

As mentioned before, Ralph Beaver Strassburger arrived on the scene as early as 1913, adding farms to the domain until 1929. Much has been written elsewhere of Mr. Strassburger. It is the purpose here to only point out that at present, there remain about fifteen houses, plus the school house, which at one time were individually owned.

Attention is called to the fact that the corner or manor house, as stated before, was once the Franklinville Inn. It had several owners beside the Heists. The small stone house within the entrance-to-the barns lane was the birthplace of Mr. Strassburger, having been moved here from Worcester near Skippack.

The west corner main farm house and barn were once the home and lands of Charles Krieble. His son, Hiram Krieble, was the maternal grandparent of Edward and Merrill Zimmerman.

The next farm, southwest facing DeKalb, was once the Samuel Brinton property and then Eugene Whittock's, Henry Whittock's father.

Going west on Morris Road, there are a group of buildings which were once the holdings of Reuben Rodebaugh, the very able and prosperous butcher.

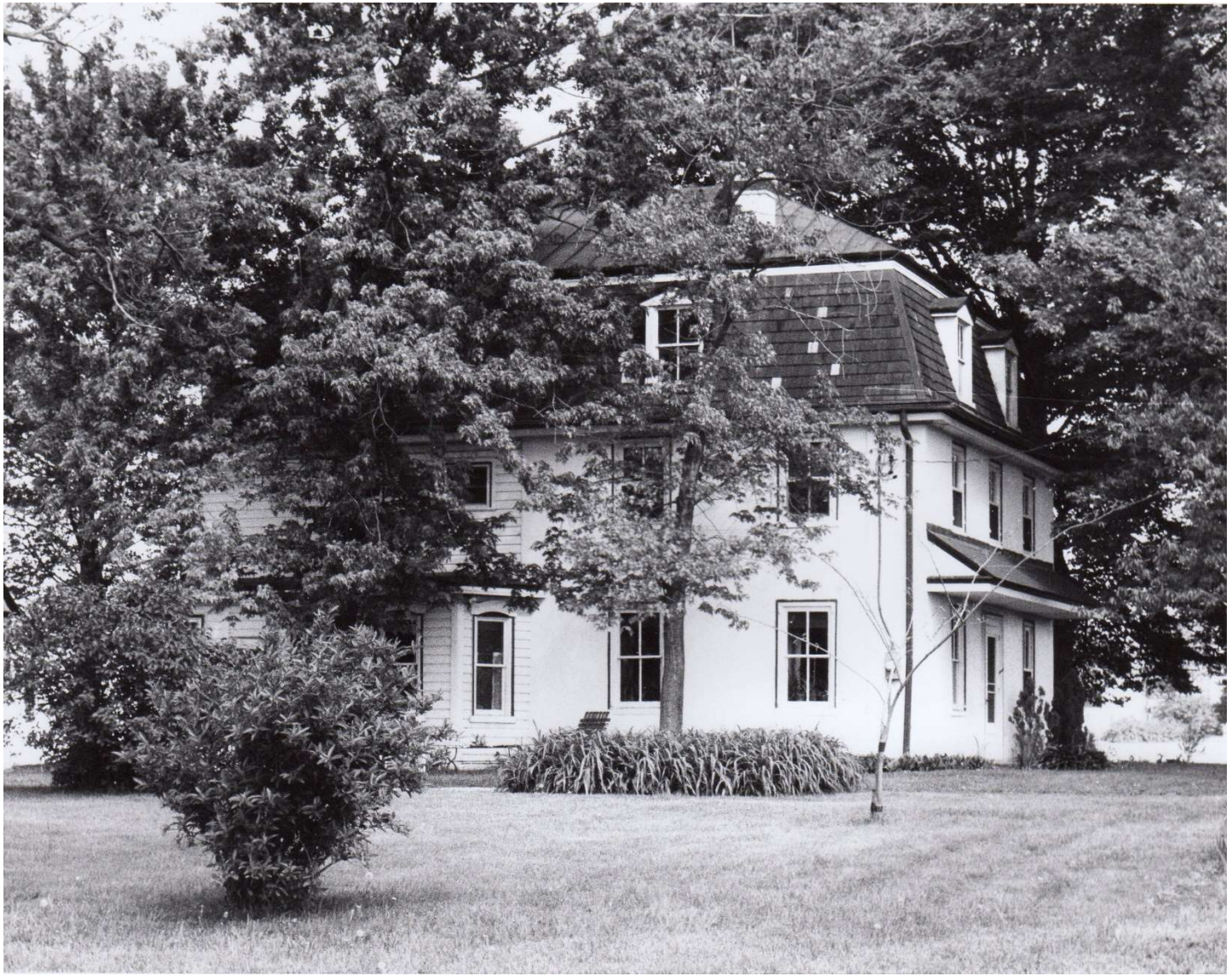
The houses on Township Line Road-East, which are painted red and white, the Normandy Farm colors, are of later vintage, and little of their history is known by this writer.



Jonathan Greenawalt Home



Bernhard House in 1977



Former Jacob Walker Houser – Original Prtion.c.1760

Bernhard — Walker — Greenawalt Farms

(Now Montgomery County College)

By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck

On the Montgomery County College Campus, there are three houses which date to before the Revolution. From Edward Mathews Scrapbook No. 92 p. 42, it is difficult to determine whether they are Bernhard, Walker, or Greenawalt houses when comparing them with the different maps, and the knowledge of how all three families were interrelated. Besides this, there are several branches of the Bernhard clan and it is a puzzle to put them in their proper places. Marriage within and among the three families further complicate the quest for whose house belonged to whom.

It began in this particular area in 1685, with the Penn grant to Richard Whitpain. In a series of transfers, not necessary to recite here, Rees Thomas and Anthony Morris came into possession of 300 acres in 1713 which covered this northeast section of the township.

William and Richard Thomas, sons of Rees, sold to Jacob Kurr in 1746. This same Jacob Kurr, the farmer, but more importantly a builder, also bought land south and east from John Phillip Boehm. Jacob Kurr had a house-plan which he used for other people. Unfortunately, he never put a date-stone on any that he is reputed to have erected. The pattern and appearance of many early dwellings which were researched, when viewed through pictures, are clues that say he can be credited with designing and building many that are still in existence.

The next owners are not on record, but before the Revolution, Jacob Ulrich became the owner and then the property changed hands many times:

- 1777 — George Wright bought from Ulrick
- 1777 _ Paul Bower bought from Wright (Bower was the trustee of St. John's Lutheran Church when the land was received from George and Elizabeth Kastner)
- 1778 — Edward Laskey
- 1783 _ Henry Dawson (At this date it was a message plantation—paid 1,000 pounds in Continental currency)
- 1786 — Zebulon Potts (Went bankrupt and property was seized and sold to Abraham Knitzing)
- 1797 — Mordecai Jones invested in it
- 1798 — Henry Greenawalt bought

Henry was the son of a Jonathan Greenawalt who lived "1/2 mile south of Franklinville" and is listed as a soldier in the Revolution Army.

At the same time, in 1798, one Andere Bernhard migrated from Switzerland and operated a tavern in Hatfield until 1821. In 1823, he and his son, George Adam Bernhard, purchased a farm in this vicinity. Again, it is difficult to pinpoint which one. Their offspring, Anthony Bernhard, married the daughter of Henry Greenawalt and thus inherited the homestead. Descendants from this union (gathered from 1877 map) are Jacob C. Bernhard, George Bernhard, and William R. Bernhard. Others of this generation are James Bernhard and David Bernhard. Two of the last remaining descendants are Irwin Bernhard, son of David, and Henry Whittock whose mother was Annie Bernhard Whittock.

When and how Jacob Walker entered the picture is not known. His name first appears about 1850. Boehm's Cemetery lists three Jacob Walkers: 1773-1859, 1815-1864, and one that was still living beyond 1897. Somehow the house and farm buildings on the west corner of Morris and Cathcart (Wood) Roads became the fertile and prosperous farm of about 72 acres. In a Montgomery County Farm Report about 1860, Jacob Walker, with 68 acres of land and 5 acres of woodland, had an income of approximately \$1,132.00 from the sale of products he raised on his farm near Franklinville. The Jacob Walker in question here is the one who deeded the aforesaid ownership to his son-in-law, David Bernhard, in 1897.

The writer knows that this Jacob Walker and his wife, Rebecca (nee Smith), had eight children: three boys and five girls. Two of the men resided in Philadelphia and the other bought a farm in Bucks County. Two girls also moved to the city, and the three others married and stayed in Whitpain Township. It is significant here to enumerate:

Annie R. Walker married James Bernhard, a Greenawalt descendant. Hannah Walker married David Bernhard and continued in the old homestead. Phoebe Walker married Edward Phipps (once the owner of "Tall Oaks") and had three daughters, Edith, Clara and Letitia.

It was from the first union, Annie and James Bernhard (the maternal grandparents of the writer), that three boys and two girls were born and reared. The one male heir was the well known postmaster and storekeeper, F. Clifford Bernhard. One of the girls, Rebecca W., married Howard L. Baker in December, 1910.

Somehow, the Frantz' and the Riles enter the scene and intermarried with this clan. During the time 1910 to 1940, the Greenawalt Reunion was held each summer and the participants encompassed the descendants of Greenawalt, Bernhard, Walker, Rile and Frantz, but nobody could recite how they were all related.

Irwin Bernhard reminds that the back part of the small house on Morris Road, Vz mile from DeKalb, which the College has not razed, is part of a log cabin. (This could be Jonathan Greenawalt's place.) The mansard roof on the former Jacob Walker home belies its age. Part of this structure probably dates to 1790. The main house facing DeKalb Pike was possibly built by Jacob Kurr and dates, circa 1760.

This was the farmstead of Annie and James Bernhard from 1880 to 1910. James was a blacksmith, in addition to a farmer, and a man given to mechanical ways of improving agricultural practices. He was one of the first residents of the township to own an automobile. His future son-in-law challenged him to a race to Rebecca's graduation in 1908. Needless to say, by the time the sputtering, jerking vehicle started, Howard Baker had already won the race with his spirited, white horse, and well-polished black carriage.

There is a legend about the strange pear tree on the Walker land: The stump of a great oak or maple tree was left standing above ground. Some ingenious person grafted a pear branch to it and it eventually bore exceptionally large and delicious fruit. As a connoisseur of exceptional fruit, George Washington is reputed to have plucked a pear from this tree while he was riding in the area. He enjoyed eating the luscious pear and commended the owner for having such a tree. The remarkable part was that the tree stump was calculated to have been about 120 years old at that time.

In 1910, James and Annie Bernhard sold their farm to a Mr. and Mrs. O. Brown, who improved the land and kept the buildings in good condition. About the same time, in the early 1930's when Mr. Strassburger was buying up the land on the northwest side of DeKalb Pike, a Mr. Alexander D. Thayer (having married Mrs. Strassburger's sister, nee Bourne) started buying up land on the southeast side. All these farms became Gwynllan Farms, and were operated under that name until Montgomery County purchased it for the purpose of building the County College in 1969-1970.

It is gratifying to realize that on this beautiful productive land there now exists a seat of learning. It is a comfortable thought that once again Whitpain Township was chosen as the center of the county and still remains a crossroads . . . from many directions.



Former McCandless Now Ferguson Home and Skippack Pike.c.1906 When A Dirt Road



Springhouse Remaining on Bush Tavern Property

Down Skippack Pike

By Agnes Baker Jefferson

Photography by George S. Peck

Entering Whitpain from Worcester, eastward on Rt 73, on the southwest corner there once stood a lovely old house and the remnants of a once prosperous farm. This was the Bush Tavern and later the Jacob Baker farmstead. The house was completely demolished to make way for the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike overpass. Only a little stone springhouse remains to mark the spot.

This land was first acquired in 1754 (86 A.) from the Anthony Morris — Davis — Osborne — George Kastner group. Metz was the owner during the Revolution. Tyson operated it as a tavern from 1833-1857, and then sold to Jacob Baker who cleared most of the land and farmed it.

The Crop Records in the County Newspaper report, in 1860, show that Jacob Baker owned 63 acres of land — 58 in crops and 5 in woodlands. From the sale of products raised and gathered, he realized approximately \$938.00 on this farm.

The house next to the railroad was built for Jacob Baker's daughter Emma, and son-in-law, Theodore Harrar. Here was established the coal, feed, flour and lumberyard business of 1882.

Across the road, the little house was once a general store and post office. Five or six other houses along with the Railroad Station made Belfry a thriving little village. The Ferguson house has already been mentioned in the McCandless account.

The sexton's house, on St. John's Church property, was labelled "a good and comfortable house" in Bean's History, page 1169, and was possibly built about the same time as the church. (Circa 1773.)

The parsonage used by the early pastors, if they lived here, was the rear part of what is today Robert Meehan's place. It was rented by the Church for many years. The present "Victorian" parsonage was erected during the pastorates of D. Levin Coleman and Reverend Parks. The attic is entirely "finished" to make room for the large number of children which the pastors had.

The top of the hill was known as "Grog Hill" because of the legend about a group of roistering bullies who would terrify the residents along this road with their drunken marching up and down the hill. They could carry jugs of grog on a stick, each end of which was anchored on the shoulders of two so-called "Grog-Bruisers." Their activities culminated and were eventually curbed by a large law-abiding man named Daniel Rossiter in a final brawl. The force and cry of the public opinion finally put an end to the group, but the name "Grog Hill" remained for a while.

Stories of Smallpox, Yellow Fever Burial Grounds

A story surrounding the burial grounds of the highly contagious small-pox and yellow-fever victims during and after the Revolution has two interpretations. The first one was that to keep the remains separate, there were a number of bodies placed in graves on a lot across the road from St. John's Church. The graves are no longer marked, if ever. This story comes down through the church records of 1793.

The other version is that the victims were buried much farther away on the top of the hill in back of what is now Belfry Meadows, where the Greger and Jensen properties meet the community. This account was told by Mr. Garfield Greger to Mr. Stan Smullen, shortly after the houses in Belfry Meadows were built.

It is the writer's opinion that both stories could be correct. There was not just one epidemic. One reads of whole families being wiped out by dread yellow and typhoid fevers and small-pox. One of the curses and causes of death for many years in these early days, was the lack of medical knowledge and doctors. It is well to keep in mind that the "good old days" were full of heart-breaking, tragic sicknesses.

What Was Once Cream Ridge

All records show that Samuel Castner's relative, George, was a land operator in the early 1700's. He received land in Whitpain on speculation deals from the original Ann Whitpain McCarty-Anthony Morris-Rees Thomas speculator group.

George (K or C) Kastner at one time lived on "Whitpain Farms," but at the same time he owned most of the land on both sides of the Skippack Pike from Centre Square to Belfry. Not much is known of his personal life, but it is known, from church deeds and records, that in 1769 he and his wife donated two acres of land to St. John's Lutheran Congregation. They are listed as members and are buried in the cemetery. The deed book in Montgomery County Court House carries at least twenty transactions on the sale of property to people who lived along this route, between 1740 and 1800. George Kastner was called the Grantor. It is fairly safe to say that of any property along this road, when traced as far back as George Kastner, the origin of the ownership can then be traced to the Penn Land Grant.

The history of what was once Cream Ridge, now Whitpain Hills, began on record in 1776 with George Kastner. "..... a house of considerable size and a small barn were built" and there appears to be "38 acres of cleared land and 5 acres of woodland." The purchase price was \$2,610.00. Phillip and Joshua Richardson's names are on the tax list of 1785 and both are on the list of privates in the militia in 1777.

From 1790 to 1807, John and Mary Slingluff apparently owned it, but the next transfer shows that, in 1813, the Richardson's transferred it to William, the father, George, Henry, and John Hurst. The father and brothers signed off to George, whose wife was Elizabeth Dannehower.

Between 1813 and 1830, George and Elizabeth Hurst and family probably lived on the farm and made a reasonable living on it, developing it to the extent that life was comfortable in that era. Their daughter Sarah inherited the entire holdings when she married Jonathan Baker.

Where Jonathan Baker, born in 1811, came from is open to two theories:

1. The writer's sister found in the Bucks County Historical Society, a Jonathan Baker shipped over on the "Patsy Rutledge" in 1785 . . . from Hamburg, Germany. His wife's name was Anna Maria and they had a son, at that date named Jonathan B. This man could be the father of the Jonathan in this concern. The ship docked in northern New Jersey. In the same book, "Pennsylvania German Pioneers," is found other familiar names that are pertinent to this account. John Hurst, in 1749, sailed via Yorkshire, with sons Lucas, William, and Henry. Abraham Dannehower, Benjamin Baker, and Colonel John Baker are also on the list.
2. The writer's theory is; Jonathan's father may have been a deserting Hessian soldier from the Battle of Trenton, who "dispersed himself along with other unwanted prisoners-of-war into the hills of Pennsylvania."

Jonathan Beaker's school arithmetic books and account books are in the possession of his great-grandson, Dr. Charles Baker. But to give an idea of how well he farmed, here is an excerpt from a newspaper showing the products he reported. (Approximate date, 1845.)

Upon the death of Jonathan, in 1874, and his wife, in 1890, the farm was left to three children, Emma, Ida, and Victor Hurst Baker.

Victor married Sarah Jane Hamilton in 1869. (Approximately, unable to find any trace of Sarah's ancestry.) It was the tragic death of their eleven year old son Frank, in July 1886, that brought about the continuation of the Baker name, for in September of 1887, Howard Levin Baker was born. (Named for Reverend D. Levin Coleman.)

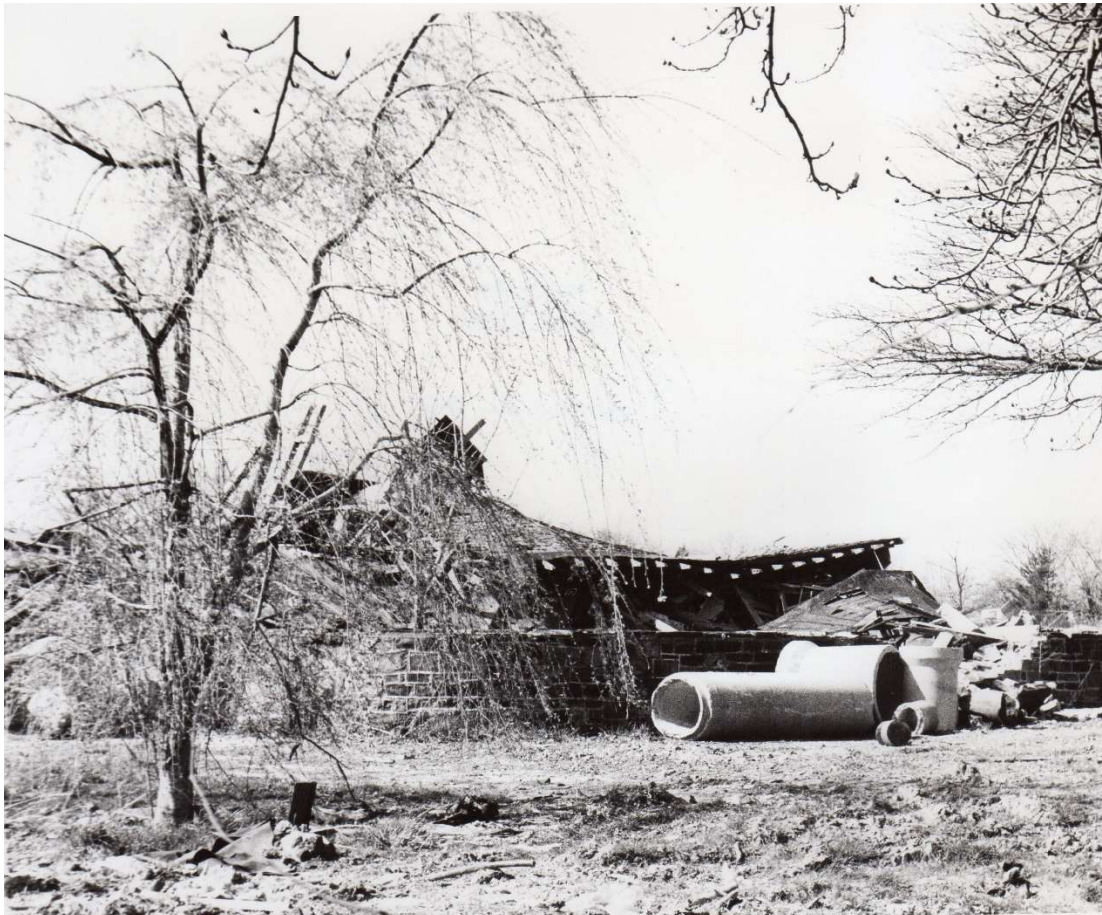
This writer's father, Howard Baker, married Rebecca Walker Bernhard (see Bernhard-Walker-Greenawalt story) in 1910. From that union six children were born — 3 sons, James, Howard, Jr., and Charles, and 3 daughters, Agnes, Rhoda, and SaraAnn. The fifth generation has thirteen children and the sixth generation, to date, has fifteen children.

To these six generations — Jonathan to the present — this spot on the side of the hill has been know as the Baker Farm or Cream Ridge

The Cream Ridge name came from John Schirmer, an 1880 German immigrant (and his family of eight children), who was an agriculture specialist in a rich valley in Germany. He said the soil on the top of this hill and the well-watered, well-drained valley was "cream rich."



Baker Farm, 1943



Ruin of Baker Barn Demolished, May 1976



Howard Baker assumed ownership of the farm in 1910. By 1918, he had added the forty acres of the Schirmer farm, built a large barn, silos, stables, and renovated the house. He then added twenty more acres "across the road," thus making a productive farm of one hundred acres.

The Bakers, beginning with Victor, then Howard and Rebecca and all six children, farmed, ran a dairy, raised poultry, pigs, and horses, and produced food for forty-six years. It was during the Depression of the thirties, when Howard could help feed some needy families, that gave him great satisfaction. But, of all the crops he grew and harvested, and all the animals and stock he produced, he was "proudest of all. . . of his six children!"

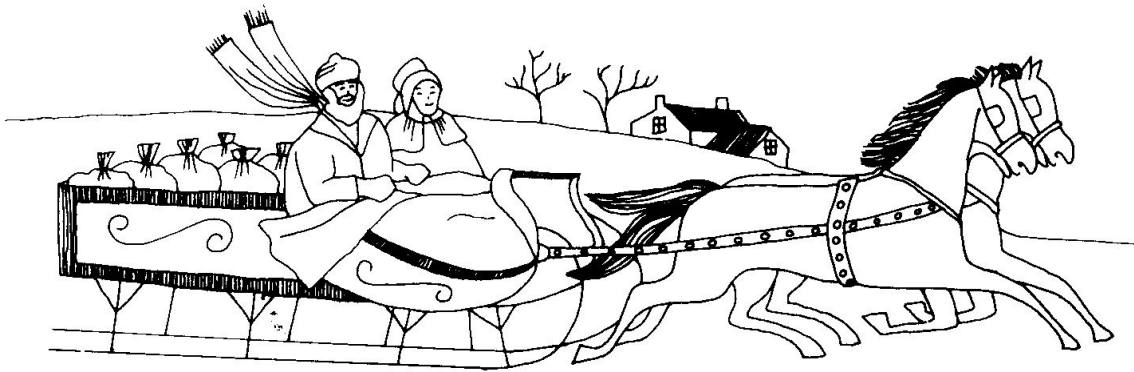
However, it is Victor Baker who deserves a word here. "Versatile" is the word for him. Born in 1842, somehow, he was not called in the draft of the Civil War, no doubt because he was a farmer and the support of two sisters and ailing mother and father. He was a carpenter by trade, having worked with his uncles, the Hurst's. But he was first, last, and always a farmer. Besides these two full-time occupations, he conducted a music and singing school at Centre Square School on his own time. In addition to all this he was a business man and was versed in law. He was Secretary-Treasurer of the Creamery Association and Justice-of-the-Peace for many years. On reading any Whitpain deed, will, or document in the period 1890-1910, one finds the name and seal of VICTOR H. BAKER.

He was active in St. John's Lutheran Church, serving on the church council, leading the music, and building and repairing church property.

Shortly after his marriage to Sarah Hamilton, he used his architectural skill, and designed and built a house for his bride. It is the white stucco house, No. 1696 Skippack Pike. It is the first variation in design of the houses built up to that time. It looks like it did when it was built except for the gingerbread that has been removed from the front porch.

Apparently Victor Baker was a modest, rather private kind of man when it came to displaying his accomplishments. Nowhere can one find in the historical records anything about his public life, yet church records show how active he was. It is legend that he settled many family quarrels and aided many neighbors to write wills, pay mortgages, and generally help in financial matters. The only recognition that is found was in the Norristown Times Herald Yesteryear column on November 21, 1972 under 100 Years Ago: (slightly paraphrased).

"Taking advantage of the early snow, Victor Baker, of this place, hitched his team to his sleigh and carried his grain to Yosts Mill to be ground for his animals. This made quite a lovely scene and cheerful sound as they drove through the village."



To bring to date Cream Ridge Farm: In 1956, Howard and Rebecca Baker, after selling ground for the Philadelphia Electric tower line, the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and giving two acres to St. John's Cemetery, sold the remaining fifty-five acres on the southwest side of the road to J. Franklin Meehan & Sons. The Frank Meehan's lived in the main house and the Robert Meehan's occupied the Schirmer house. Both houses were extensively renovated. The front field contained nursery plantings and a shop called Meehans Garden Center.

In 1973, the Meehan's and J. DiSanto Developers built the townhouse community called Whitpain Hills. The old house and barn were demolished in early 1976!

Before discussing the houses down "Grog Hill," let this be quoted from Clara Beck's observation in 1926:

"By 1876, practically all the log cabins that dotted the roadside of one hundred years ago have been removed." From this, one can gather that they either fell down, were torn down or were replaced by more modern building materials. In some cases, an addition enlarged the living space. In other cases, as was the style of the day, a dwelling was enhanced and finished off with a French Style roof. This is the type that makes up most of those in the present village of Center Square.

The Reichels

It is a real delight to "discover" the Wayne and Helen Reichel house. First of all, it stands among a cluster of large old trees and shrubbery and can hardly be seen from the road, although it is only a few feet from the present concrete curb. Secondly, upon studying the deeds and dates of sale, it was found that Peter Wentz, of Worcester and Washington's Headquarters fame, was the second owner and resident of the attractive old house.

The Reichels were fortunate enough to have the former owner, Horace Shabacher, look up the history of the owners, which he gave to them. As mentioned before, if George Kastner's name appears, then that is about the third transaction from the original Penn Grant.

The list includes:

- 1776 — George Kastner to William West
- 1784 — W. West to Peter Wentz
- 1786 — Peter Wentz died and left the property to his wife and six children
- 1795 — Mordecia Jones, an agent for the widow and children, sold to Elias Hurst
- 1814 — Elias Hurst will to John, Elizabeth, Charles and Adam Hurst
- 1862 — Adam Hurst conveyed to Charles Hurst
- 1870 — Part sold by Elizabeth and John Hurst to George Cressman
- 1878 — G. Cressman to ? Smith
- 1894 — Smith to Thomas Wunder
- 1901 — T. Wunder to Rev. Robert Hetherington
- 1907 — Richard and Theresa Andrews et al and Emerson Conrad
- 1907 — Rev. William and Nancy Galloway
- 1926 — William and Amelia Schwendt (house was occupied by tenants, one of which ran a 'tea room')
- 1941 — William and Helen Camp
- 1947 — Horace and Ethel Shabacher
- 1969 — Wayne and Helen Reichel

The original old stone part of the house contained two rooms down and two above. The kitchen room has the large walk-in size chimney fireplace, and corner circular stairs. The front room or parlor has a more formal fireplace. This part has remained almost intact. A frame kitchen and dining area was added about one hundred years ago, and the Reichels have added a modern family room, which extends the house in a southerly direction, thus taking advantage of the sun's path and continuing the position of the original house.

On June 5, 1976, when the Peter Wentz Farmstead of Worcester was opened, the speaker who gave the history said that, in 1784, Peter Wentz retired to a farm in Whitpain. At that time it was evidently not known where. To come upon such information and put it 'together' reveals some of the pleasure in researching these fine old dwellings.



Reichel Home

Three houses on the northeast side of Skippack Pike present a real problem. Records on all three are available, but difficult to unscramble. Clara Beck is of the opinion that the period, 1711 to 1760, was considered "a quiet time, being a place of bridle paths through forest type of existence." Even if the records in Philadelphia convey anything, it is still not easy to keep up with the trading of land, doweries of daughters, church-owned properties versus minister-owned properties, and wills of fathers leaving possessions to wives and seven or eight children apiece, or maybe ten children and their spouses.

One also reaches a snag in records from approximately 1838 to 1855. A suggested reason for this is that the writer came upon the fact that Philadelphia County and City government was so "crime-infested, inefficient, and inadequate that records, even if found, were not dependable." The records in Montgomery County suggest the same. One comes across deeds where the deed book numbers and page numbers are left blank. It is because of these garbled records that one has to guess what may have happened, especially if there is no record in the sheriff's office. Sometimes we find the same family owning and occupying two houses at the same time within a mile of each other. It is confusing to find an owner disappeared, and then pick up that somebody "assumed ownership and dwelt therein."

Alex and Emily McNaught

The first of these old houses is located opposite the entrance to Whitpain Hills. One glance tells any observer that it is an "old house" — but how old? and who built it? If there was a farm in the beginning with sizable acreage, it has now been chopped off, leaving only about five acres adjacent to the house.

Going backwards in time, the ownership-date-list goes in this order:

- 1954 — The McNaughts purchased from Harry and Anna Miller
- 1920 — Harry Miller bought from L. Hollingsworth
- 1920 — Clayton L. Brown, Realtor
- 1912 — Hollingsworth bought from Gottlieb Holgewachs et ux

1910 — Jonathan Rawbottam

1893 — Richard Roynan name appears about the same time that Richard

Roynan's name is on a deed on the house 1 / 4 mile down the road

1893 — Levi Laybold — and heirs — a number of daughters

1857 — John Laybold willed it to his son Levi

1805 — Charles Hurst transferred to John Laybold

1799 — William Hurst had conveyed it to his son Charles

William Hurst, cabinet-maker, carpenter and builder appears on the tax list. George, Charles, Henry, and John were all carpenters as well as farmers. As stated elsewhere, Elias Hurst conveyed some other property to John, Charles, and Adam. One bit of evidence that the inhabitants of these houses were ingenious is the fact that both this house and the one down the road are similar in design and both have windows with four large window-panes. While the McNaught house seems to date earlier (Rush house 1801) like a Betsy Ross plan, nevertheless, both have noticeably large panes. Explanation? It was in 1798-99 that the window pane tax was in effect, i.e., the place was taxed according to the number of panes of glass in the entire house. It is the writers opinion in this case, that some taxpayers, for example, the Hurst's, if they were adept and fast enough could outwit the tax assessor or collector by quickly changing or installing four large panes where eight or twelve once were used.

William Hurst, according to Clara Beck, "in 1804 lived on the Roynan farm and helped to rebuild and renovate the 'Waggon' Inn."



McNaught Home

Arthur and Kay Rush House — owned by Peter Strassburger

This has undoubtedly been a most popular house and location. Many families have lived in it and owned it, and many more would like to buy it! One reason for its popularity would be that it is the first real farm house west of the village. Secondly, it is ideally located back from the road and has a stream nearby. Thirdly, it is well-designed and built and has weathered some adversity.

In late 1975, after having been vandalized and then completely gutted by fire, the Arthur Rush's, Jr. and Sr., with the permission of Mr. Strassburger undertook to restore the dwelling. Today the Rush's are enjoying the spaciousness of the large farm kitchen and the atmosphere of the main part of the house with its old woodwork and refinished floors. It has been decorated in a colonial motif. The crowning feature is the unusual masonry of the entrance surrounding the front door. But best of all, the workmen found the date-stone while renovating — 1801!

The record of deeds is herewith presented-going backwards:

- 1939 — Strassburger purchase — Several tennant farmers and their families occupied it
- 1927 — Dr. John Nevergole
- 1926 — Charles and Elizabeth MacMullan
- 1920 — Paul Zenone
- 1920 — George and Helen Woodward
- 1920 — Joseph Termine (agent)
- 1916 — Richard Roynan
- 1905 — William Knoll sold to Charles Heimsbaugh (last of the Yost farm managers)
- 1903 — John Knoll, the father willed a great area of land to William (Log-cabin dweller on Yost Rd.), George and Thomas



Rush Home

1898 — John Knoll Farm (on map)

1877 — John Knoll Farm (on map)

The name of John Haag appears here. But John Haag (from personal recollection) was married to one of the Knoll daughters. (Verified in St. John's Cemetery) St. John's Cemetery is full of tombstones with markers of a host of Hursts as well as Knoll's.

When or how the property was transferred from the Hurst to the Knoll family is not exactly known. One guess would be that the elder John Knoll married one of the Hurst daughters. That would take time and research to verify.

It would also take time and effort to decipher the next puzzle because part of the land was chopped off to make another farm. It was first labeled the Tyson farm, then the Charles Wood Farm. From the writer's recollections, the next farm to the Rush place was owned by Horace Wood (second generation) and Earl Wood, his son. In the late 1920's, the Ellsworth Ritter family purchased from the Wood's. Amy Ritter Smith was the co-owner who sold the property, in the 1960's, to the developers who built Belfry Meadows.

Vivian and Phillip Bird Estate

The boarded-up, deserted house near old Centre Square School is involved and tied up among the McNaught-Wood-Strassburger properties. Here, by elimination, not by actual research, is an interesting story.

When reading any of the deeds of the above mentioned holdings, one comes to the boundary description of "the lands formerly owned by the Reformed Church." From the Montgomery County Historical Society it was learned that Judith Meier, of East Norriton, last year did a study of "Patriotic German Reformed Pastors." In her report she has a chapter on the Reverend John H. Weikel. This rather flamboyant man was called to serve both Wentz's and Boehm's churches, after John Phillip Boehm retired. It was in



Bird Estate

1775 that Weikel persuaded the two congregations to own a house and farm to accommodate the minister. It appears as though the land between the Hurst's and the Hurst's was acquired and a house was built to fulfill that purpose. It is guess work, but fairly reasonable, that a first house was situated farther back from the road; or it could be this same house and the road bed was different or seemed farther away. Nonetheless, this is the property that nearly fits the description as indicated on many deeds, and Mrs. Meier's findings.

Rev. Weikel was a controversial man, some saying he was a fanatic and crazy, others saying he was fired with patriotic zeal. One account reports him, on July 23, 1775, as coming home and before he put his horse in the enclosure, he shot a pistol over the animal's head, in an effort to train him, should he be needed in the war.

When the strange man was dismissed, he did not move out of the parsonage. The new minister had to find quarters elsewhere. He dropped out of sight in 1781 and was never heard from again.

Mrs. Meier tells an enlightening sidelight: "In the early 1840's when the parsonage, known as the John Knoll Farm, had fallen into disrepair, the Rev. George Wack purchased the property at public sale (as he did in the case of Erb's Mill), for \$3042.90." He lived here in semi-retirement while he operated the Mill on Township Line Road near Custer Station.

In the period around 1915 to 1930 (personal recollection — not verified), a Quaker family by the name of Sylvester and Eleanor Sharpies from the West Chester area, owned and operated a goat farm. Upon their death, their daughter, Vivan Bird, inherited it. Recently, upon her husband's death, their son, Glenn, inherited it. Glenn now lives in California and the property is for sale. At this writing, the possible sale depends on zoning regulations. Who knows what this once fine place will be used for!

If the story of the houses down Skippack Pike is inconclusive, so be it! It is a confusing mixture of interchange, intermarriage, complications, neighborliness, plots and schemes. It is just possible that they were rugged individualists or ordinary people who lived and struggled to keep abreast of the times in the best way they all knew how.



Former Tannery and Later Odd Fellows Hall



Clara Beck Photo – Skippack Pike, c.1920



Blacksmith Shop Center Square



Salter Tea Room and Gas Station



Bernhard Store and Center Square Post Office

“Quail Call”

By Mr. and Mrs. Robert T. Trump
Photography by George S. Peck



"Quail Call" is the charming home situated on the southern corner at the intersection of Morris and Cathcart Roads.

The original house was built in 1812 or early 1813. It consisted of one room on the first floor and two on the second with an attic above and a half cellar under the first floor. The original "one room" house appears to have always been stuccoed and whitewashed over native brownstone. According to county tax records, it was built by Barnabas Gearhart who was the son of Nicholas Gearhart. Barnabas was described as a "cordwainer" (today a shoemaker) in the original sheepskin deed.

Tax records of 1819 show Barnabas crossed off as probably deceased and "Neavel, Henry 2- A & Dwg-100" is shown. In 1812, the tax rate doubled to \$200 indicating extensive building. This suggests that the second section of the house (two stories and matching the first in outline but with a full cellar) would have been then added to the west side.

Henry Neavel was listed as a weaver by trade in 1820, 21, and 22 and the tax listed as \$200. But in 1823, 24, and 25 it is listed at \$180. Henry must have contested his new assessment.

Over the years, different owners have "modernized" the home until the George Millingtons, in 1926, began to restore the house. The Trumps have been living in the house since mid-1976 and have extensively restored the home, including exact details as they would have been in the early 19th century.

The place was originally named "Quail Call" in 1926 when the Millingtons found a quail cock was living in their rear meadow, but although they even purchased quail hens and attempted to keep these fowl on the place, these birds have long since left with their melodic cry of "Bob White," a once common sound around Franklinville.

Edward & Gloria West Property

By Agnes Baker Jefferson

The ownership of this farm, located on Morris Rd., just below Ginkgo Rd., dates to at least 1796.

The present house is not colonial but no allowance has ever been made for a fire destroying an original house in our study of old houses.

The present dwelling appears to be "Victorian." It is conspicuous by the lack of fireplaces or remnants of such. Only chimneys for pot bellied stoves were in evidence when the last renovations were made.

What could have happened, if imagination takes over, is that the first house was destroyed by fire because of the misuse of the fireplaces and when rebuilding the owner vowed not to have such a fire hazard again.

This was once the parcel of land that extended from Gwynedd into Whitpain that was owned by Nicholas (Raile) Rile. It is important because it helps to place the boundaries of the Robert Trump land and establishes guide lines for the Clayton ground. Nicholas Rile was the patriarch of the Rile family in Whitpain and took an active part in the Revolution!

1796	George Syfert — (fought in Revolution)
1796	Henry Styer
1806	? Dilworth
1817	Stephen Styer
1825	Stephen Styer bought more land
1868	John Styer
1900	Albert Rile
1910	S. Rile, Greger, Henderson, Bernhard, Williamson
1915-?	Stuart Heist
1940-?	Alexander D. Thayer
1962	Edward and Gloria West

The Clayton House

By Agnes Baker Jefferson

Photography by George S. Peck

Where Plymouth Road comes from Gwynedd and crosses Morris Road on the west corner there stands a charming old house which is the home of Mrs. Russell Clayton and her daughter, Mrs. Barbara Rambo. It is worthy of special recognition because of the way it is "put together," i.e., the original house, then a space which is now the kitchen, which connects the old smokehouse and thus becomes a continuous, comfortable, livable space.



Clayton House

The list of ownership going backward goes in this order:

1959	Mr. and Mrs. Russell Clayton bought from Wilbur and Edith Schmidt
1944	Schmidt bought from Harry Asquith
1925	Asquith bought from Charles Hackett
1900 (circa)	Hackett acquired from Mrs. Catherine Clair
1859	Mrs. Clair bought from Samuel Shive
1839	Shive bought from Hugh and Elizabeth Lukens
1832	Lukens bought from William Rhoades, Agent
1831	Rhoades acquired from Abraham Lutz
1813	Abraham Lutz bought from Jesse Wentz
1802-1805	Jesse Wentz acquired from Mordecai Jones (land agent)
	M. Jones received land from Jacob Walter
1795	Jacob Walter came by property from Septimus Wood

The next deed discusses the will of Septimus Wood written in 1750. Here it is difficult to fit together the relationship because of the nature of what is incorporated in a deed, will, release, etc., Septimus Wood names Samuel Lenderman as a recipient of something resembling this corner. Then alas! Sam Lenderman's daughter, Mary, was the wife of Samuel Castner.

When one reaches Castner (K or C), that is as far as one needs to go, for Samuel Kastner was either father or brother of George Kastner and they were landowners. (George donated the land for St. John's Church) There is a close relationship probably through marriage, to the Morris and Whitpain families. It would seem that the Kastners were the second generation landowners after the Whitpain, McCarty, Morris, Palmer group. Hence, it would be logical to conclude that the Clayton property was cut off and buildings erected in the 1750 to 1795 period.

Mrs. Clayton describes what she has learned in these words:

"According to the late Ross Rile, whose family dated far back in Blue Bell history, the Clayton house on the corner of Morris and Schoolhouse Roads was built soon after Whitpain Township was incorporated in 1794. It is believed that the builder of the Blue Bell Inn built this house.

"What is now the living room of the three-story stuccoed fieldstone house was used as a kitchen. About fifty years ago the owner built a kitchen joining the original house and the smokehouse behind it. A view through the trapdoor in the ceiling of the smokehouse shows wooden pegs holding the roof timbers together. This is also true of the view from the trapdoor of the porch ceiling.

"On the second and third floors the eighteen-inch deep window enclosures are rounded plaster rather than the more modern conventional wood."

With so many families making changes over a period of 200 years, it is a delightful hodge-podge of how taste and utility can blend to make a convenient and appealing home.

The South Corner of Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike and Morris Road

By Elizabeth M. De Vincent
Photography by George S. Peck

The Davis — Greger Property

William Davis, a Welsh Quaker, was among the first settlers of Whitpain Township. He purchased two hundred acres of land on Skippack Pike across from what is now the Shady Grove Middle School. Since there is no record or deed it is assumed that he bought the property from John Palmer about 1701.

In 1729 he acquired 116 acres of the great Whitpain tract from Rees Thomas, Anthony Morris and Ann Whitpain. This farm was situated on the south corner of Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike and Morris Road, extending from the vicinity of Boehm's Reformed Church to Morris Road, along a slope draining to the Wissahickon Creek. A portion of the property extended over the northwest side of Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike. It is this property of William Davis that this article is about.

It is presumed that William Davis made the first clearing and built some kind of dwelling. In his will dated 1735, he left sixteen acres to his wife Deborah, all his other properties were to be sold. He was survived by five children: David, Thomas, John, James and Margret who were all under sixteen years of age.

Deborah sold the property in 1737 to William Martin. In 1751 James Brown became the owner. He gained complete title to the property in 1759 only after the sons of William Davis had all reached their majority. The farm was sold for twelve dollars an acre in 1770 to Israel Pemberton who conveyed title to the property in the same year to George Greger.



George Greger House



Springhouse Built c. 1793



Original Fireplace and Corner Cabinet

George Greger or Krieger as the name was originally spelled came from Blenheim, Germany in 1748. According to the Biographical Annals of Montgomery County, he was a certified flax weaver. He paid £480 for the 116 acre farm. George Greger belonged to the Reformed faith and was an elder in Boehm's Reformed Church at various times from 1790 to 1816. He died at the age of ninety-one on October 4, 1818, and his wife, Catherine, died eight days later. They are buried in Boehm's Reformed Church Cemetery. According to his will his son Abraham, was given the Whitpain homestead and his son George, was bequeathed a farm in Plymouth. The daughters: Margaret, Elizabeth, Barbara and Mary got legacies of money.

During the Revolutionary War, Brigadier-General Weeden's regiment of Virginia troops were encamped here from October 19 through November 2, 1777. During their stay the season was very inclement and they met with many discomforts.

George Greger lived in a two-story stone farmhouse that was situated in the center of the property near a spring and meadow. According to the tax records it was built prior to 1785; the exact date can only be assumed. In 1793 George Greger built an addition to the house and according to the tax records built the stone barn when this was completed. It is presumed that the spring house in front of the house was built at the same time.

This house is as beautiful today as when it was built, maybe even more so, as pride and quality of workmanship such as this is not to be found in houses today. The first floor of the original house with white plastered walls and ceiling is the living room. The fireplace is the original and in excellent condition as is the handsome floor-to-ceiling wood corner cabinet and the door leading to the front porch.

The first floor of the addition contains the dining room and kitchen and above are bedrooms. Between the house and the barn is an overgrown thoroughfare that is believed to have been the original Morris Road. This road can be traced to the other side of Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike.

It was during the ownership of Abraham Greger that the great Whig mass meeting of August 2, 1844 was held on his premises. The speakers stand and the crowds that cheered for Clay and Frelinghuysen were mostly congregated on a grove near the Pike.

Abraham held possession of this property for nearly forty years. He lived here with his wife, Mary, and children: George, Jacob, Charles, Elizabeth, David, Catherine, Abraham and Meridith. Two more houses were built on the farm during this time. David lived on the family homestead until 1856. All his children were born here. Abraham and Mary died in 1854 and were buried with others of the family in Boehm's Cemetery.

The "Cedars"

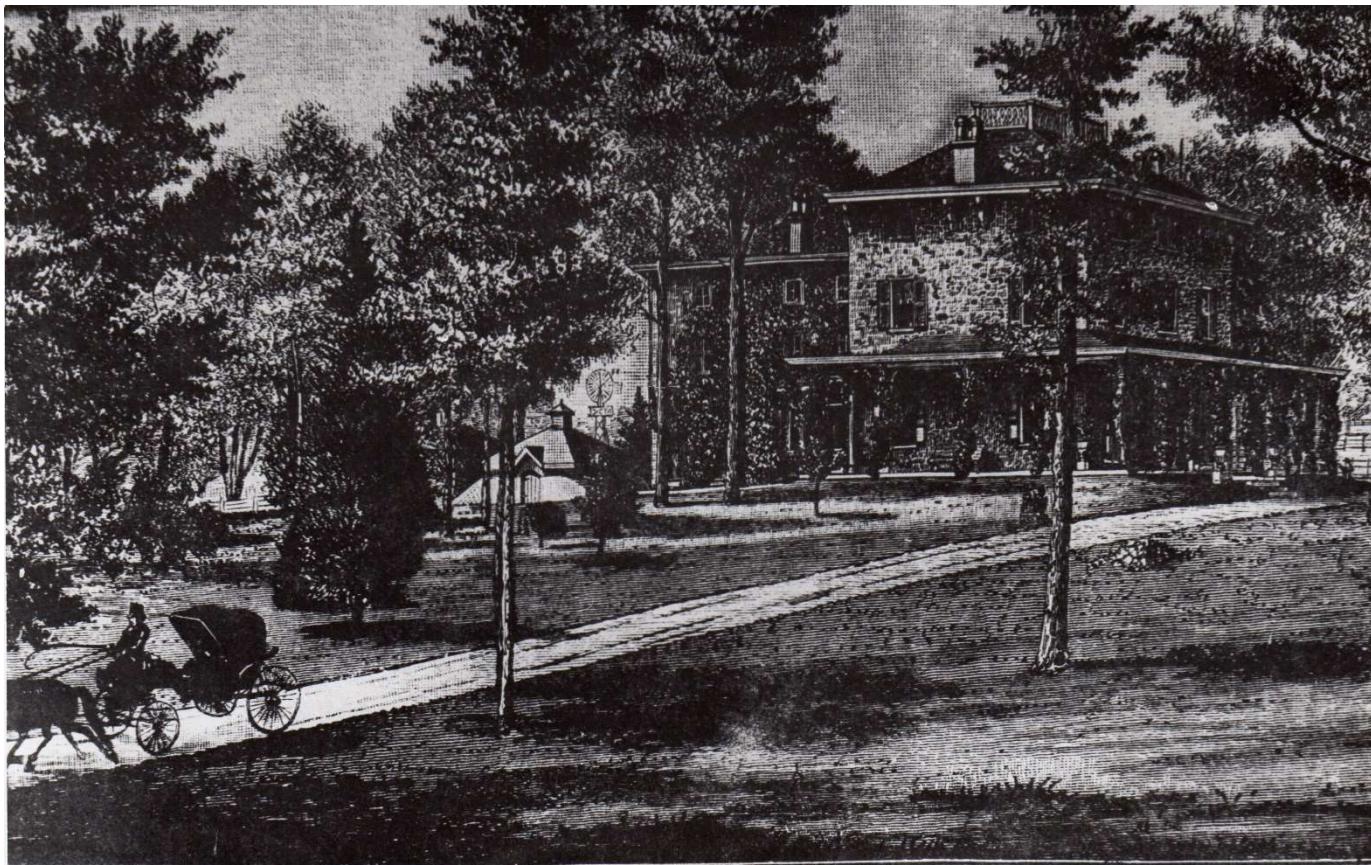
After Abraham Greger's death the farm was sold several times in quick succession and in 1857 it was bought by Mrs. Harriet Coleman for \$7,375.00. She proceeded to build as her summer home the stately stone mansion with the huge porch on Morris Road. The rear wing of this dwelling was a farmhouse assumed to have been built by a Greger.



Armentrout Mansion



Restored Icehouse



"BLYTHEWOOD."

RESIDENCE OF THOMAS A. BIDDLE.

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP, MONTGOMERY CO., PA.

Built 1868

After the death of Mrs. Coleman the farm became the property of her sons Robert and Dawson and her daughter Harriet wife of William Hayward Drayton. The two brothers conveyed their interest to their sister and Mrs. Drayton became the sole owner. In 1868, she sold the northwest side of the farm comprising forty-seven acres to Thomas A. Biddle of Philadelphia for \$26,500.00.

Henry E. Drayton built a house on his parents' property. It faced Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike near Morris Road. Upon the death of his parents, Henry sold his house and moved to the mansion on Morris Road where his parents had lived. His executors sold the farm in 1939 to Leonard T. Beale.

The present owners of the farm are Mr. and Mrs. James S. Armentrout Jr. The grounds attached to this comprise the larger section of the former Greger farm containing seventy-seven acres of its southeast side. A rare treasure, a beautiful old icehouse completely restored by Mr. Armentrout, can be found behind the mansion. The houses and buildings on this property contain much historic interest and architectural beauty and

Mr. and Mrs. Armentrout are preserving these land-marks of our colonial days.

"Blythewood"

In 1868 Mrs. Drayton conveyed the northwest side of the farm comprising forty-seven acres to Thomas A. Biddle for \$26,500.00. Mr. Biddle built a beautiful summer house on this property, he called it "Blythewood." A picture of the original house is in Bean's History of Montgomery County. The Biddle heirs sold the farm in 1925 to Thomas Raeburn White. Mr. White added extensively to the house so much so that Mr. Biddle's summer home had now become a mansion.

The farm was sold at auction in 1961. Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Ederer bought the mansion and some acreage for \$29,000.00. Mr. and Mrs. Charles McCracken bought seven and some odd acres containing a house, barn, carriage house, chicken coup and corn crib. The rest of the farm was sold in lots.



Clarence Ederer, a former State Representative, and his wife, Margaret, did extensive repairs to the mansion. It took workmen six months to remove the paint from all the doors and restore them to their former condition. Mr. Ederer was an avid hunter and traveled all over the world. Many of the animals that he caught were mounted and stuffed and hung on the walls of the library or displayed on tables. His sense of humor knew no bounds; placed strategically on the walls of the powder room were two huge coiled rattlesnakes.

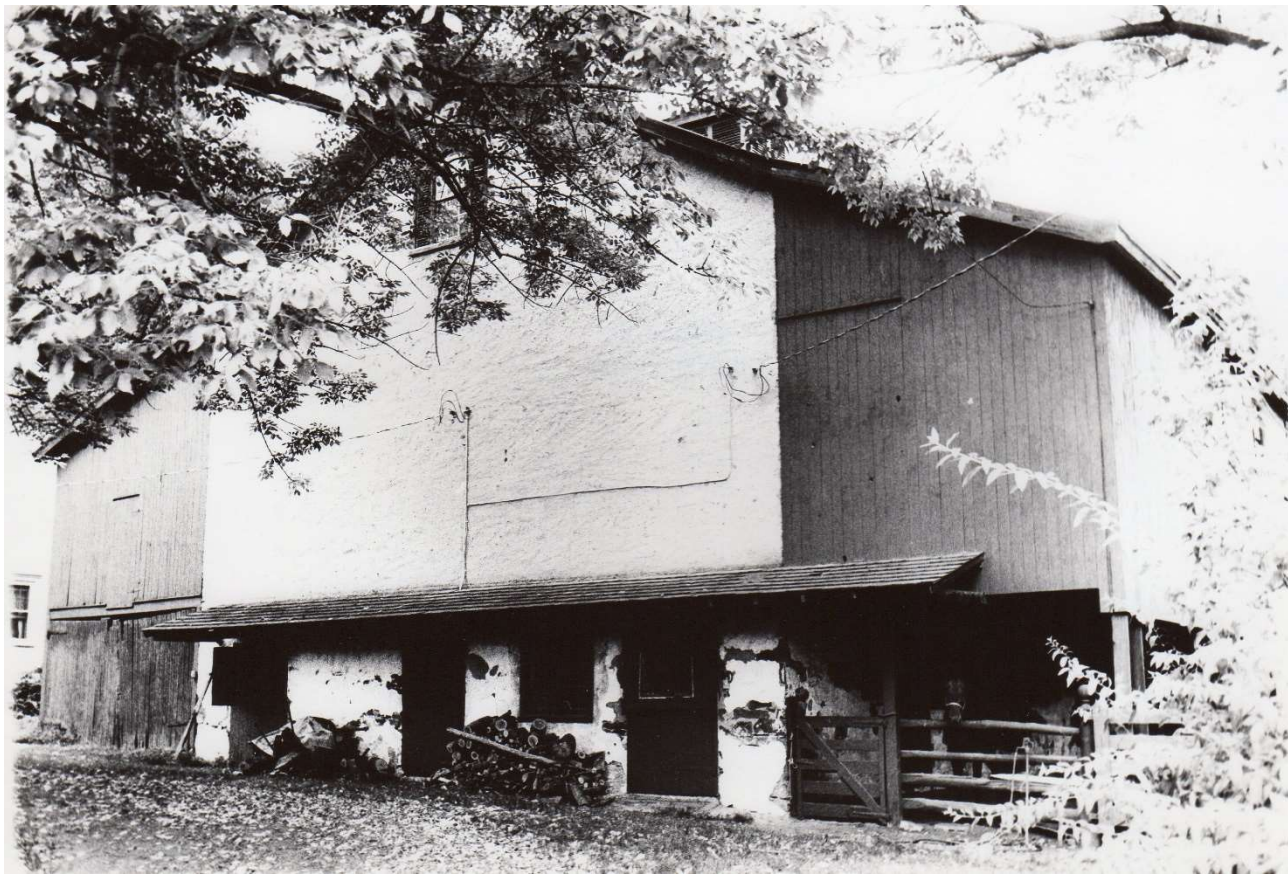
The Ederer's built a new house on the two front acres of the property and sold the mansion to Mr. and Mrs. William L. Scott. Mr. Ederer was buried on the day they were to move into the new house. Mrs. Ederer lived there for a short time and then moved to Virginia.

"Charles McCracken House"

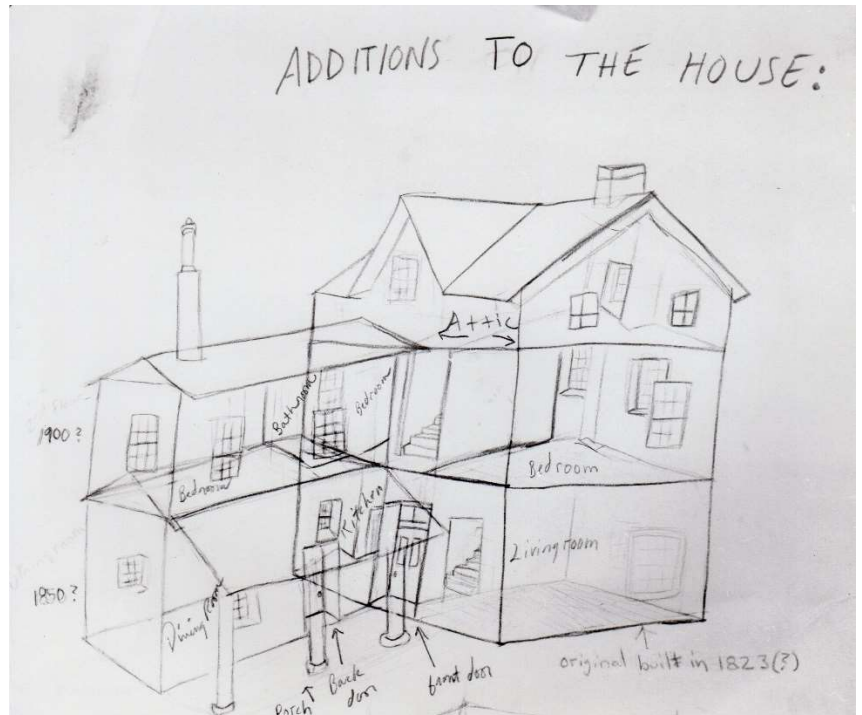
The home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles McCracken on the former Biddle estate is believed to have built by a Greger about 1823. The house is a typical Pennsylvania farmhouse of the early nineteenth century. It is a three-story farm house of plaster over field stone. The drawing by Laurie Youtz illustrates the additions to the house since 1823. The original house had two rooms on each floor and a fireplace in the initial kitchen that is still in use. The former porch is now the kitchen and all the kitchen cabinets were made by Mr. McCracken with siding from the interior of the barn.



Charles McCracken House Today



McCracken Barn



Fireplace, Original House and additions to the House 1823



Former Boehm's Church Parsonage

By Elizabeth M. DeVincent

Photography by George S. Peck

Adjacent to the cemetery of the Boehm's Reformed Church on Blue Bell Pike, is the home of the Robert Krum's. This white stuccoed house, built in 1859, is situated on sixty-one perches of land. It was used as the parsonage for the church from 1859 to 1890.

The following paragraph is from the "History of Boehm's Evangelical and Reformed Church 1740 to 1890."

"On January 13, 1859, the congregation agreed to build a parsonage along the Penllyn turnpike and appointed John Jones, George Geatrell, John Fitzgerald Sr., Joseph W. Shearer and Jacob Hoover a committee. The building was done by contract at a cost of \$2,039.55. Carpenter work was done by George F. Sheaff. Mason work by John F. Rumer. The congregation raised by subscription \$603.50; the balance being taken the funds of the church."

It was decided at a meeting of the congregation held on March 3, 1890 to sell the house.

The parsonage was sold at public sale to Donald Miller for \$1,500.00. The congregation then proceeded to build a new manse on ground bought from Charles DePrefontaine. This house is now the offices of Eichler and Moffly Co. on Skippack Pike in Blue Bell.

During the ensuing years the property changed hands a number of times. The Krum Family has lived there since 1967.

Maggie and Harry Rolin's House

By Maggie and Harry Rolin
Artwork by Becky Huttinger

A towering buttonwood tree, about one hundred and fifty years old, and a spring house make a perfect setting for this fieldstone house, set back from Penllyn Pike across from Boehm's Church. Apparently, it was built in the late part of the 18th century, then added to in 1802, and must have housed two families. Two front doors, and two sets of stairs, all the way to a big attic indicate this.

Low ceilings — some of them with old beams — several fireplaces, one of which is huge, and wide floorboards all add to its charm.

We added, in 1952, a wing of closely matched stone, obtained from a nearby quarry, giving us sufficient room in which to raise a modern family.



The Rolin Springhouse



The Rolin Home

Becky Huttinger.



Barn Restored and Converted to a Studio



Christmas House

"Christmas House"

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

This property, located on the corner of Skippack Pike and Cathcart Road, owned by Peter Cross, was named after Mr. Cross' great, great uncle, Clement C. Moore, who wrote "The Night Before Christmas."

In the early days Abraham Wentz, who owned and operated the red brick inn across Cathcart Road, also owned this property and used it for the "overflow" of overnight travelers to the inn. In 1871, the executors of the estate of Abraham Wentz, who died in 1870, sold the home and eleven acres to William H. Seeley for \$2,400.

Caroline S. Hangstorfer came here as an eighteen-year-old bride in 1884 and the home remained in the possession of the Hangstorfer family until 1965. Fred Hangstorfer, son of Caroline, was known for disposing of dead animals for the farmers in this area.

Cathcart Road was at one time called Hangstorfer Road.



Peter Cross, who purchased the property in 1965, stated that he has seen an original deed of this property dated 1755. Part of this house was a toll house during the time of the Skippack Turnpike Company which was dissolved in 1901. Mr. Cross made additions to the original house and remodeled the barn; old bricks from walkways around the outside have been used in the present kitchen floor and many old window panes remain in the "old part" of the house.

"Boxwood Farm"

By Bonnie Schmid
Photography by George S. Peck

"Boxwood Farm," a charming 18th century farmhouse, is located on the southwest side of Skippack Pike at its junction with Cathcart Road. It was purchased in 1945 by Charles and Margaret Olson and has been extensively renovated by them. Over the last thirty years they have made a pleasant home for today's living while preserving a fine example of an early Whitpain farm. The property consists of nearly 50 acres of land, a house, barn and several smaller buildings. Extensive plantings of boxwood adjacent to the main house have given the property its present name.



When the Olsons purchased the property, it was much in need of repair. They lived on the third floor as the restoration of the main part of the house was accomplished. From their study of the house during its restoration, they discovered that it had probably been built in three sections. What is now the kitchen, is thought to be the original farmhouse. Built about 1730, it consisted of one large room with a spiral staircase leading to a cellar and a built-in ladder leading to a loft above. Remains of both the staircase and the ladder are still visible.

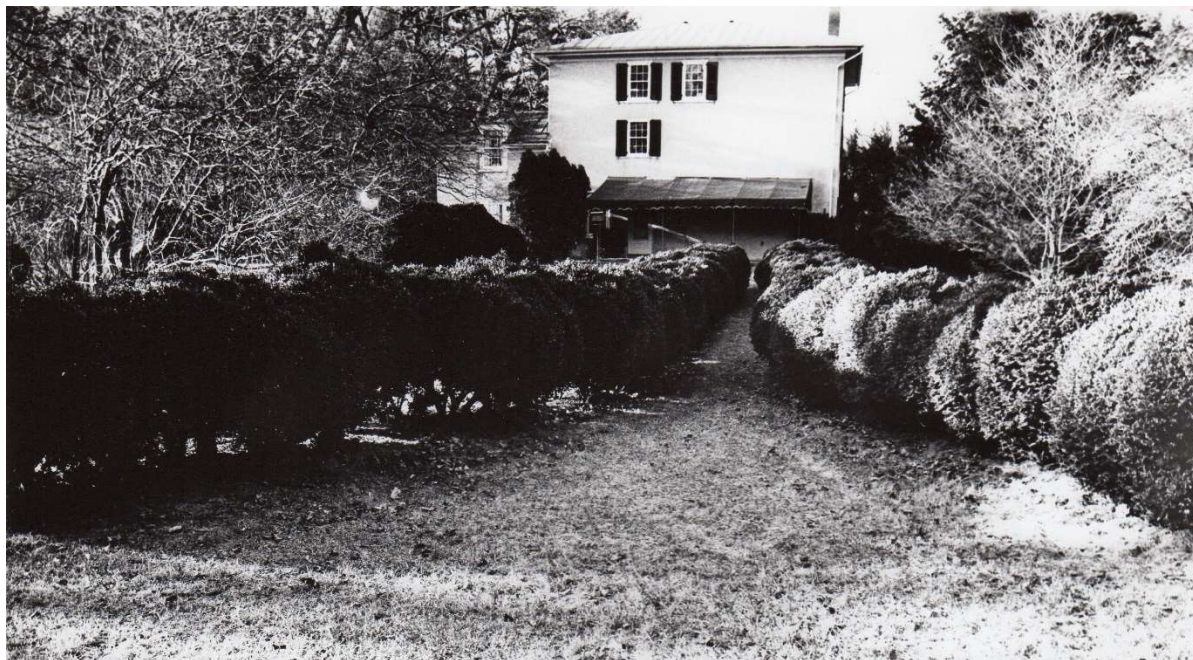
The next section, a three-story addition was built towards Skippack Pike. Later another three-story section was added bringing the house closer to Skippack. The newest section has two lovely fireplaces, one in the living room and the other in a second floor bedroom. From the type of construction and style of mantel, the fireplaces appear to be 200 years old.

Although the property changed hands at least a dozen times between 1864 and 1945, the acreage and the buildings on the land stayed pretty much the same. The owner, in 1901, gave the Inland Traction Company the right-of-way to place poles on the land along Skippack Pike. These were to be used by a trolley line that was to run from St. John's Church in Centre Square to The Fort Side Inn. There is no indication that these rights were ever used.

Prior to the 1864 sale to Nathaniel Longabow, the property belonged to the Wood family for many generations. The Wood name appears on property deeds recorded at the Montgomery County Court House in the mid-1700's. The Wood family was one of the original families in the township. At one time, the Wood family owned land on both sides of Skippack Pike. Cathcart Road appears as Wood Road on some deeds.

A portion of the present property, about 20 acres, was purchased from various owners by Israel Robinson between 1786 and 1802. He willed this land to his granddaughter Janette Robinson who married William Wood. This parcel of land then became part of the Wood property.

It appears that members of the Wood family built the original house and the additions, although no specific documents or wills have been found to verify this. One Charles S. Wood is said to have been born in a house at this location in 1748. We may never know the precise early history but records do show that the Woods settled on this property before we were a nation. Today, we can enjoy their legacy to our township thanks to the care taken by the Olson's in restoring and maintaining this lovely home.



Boxwoods For Which Farm Was Named



Side View of Olson Home



The John Wentz Home Now Occupied by Mary and Richard Marsh

John Wentz Home

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

John Wentz, son of the innkeeper Abraham Wentz, was married on the 14th of April 1785 to Hannah Nanna, daughter of Abraham Nanna of Gwynedd. Between 1790 and 1800 he built a stone house, 1150 Skippack Pike, opposite the red brick inn. He continued to run the inn as his son, Abraham, did after him. On May 28, 1798, John was commissioned Justice of The Peace and held the office until his death in 1818. He was widely and favorably known as a justice who transacted much legal business and was a trusted man of affairs around the region. He served as County Treasurer; and during the closing days of the war of 1812, he collected internal revenue for the United States Government. His death took place March 11, 1818, at the age of sixty-eight. John's son, Abraham Wentz, became owner of the residence and fifty-one acres of land, and in 1872 Abraham's son, Abram, purchased the entire property.

In 1888, Abram Wentz sold to Reuben C. Beyer. Beyer remained owner of the stone house until 1915 when he sold to Tamzen E. Shelley, wife of Emanuel F. Shelley, who sold one year later in 1916 to William Jackson. From this time the land was gradually sold; and when Stanley and Helen Posen purchased the property in 1966, it contained a little more than four acres and the stone house. Mr. and Mrs. Posen's daughter Mary Beth Marsh and her husband, Richard, presently occupy the home with their two sons, Ryan Richard and Jason Christopher.

There is a huge magnolia growing on the property which is rare in this area, since it is the type that grows in the south. Mr. Jackson, who is now a resident of Florida, related that they used to call it a "cucumber tree" because of the cucumber type growths. When a tree was taken down to enclose the front porch, they found a metal box full of old coins which is now in the possession of Mr. Jackson. The remains of an old stone barn that was blown down by a tornado are still in evidence. This is a lovely old home.



Magnolia Tree

The "Gingerbread House"

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

This lovely old home at 1030 Skippack Pike was purchased by Robert and Patricia Florig in 1966 from Dr. Edward Ocelus.

The first mass of St. Helena's Church was held in the living room when Father Ganley first arrived and before St. Helena's Church was built.

During the Depression years, this home was known as the "Gingerbread House" because the occupants at that time sold home-made baked items in front of the house on Skippack Pike.



Home of Robert and Patricia Florig

The Zimmerman's of Silver Lake Farm

By Blanche P. Zimmerman
Photography by George S. Peck

The Zimmerman family on Wentz Road is one of the few families in Whitpain Township if not the only one, which still lives on and from the land which was acquired by their ancestors before the Revolution. The farm, known as "Silver Lake Farm," has the further distinction of having been operated under the same family name all this time, since the inheritance went in each generation to a son.

Silver Lake Farm is part of an original grant, which document the Zimmermans have in their possession, of 5,000 acres given by William Penn to George Palmer in 1682. In 1685, George Palmer gave 500 acres of this grant to his son, William. Since the property passed through several other hands before the Zimmerman's bought it in 1775, this piece deals only with the Zimmerman's.

John Jacob Zimmerman, father of the Zimmerman's who emigrated to America in the seventeenth century, was born in the Duchy of Wurttemberg, Germany. He was a brilliant mathematician, astronomer and scientist, and was the author of many works on theology and astronomy. He was a Lutheran minister for many years but was dismissed because of his leanings toward mysticism. Following his years in the ministry, he was a professor of mathematics at Heidelberg University but his outspoken viewpoints about religion caused him to be expelled from Germany.

With his wife, Maria Margaretha, and their four children, Phillip Christian, Matthaus, Jacob Christopher, who was baptized in 1683, and a daughter, Maria Margaretha John Jacob left his homeland to start to America. They went by way of Amsterdam where John Jacob fell sick and died. His family, with the help of the Quakers, continued on to America and arrived in Pennsylvania on June 23, 1694, then moved on out to Germantown.

The widow Zimmerman managed to acquire several pieces of property in Germantown before her death in 1723. In her will, which was witnessed by Christoper Witt, the noted botanist, she left property to her two older sons and gave money to the other two children. Since Jacob Christopher didn't inherit any land, he left the area and went north where he bought land in Von Bebbber Township. This was in 1708 when he was twenty-five years old. In 1734, he was assessed as a landowner in Worcester Township, a new township which was a part of Von Bebbber.



Aerial View of Silver Lake Farm
Photo Courtesy of Edward Canfield

We have no date of Jacob Christopher's death nor do we have a record of whom he married. We know that he was married and that he had a son, Christopher, who was born in 1735 in Worcester Township.

Christopher Zimmerman married Deborah, daughter of Hance Supplee who was a well-to-do land owner in Worcester Township. It was this Christopher who bought the "plantation" in Whitpain Township from the estate of Charles Jolly, Esq., in 1775.

Charles Jolly, a man of means, had accumulated about 800 acres of land before his death in 1774. He was a man of influence in the township and traveled around quite a bit. To make it easier to get to the main roads, he had a road put through his whole property extending from what is now DeKalb Pike to Germantown Pike. This road still bears his name. After Jolly's death, his widow sold the land at auction and Christopher Zimmerman bought 212 acres of it.

Christopher didn't live to enjoy his "plantation" very long, since he died in 1782 leaving his wife and eight children. Deborah and her children lived on at the homestead (now the Mermaid Lake Swim Club) and Deborah, being a good business woman, continued to add to her holdings. At the time of her death in 1832 she owned around 300 acres.

William Zimmerman, born in 1781, was the third son of Christopher and Deborah Zimmerman. As in the previous generation, the third son received money as his inheritance instead of land. William took his money and went into the lumber business in Philadelphia where he did quite well. His older brother, Isaac, never married and continued to live at home. His brother, Jacob, married Mary White and they lived and produced a family where the present family now lives.

Jacob's sons didn't stay on the farm. Old deeds show that William bought the land from his nephews, Isaac and Jacob, and apparently inherited his brother Isaac's share since Isaac never married and William was next in line.

William Zimmerman married the former Esther Butler of Whitpain Township. They settled down on the farm which William had bought from his nephews and he began to buy back the property which his brothers had sold. At the time of his death in 1862, he had title to 293 acres consisting of the present Silver Lake Farm, what is now Mermaid Lake and the acreage between Silver Lake Farm and Union Meeting Road. This land joined the property of the old Union Meeting House, which was donated by the Zimmerman family. The Zimmerman's were very active in the little church and several family members are buried there.

Three sons and a daughter were born to William and Esther: Sylvester, Franklin, Lorenzo and Cecelia. In his will, William divided the real estate equally between his sons and established a dowry for his daughter. Lorenzo was not happy with the piece he got for it was known to be the poorest of the lot. It is interesting that it is the only piece still in the family.

Lorenzo Dow Zimmerman was born in 1872. He married the former Anna Maria Dager of Springfield Township and to them were born two sons, William and George Streeper. Lorenzo didn't live out his life in the country. He had a nice brick house built for himself and his wife, at 1300 DeKalb Street in Norristown, and they lived there in retirement for a good many years before his death in 1918.

William Zimmerman, as his grandfather of the same name had done, left the farm at an early age and sought his fortune in banking. He had a very successful career in his chosen field as did his only child, Frederic Zimmerman. Fred Zimmerman, at 94, is the oldest living member of this line of Zimmerman's. He was, for many years, president of the Montgomery National Bank of Norristown and after that bank merged with the Philadelphia National Bank, was one of its vice-presidents.

George Streeper Zimmerman, grandfather of the present Zimmerman's, was born in 1857. He married Mary Hoover, daughter of a well-known Whitpain family. Hoover Road in the township was named for her family. When his father, Lorenzo, moved to Norristown, George and Mary bought the farm and continually sought to modernize and improve it. It was during their lifetime that electricity was brought to the farm and they were quick to take advantage of all the benefits that ensued.

Clarence Hoover Zimmerman, only child of George and Mary, was born in 1885. He married Edna Meschter Kriebel, daughter of Hiram Kriebel whose farm is now part of the Normandy Farms on DeKalb Street at Morris Road. Clarence and Edna continued to be progressive farmers and were among the first in the area to mechanize farming. Two sons were born to them, Clarence Edward in 1910 and Merrill Kriebel in 1913.



Zimmerman Barn Built 1804



Two-Family Home of the Zimmermans

Edward and Merrill successfully carried on the tradition of farming set by their forebears. For many years they operated a dairy farm with an outstanding herd of registered Guernseys and won numerous awards for their cows and dairy products. At the same time, they were using and developing better methods of crop and grass farming and had a full line of modern farm machinery. In 1960, along with their wives, Blanche Perkins from Texas and Louise Everitt from Pennsylvania, they received the coveted Pennsylvania Master Farmer award. This award is given for excellency in farming combined with community service.

Edward and Blanche had three children. Their daughter, Mary Edna, was the first girl born into the family in over a hundred years. She lives with her husband, Richard Ott, and three children: Mark, Kimberly and Eric on Wentz Road. Their son, Paul Edward, is the last male to bear the Zimmerman name in this particular line. He is married to the former Deborah Tyson and is the father of two girls. Heidi and Heather. Mark Lorenzo, Edward's younger son was born in 1947 and died in 1969.

Merrill and Louise also had three children, all girls. Suzanne, married to Lee Powell, has three children, Steven, Gary and Kristin. Joan and her husband. Ronald Amey live on Wentz Road with their three girls, Jennifer, Patricia and Leigh. The only member of her generation to follow the family tradition of farming is Merrill's youngest daughter, Rebecca. She and her husband, Kenneth Schoenberg, are dairy farmers in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. They have two daughters, Kerrie and Gretchen.

The original part of the house in which Edward and Merrill live was built in 1752, presumably by Richard J. Morris, and still stands although the house was gutted by fire in 1931. The house had been added to several times over the years and two or three generations had lived in it at the same time, but after the fire it was rebuilt into a modern two-family dwelling. This allowed both Edward and Merrill ample room to live there with their families.

The large stone barn, built in 1804 by William Zimmerman with the help of his brothers, Jacob and Isaac, still stands. This is very old for a barn for barns so often catch fire, especially when they are used for storing hay.

The old parchment deed which William Penn gave to George Palmer has been mentioned. The Zimmermans also have in their possession several old sheepskin and parchment deeds and indentures covering various transactions through the years. A copy of a letter written on April 25, 1682, and sent from William Penn to the "Emperor of Canada" raises some interesting questions. Who was the Emperor of Canada? Could he have been an Indian Chief? In the collection, there is a copy of the rather lengthy charter given by Charles the second of England to William Penn, son of Sir William Penn for the "Province of Pennsylvania" dated 1682.

Along with several old account books which the Zimmerman's have is a "Cipher Book" which William Zimmerman used in 1795, at the age of fourteen to learn all the rudiments of mathematics. It was also where he did his writing lessons. A mathematical problem runs:

"A younger brother received 158 S which was just $\frac{7}{12}$ of his elder brother's fortune and $5\frac{3}{8}$ times the elders money was $\frac{2}{3}$ as much as the father was worth. Pray what was the estate valued at?"

The following poem was one of the writing exercises:

"I am constrained to plant a grove
To entertain the girl I love.
This ample grove I must compose
Of nineteen trees in nine straight roes

And in each roe 5 trees must place
Or never expect to see her face.
Ye men of art send me your aid
. To satisfy this curious maid."



Mermaid Swim and Golf Club

By Blanche P. Zimmerman
Photography by George S. Peck

The history of what is now the Mermaid Swim and Golf Club down to the time when it was inherited by Sylvester Zimmerman at the death of his father, William Zimmerman, in 1862 is told in the piece about the Zimmerman family printed elsewhere in this book.

When William Zimmerman divided his property into three parcels for his sons, Sylvester, Franklin, and Lorenzo, he designated the homestead as Sylvester's lot. The others were envious for it had the nicest house and the best ground — or so they thought. Sylvester was very happy with his inheritance and set out to beautify it so that during his time there it was considered quite a show place.

It is believed that the house which now stands on the property was the house which was there when Christopher and Deborah Zimmerman bought it from the widow of Charles Jolly in 1775. A smaller house, which was destroyed by fire in 1959, was a tenant or farmer's house. The old carriage sheds, currently used as a garage, also still stands, as does the stone barn which William Zimmerman built in 1800 with the help of his brothers, Jacob and Isaac.

After Sylvester's death, his son Harry Zimmerman lived there. Harry was not a farmer and eventually sold the farm and moved into Norristown where he was engaged in the real estate business. His two sons and daughter also went in other directions.

About 1927, John and Louise Crowell bought the property. They saw the potential of the little stream which ran across their land, fed also by the big spring which was nearby, and so the idea of Mermaid Lake was born. By 1930, a dam had been constructed across the stream, bath houses built and a refreshment stand put up. They were in business.

Mermaid Lake proved to be a very popular "watering place" for many years. It was open to the public for a fee, but John Crowell scanned the cars as they pulled up to the admissions gate.

In 1945, Roland Randal bought Mermaid Lake from the Crowell's. He continued to run it in much the same way as it had been, but he also began to look at the larger potential of the property. He made improvements to the area. He turned what had been pastures into lawns, put picnic tables around and built tennis courts and a small golf course.

In 1958 the big, sturdy empty barn was turned into a recreation center. It was separated from the swimming pool built adjacent to it. This has been a very busy area. In the summertime from Memorial Day to after Labor Day, the "Barn" is a center of activity, rain or shine, with the picnics and outings held by many large organizations.

Meantime, Whitpain Township was growing and the crowds at Mermaid Lake got bigger and bigger. It became apparent that some form of regulation would have to be found, so in 1961 the Mermaid Swim and Golf Club was organized. At this time, a huge pool was constructed within the lake which made for more pleasant swimming. It continues to operate as a private club.



Stone Barn Built 1800



Sperry Univac Land

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

In 1682, a patent covering five thousand acres was granted to George Palmer who lived in England, never seeing his American land. On April 9th of the same year, he bequeathed by will a share of same to his son, William Palmer. In 1702, a patent of exact boundaries conveying eight hundred and twenty-three acres was received by him from William Penn's Commissioners of Property. This tract was three-fourths of a mile wide by one and a half miles long, extending from Skippack Road to Plymouth Line.

In 1703, the land was conveyed to Philip Price, a Welshman of Upper Merion, who evidently bought it for speculation. The same year he sold the upper half to William Thomas, another Welshman from Radnor. This contained the later Zimmerman, Alfred and Augustis Styer properties. In 1706, Price conveyed to Richard Morris the remaining lower half of the eight hundred and twenty-three acres. This covered the farms that later belonged to the Conrad, Roberts, Detwiler, McCann, Shoemaker, Indehaven and Hoover families. The Conrad farm covered a portion of one hundred and thirty-two acres sold by Richard Morris to John Rees, a Welsh Quaker, about 1733. In 1734 Rees, who previously lived in Plymouth Township, was assessed for this many acres and possibly built the first home on this property for his family. In 1767, his ownership ceased by sale to Henry Markhall (Markley) who was owner for seven years just prior to the Revolution. In 1774, Henry Markhall sold to John Zimmerman and Zabulon Potts who evidently bought the land for speculative purposes. In 1777, a Church Corporation, titled "The Society of the Relief of Widows and Children of Clergymen in the Communion of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America," bought of Zimmerman and Potts the main tract of one hundred and thirty-two acres and a dwelling.

In 1795, the property was sold to Henry Conrad who had married Anne Osborn. He was a descendent of Thomas Kunders (Dennis Conrad) of Germantown who came there in 1683, soon after the arrival of William Penn. Henry, son of John Conrad, was born at the family homestead which is now the Jeffersonville Inn on DeKalb Pike.

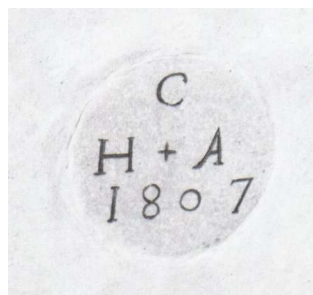
His sister, Sarah, married Enoch Supplee, a Tory, who with her brother, Robert, fled the country because of Tory activities. Henry's son, Benjamin, was quite a local celebrity, having taught school at "North Star" and "Five Points." He died, never having married, in

1843 at age forty-six. Henry died at his home December 2, 1838, at age seventy-six. His wife continued to live at the old homestead with her son, Nathan, until she died in 1852. Henry's estate amounted to eleven thousand dollars. Nathan continued to live on the farm until his death in 1872. Nathan married Martha Meredith, had seven children, only two of whom survived him. He made extensive improvements on the home.

In 1872, the farm where Nathan was born in 1808, was willed to John Meredith Conrad who had married Elma Garrigues. They had five children. His son, Lee Garrigues Conrad, born in 1881, met a terrible fate, losing his life at the burning of The Park Hotel, New York City, February 22, 1902, where he had gone with his relative, Henry C. Conrad. His charred remains were interred in Plymouth Friends' burying ground.

The last occupant of the farm prior to the sale to the Sperry Rand Corporation was Ida C. Conrad who became Mrs. Abel K. Harris after the death of her first husband, Harry W. Myers. Thus, the land passed out of the Conrad family who had lived on the land since 1795.

At the time of the ground breaking, expanding the Sperry Univac facility in 1964, Ida Conrad Harris recalled many memories of her life on the farm for an article in the Norristown Times Herald. She related that several big barns were located on the property and one or more was set aside for the circus people who brought horses to be stabled for the winter months. A fire swept through one of the barns one night in the year 1910, which created a lot of excitement and work in bringing it under control. All the cows were lost in the fire and the barn itself was completely destroyed, but all the farm horses and riding horses were rescued.



Mrs. Harris spoke about a coal vein on the farm in the hill area. It was of no commercial value and was considered mainly as a curiosity. It did on occasion, provide coal for family needs.

The big farm wagons were well remembered by Mrs. Harris. The hay loads, she said, were hauled to the paper mills of Manayunk for the feeding of the horses of the mill's wagon teams. A special customer was the old Nixon Paper Mill. On return trips from the mills, the Conrad wagons brought fertilizer and manure for cultivation of the farmland.

Along with farming, Mrs. Harris took special interest in Grange affairs and it is said that she was quite an actress with a most beautiful voice, and was known as the "Sarah Bernhart" of the Whitpain area. She was a past president and a founding member of the Cold Point Home Economics Club, a past master of the Cold Point Grange and for thirty-two years, secretary of the Pomona Grange. Earlier in her career she campaigned for women's suffrage as leader of the Women's Rights Movement in Whitpain Township. Mrs. Harris was selected as the first woman juror from Whitpain Township about 1922. She was a Republican in politics, and a Friend by faith, a birthright member of Plymouth Meeting and attended Plymouth Meeting Friends School as a young girl.

The old farm house on the property was torn down in 1973; however, certain artifacts were preserved and given to The Historical Society of Montgomery County.

Ida Conrad Myers Harris recalled bob-sledding and sleigh rides over the farmlands. On winter nights, when snow is on the ground, neighborhood children still have fun with sleds and toboggans on the slope in front of the main building of this great industrial complex which has become the World Headquarters of Sperry Univac.



300 Year Old Oak Tree at Jolly Road and Township Line Road



Rile Home 1881 and Rile Home Today



Veterinarian Building and Kennels

Dr. and Mrs. Barclay Rile Property

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

This property has been the home of a medical doctor, a pastor and two veterinarians.

This six acre parcel, with message (building), located on Skippack Pike across from the Post Office, was part of a larger tract of land deeded to Jacob Kurr on September 3, 1766. In 1798, William and Barbara Still, paying two hundred pounds and one shilling, were the highest bidders for this property at a public sale. It is interesting that the dimensions of this land, six acres, remained the same throughout the years.

In 1810, Barbara Still, now a widow, turned the property over to her son, Henry Still, and his wife Elizabeth. Dr. Anthony Steinberger, a medical doctor, and his wife Susanna were owners and occupants until 1830, when the estate was purchased by Cornelius Tyson and his wife, Hannah, and Abraham Wentz and his wife, Charlotte. In 1838, the property was sold to Leonard Stver whose ownership was brief since he sold to George Worl in 1839 for two thousand, one hundred dollars.

In 1842, the administrators for the estate of George Worl sold the property to Reverend Samuel Helffenstein and his wife. Reverend Helffenstein was pastor at Boehm's Reformed Church and was one of the most eminent ministers of the Reformed Church in America. The property, in 1867, came into the ownership of Henry Dull, and in 1874 it was sold to Thomas Jefferson Rile.

From the year 1874 it has remained in the Rile family. Four generations have occupied the home as it passed from father to son. Dr. Edward A. Rile, who was born here in 1885, bought the property from his father in 1909 and operated a well-known veterinarian business throughout a very large area of Montgomery County and surrounding Counties until his retirement in 1952. He and his wife, Alice Conard Rile, are presently residents of a Nursing Home in Sellersville, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Edward Rile has a wealth of stories to tell about the area, residents, and his experiences. One of the stories is about a man calling from the driveway of his home to the second floor, about three o'clock in the morning. When Dr. Rile opened the window, he recognized the person and asked, after the gentleman had requested that he come to see his sick wife, why he didn't call a medical doctor. The man replied that he had, but couldn't get the doctor to his home. After some contemplation Dr. Rile, dressed, got out his horse and sleigh, and accompanied the man to his home.

Upon arriving, he found the wife had had teeth extracted, was unconscious and bleeding profusely, and had practically no pulse beat. Dr. Rile's thoughts naturally were what the consequences would be if the woman should die, and he, a veterinarian, was treating her. He used an old fashioned wooden match, wrapped a piece of cotton on the end, dipped it into chloroform, and held it into the socket where a tooth had been removed. He continued this in each socket until he came to the middle of her mouth, when she opened her eyes and said, "Doc, you're a vet. What are you doing here?" Doctor Edward Rile has always been Hank Conard's favorite Uncle, and he well remembers frequently being taken to the corner drugstore at Butler and Main Streets in Ambler and being treated to an ice-cream soda.

In 1952, Dr. E. Barclay Rile, son of Edward and Alice, and his wife Grace Arn Rile purchased the home and are the present occupants.

The Roberts - Miller Tract

By Becky Huttinger
Photography by George S. Peck

The early history of this property, like all of the land in this area, may be traced through old deeds to original grants of William Penn. It was part of the five thousand acres presented to George Palmer of England in 1682 by the Proprietor. Palmer's son, William, inherited the land and in 1703 one year after acquiring it, sold it to Philip Price. Price then sold it to Richard Morris who, in 1707, apparently deeded 100 acres of it to Edward Endehave for forty pounds. The old deed reads as follows: — "Beginning corner post being corner of William Thomas's land from thense by a line of trees marked dividing it from other land of Edward Endehave SE one hundred perches to another post being corner of Charles Molen's land being a corner post of Charles Molen's land from thense SW by a line of marked trees and the same land 111 perches to another post being a corner of other land of said Richard Morris from thense by a line of marked trees NW 144 perches to another corner stake set in a line of the said Wm. Thomas's land from thense by said line of marked trees NE 111 perches through the place of the beginning". For the next fifty-seven years ownership is obscure. It probably passed from father to sons within the Endehave family.



The Roberts - Murdock House, Union Meeting Road

B. Huttinger

In 1764, Edward Roberts bought forty-eight acres. Because the land he purchased was in two parcels, he had to get two separate deeds. The same year, he was married to Ellin Lewis in the Gwynedd Friends Meeting-House. His father was Robert Roberts, son of Hugh Roberts who had come from Merion (on the other side of the Schuylkill River) in 1697 to establish a new community of Friends. He was one of a group of about 100 who bought collectively 7,820 acres which later was to become Gwynedd. Like William Penn, these people had originally come from Wales.

During the American Revolution, somewhere along the northern boundary of the farm (now Union Meeting Road) about 400 yards from Skippack Road, a number of Continental Soldiers are supposed to be buried. They probably died in the winter of 1777 after being wounded in the Battle of Germantown.

Clara Beck, in her History of Whitpain Township comments, "Tradition says that at one time a tannery was in operation here, and that huge vats were placed east of the house and between it and the turnpike; and that these vats still exist though sealed with heavy planks and covered with earth."

Edward Roberts, who was esteemed as a gentleman, made a most interesting legal agreement with his son, Amos, in 1811. He gave his farm with messuage (improvements) to his son, "with right of premises, to occupy the back room in each stories of the house plus kitchen privileges." It was further agreed that he would receive, "together with sufficient board, washing and mending at the expense of the said Amos Roberts and sufficiency of Apples for his use, likewise back stable in the barn, the small stock yard and the Barrack therein, pasture for a horse, also lot of plowland containing two and one half acres adjoining woods, further the Meadow adjoining, Mathias Wentz's with exception of small shop and small piece of garden." Amos also agreed to give his father \$4.00 yearly. This document was witnessed by Thomas Lewis and John Lewis. Whether this house and messuage was located on Skippack Pike opposite School Lane or down the lane (later Union Meeting Road) is a matter of speculation.

Amos Roberts had two sons, Levi and Charles. According to Clara Beck in her History of Whitpain Township, "when he reached middle age, he decided to divide his plantation into two equal shares, giving one part to Levi and the other to Charles." The 1848 map of Whitpain indicates that Levi lived on Skippack Road and that Charles lived on Union Meeting Road very near the Union Meeting House.

Charles M. Roberts was a teacher as well as a farmer. An old document exists which was written in 1828. It reads as follows: — "Whereas Charles M. Roberts has an intention of teaching a School and has applied to us the Subscribers hereto for a recommendation this is to certify that he is in our opinion a suitable person to conduct a school and well qualified to Perform the duties thereto appertaining his Education consisting of a Knowledge of Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Mensuration (conduct), Surveying, Navigation, Algebra, and Book Keeping by single and double entry." Signed, Alan M. Corson, Benjamin Conrade, and Joseph Foulke. (See photograph of same in section about Schools.)

Levi Roberts, according to an old deed, sold his property in 1859 to John Roberts for \$1,000. The tract in this document is described as being bounded by Skippack Turnpike, by Joseph Conard's land, thense to corner and thense by land of Charles M. Roberts (passing through milkhouse) south and thense to public road to land of William Kibblehouse (deceased) to stone corner of Howard Cadwallader and thense to Joseph Conards. There were thirty-eight acres and ninety-nine perches, "it being all and the same Messuage and Tenement."

Charles Roberts and his wife, Keziah Comly Roberts, had one surviving child, a daughter named Caroline. She was born on her parent's farm in 1838 and grew up in Blue Bell. She and William George Miller were married in 1859. Caroline inherited her lather's properly after his death. Some years later her husband, William, purchased what had been Levi Roberts' farm. Thus the plantation became of one piece again. For over one hundred and fifty years and for five generations, the Roberts' owned this land.

William George Miller was born near Pennsburg, Pa. in 1832. He was the son of John and Henrietta Faber Miller. Henrietta's parents were Rev. John Theobald Faber, Jr. and Marie Arndt. Rev. Fabor was pastor of the Goschenhoppen Church near Greenville. Marie was the daughter of Captain John Arndt who was an officer in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. William Miller was of German descent and a Lutheran. He and Caroline had eight children, six boys and two girls. All of the children were brought up as Quakers. Caroline was of the Hicksite persuasion which was considered to be more liberal than the older Orthodox Friends' religion. The sons were Charles, John, William, Eugene, Ed-



Caroline Roberts Miller, 1859

win, and Ellwood. The daughters were Sarah and Joanna.

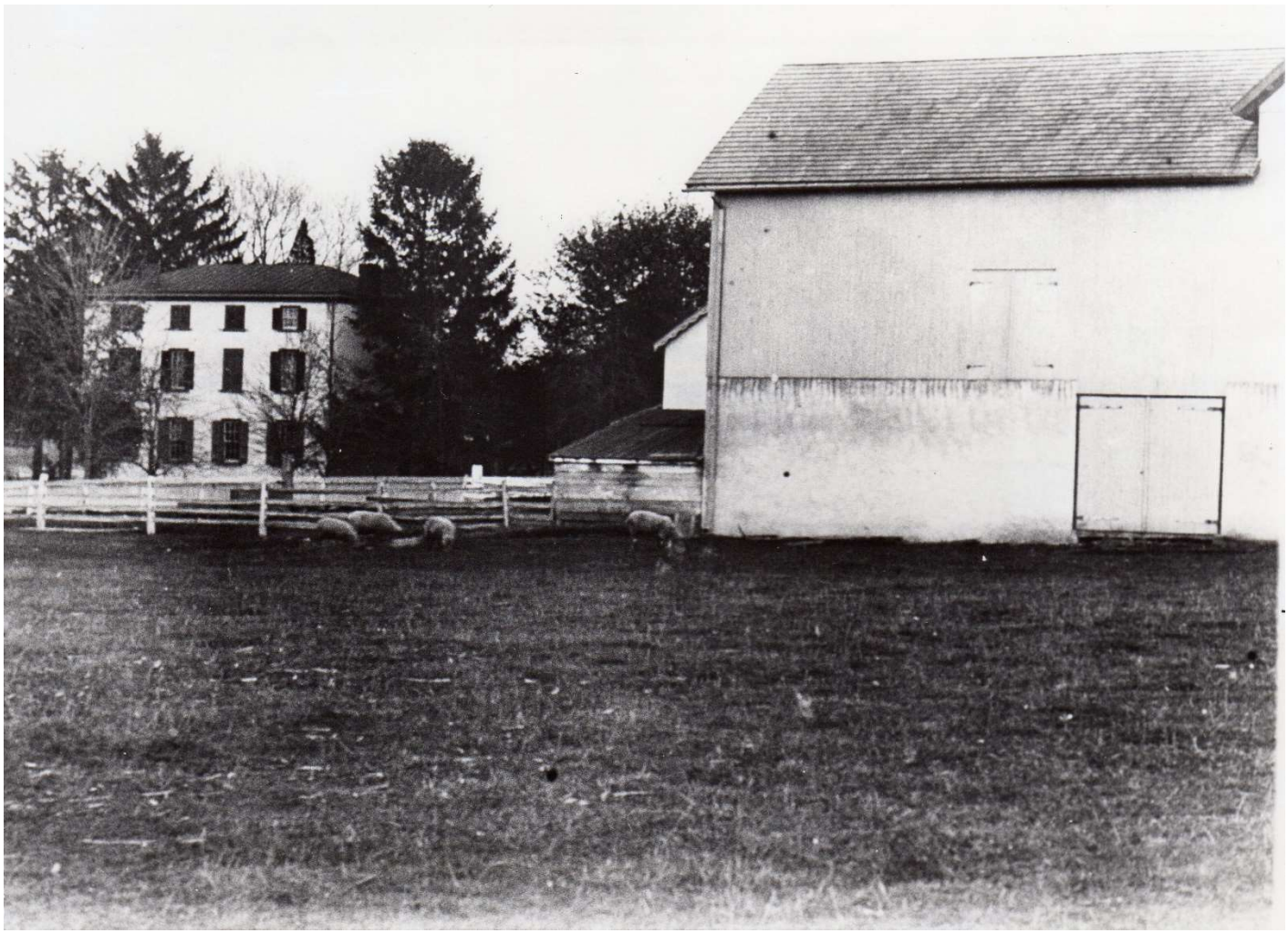
William Miller was a teacher in Blue Bell for a few years until he was asked to join his two brothers in their wholesale tobacco business. Miller Bros., at Third and Vine Streets, Philadelphia. This was about 1865. The business flourished and the family moved to the city but continued to come out to the farm in Blue Bell for the summer. About this time, the Millers built a fine home which was set back from the turnpike and had a long lane bordered by beautiful trees. The farm also had a large barn, a carriage house, and a farmer's house. William G. Miller died in 1892, aged sixty. Caroline survived him by more than twenty years and spent a good bit of her time on the farm. It was the custom for her children and their progeny to spend vacations with her in Blue Bell. Caroline died in Philadelphia in 1913.



Old Farmhouse After Fire



Caroline Miller



Miller Mansion House and Barn



Josie Miller, Bertie (Rickert) Miller and Sadie Miller at the Farm



Coach House and Jim the Coachman

With the exception of Eugene, all of the children of Caroline and William Miller were married. Charles worked with his father at Miller Bros.; John became a lawyer and later a Judge of the Montgomery County Courts; William became a doctor, had a private medical practice in Norristown and was County Coroner from 1898 to 1901; Edwin owned the Rickert Hat Company which was in competition with Stetson at the turn of the century; Ellwood married Mary Rich Jeannes, a wealthy widow. The two youngest children were daughters. Joanna became Mrs. Thomas Livezey and Sarah was married to William G. Taylor. All of the members of this generation are now deceased but several of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren live in this area.

After his mother's death, John Faber Miller bought the farm from her estate. However, he and his family did not live there. The home of Levi Miller on the Pike had long since disappeared by this time, and the home of Charles Miller on Union Meeting Road was a separate piece of property. Eugene lived in the mansion house for a time and then in the smaller tenant house until his death. For a few years the Smith family lived there and cultivated the land. A colored man, Uncle Smokey who was well liked by everyone, was the caretaker. The "big field", as the land surrounding the big house was called, was leased and farmed by Dr. Deaver who now owns Brookside Farm in Whitemarsh. In 1950, the Mercaldo Brothers bought the farm (about one hundred acres at this time) from the estate of Judge Miller. Judge Frederick Smillie of Norristown handled the estate. His wife, Comly Miller Smillie, is the daughter of the late John F. Miller. The Mercaldos created their own Blue Bell Water Co. on the grounds and over a period of years built stone and masonry homes. They named the development Blue Bell Gardens. The mansion house was torn down about 1955[^]:56; the barn, carriage house, tenant house and other buildings had been razed sometime before. Just a few of the old maple trees remain today.

The old farmhouse, reputedly dating back to 1714, which stands on Union Meeting Road, is the only house to survive. William and Caroline Miller had lived in this house for a while with Caroline's parents until their big house was completed. After that, the smaller house was rented to a number of tenants. Like many farms in the vicinity, it became a pig farm, then a chicken farm, and more recently, a kennel. Some of the older residents in the township remember when "Mom" Meehan lived there with her numerous foster children and her goats. About 1940, the barn was destroyed and the house was badly damaged by fire. Shortly after, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Rolls bought the ruins from the Miller estate. They restored the house and in 1951, sold it to Mr. and Mrs. R. W. P. Allen, 111 with three and a third acres. Mrs. C. Valentine Blagden, Mrs. Allen's mother, and the owner of Ruffy's Kennel on Hoover Road, bought the remaining four and two thirds acres.

The Allen's made further improvements. Later, Mrs. Leila Lodge and then Mr. and Mrs. Cockley owned the house. In 1964, they sold the home to Mr. and Mrs. George B. Murdock, the present owners. The additional land along Hoover Road has been developed with attractive one-family homes.

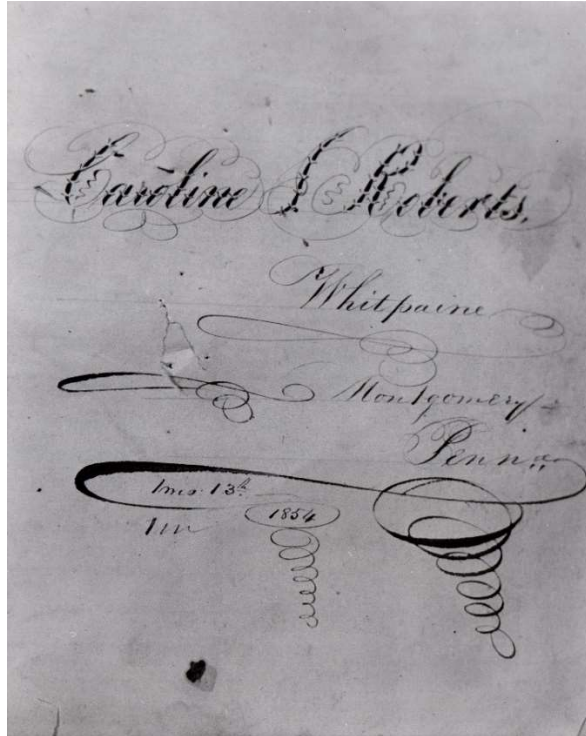
Originally, this native stone and stucco farm house consisted of two rooms, one above the other, plus a third floor garret. Later additions were added to create more living space. In what is now the living room is a most interesting hearth with sturdy wooden doors enclosing it. This same room has a tiny window at the rear which is characteristic of Eighteenth Century houses of this area. Through the years, this old place has been enlarged, restored and modernized without having too much of its original character erased. Today, it is an outstanding example of what can be done to make an old Montgomery County farmhouse beautiful and comfortable.

Caroline Roberts Miller's Notebook

By Becky Huttinger
Photography by George S. Peck

This paper and leather bound book evidently was started in 1854 when Caroline was sixteen. At first it contained quotations from Byron and other sources. These are all written in a beautiful Spencerian script. Caroline must have had some connection with the Kennett School in Kennett Square or she was just quoting from words of friends or teachers. She also speaks of the Glenwood School wherever that was. In those days it was customary for young ladies to attend a Ladies Seminary for a year or so. If they were inclined, they then taught school, or they returned home and were married. The latter was quite possibly the case for Caroline.

The character of the book changed through the years as Caroline's own life changed. Caroline's brother, John, who must have died around 1859, wrote a few things in the book. Enclosed on a separate sheet is an essay composed by John, describing Norris-town as it was in the year 1856. There is also a note from Henry Dotts in Pennsylvania written in February 1859 telling the family that John is very ill with typhoid fever. Still later in time are records of household accounts and recipes for home remedies and edible concoctions. Still later in the book are signatures and records made by Ellwood and Eugene Miller, when they were children. Some are records of payment for chores accomplished or debts owed, etc.



Caroline Miller apparently took a very active part in running the business affairs of the farm and she was tremendously interested in remedies for ailments in both humans and animals. In her book, and on separate sheets, she also wrote down recipes for making leather, whitewash, and for purifying water.

The material in this book is too extensive to quote in its entirety. Following are some samples:

Titles of poems . . . Byron's Farewell to his Wife, The Land of the Blest, Leave Us Not, To My Mother, The Dying Child, The Grey Hair, A Mother's Gift, or On Leaving Kennett School ... All of the poetry is either sentimental, or sad, or both which was the style of the time and certainly reflected the people's familiarity and preoccupation with death, especially among the very young.

One essay seems to be a theological treatise but it also discusses civil problems and unfair taxation. The writer speaks of the need for good education, for fair salaries for teachers, for better quality in education, especially in the sciences, for public education, for private support of religion and for charity to be private or in part supported by religious groups, and so on. Part of the last page has been cut out which makes it impossible to know from whom this material was quoted.

On the next page, dated 1866, is a list of accounts — in part

December - sold Conard White Calf	\$9
March 1867	
Sold Turkey 13 Ib at 28 cts per Ib	3.64
Chicken	.90
3 doz eggs at 30 cts	.90
3 Ib Butter at 60 cts per Ib	1.80
Detwiler, one Calf	10.00
Shoemaker, one Calf	10.50

Several pages later, dated 1870, is another list ... in part

Jan 1st 2 turkeys 39 Ibs @ 22	8.58
2 pr Chick 141bs@20	2.80
8 Ib Butter @ 55	4.40

The recipes are to be found inside the front and back covers and are scattered throughout the pages of the notebook . . .

"Tea Poultice, is the best thing in the world for a bruise that is inflamed, or a sore caused by mashing or tearing off the flesh. Take a handfull of good fresh tea, put on water enough to wet it thoroughly, let it stand a few moments, then bind it on the wound; change once or twice a day till the swelling is reduced.

Burns and Scalds

"The best remedy is common Starch. Just moistened with cold water and spread on a cloth to effectually cover the wounded part, keep the starch moist. After the inflammation is out, apply a linen cloth dipped in sweet oil."

Cure for Croup

"The white of an egg given in sweetened water is a sure cure for croup. To be repeated till a cure is affected.

"To cure cattle that are swollen from eating clover. The remedy is a spoonful of ammonia dissolved in a glass of water and given to the animal . . . cure in an hour.

"To remove fruit stain from linen, rub the parts with yellow soap then tie a piece of pearbark in the stain and boil, then expose to the sun.

"To clarify water. 2 grains of allum to a pint of water that is not fit to drink render it perfectly clean, and pure, and the taste of allum will not be perceived.

"To cure a Foundered horse take a green goard. Put it into a gallon of water, boil it down to a quart, and give it as a dreach.

Receipt for Curing Meat

"To every 100 Ibs of beef take 4 Ib of salt, 2 Ibs of brown Sugar, and 2 oz. of Saltpetre, Pack the Beef tightly and cover it completely with the pickle.

An Excellent Pickle for Butter.

"Take two pails of water, two qts. of fine salt, one-fourth of a pound of loaf sugar, two ounces of saltpetre, well boiled and skimmed, cover the butter with the pickle, and it will keep sweet the year round."

Observations and Quotations From Arthur Hagen Miller's Book "Fond Memories"

By Becky Huttenger

The late Arthur Hagen Miller, who was the son of Charles Roberts Miller, wrote his memoirs and had them published in 1956. Mr. Miller was a successful Philadelphia lawyer and a judge. The book describes his family and his life in Philadelphia as he was growing up. He also talks about his immediate family and his career.

In this book, he speaks of his forbears with candor and affection. Of his grandparents he writes, "My grandmother, Caroline Roberts, of Welsh extraction, lived in the Gwynedd (Whitpain Township) section of Montgomery County and was in some way related to the late Justice Owen J. Roberts. My grandmother had a brother, (John Roberts) who also was a poor school teacher in the Pennsburg district where he met William Miller. They must have become cronies, because my grandfather once spent a week-end with my grandmother's brother at his home. Then he spent more week-ends there. My grandmother often visited her brother at Pennsburg. Before long the engagement of William G. Miller and Caroline Roberts was announced and they were married. William moved into the Roberts' homestead, and took a teaching position at Blue Bell in that neighborhood."

Later, Mr. Miller tells a little about his father's life. He says, "He took a job at Blue Bell in the country store conducted by Charles De Prefontaine. I have heard stories of father sleeping in the attic with snow blowing in on his bed, so his early life must have been rugged." Mr. Miller also talks about the wholesale tobacco business and how his father was taken into the family firm. One of the salesmen, Percival S. Hill, with whom Charles Miller worked, later founded the American Tobacco Company in New York."

In a later chapter, Birthdays Are Milestones, Mr. Miller describes his first illness when he was but a few months old. He had pneumonia. "The doctor gave me up, but not my grandmother Miller. She asked for permission to try a home remedy and then burned some tar and placed me in a position to inhale the smoke. The congestion broke at once. The doctor then said that the boy would live, and here I am. I suppose that either the Lord wanted me for some purpose, or the Devil wouldn't take me." Two paragraphs of the same chapter describe later birthdays. "Really, the first birthday I can remember is my sixth. Grandmother Miller's summer home was on a farm, and we spent our summers there. I can remember, as if it were yesterday, strolling near the farmer's house and shouting with joy, I am six years old."

"On most birthdays I had a cake. My Aunt Sadie tells me that on the farm we used to spread a tablecloth on the lawn, under the cherry tree, and celebrate out there. She also tells me that one of my favorite pastimes was to take the black seeds from a piece of watermelon, and squirt them around on the table. One time my grandmother got me flat on the ground, and sat on my back until I promised to be good." There is much more to the book and all of it is entertaining and most descriptive of an era.

"Tall Oaks"

By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck

In researching the history of old houses, the usual procedure is to start from the present and trace the ownership backward, as in this case. to the mid-1700's. However, if one has an inkling of the original owners, one can start with the earliest known residents and trace forward. But backward or forward, a snag appears and here great gaps and questions go unanswered.

With several other persons working on the Lucas house, getting nowhere, it came to this observer's attention that other approaches had to be used. After laboring over many angles for over four weeks in conjunction with other properties and families the writer came across the statement in one of Clara Beck's writings where she called this "a house with a very involved and obscure history." Then she never went any farther nor did she elaborate on the statement.

This disclosed that the house had not been accurately traced by previous writers, i.e Jones Detwiler, Edward Mathews, etc. For that reason, and the deadline for the Whitpain House Tour on November 14, 1976 approaching, the Lucas house was labeled in the ticket-brochure as "the house with the mystery history."

Starting with the writer's knowledge of who owned the place for the last fifty to sixty years, there was an impasse, first in the 1920-1923 period, and then another from 1900 to 1911. The 1877, 1884, and 1898 maps all labeled the farm as W. Dannehower. Yet W. Dannehower never paid taxes on land, only on occupation, horses and cows. If no property is owned by a certain name, there is no way to gain from the Recorder of Deeds Index any data relating to a particular property, hence, a researching person can go nowhere.

The next development came by accident, coincidence, or perhaps astute perception.

Other members of the committee were trying to locate the ownership of land of the DeHavens and the DeHaven family, for there were many different DeHavens appearing in all the reading material. It was the writer's good fortune to know that a neighbor Mrs Mildred DeHaven Slough (one of the last of the DeHaven's from the Gulph Mills' area) had access to some DeHaven genealogy. She procured the record from a friend of a friend of a relative, and graciously turned over a whole packet of information on the "DeHavens in Whitpain" compiled in 1938.

In this packet were the following:

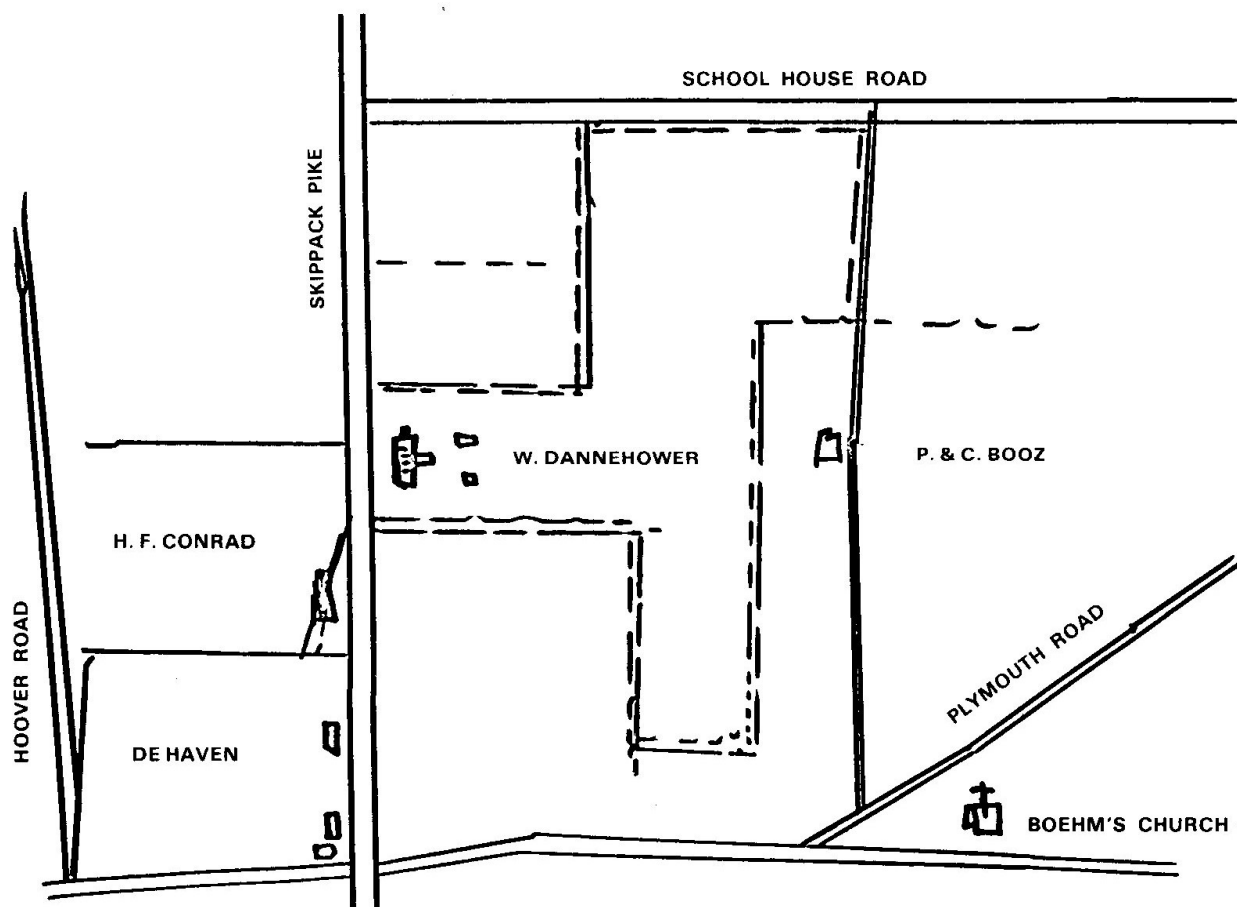
1. The will of John Whitpain, in which he sold a "message of tenement" and a tract of land to Edward in Hoffe near lands of Peter in Hoffe and John Phillip Boehm

2. seven deeds on the DeHaven property in Whitpain plus the will of John DeHaven
3. The will of William DeHaven
4. Brief Title to 55a. of land in Whitpain, the property of David DeHaven plus an extensive description of that land
5. A page of four generations of the DeHaven family
6. A page of the Wentz Family — Descendants of Peter Wentz
7. A list of De Haven's and Wentz's buried in Boehm's Cemetery

It was in item four above that the phrase "thence by land formerly owned by Matthias Wentz now belonging to Joseph Conrad . . . thence by land late of Morgan Morgan of William Dannehower ..." appeared and gave the first real workable clues.

It was in the will of John DeHaven that he left land on one side of Skippack Pike to his son, David, and land on the other side to his daughter, Lydia, who married Matthias Wentz. A look at the pages containing the DeHaven and Wentz genealogy confirmed the fact that Peter Wentz's second son (of Worcester) married Lydia, daughter of John DeHaven on April 25, 1775. This was the forth generation of De Haven's and the third generation of those Wentz's to live in this country.

A diagram of the William Dannehower property from an 1877 map nearly fits the description of the Matthias Wentz-David DeHaven property. It was finally established that this was the "plantation."



The purpose of the brief title-description was to spell out, in detail, what David De Haven (fifth generation) was mortgaging. After three tries (1844, 1861, 1877) on borrowing money, finally in 1880 the tract of land was satisfied by William Funk in the Mortgage Book. Whether the Lucas property was included in the mortgage is hard to discern because of the involved description of the shape of the parcel. (See diagram.)

"The 'roots' of the De Haven's are different. Sometimes their conduct was strange." So say the descendants, Mildred DeHaven Slough and her son, John D. Slough, (also a descendant of Nicholas Slough of Revolutionary fame), who can converse readily about some of the idiosyncrasies of their ancestors.

The family originated in Alsace-Lorraine when that area was juggled back and forth between France and Germany. In the era around 1682, the name was in Hoffe or Indehove or other variations, depending in which country they happened to be. In France they followed the Protestant Huguenot faith and tradition, and were often ostracized in that Catholic country.

When Willaim Penn's offers came, subsequently many bothers — with their own fleet of ships, their wives, children, and kin, plus all their possessions — sailed up the Delaware into the port of Philadelphia. When they tried to navigate the Schuylkill, they had to leave the larger ships and use smaller boats. It is here they scattered in many directions, especially in Chester and Montgomery Counties.

It was Whitpain's good fortune to attract Peter and his wife, Sidonia Levering, with nine boys and three girls. (3rd generation in this country.) Is it so amazing that so many DeHaven names are in Whitpain's history? To name a few there were William, John, Peter, Samuel, Gerhart, Jacob, a second John (second marriage) and Abraham. (Great-grandfather of Mrs. Slough.)

In the Revolution in 1777, Samuel, Jesse, Moses, David, and Jonathan DeHaven were available in Whitpain during the time the Army was encamped here.

The Slough's maintain that because of the separatist idea in following the Huguenot sect, the DeHaven's were clannish, loners and rather non-social people. Be that as it may, they did marry into other prominent families. David married Magdalene Zimmerman. Magdalena DeHaven married Hans Supplee. Lydia DeHaven married Matthias Wentz. Rather than begin another denominational religion they all became members of Boehm's Congregation. Mildred adds, "The DeHaven men were not church-goers, but the women they married saw to it that they were faithful!"

John and Elizabeth (Potts) DeHaven married in 1743, had three children, two of whom were named in his will. David received the farm on one side of the road, as mentioned before, and Lydia was to receive more ground to add to the message that Matthias Wentz and she had bought earlier. It is this property with which we are now concerned.

The earliest date of Edward in Hoffe is 1785, when Rees Thomas and Anthony Morris sold land near Peter in Hoffe and John Phillip Boehm. The next date is 1742 and contains the "oak sapling on the lands of John Indehove, son of Peter," and "lands next to Joshua Dickinson and Peter Indehove. These are deeds with dates of 1745, 1795, 1810 and 1812.

Jones Detwiler's Scrapbook confirms the fact that John's will in 1798 sold land to his son-in-law, M. Wentz. The Wentz's owned it the remainder of their lifetime, at which time the three sons, Johnathan, Samuel, and Levi inherited it. In 1833 on Johnathan's death, the farm was directed to be sold.

There seems to be a ten-year gap in activity here. One source mentions that Joseph Conrad purchased something in 1836, but not exactly where. The only other knowledge available about Matthias Wentz comes from the window-pane tax. In 1798, he had a stone barn, 37 ft. X 25 ft. a smith shop 20 ft.X 12 ft., and a house which has two stories, 4 windows with 12 lights each and 4 windows with 18 lights each, and his occupation was listed as both blacksmith and farmer. His nearest neighbor was Morgan Morgan.

Because of the lack of a name for the next owner, the approach was to peruse the tax lists after 1840. Here is where is found that W. Dannehower paid taxes, not on land, only on being a farmer and his animals. Still the maps point to the fact that this tract of land was that belonging to William Dannehower.

The index in the Recorder of Deeds office was no help. All transactions were by the eminent county squire William F. Dannehower from the Telford area. It was only by looking at the adjoining properties and figuring contemporaries that Phillip and Conrad Booz come into the picture. When reading the long obscure hand-written deeds which contain almost everything imaginable, one can shriek with joy when she finds that Adelliza Booz, daughter of Phillip, married William Dannehower!(St. John's records confirms it — in 1843.) The farm was not theirs alone. The names of Phillip Booz and wife, Conrad Booz and wife, and all three girls and their husbands were owners, i.e. Adelliza and Willaim Dannehower, Phoebe and James Wood, and Mary Loretta and Emanuel Hanes

The deed provided more information. It seems that William Dannehower was an indentured servant with Phillip and Conrad Booz as his sponsors. If one reads between the lines, one finds that it suggests that this family was not about to trust William and Adelliza with all that land and beautiful house. But they lived and worked here from approximately 1843 (when William was free of his indenture) to 1897. (See map.)

It is an interesting sidelight that Mary Loretta and Edward Hanes owned their own place on School Road (where Gale and Edith Fields now live), and Phoebe and James Wood are on record as owning several different places in the township at different times.

After reading about this, the writer literally stumbled across the gravestones of William and Adelliza in St. John's Cemetery. The reaction was, "Eureka — these were real people!"

As far as is known here. there could have been one son. There is a William C. Dannehower who was baptized and confirmed at the same date in 1870 in the records at St. John's. It is possible, from other sources of information, that he married and moved from the vicinity.

For a time the property is listed as William Dannehower Estate. (See Creamery book picture.) The dates of the Dannehower deaths are not readable on the tombstones.

Up to 1900. the ownership roughly goes like this:

1728-1798	DeHaven's . . . 2 or 3 generations
1798-1833	Matthias Wentz and family
1833-1843	10-year gap
1843-1898	William and Adelliza Dannehower, et ux, et al.

What happened then is vague and indistinct. In other words . . . nothing. So a reverse approach was attempted.

Starting from the present occupants, the list goes thus:

1968 -	Wilder and Hazel Lucas
1954 —	Morris Potter
1934—	Helen Naylor
	? — J. Magill to Elizabeth Wertner, Agent
1920 to 1927 —	Eugene Wentz
1911 to 1917 —	Edward Phipps
1898 to 1911 . . .	13 years . . . Perhaps the place stood idle!

The earliest deed, 1706, from Richard Morris to William Palmer and Edward in Hoffe, does not mention buildings. But the indenture of 1725 naming Edward and Peter Indehave mentions a "messuage or tenement" and tract of land next to John Phillip Boehm. One can only guess that the present dining room was first because of its window construction. The first floor windows tell us that repairs have changed the originals.

The first addition came possibly between 1740 and 1760. This is when the next generation of Peter DeHaven's may have added something in the rear and maybe the front rooms, in order to accommodate the large family. Jacob Kurr, the builder in the neighborhood, could have helped construct the additions. Both Jacob Kurr and Phillip Sheneberger served as witnesses on deeds, wills, and releases.

It is well to bear in mind here that the 1742 deed used the "white oak sapling" as a marker on the deed description.



Former Dannehower Home



Tall Oaks Today

A picture shows what the house looked like with its three floors and front and side porches. No date can be established, but at least it is obvious it was during horse and buggy days.

The extensive renovations were made by Miss Helen Naylor around 1932-1934. The kitchen to the rear may have come first, but the beautiful west wing, with sunken living room and back terrace plus added bedroom space, make this an ideal modern example of excellent colonial architecture.

Besides being farmers and business men, the Dehaven's each had separate trades. There were smith shops among the buildings and John Dehaven is listed as a cordwainer (sewer of leather goods). It is almost certain that the entire clan was at some time involved in the shipping business, while the ladies stayed home "to mind the store." Lydia and Matthias Wentz had three or four sons, no daughters.

In the Booz-Dannehower era, three Booz daughters were involved. In the Phipps time, three daughters grew up and were married here. (See Walker account Montgomery County College.) By quaint coincidence the Lucas' have three daughters.

In the 1920's, the writer remembers that Eugene Wentz resided here and vaguely remembers him as being the Tax Collector. The memory is reinforced by the fact that Geney Wentz drove one of the first two school buses. He kept his rickety, springy old Ford bus at this place at night and bounced over bad roads by day! The kids felt lucky when they were assigned to ride in the other bus — the Reo.

Edward Phipps was the Secretary of the School Board, ran a Harleysville Insurance business, and was Justice-of-the-Peace for many years. Both Phoebe and Ed were active in Grange and County affairs. They were some of the last in the township to continue to go to Friend's Meeting. While Maurice Potter lived here, he operated a well drilling business from the adjacent property. For a time during Miss Naylor's ownership, Dr. Harry Steinbach had a Veterinary office on the premises.

The handsome house located just the right distance west of Blue Bell on Skippack Pike makes it a most desirable site for most any purpose. To be sure, it has had a varied history, even if we are not positive of its successive history.

Yes, it is good that the Lucas' called their home "Tall-Oaks." For whether or not the "tall oak" which stands today near the driveway is the "oak sapling" in the early deed, it still was the first hint that suggested the unravelling of the "mystery history" of the stately, charming "house of the three daughters" called "Tall Oaks".

"Melrose"

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

The home of Helene Charon Weiss at 710 Skippack Pike in Blue Bell is part of a 5,000-acre grant by William Penn to George Palmer in 1682. William Palmer, who inherited 832 acres from his father in 1703, sold the acreage to Philip Price. That same year, Philip Price sold part of the tract containing 417 acres of this parcel to Richard Morris. In 1707, Richard Morris sold 100 acres of this parcel to Edward Endehave for forty pounds. Peter Endehave, son of Edward, was owner in 1728. In 1742, Edward Endehave, the second son of Peter, and his wife, Margaret, received fifty-nine acres, part of the 100 acres. In a sale to Jacob Shetz by Edward DeHaven and his wife, Margaret, in 1763, there is mention of a residence included with the transaction of land. Jacob Shetz sold to Joseph Stamper and his wife, Sarah, in 1776, and in 1784 Joseph Stamper sold the messuage and tract of land to John Dehaven and his wife, Elizabeth, for 450 pounds. In 1798, John DeHaven sold to Mathias Wentz who remained there until his death.

Tax records of 1799 indicate that Mathias Wentz owned one stone dwelling house 25 X 15. In 1825, the administrator of the estate sold to Jacob and Jonathan Wentz. The Wentz estate was sold at auction in 1836, after the death of Mathias and his two sons, to Joseph Phipps Conard for \$1,530. The property remained in the Conard family for the next seventy-two years, passing from Joseph to his son, Henry Fasset Conard, who had married Sarah Harper Nice of Whitemarsh. During this period many improvements were made, including the building of a solid cypress porch which is now the dining room. In 1901, Eugene Nice Conard, son of Henry, built an additional small frame house on the property facing Skippack Pike.

Henry Fassett Conard and his wife sold the entire property to May G. Maloney (wife of Phillip S. Maloney) in 1908 for 10,800 dollars. In 1915, twelve acres of this tract were sold



"Melrose"

to John Farber Miller. Mr. and Mrs. Maloney were killed at the Mt. Pleasant Road railroad crossing, leaving two sons, Gordon and Mercer.

Clarence E. Doan and his wife, Marion, purchased the property in 1928, then known as "Canterbury Farm," where they operated a horse breeding farm and also raised black-faced sheep. The huge barn was heated by a large furnace and the metal ducts running through the barn still remain. Horses that were used by Abbotts Dairy, for pulling milk delivery wagons, were brought to this farm for rest and relaxation. Saint Dunstan's Episcopal Church was built on part of this property.

Mr. and Mrs. Doan moved to the smaller frame house on the property and sold the large house, barn and twelve acres of land to Helene and Benjamin H. Charon in 1952. Helene related that when they removed the wall paper from the original kitchen ceiling (now the den) they found it lined with newspapers dated 1807. This was probably a means of insulating. There was also a walk-in fireplace in this room which is now closed. The present kitchen was a chicken coop. The house itself shows signs of the fine cabinet making in the past, since beautiful paneling of solid cypress is in evidence throughout the house. An iron peg and old markers were found in the fields of the property, and it is said that a still was in operation in the far field during prohibition days. A wooden bridge over a stream leads to a beautiful three-level stone springhouse which has a trapdoor to the second floor. The present deed still contains a clause giving trolley-car rights on Skippack Road, in front of the house, which is a reminder that the trolley once ran in Whitpain Township.



Huge Barn at Melrose



Unusual Three Story Springhouse at Melrose



Old Stone Springhouse and Back view



Date Stone 1795



Side View of Chambers Home With 1795 Datestone

Chambers Home (Formerly Black Horse Inn)

By Herman J. Prischmann
Photography by George S. Peck

The Black Horse Inn was located on the southwest side of Skippack Turnpike, a short distance below the intersection of Plymouth Road (now known as Blue Bell-Pennlyn

Road). It was erected by James Bartleson and a license to operate as the Black Horse Inn was granted in May 1796. The Inn remained open until 1826 when it reverted to being a private homestead.

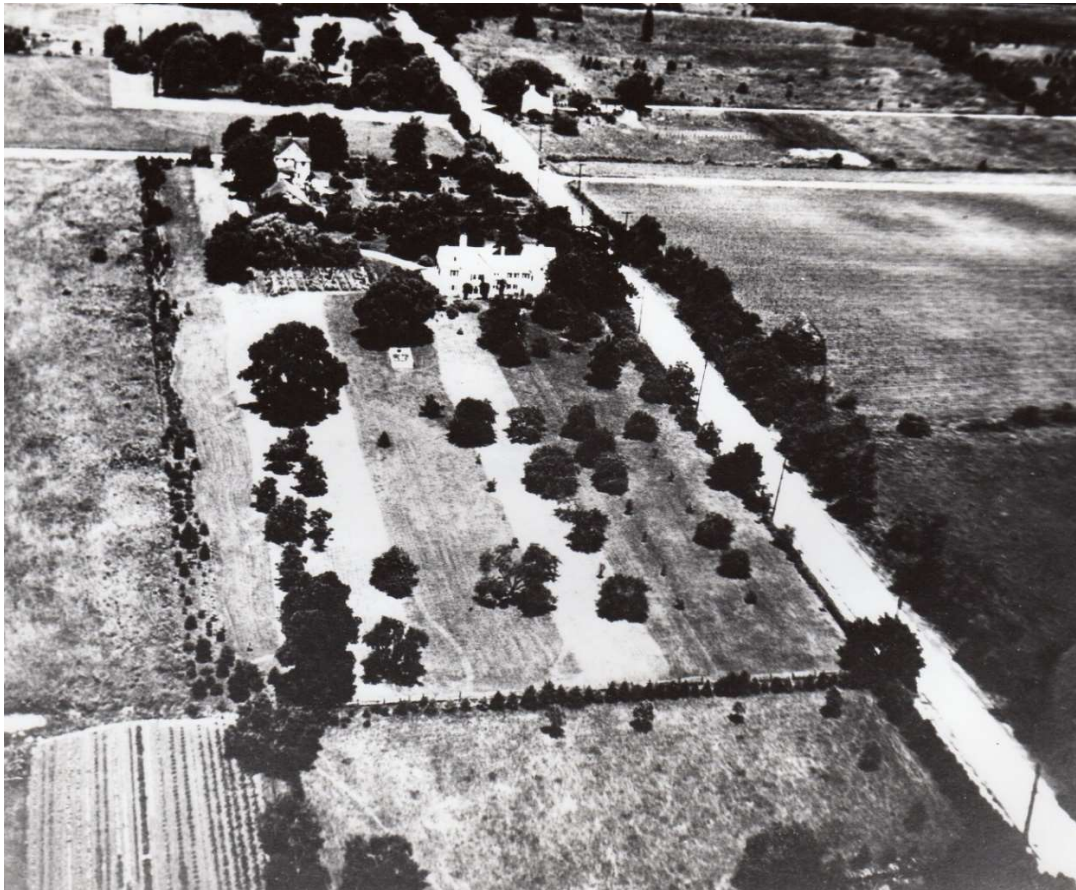
In 1872, it was purchased by Sam Rader, a German. On June 2, 1877 a tragedy took place in the home, Mrs. Rader was murdered by an unknown hand. A negro was arrested, tried at Norristown and acquitted. Popular opinion at the time held that the accused was guilty and that he shot the woman when he was surprised in the act of robbing the house. Sam Rader subsequently moved to West Philadelphia and died there in a home for the aged.

The property was purchased by James B. Long who owned and lived in the home until his demise. Mr. Long was Design Engineer for the present DeKalb Street Bridge over the Schuylkill River, built in the late 1920's to replace a wooden covered bridge which was destroyed by fire. His daughter, Betty, married John Chambers and their son, James, lives in the house with his wife and child.

The Black Horse Inn was often confused with the White Horse Inn, now known as the Blue Bell Inn, because both were in Blue Bell on different corners; however, the Black Horse Inn was only in existence as an inn for thirty-one years. It then became a gentleman's estate after 1826, some fifty years before the Rader tragedy.



President Pope Residence



Aerial View – Barberry Lodge

"Barberry Lodge"

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

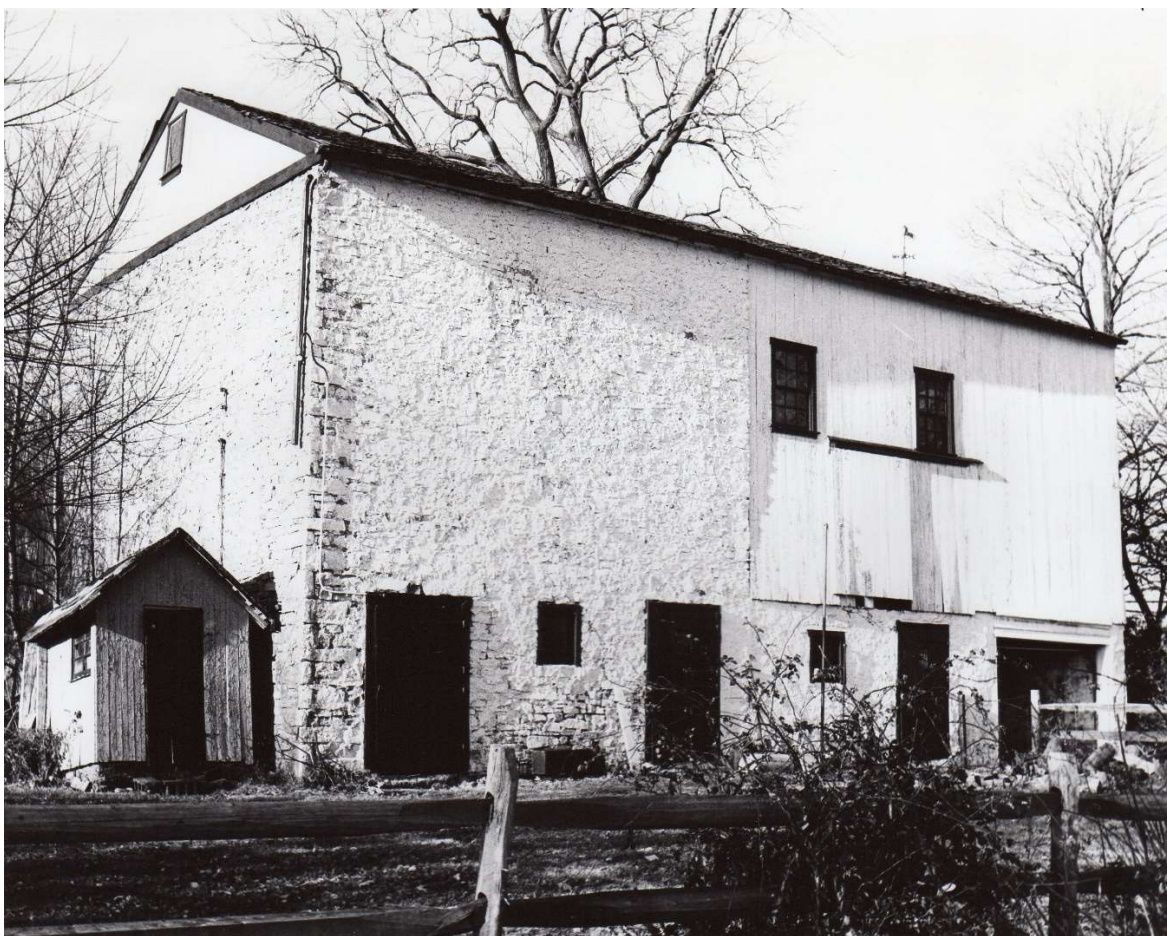
Barberry Lodge, located at 460 Skippack Pike in Blue Bell, is part of the original William Davis tract of two hundred acres purchased in 1701 from John Palmer. The tax records of 1734 show that two hundred acres were held by William and John Davis, each having one hundred acres. In 1760, John Davis was assessed for his two hundred acres of which only eight acres were cleared of forest. He had two acres sown in winter grain and was taxed for one horse and two cows, indicating pretty poor farming. John Davis made his will in 1782 and gave his land to his two sons, William and John. The plantation was divided longitudinally giving each one hundred acres with frontage on Skippack Pike, William receiving the upper side.

In 1800, the executors of the estate of William sold seventy-three acres, the main portion of their father's estate, to Richard Duffield who lived here until his death in 1828. After the death of Duffield, his heirs sold to Mary Ann Williams. In 1847, George Berkheimer bought this property and in 1848 it was sold to Jesse Shay. He sold it in 1871 to James McEwen and it was purchased in 1873 by B. P. Sampson. In 1876, Charles Shoemaker was the owner and his son, Joseph Conard Shoemaker, later owned and operated the farm. The next owners were Gerald and Marjorie Deacon. Mr. and Mrs. William Pope bought from the Deacon's in 1935 and Mrs. Pope is the present owner.

The center section of this home is pre-revolutionary and the front section, which is now the kitchen area, was added in 1814. Mrs. Pope related that when insulation was being blown in on the second and third floors, a workman went into a hole and found two high silk hats, dated 1700. One hat was made in Paris and the other in Philadelphia.



Garden View of Farview Farm



Barn

"Farview Farm"

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

On April 4, 1968, Allan and Anne Kime bought this house and two acres of ground at 440 Skippack Pike in Blue Bell. It is part of the original Davis tract of 200 acres purchased in 1701 from John Palmer. William Davis' son, John, inherited the 200 acres and when John's sons, William and John, inherited the estate they divided it equally; William received the upper 100 acres. William died in 1798 and his executors sold seventy-three acres to Richard Duffield in 1800. Records show that he had 1373 feet on Skippack Pike (one quarter of a mile). In 1803, Richard Duffield detached thirty-three acres, selling them to James Nettles. This deed states "the house is of stone, standing on a knoll close to the road."

Dr. George Martin, who was the father of Dr. John A. Martin of Whitemarsh, bought from James Nettles in 1809. In 1814, he conveyed to David Styer, who was landlord of Broad Axe Tavern at the close of his life. The present Walton Road is shown as "Styer Road" on older maps. David Styer died in 1825, and for a time after his death there seems to be a dispute concerning the title of the farm. Solomon Freas married a granddaughter of David Styer and lived on the place for years. In 1851, Sheriff Philip Hahn sold the residence and thirty-three acres to Ebner Walton who was the highest bidder and paid \$2,132. Joseph Conard Walton purchased the property in August 1878 for \$4,000. When Samuel French Reeves bought the house in 1923, much of the land had been sold off and it included only fourteen acres of land. In 1968, the present owners purchased the house and two acres.

Anne Kime related that a restoration archivist inspected the house and, judging from the width of the base of a hearth in the basement, dated the original construction as a two-story house built about 1740 with modernizations about the year 1840. The fireplace hearth in the living room is of English construction. There is a set of stairs in the basement leading to a second basement. This is an area about six feet round that is high enough to walk in, and it is believed to have been the spring room or springhouse.

The Home of Ilga and Herbert Winicov

By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck

The challenge of researching this graceful old dwelling opposite Shady Grove School, is not for lack of information, but to straighten out conflicting dates of its origin, and to sift out what is most appealing.

Its location, so close to "Whitpain Farms" suggest it is very old. Yes, the property is very old (1701) but there were two houses; also, one owner must have had two families. Luckily, with a careful study, it is possible to produce a reasonable explanation even if it is not absolutely certain that it is solid in facts.

In Edward Mathews' Scrapbook, page 53, he writes this excerpt for the Ambler Gazette, Aug. 17, 1893, entitled Local History:

"During the last century a considerable tract in Whitpain was owned by the Davis family for three generations. It includes a strip along the Skippack Road midway between

Blue Bell and Broad Axe and extended back 3/4 of a mile. The surface has a general slope toward the southeast, diversified by a depression through which flows a 'meadow rivulet'.

"The original Davis tract comprised of 200 A. ... The first settler here was William Davis, a Welsh Quaker. While no deed is on record of whom he bought, it is estimated the time was about 1701, when he bought of John Palmer (who bought from Ann Whitpain McCarty). The boundary of another property showed that he was here in 1704 and 1710. "His residence was not on Skippack Road, but near the center of the plantation. Here was a spring and the natural place for the habitation of a pioneer . . . Over a spring there yet remains the ruins of a two-story house.

"John Davis was William's son, but very little is accurately known of the successive generations. There is record about the time of William's death before 1750 that 'John Davis built what was then the new house'. In 1768, there was a stone house . . . had two rooms downstairs while a spring flowed through the cellar.

"William Davis, the grandson of the pioneer made a will in 1798, naming five children." Here records are confused. It is difficult to distinguish between the two Williams. There are also records of William Davis, possibly a second marriage, with another set of children, who lived and farmed in the Morris Road — Penllyn Pike area. However, in this case, in the 1800's, the "land was divided and became separate farms" and the Davis family seemed to have disintegrated or moved elsewhere.

At this point, it would be to the reader's advantage to see a list of owners, in order to better understand the story of "Berry Pomeroy." (Named for an English castle which came down through the Allen's ancestors.) A stone at the entrance of the lane still marks the house's name.

Prior to 1701 — Ann W. McCarty and John Palmer
1704 — William Davis
C. 1735 — John Davis
C. 1768 — Changed hands within the family
1782 or later — William Davis (11)
1799 — John Davis (II) state
1818 — John Davis (111)
1818-1832 — Dr. George Martin (wife-Davis) bought land at Sheriff Sale
1832 — George Martin and wife sold to Henry Still
1833 — Widow of Henry Still sold to James Wood (husband of a
Booz daughter)
1846 — James Wood sold to Samuel Streeper
1874 — Samuel Streeper Estate deeded to John Streeper
1910 — John Streeper sold to J. Perry Tyson
1924 — J. Perry Tyson (Jenkintown Bank and Trust Co.) sold to Jesse
Cassel
1924 — Jesse Cassel sold to Phillip Meredith Allen
1965 — P. M. Allen sold to Seehoff
1971 — John C. Seehoff sold to Herbert Wmicov

One note of explanation of the chart: — E. Mathews describes the Streeper Farm on page 54 in the above Scrapbook. He explains in detail the shifting, dividing, reselling, sheriff sales and selling back, which occurred in the 1818-1846 period.

It simplifies matters here if one thinks of three "regimes" so to speak:

Davis — 1701-1833 — 130 years
Streeper — 1846-1910 — 64 years
Allen — 1924-1965 — 41 years

As for the kinds of people each of these families were — how different!

Mathews comments: "In 1760 John Davis was assessed for 200 A. of which only 80 A. was cleared. ... He had but 2 A. sown in winter grain and was taxed for one horse and two cows — indicating pretty poor farming." E. M. further states "... the children of William Davis, Nancy, John, Sarah, Hannah, and Tamar were strange ones. John and Hannah seemed to have been carried away by the infatuation of a religious imposter. . . . By the time of their father's death, in 1798, they had both moved to Ontario County, N. Y. with the other followers of Jemima Wilkinson."

As for the Streeper's: The report in the Farm Section of the Norristown Register in the 1845-1850 period quotes Mr. Samuel Streeper as living on a farm containing 53 A. An itemized list of products and amounts realized from their sales revealed that his total income for the year was \$1,578.25. From observing the barn at the present, although built in two sections, it would seem that the Streeper's had need of such a structure and they erected it in their time.

On the list of exhibits at the Centennial Celebration of Montgomery County in September, 1884, in the Court House is found these items:

Miss Amanda Streeper; Coffee Pot, very old; Sampler, made by Grandmother Shay in 1805.

Mrs. Samuel Streeper; Silk Badge, worn by a lady when Lafayette entered Philadelphia; Brass Andirons; Chest dated 1767; Linen Towel and apron over 100 years old; Flax grown on farm locally.

But the special story of this house is supplied by the Allen regime. A much more colorful history exists for the last fifty-two years, because of the rather flamboyant Phillip

Meredith Allen and his family.

Much of the source of information comes from the Saturday Evening Post article in the November 14, 1925 issue, entitled "Furnished in Antiques" by Mr. Allen. His son, Ralph Wheelock Pomeroy Allen II, now living in Worcester, filled in the facts and data from his first-hand knowledge of having lived on this delightful spot.

The first puzzle Roy helped to solve was that of the "old house." In his time as a youngster, he and his brother, Carl, were intrigued by the rubble of some dilapidated remnants of some kind of building "down in the meadow near the spring." It was overgrown with vines and covered with piles of debris. While rummaging through one day, they found a medal which probably came from a hat. When Roy polished the black piece of what he hoped was a treasure, it turned out to be a railroad insignia. The most exciting conclusion he could come to was that the last occupant of the house obviously worked for a railroad.



Wincov House

When Roy and Carol Blagden anticipated marriage in 1948, Roy's dad, "P. M.," offered the young couple a site and the old stones. With the help of some neighbors and an ancient truck, they moved many loads of stones to a location nearer the Narcissa Road. However, their dream never materialized. The pile of stones is still there and the location of the site of the original cottage is not easy to find.

Beside the information gleaned from reading between the lines in the Post article, Roy offered other items of interest. Phillip Meredith Allen was affiliated with Curtis Publishing Company in advertising. His many hobbies included purchasing, collecting, and refinishing antiques, and other historic memorabilia. He was an avid sports-car enthusiast, enjoyed flying, and helped promote aviation. He was active in civic affairs and served on the zoning board that wrote the zoning code for Whitpain Township.

The Post article does not entirely agree with Edward Mathews' account as to the dates of origin of the buildings and land ownership. But what can be gathered is that by the time in 1924 when the Allen's bought from Jesse Cassel, the house was in such a neglected condition that Mr. Allen hired an architect. The basic direction given was to put the wreckage in a livable condition befitting the likes of Mrs. Allen who had lived all her life in the city. Also, make it suitable for all the antiques "we are planning to collect." Quoting Mr. Allen further, "... Babs looked at me. I don't remember which of us mentioned it first: 'Let's fix this up and live here.' We were fortunate, too, in our selection of a builder. Every man was a craftsman there was careful slow progress with everything done right." For example, the staircase in the dining room, of curly maple wood, is a replica of the stairway in Independence Hall.

It is to Mr. and Mrs. Allen's credit that they were possibly among the first people to be bitten by the "antique bug." This was fifty-two years ago. Antiques have continued to be lasting hobbies for many collectors.



Wincov Barn

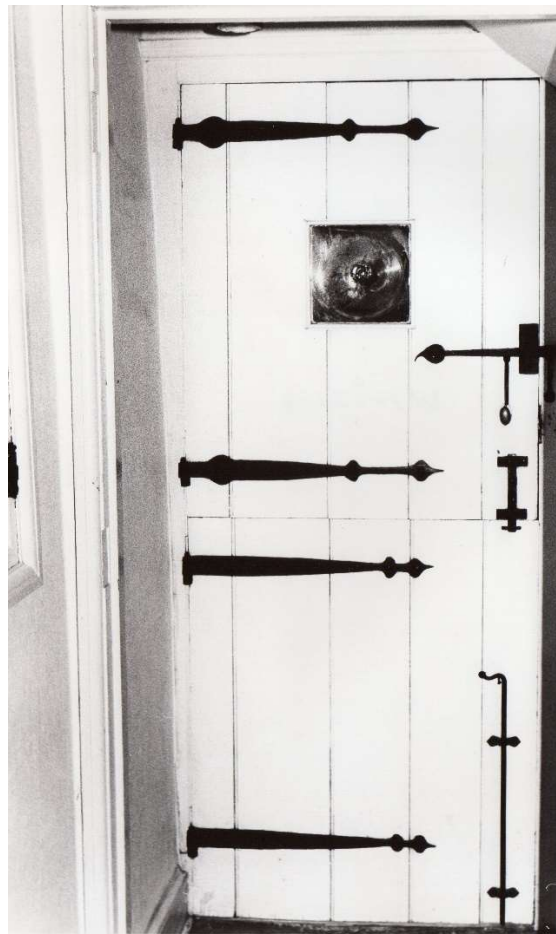
Roy enlightened the writer on the story of the cannon: It was in the mid-1920's when crews of workmen were clearing land to build the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. One day while the Allen's were looking for "antique iron" from ships that were about to be destroyed along the Delaware River waterfront, they were watching the work force tugging with an old cannon. These ships could have been there many years, and date to the Revolution or at least the War of 1812. Mr. Allen asked the foreman if he could have one. rather than let it go to the bottom of the river. At the time, the Allen's were driving a 1924 Marmon Touring Car with a baggage rack on the rear. Somehow, someway, the crew managed to load the cannon (of tremendous weight) on the back of the car. The Allen's drove through Philadelphia to Broad-Axe, with the Marmon's "nose in the air." placed the cannon, somehow, in the backyard and there it remains to this day.

To add to the fun, over the years the Allen's visited many battlefields, both Revolutionary and Civil Wars. "P. M." purposefully picked two stones from each historic place to form two collections. He marked and dated each stone. One set he used to make a base on which to mount the cannon and the other set went to a friend who worked for the Chicago Tribune. This set

was used to build a niche in the front of the Tribune Building which was then being erected. A bit of history traveled from eastern states to the mid-west!

The house itself today is functional, livable, and charming. The wing, which was added in 1925, looks more genuine than the restored parts that were built in perhaps 1720, 1760, or 1840. Even electrical wiring and telephones were hidden to make everything more authentic. The hinges, hardware, mantles and woodwork are expressions of careful, thoughtful restoration.

The Winicov's and their two sons, Eric and Mark, appreciate the setting of the two and a half acres of graceful trees, lawn, and shrubbery. They take pride in the barn, the old well, the dinner bell, and the cannon. What a rich background this beautiful colonial house has!



Rev War Cannon

"Swallowfield" - Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike

By Elizabeth M. DeVincent
Photography by George S. Peck

In 1745, Catherine Singer bought twenty-five acres of land from Mathias Tyson. The property began in the proximity of Skippack Pike and went down the south side of Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike ending at what is now the property of the Honorable Patrick J. McGinnis. This ground was part of a tract owned by Henry Conard who bought 222 acres from Charles Mullin in 1711. Mullin in 1703 purchased 322 acres of the great Palmer patent.

Catherine Singer was a widow with seven children: Catherine, Christian, Phillip, Margret, Barbarah, John and Samuel. In 1760 according to the tax records Jacob Adams rented the land for farming and Catherine moved to North Wales. She died in 1794 and was buried in the cemetery of Boehm's Church.

Phillip Singer bought the top twelve-and-one-half acres next to his mother and built a house that is no longer standing on the corner of Skippack Pike. In 1794, Phillip sold his property to a James Bartleson who proceeded to build the house that is standing today. When this house was completed Bartleson procured a license in 1796 and opened it as a tavern. It did not remain a tavern for too many years. The Rader tragedy in which Mrs. Rader lost her life took place in this house on June 2, 1877.

In her will Catherine Singer reserved for her son Christian the privilege to live in the house he had built on the west corner of her property for the term of eight years from the time he first built on said lot. Her will was dated 1783 and it must be assumed that she had a change of heart because in later tax records not only was Christian still living there but had acquired four acres from his mother.

John Singer was the sole executor of his mother's will. Catherine Singer left four acres to a Joseph White and four-and-one-half acres to a Joseph Fitzwater. All the remaining acres and her worldly goods were to be sold to the highest bidder. This included another lot of land containing seven acres adjoining the lands of Peter Bisbing. The money arising from the sales was to be shared and shared alike among her children.

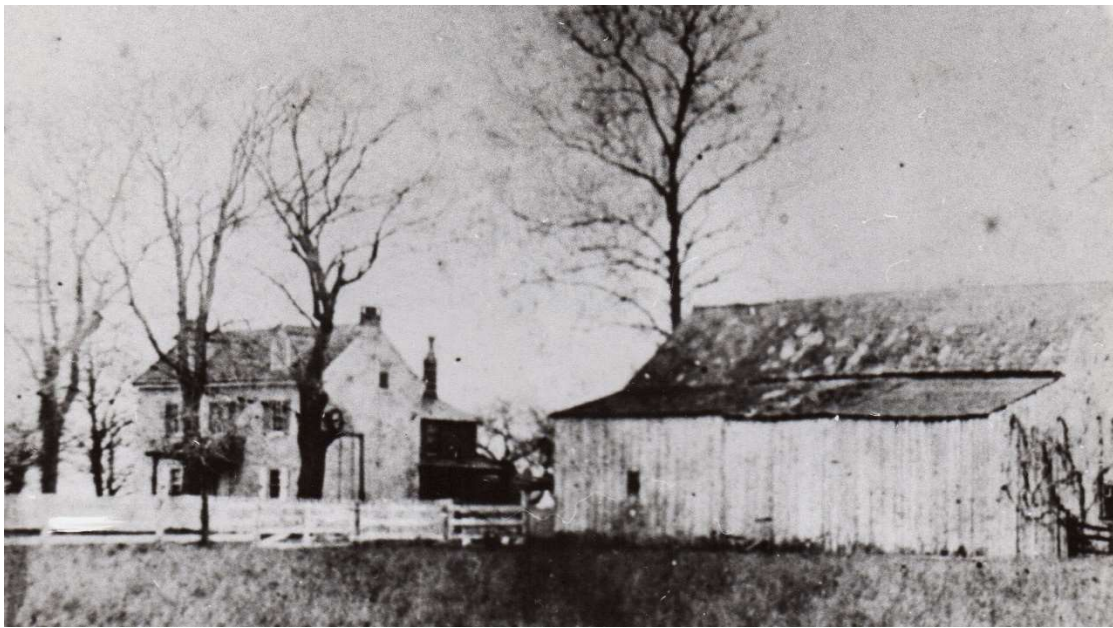
In the next five years the property changed hands three times. It first went to John Fetzer then to John Dutterer who kept the small white house and three-quarters of an acre of ground. Wendel Kingfield in 1799 bought this property and adjoining ground from Israel Coulston thus giving him a farm of forty acres. According to his will dated March 31, 1809, this tract was divided into lots. Two lots were left to his wife, Margaret, and it is this ground in which we are interested. After her death this property was sold to John Preston in 1828. At this time the neighbors on either side of the property were Samuel Lukens and John Fitzgerald.



Nina Cooke Emlen Home



Christian Singer House.c.1870



In 1831 Frederick Rumer bought eight-and-one-half acres and a house and outbuildings for \$850.00. It was then owned by William Michner from 1838-1843. At this time it was bought by Samuel F. Shaeff. Mr. Shaeff was a machinist and in 1847 he bought a building in Centre Square for business purposes. This was located on the State Road now known as DeKalb Pike near Skippack Pike. He was noted for making the one-horse-power threshing machine.

In the 1850 census the Shaeff family is listed as Samuel F. Shaeff, 37 (machinist); Margaret, 38; Amanda, 13; Elizabeth, 12; George, 9; and apprentices David Eli, 18; William Craft, 18; William McDonald, 15; and Allen Mathias, 21. Later George lived here with his wife Catherine and their five children. Upon George's death his son Walter bought the property from his brothers and sisters. In 1897 Walter Shaeff sold the little white house that Christian Singer had built to Eugene M. Davis for \$2,000.00. In 1903 it was bought by Walter L. Bright.

"Swallowfield" belonged to the Shaeff family for eighty-six years. Walter Shaeff was a carpenter and undertaker and lived in this house until 1929. He and his wife Jennie and family then moved to a house on Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike above Skippack Pike. His daughter and her family now reside at this address.

In 1929 Edward C. Quin bought this property and a great many more acres of ground on Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike and Walton Road. His residence was on Walton Road. Mr. Quin raised horses and had two race tracks on his property. In 1946 he sold the original Shaeff tract to Mr. and Mrs. Alan L. Emlen.

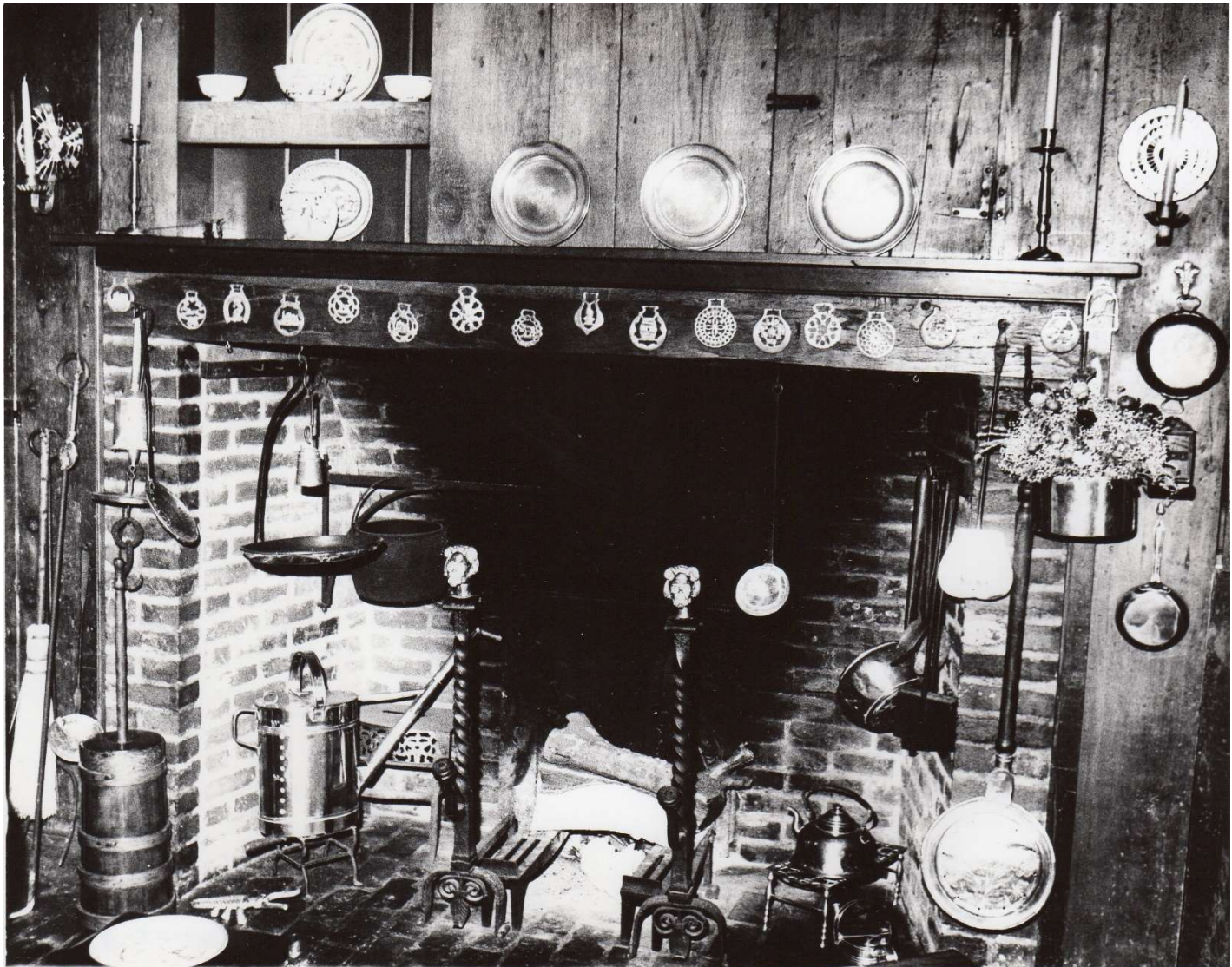
The original house of Catherine Singer, circa 1750, was a three-story fieldstone house with two rooms on the first and second floor and an attic. A wing was added later that contained a dining room and kitchen.

Prior to 1946 the house had been vacant for some years and the upstairs ceilings were on the floor. Needless to say, this was one of the major projects that had priority in remodeling. The outside walls had been plastered and Mrs Emlen had this removed and the house returned to its original stone appearance. In the small room on the first floor, the fireplace was removed and a door was placed in the side wall. The frame and door came from the Andorra Inn which was being demolished.

In 1953 a wing was added to take care of the needs of a growing family. It consists of a sun room and a large sitting room downstairs and two bedrooms and bath on the second level. The floors on the first level are handmade bricks used in the streets of Germantown at one time. The fireplace in the sitting room is faced with wood siding that came from the Hobensack barn that was being demolished to make way for Broadaxe Village. The beams on the ceiling are from the same barn.

The next wing was added in 1964. The original dining room and kitchen were done away with. The dining room is now a spacious hall leading to a beautiful new dining room and a kitchen that no woman could ever complain was too small. A hall separates these rooms from a handsome and airy living room. The beautiful plank floors and fireplace and mantel in this room were bought from an antique dealer in Connecticut. Upstairs more bedrooms and baths were added.

The barn was destroyed by fire in the 1930's but replaced a short time later. The grounds now consist of twenty-two acres, three acres less than when Catherine Singer lived in this house.



Fireplace in 1953 Wing



Carpenter Property

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

This property at 1224 Blue Bell Road, is part of the Henry Conard tract of two hundred and twenty acres that was divided by his will of 1758 between his sons, Benjamin and Joseph; each was to receive one hundred and ten acres. Benjamin died one year later in 1759, and the messuage and land were willed to his wife, Margaret, who later married Thomas White. There is a deed which states that Thomas White inherited the estate in 1761.

In 1766, Harmon Hendricks bought the property at Sheriff sale and remained there until his death in 1785 when it was willed to his seven children. Leonard, the eldest, handled the transaction when it was sold to Joseph and Abigail Hallowell in 1786. Their stay was short, since in 1788 Joseph Hallowell sold the home and one hundred and eleven acres to Frederick Fetzer for £ 500.

When James McDowell bought the farm from Frederick Fetzer in 1798, the acreage had dropped to eighty-five acres. Two years later James McDowell was deceased and Elisha Evans purchased the property and remained there for two years when it was sold to William and Mary McDowell.

The acreage of the property was twenty-three acres when, in 1812, William McDowell sold to Samuel Lukens who remained there over forty years. After his death in 1853, Sam Johnson and wife were owners and occupants for two years when it was sold to Jacob Craft. One year later, John Jones was owner and in 1869 Charles Jones, who was executor of the estate of John Jones, sold to William H. Slingluff.

Four generations of the Slingluff family lived in this home. William Slingluffs son. Henry Geiger Slingluff, came into possession in the spring of 1903 and greatly improved the buildings and surroundings. Lyle Krewson Slingluff, Henry's son, was the last owner in the Slingluff family. Belle Slingluff, wife of Lyle, came there as a bride in 1911 and their three children were born in this home: Dorothy, wife of L. Stetson Rowles, who resides in Blue Bell; Lyle, Jr.; and Albert, who lost his life in an airplane crash in World War 11.

Belle related how the family fed hobos who came to their door and gave them lodging in the barn with the provision that they relinquish any matches in their possession. She also spoke about the Gypsies who camped each year at Five Points and how the Slingluffs "tied things down" because of possible thievery; daily walks to the post office for mail (which was then located at the intersection of Blue Bell Road and Skippack Pike); hitching up the horses to go to Penllyn to pick up the boys to pick strawberries on the farm, for which the boys were reimbursed one cent a box. The produce from the farm was taken to the Girard Avenue Farmers' Market in Philadelphia each Tuesday, using a wagon with a double team of horses.



Stone and Frame Barn

Belle Slingluff has always been active in community affairs. She finished a term for a member of the Board of Education who had died and, without campaigning, continued to serve as a member for four six-year terms. When the Women's Suffrage Act was passed, she was the first woman to vote in Whitpain Township, holding ballot number one.

After Lyle's retirement, he and Belle built a smaller home on Blue Bell Road a short distance from the old homestead. Lyle died in 1959. She is a "grand" lady and at age eighty-seven drives her own car. She was a grand marshal in our Bi-Centennial Parade. Maxwell and Elsy Carpenter purchased the home and four acres of ground in 1949.

Maxwell died in 1953 and Elsy then taught at the Blue Bell School for a period of eighteen years until her retirement in 1971. Today, Mrs. Carpenter and her son, Walter, are owners of the home, barn and four acres of land and have recently made a lovely addition to the home.



Original House with Addition



Cavanaugh Property - Blue Bell Road, Blue Bell

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

May Cavanaugh, daughter of Bernard and Anna, has lived in this house all of her life. She has a vivid memory of neighbors and events of the area and has researched her property and provided copies of all previous deeds on the property.

On February 4, 1754, Robert Porter purchased one hundred and forty-two acres of land with appurtenances from the heirs of Anthony Morris and Richard Whitpain, which was willed to Robert Porter's sons, Charles and Stephen, in 1770. This transfer mentions a messuage or tenement and one hundred and forty-two acres of ground. May Cavanaugh relates that there is a date-stone that is covered up with plaster that probably has the date 1763 on it. She would like to uncover it sometime.

In 1774 the entire property was sold to Leonard Metz and his wife, who were owners until 1793 when it was sold to Valentine Bush for eight hundred and fifty pounds in gold and silver money. Tax records for 1798 show Valentine Bush as having an unusually large barn for this time, 46 X 34. By the year 1807 the land was being sold off. In 1811 John Nungesser, who owned the house and thirty acres at that time, sold to Isaac Dettwiler for twelve hundred dollars. He sold the thirty acres and messuage or tenement to Henry Beideman in 1849 for one thousand forty-six dollars and fifty cents. The next owner was George McNeill and the property was transferred to Morris D. McNeill in 1902.

Bernard and Anna Cavanaugh purchased the residence and ten acres in 1903 from Morris McNeill, raised a family and lived there the remainder of their lives. The house still is owned and occupied by the Cavanaugh family.

Home of Lei Barry and Frank (Tad) Mahan

By Lei Barry
Photography by George S. Peck

The land on which this home sits. on the northeast side of Blue Bell Road at Stenton Avenue, was originally part of 5,000 acres sold by William Penn, in 1682, to George Palmer. After a few changes of ownership, Richard Morris purchased 417 acres of it in 1703 for £100.

Richard Morris was a yeoman and master of a ship which he purchased with four others in 1691. Morris first cleared the land and made his home half a mile north of the existing structure in what was known as the Hoover House in 1703. Seventeen years later he bought an additional 120 acres, bringing the total of his farm to 537 acres. During his lifetime he sold off all but 200 acres, which he left to Joshua Dickinson who had married his daughter, Elizabeth. In 1736, after Richard's death, the Dickinson's came here to live.

The property become known as their "Plymouth Plantation" as at that time the road in front was called Plymouth Road. The Dickinson family retained ownership for thirty-eight years, selling to John Yeddar in 1774. Mr. Yeddar was, however, only a brief owner as he in turn sold the property three years later to Mathias Shoemaker. By this time, the piece which the home was on consisted of only forty-six acres, as the 200 had been divided among the heirs of Joshua Dickinson at the time of his death.

Mathias Shoemaker's forty-six acres included a one-story wood structure with four windows for the home. It measured 22 by 16 feet and is now the kitchen of the house. Also on the property was a 28 by 22 foot stone barn. It is interesting to note that the barn was made of stone, indicating more concern for the animals' shelter than that of the family. There is a very charming two-story springhouse above the existing well which appears to be very old; however, nothing has been found regarding it in the research of the property. The original well from which water was drawn still stands.

Mathias enlarged the farm by thirty-three and a half acres in 1796 and started a major addition to the house which indicates that he had attained affluence in the twenty years he had owned the property. The addition consisted of three stories and was stone and plaster and it seems the wooden section also was covered with stone at that time. That addition is now a large dining room on the first floor with a master bedroom above and another bedroom, bath and storage area on the third floor. A second floor over the original section was also added at that time. The addition was completed in 1804. Mathias, a farmer and blacksmith, was the grandson of Jacob Shoemaker, one of those German Quakers who followed Penn to his new province in America.



Home of Barry-Mahan Family



Another View of Barry-Mahan House



The Shoemaker homestead remained in the family for four generations for a total of 137 years. There is quite a bit written about the Charles K.. Shoemaker family. Charles was born here and he and his wife, Sarah, celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in the house.

An article written in a local newspaper on March 4, 1891, depicted a very heartwarming anniversary party:

". . . No formal programme was carried out. Spontaneous expressions of love and good will found natural place and prevailed. Hearty greetings to the husband and wife were extended by all. There was singing of the songs of Zion that gladdened the heart and brought mysterious moisture to the eyes. Rev. C. E. Wehler, pastor of Boehm's Church, sang several solos, which were feelingly rendered. His worthy wife presided at the organ. Together they sang several duets. It was a beautiful and touching scene, when the little grandchildren were grouped about the organ, and lifted up their young voices in praise to Him who, when in the flesh, put His hand upon the children and blessed them.

". . . Fifty-one persons sat about the hospitable board, generously provided with the material blessings so pleasant to the palate and refreshing to the body."

In his 1884 History of Montgomery County, Theodore Bean wrote:

"Charles K.. Shoemaker purchased the homestead from the heirs with little more than good health and determination. By honesty and frugal habits he relieved himself of all financial obligations, reared a large and highly respected family and amassed a sufficiency of this worlds goods, so that he was able to retire and transfer responsibility to his son, Jesse, in 1880." Charles died here in 1892.

Jesse became known as one of the most substantial farmers in Whitpain. A newspaper article in 1887 reads: "a large and capacious stone house stands by the roadside and the farm is quite fertile and well cultivated, in fact one of the best farms in the township."

Bean wrote about Charles' eldest son, Mathias: "who at the first call of President Lincoln for troops in April 1861, to defend the life of the nation against the assaults of the southern slavery, volunteered his services. At the end of his term of enlistment he returned to the paternal roof, where he remained until the dark cloud of the slaveholders war covered the land, when he once more offered himself as a living sacrifice upon the altar of his country, enlisting himself in August 1862 in Company H, 13th Regiment, Pennsylvania Calvary.

"By his strict obedience and soldierly bearing, he passed through the several gradations to the honorable position of second lieutenant. While on picket duty in September 1863, he was captured by the enemy and consigned to Libby Prison, from which he was transferred to that hell of the southern chivalry, commonly dignified by the title of Andersonville Guard House or Prison. There he literally starved and in June 1865 died the death of a noble martyr."

There were nine other Shoemaker children. In 1914 the sale of the Shoemaker homestead ended the long term ownership which had been the pattern until then.

The property, then forty-three and a half acres, changed hands six times between 1914 and 1958. During the early 1920's, the second wing of the house was completed with the addition of a library and a bedroom above it. While the MacKenzie family owned the property in the early 1950's, the garden and stone work around the back terrace was designed, as well as a grass tennis court. Local residents say much was done to the house during their twelve years there.

In 1958 when the owner, Thomas Fleming, was unable to sell the property in total, it was divided into three parcels, with the home and two-story springhouse being on 1.7 acres which was purchased at auction by the McAllister family. The barn was sold in one of the other parcels and converted into a home.

In 1967, the McAllisters sold to the Mariani family who in turn sold to the present owners, Lei Barry and Tad Mahan, in 1976.

The Barry and Mahan family includes six children in the Wissahickon School District. Lei and Tad are in business together as manufacturers representatives of hospital equipment. All of the family are busily involved working on plans to restore the old homestead and bring back the warmth and charm prevalent in the days of the Shoemakers.

Michael and Edna Lalli Home

By Dorothy S. Conard



This converted barn at Blue Bell Road and Stenton Avenue was part of the farm known for four generations as the "Shoemaker farm " It was also known as "Plymouth Plantation."

When Tom and Helen Fleming sold the property in 1958, it was divided and sold in three different parcels. The barn and a little over two acres were bought by Peter Scheldt, then a bachelor, and it contained a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bath.

On August 1, 1962, Edna and Michael Lalli with their daughter Loren, moved into the converted barn. They added an additional bedroom, a hallway, two studies and a second bath. The outside improvements included fences, terraces and beautiful gardens. Today it is a most charming and unusual home.



"The Cloot"

By Dorothy S. Conard

The Conard family is one of the oldest families in Montgomery County. Thones (Dennis) Kunders, who was the founder of the family in this country, emigrated from Crefeld, Germany, in October 1683, and was one of the early settlers of Germantown. He was a member of the Society of Friends, as were most of his descendants in this section of Pennsylvania. The first Friends' meeting in Germantown was held at his house or cave, as their temporary homes in a new country often were, soon after the arrival of the little band of immigrants. He had been a blue dyer in the fatherland and he continued that humble occupation after settling in Germantown. In 1688, Thones Kunders was one of the little band of Germantown Friends who raised their voices against negro slavery, theirs being the first formal protest ever made in America. In 1691, on a charter of incorporation being granted to the village of Germantown, Thones Kunders was chosen as one of the burgesses. He resided in Germantown for a period of forty-six years until his death.

Thones Kunders and his wife, Elin, had six sons and a daughter. These descendants adopted various ways of spelling their last names and no two sons spelled the name in the same way. Conrad, Conard, Cunard, Cunnard and Cunreds have all been in use for generations and still continue.

Henry Cunreds, the youngest son of Thones, was born in 1688. He was married at Abington Friends Meeting in 1710 to Katherine Streypers and a year later, in 1711, he bought a tract of 220 acres in Whitpain Township for which he paid £175. It was stated that the ground lay in low areas in some sections and had an undulating surface. In the early days this section was called "The Cloot." Henry built a stone house at the corner of Blue Bell Road and Stenton Avenue and raised a family of seven sons. William, the eldest, left the neighborhood and the other six sons remained in Whitpain or the surrounding townships.

Dennis, Henry's second son, married Lydia Potts of this neighborhood, raised three children, Catherine, Henry and Rachael, and died in 1786. From this line come the very large Shoemaker family, Rachael having married Isaac Shoemaker.

John, the third son, married Ann Rogers and lived a mile out of Norristown at what is now known as the Jeffersonville Inn. They had three sons and a daughter.

Peter, the fourth son, married Catharine Evans and their daughter, Tacy, married John Styer, from whom comes the large Styer family.

Joseph, Henry's fifth son, married Rebecca Cook. He left two sons, Joseph, Jr., and John. Benjamin, the sixth son, left no children. Samuel, the seventh son, was married twice. The children of the first marriage drifted away from the neighborhood in their youth. A son, Abraham, went to Nova Scotia and his son, Sir Samuel Conard, became one of the founders of the famous Cunard line of ocean steamers. Samuel's second wife was Susanna Foulke and from this marriage there was one child. Nancy, who married Abraham Philips and ten children were born to them.

Henry Conard died in 1758 and his plantation was divided equally between his two sons, Benjamin and Joseph. Benjamin died in 1760 and his wife was married again to Thomas White who went through the fortune in a short time and the Benjamin Conard land of 110 acres was sold.

Henry's son, Joseph, who married Rebecca Cook had two sons, Joseph, Jr. and John. Following Joseph's death in 1786, the land was divided between the two sons. The message and approximately fifty-six acres went to Joseph, Jr.

When Joseph, Jr., died in 1840 the property was deeded to William Stockdale who had married Sarah Conard, daughter of Joseph, Jr. The property remained in the Stockdale family until 1912 when it finally passed out of the hands of the Conard descendants for the first time in nearly 200 years.

When G. Howard Bernhard purchased the house and fifty-six acres in 1912, there were two rooms on the first floor and two on the second floor. At this time an additional room was added on the first and second floors. The barn, which had burned, was also rebuilt.



View From Blue Bell Pike Showing Frame Addition

For the next twenty-eight years there were a succession of owners, few of whom had either the interest or time apparently to contribute very much to the premises. Their primary concern appeared to be land speculation. As a result, the house did not suffer greatly from alteration.

Nicholas Kuchorsky purchased the house and eight acres in 1928. He added the room which is now the kitchen and operated a penny candy store there.

In 1946, Robert Cunningham Hamilton and Mabel Smith Hamilton bought from Kuchorsky. Mrs. Hamilton stated that many people attempted to purchase the north upper floor woodwork which is very fine. They admired the hearts carved in the wood of the mantle which are most unusual. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton sold off the remaining land, leaving only the present house and barn lots.

Jacob Christian Myers and Ruth Kennedy Myers purchased the property in 1965. Ruth, who was greatly interested in "saving" old houses, did restoration and research; renovations were made at this time. The heating system was modernized; insulation was blown in; closets were added; bathrooms altered; storm windows and shutters were added and fencing was put up.

In 1971, Henry Slingluff Conard and Dorothy Steigerwalt Conard returned to "The Cloot." They were not aware of the fact that this site at 1400 Blue Bell Rd. was originally a Conard property. At the time, they were inspecting the barn on the property for possible conversion and they were attracted by the house. When they returned the barn key to the house, they spoke about the pre-revolutionary appearance of the house and were greatly surprised to learn from the owner that it was built by a man whose name was Conard.

After research and aided by an old family history book, Dorothy and Hank discovered that it was part of the 220 acre property that had been in the Conard family for 200 years, beginning in 1711. The 1977 Henry Conard, who unwittingly "walked into" his ancestral home. is a direct descendant of the original Henry Conard. Between them lay generations of Conards who were intimately involved with the growth and development of the Whitpain area.

After the purchase of the property, they removed the plaster from the beams of the living room and dining room, exposing beams that were hand hewn, with axe marks quite apparent. The plaster was removed on the outside of the first floor front area, revealing the beauty of local stone and the entire outside of the house was painted with suitable Williamsburg colors. A two-car garage and workshop building was added, using the Mennonite wagon-shed design.

The home gives the feeling of still belonging to the past, of which it is so much a part. Should only the homes of the affluent survive our automotive age, what an erroneous concept future generations would have of our founding years. Just as surely as the politicians, great planters and merchants directed our future, the artisan and frontiersman furnished the tools, endured the dangers and hardships that made our founder's dream a reality. How and where he lived and labored to create our environment is of utmost importance if posterity is to understand its heritage.

“The Cloot Barn”

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck



Converted Barn Home of Edward and Merle Zoller

This barn, in Blue Bell where Stenton Avenue ends (1406 Blue Bell Road), was purchased in December of 1971 by Dorothy Conard's daughter, Betty Jane Fad, and her husband, Arthur. The bottom portion, which is stone, is part of the original structure but the top section of the barn burned in 1911 and was rebuilt in 1912. The work done in the rebuilding in 1912 was among the last construction done without the use of modern construction materials and the beams are pegged rather than being nailed. One section in the lower level of the barn is floored with cobblestone and it is said to have been a butcher shop at one time. The walls of one room on the first-level were lined with quite elaborate cages for birds which were used in the cock fights that were held here and were well attended by the sports fans of early times.

When the barn was being converted to a residence, the Fad's were primarily interested in restoring the barn rather than rebuilding it from new materials and none of the original beams were covered. The floor is the original barn floor and the door between the kitchen and dining room is an old barn stall door, marked by ridges where a horse had chewed on the wood.

In 1975, this converted barn was purchased by Reverend and Mrs. Lawrence Carter. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Zoller bought the property and moved here in March 1977.

West End of Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike - William Coulston Property

By Elizabeth M. De Vincent
Photography by George S. Peck

William Penn Propriety and Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania by his Deed of Lease and Release, bearing the date February 26 and 27, 1682, did sell and convey unto George Palmer 5,000 acres of land in the Province of Pennsylvania. George Palmer by his last will dated February 4, 1682, willed to his son, William Palmer, a certain share of the said 5,000 acres. In 1702, William by his patent took possession of his portion containing 832 acres. The property was sold July 7, 1703 to Philip Price who conveyed, in August of the same year, 417 acres to Richard Morris.

This acreage on the northwest side of Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike extended from the Skippack Pike to the Plymouth line road. Through the years Richard Morris disposed of his property piece by piece. William Coulston Jr., of Plymouth acquired one hundred acres bordering the Plymouth line.

In the enumeration of the taxables of Whitpain Township for the year 1760 Samuel Coulston is mentioned as a carpenter, owning one hundred acres of land. He was the owner during the Revolutionary period but soon after its close he died. By his will dated 1784 his property was bequeathed to his sons, William and Israel. It is known that his wife, Elizabeth, lived here by the tax records of 1785 and 1799. According to these records she was a widow with one hundred acres of land, a dwelling, and an outbuilding. A man named Seth Tredle farmed the land. Elizabeth Coulston passed away in 1802.

By the will of Samuel Coulston, dated 1784, his farm contained one hundred and eleven acres. This figure differs from the tax records but in researching old properties this was a common occurrence. William was bequeathed the upper end of the property containing sixty-one acres. Israel's share of the inheritance was the lower end containing fifty acres. In 1807, Israel resided in Philadelphia and his occupation was listed as carpenter. It was at this time that he sold his portion of the farm to a land speculator, George M. Potts.

William Coulston died in 1813 and his share of the estate was sold to Jacob Wood. Mr. Wood had purchased fifteen acres from George M. Potts the previous year. His farm now contained seventy-six acres. The following year Jacob Wood went bankrupt and the property was sold to John McCann of Upper Merion.

Mr. McCann died shortly after the purchase of the farm and never lived in Whitpain. His widow, Ann, and children; William, James, John, Thomas, David, Philip and Catherine came here in 1816. Thirty acres of the farm were sold in 1819 to Lawrence Egbert. In 1850, Ann was living here with her son, Thomas, and daughter, Catherine, and a young boy of twelve, Allen Kirk. At this time the farm known as "Spring Valley Farm" was valued at \$3,300.00. Ann McCann died September 26, 1875, at the age of ninety-eight. The property then went to her son, Philip.

Today there are two remaining members of the McCann family, a Mrs. Flora McCann Boyd of Ambler and her brother who lives out of state. Mrs. Boyd, a woman in her eighties, has fond memories of her childhood summers spent on the farm. She recalls how her aunt would entertain twenty-two children related to the family for several weeks every summer and what a good time they all had. According to Mrs. Boyd the house hasn't changed at all. it is just as she remembers.

In 1932, a Mr. Haines bought the farm and the land opposite, now the "Blue Bell Manor Development." It was a dairy farm but not for long as Mr. Haines went bankrupt. Mr. Edward Rile bought the farm in 1934. He sold the McCann homestead to Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Barclay in 1936.

The original farmhouse constructed of fieldstone like many in the neighborhood was plastered inside and out. This was done to keep the rain from seeping through its porous walls. The house consisted of one room on each floor with eyebrow windows on the third level. It was built similar to a Father, Son and Holy Ghost house. At one corner of the house, an enclosed circular staircase went from the basement to the top floor. When the house was enlarged the staircase was removed from the basement and first floor. The window moldings are all handmade and a drawer fits in the wall under the front window. The fireplace is original. This house has all the signs of the stone houses that replaced the log cabins of the locality's earliest settlers, so it may be assumed that the house was built by a Coulston.

The second part of the house was built as a separate house with one wall joining the two. Later, the party wall was broken through and the two houses became one. A wing was added to the rear of the house. This consists of a kitchen and dining room on the first floor and bedrooms on the second level. This combined house was bought as a single dwelling by John McCann in 1814.



Israel Coulston sold his fifty acres of the estate to George M. Potts in 1807 for the sum \$1,237.50. This included a house and outbuildings. Mr. Potts sold off the property in lots. In 1812, he sold the house and fifteen acres to Daniel Rossiter for \$750.00. Daniel Rossiter acquired thirty acres from the estate of Lawrence Egbert in 1825 for \$850.00. This thirty acres had been part of the McCann farm.

The farm was sold in 1838 to Samuel B. Davis who sold it to Adam Rumer in the same year. In 1850 Adam Rumer was noted as having earned \$776.75 from the produce raised on his thirty-acre farm. He was listed on the tax records of that year as a farmer 45 years old, wife Harriet, 45, children: Sevamia F., 19, and Samuel H., 11, and a labourer. Adam Rumer's real estate was valued at \$3,400.00. He sold the farm in 1860 to Ranson Rogers who went bankrupt in two years. Walter Laing bought it at a sheriff sale and sold it the next year to Reuben Cooper. Jones Detwiler purchased the farm in 1863 from Reuben for \$4,300.00. The property contained a house, outbuildings and thirty acres. According to Mr. Detwiler the original house was a long log cabin situated in what was now his garden.

Jones Detwiler was one of the most prominent citizens of Whitpain Township. He was married twice. His first wife was Hannah Holland and his second wife was Sarah Ann Dull of Hickorytown. His children were Job, Elva and Mrs. Harry Shearer. Elva married a McCann.

Jones Detwiler was indefatigable in collecting the materials for local history and his home was a storehouse of many manuscripts, books and pamphlets. He also wrote many articles for publication, furnishing the history of Whitpain Township for Bean's "History of Montgomery County, Penna., 1884." He compiled the "History of Boehm's Evangelical and Reformed Church, 1740 to 1890" for the church's Sesqui-Centennial Anniversary in 1890.

He was a member of the Montgomery County Historical Society. He was one of their committee appointed to form an organization to celebrate the centennial celebration of Montgomery County in 1884. He was also in charge of Memorials.

Jones Detwiler wrote that the area he lived in was evidently an Indian resort at one time and the Red Man had left abundant evidence in the way of relics. This was evident by the one hundred and sixty-four relics he donated to the Indian Relic Exhibit of the Centennial. They were arrow points, tomahawks, skinning stones, hoes, sling stones, rubbers, and whetstones. He also put on exhibition many of the fine deeds, books, currency, and manuscripts that he owned and also a map of Montgomery County published in 1827. Mr. Detwiler was an Elder of Boehm's Reformed Church and secretary of the Sunday School. He was manager of the "Whitpain Library Company," secretary of "The Blue Bell Live Stock Insurance Company" and served three terms as a school director. He was elected State Senator in 1876 on the Democratic ticket and served two years in this position.

Jones learned the wheelwright trade with Jacob Conard at Center Square but engaged later in farming which was his life long occupation.

He attended the Philadelphia market for many years. Crossing the railroad tracks on his way home from market in 1896 his wagon was hit by a train and he was seriously hurt. He developed pneumonia and was permanently injured from the accident. He died in 1900.

Job Detwiler put the property up for public sale in 1901. Sara A. Reed made the high bid of one hundred and fifty dollars. For this amount she received a messuage, tenement and thirty acres. The same year Sara A. Reed married Charles A. Furbush. She executed a "Declaration of Trust" of the property to him. During this time extensive remodeling and restoring took place on the farm. Charles A. Furbush died in 1905 and Sara continued to live in the large house until 1908. Martha Snowden Chapman and her husband Alfred K. Chapman bought the house and buildings and twenty acres for \$11,500.00. Sara Furbush kept the remaining ten acres.

In 1919 Mattie C. Mann became the owner of the thirty acres and buildings for the token sum of one dollar. The next year Eli Duffield bought the property for \$8,000.00. In 1935 Freas Styer procured the property at sheriff sale for the sum of \$127.63. He sold the "Lone Pine Farm" the same year to Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Bogar.

The exact date of the house is unknown. The original section was a four room house with a fireplace in every room. The twenty-two inch stone walls were plastered. Window glass was hand blown and the original is still intact. The house was enlarged to the size of a manor house, date unknown.

By 1935 a period of poverty and neglect had nearly destroyed this house. Mr. and Mrs. Bogar took this once beautiful house, so pitifully run down, and transformed it into a fine home.

Until this time the water was pumped from the spring house to a tank on the roof of the barn, from there by the force of gravity down a wooden pipe to the water pump at the kitchen sink. Fireplaces were the only source of heat. Electricity was nonexistent until Mr. Bogar had the electric company run poles down this end of the road at his expense. As homes were built in this area, he was reimbursed. All thirteen rooms in the house were restored and two more bathrooms were added.

Mr. and Mrs. Bogar's interest in our heritage homes has made this home the beauty that it is today.

J. White House

In 1786, after the death of Samuel Coulston, a one hundred and sixteen acre property with messuage was released to Elizabeth Coulston, her son, William, and her son-in-law, John White.

This property had been purchased from Peter Conard.

According to one historian, this house and a parcel of ground was given by Samuel Coulston to his daughter who had married a John White. Since it is not noted in his will, it is assumed that this was part of the inheritance of Israel Coulston. He in turn sold his entire inheritance to George M. Potts. It is known that a Charles Styer lived here for many years. The Styer family lived mostly along the Plymouth line and were one of the wealthiest families in this area at one time.

This house was built before 1780, but sad to say, the only remains are some ruins. Time, neglect and disaster have taken their toll. On the 1848 township map the house is located opposite the premises of Adam Rumer (now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Bogar).



Bogar House Before Restoration in 1935



Home of Mr. & Mrs. Edward L. Bogar 1621 Blue Bell Road



Bogar Barn



Robert C. Allen House



John White House As It Could Have Appeared in 1780

Robert C. Allen House

Joseph and Rebecca White purchased a twenty acre lot bordering on the Plymouth line from George M. Potts in 1807. In 1812 he sold ten acres of this property to Patrick and Catherine Mullin. They built the house that is standing here today. It now belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Allen of 1799 Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike.

The house is very similar to the original house on the Bogar property. Constructed of plastered fieldstone the original house has a center hall, sometimes known as a welcome hall, flanked by a room on either side of equal proportion. Upstairs there were two bedrooms, and fireplaces were in each room. According to deeds the house was located on Pigeontown Road leading to Pigeontown. Pigeontown became Blue Bell in 1840. This road was only a short span starting at the Plymouth line, now known as Township Line Road, and ending where Stenton Avenue and Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike meet. For many years it was not much more than a cow path. The main road led from the Plymouth Meeting House to the North Wales and Gwynedd Meeting Houses.

Patrick Mullin died intestate and Catherine continued to live here with their children: Daniel, John, Peter, William, Charles, Elizabeth, Hannah and Mary Anne. Catherine Mullin sold the property in 1850 to Henry Schlater.

The Schlater's were a very early American family. Their descendants were continuously active in the service of Boehm's Reformed Church. Henry Schlater died January 1, 1892, and his wife, Elizabeth, died in July of the same year. Their children sold the homestead to Morton and Louise A. K. Streeper in 1893.

Morton Streeper died in February 1902; his wife and their daughter. Miriam, lived here until 1908. Robert O. Steiger paid \$2,800.00 for the property but sold it in 1912 to Henry and Amanda Biddle for a token fee of one dollar. The next three owners did the same.

Frank and Pauline Pierce sold it in 1919 to George Amberg, a widower, for \$2,000.00. In 1924, Simone De Biase paid \$9,000.00. The next owners Levi Broadhead and his sister, Sara, bought the property in 1927 for \$9,500.00. In 1929, Edwin S. Renshaw became the owner for a token fee. It was during this time that eight acres were sold. The house and two acres were sold for a token fee to Mr. and Mrs. Cyril G. Woley in 1939. The present owners Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Allen bought the property in 1964.

A wing has been added to the house. The original kitchen is now the dining room and the new kitchen is in the wing. Above the kitchen are bedrooms. The wing was added to the house many years ago but the exact date is not known.



The C. Cressen Wistar House

By Elizabeth M. DeVincent
Photography by George S. Peck

Mr. and Mrs. C. Cresson Wistar have resided on Stenton Avenue, on the northeast side just above Walton Road, since 1963. The house can only be viewed from the road when all the trees are bare. Come spring the mail box is the only indication of a dwelling.

This long rambling white plastered house situated on twelve acres of ground is set back from the road. The house has been expanded and improved many times. The oldest part with its twenty-two inch thick walls is the first and second level of the center section. From there the house has grown in all directions. Although the exact date of the house is unknown, a twenty by eighteen stone dwelling is listed in the tax records of 1799.

It is thought that one wing and the third level with a mansard roof were added in the late nineteenth century. The latest addition was added after Winslow Lewis purchased the house in 1936.

The outside of the house is very appealing with many beautiful trees and a spring house that is in very good condition. A fine old stone building is used as a store house: there are no records of its history. The nineteenth century barn was destroyed by fire in the thirties. It was later used as a paddock. The walls are still standing.



Springhouse



Remains of Barn Destroyed by Fire in the 1930s

The house stands on part of the original 5,000 acre tract belonging to George Palmer. This was part of his son John's inheritance. Henry Conard bought two hundred and twenty-two acres from Charles Mullin early in the seventeenth century. Joseph Hallowell purchased one hundred and eleven acres in 1786. This farm extended from Penllyn-Blue Bell Pike to Walton Road. In 1798, when James McDowell became the owner the acreage was eighty five.

John Fitzwater bought forty-eight acres from William McDowell in 1810 for nine hundred and seventy pounds. Frederick Rumer became the next owner in 1818 for the sum of \$3,333.33. He sold the farm of forty-eight acres to George Kerper in 1831 for \$2,500.00.

The tax records of 1850 list George Kerper as a farmer, fifty-eight years of age; wife, Catherine, fifty-one; children, Maria, Catherine, Hiram, Willamina, Charles, and George. They ranged in age from six to twenty-eight. The only other record of the Kerper family was a newspaper clipping noting their fiftieth wedding anniversary. It was held at the home of their son who lived on Narcissa Road. Their son had a farm containing one hundred acres not far from his parents.

George Kerper died in this house. He lived here for over fifty years. His sons, George Jr. and Charles, sold the farm to Henry Rex. He lived here for nine years and then sold the farm to Edward H. Phipps for \$5,490.00.

Charles J. Sealer purchased the farm in 1915 for \$11,500.00. He sold it to Charles D. Hackett in 1919 for the token sum of one dollar.

Charles D. Hackett and his wife bought and sold much of the property in this area at that time. The farm was divided and Alfred J. Steiner. in 1922, bought the house, barn, and twelve and three quarters acres for the sum of \$7,600.00.

Winslow Lewis paid \$16,000.00 for the farm in 1936. He improved the property and added the last wing to the house. Mr. and Mrs. C. Cresson Wistar purchased the property from him in 1963.

History of "Whitpain Farm"

By Adele Rhindress

Photography by Adele Rhindress and George S. Peck

Artwork by Bobby Rhindress

This year is 1977. Thousands of travelers in automobiles, trucks and motorcycles drive along historic Skippack Pike (Route 73) every day — unaware of the fact they are passing a very special property that played an important role in the founding of Whitpain Township.

Just a short distance west of the Broad Axe Hotel lies Whitpain Farm, a lovely 113 acre private estate which is part of a certain 4,500 acre land grant by William Penn. Through leases and re-leases in the years 1681-83, one Richard Whitpain, citizen and butcher of London, England, became a landowner in Pennsylvania.

Whitpain Farm, located on the south corner of Skippack Pike and Narcissa Road, was part of the land known as the "Great Tract" and later as "Whitpain's Creek" situated in Philadelphia County.

Richard Whitpain, for whom the township is named, never came to this country, but many of his descendants and relatives who did make the journey across the Atlantic attended monthly meetings of the Quaker religion in Philadelphia during the late 1600's.

Their presence is recorded along with short family birth-death histories in the Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy.

Richard Whitpain's daughter, Ann, was one of his descendants who came to the colonies. She married Thomas McCarty, a butcher-surgeon from Great Britain, and together they are recognized as the first actual settlers in Whitpain Township.

In 1704, they came into possession of 250 acres of land south of Skippack Pike. It is believed that the original measure of land was 450 acres, but 200 acres on the upper side of the tract north of Skippack Pike were detached before McCarty became owner.

McCarty cleared some of the land where he built a house and barn. The house is made of stone and stands today with its original paneled solid oak doors on either side, multi-paned windows with locks reminiscent of pre-Revolutionary days, and a loft that could very well have been used as a hideout from Indians.

The McCarty house is now used as a living room by the present owners Mr. and Mrs. Morris Cheston. A large table, probably used as a dining room table by the McCarty's, has been handed down to each successive "Whitpain Farm" owner.



Fireplace at “Whitpain Farm”

The walk-in fireplace at one end of the living room served as a cooking area complete with bake-oven and a large wrought iron pot dangling on a heavy chain looped over an iron rod. The rod could be swiveled so as to position the pot over the fire for cooking or out over the edge of the fireplace stone floor for serving.

Two huge screens can be stretched across the front of the fireplace as a precaution against snapping cinders. Cleaning utensils, including a hand-made straw broom, stand to the right of the fireplace; and china plates, arranged in a row on the wooden mantel, add an interesting decorative touch. A polished wooden bench, placed at just the right distance from the fire, leads one to believe it was well-used by those who rested as they warmed themselves after coming in from the cold.

At the opposite end of the room stands a wooden hutch of considerable proportion with three shelves of various sized plates, mugs, pitchers and serving trays. On either side of the hutch hangs a reflecting candle sconce.

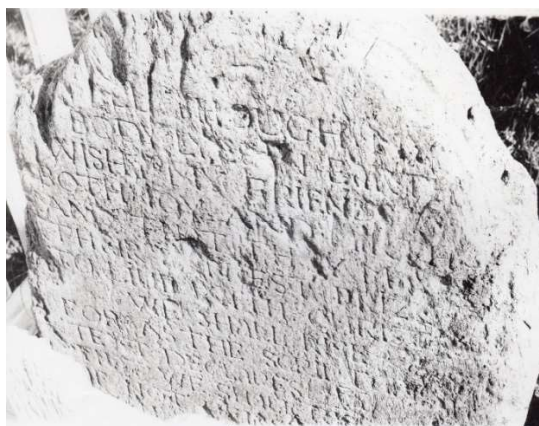
The barn was used to house cattle and feed for the farm animals. Stables for horses were located in the section of the barn which faced the McCarty living quarters. Midway through this current century, fire demolished the original structure, but it was rebuilt and used again for farm animals and riding horses. Today, the barn functions as a garage for family automobiles and equipment to keep the property in prime condition.

Thomas McCarty kept the property only six years, when in 1710, he sold his 250 acres to one John Kendall. The boundaries were described as "beginning at a post in line of Micah Thomas, southwest by same, 225 perches; northwest by part of south tract, 180 perches; northeast by land of John Hart and William Davis, 225 perches; southeast by land of William Robinson, 180 perches to beginning."

It is supposed that Kendall was a relative of the McCarty family because during the period that he owned Whitpain Farm, Ann Whitpain McCarty died and was buried in a grave on the edge of the property high above Skippack Road. Her grave is neatly enclosed with a white picket fence. The tombstone is made of soapstone and is the remains of the oldest private burying ground in Whitpain Township, and perhaps the oldest in Montgomery County.

The stone monument is an excellent example of colonial memorial sculpture with its winged grim-faced cherub at the top and floral decorations along the sides. The barely visible inscription reads, "Here lyeth ye body of Ann, late wife of Thomas McCarty, who departed this life March 21 ye year of our Lord 1714-15. Age 57." On the back of the gravestone is written:

"Although my body lies in earth,
I wish my friends both joy and mirth.
Their interest prize
To live with Christ we all shall rise;
For as the Scripture text declares
That we shall rise; and if not heirs,
Then woe be to that mortal man
That in God's judgment cannot stand."



Grave of Ann Whitpain McCarty

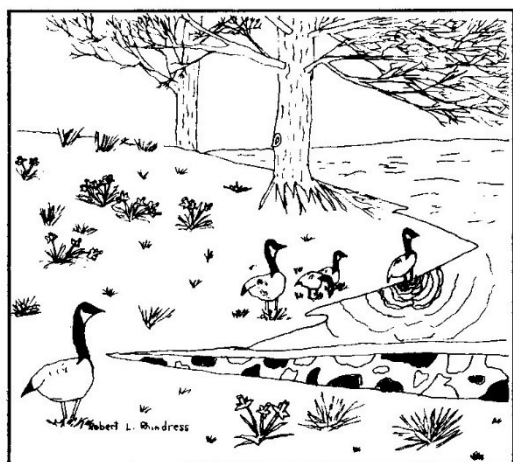


There may have been fifty or more family graves at one time on that corner of Whitpain Farm and tradition says that Ann prophesied that if she were buried on the property a spring would rise near her grave. Her prophecy came to pass when a spring rose on the lower level of the land. The stream flows through the eastern section of Whitpain Township and is a branch of the Wissahickon Creek. It has been appropriately named "Prophecy Creek."

In 1805, an arched stone bridge was built over the creek which passes under Skippack Road, then a dirt road. The bridge was named Rex Bridge.

Today, the waters ripple between wild violet and daffodil-studded banks and reflect the branches of graceful large-trunked trees that could possibly be several hundred years old.

One small section of the stream near the property's entrance serves as "home" for Canadian geese in the warm weather and as a frozen pond for youngsters who don ice skates in winter.



In 1717, Skippack Road was opened and coincidentally, in the same year, Thomas McCarty re-purchased the Whitpain Farm property. This second deed, transacted two years after his wife's death, was witnessed by Nicholas Shull and David Hay before Edward Farmer.

McCarty held possession of the land for seven years, then sold it to a man from Cheltenham, George Reinick, in 1724.

A copy of the Last Will and Testament of Thomas McCarty, dated 1725, reveals that he

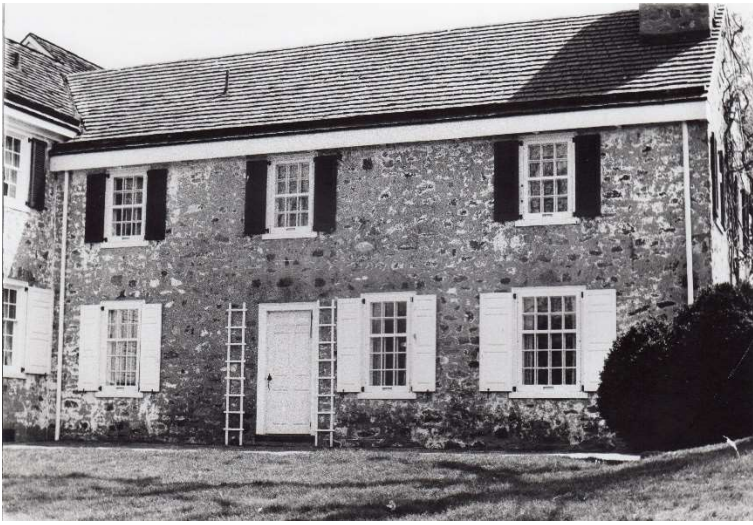
re-married and moved to Hanover. He bequeathed his earthly belongings, after his funeral expenses and debts had been satisfied, to his beloved wife, Hannah, and their daughters, Mary and Hannah.

The year of McCarty's death is uncertain, however, a story handed down through the years states that he, too, is buried in the grave with Ann Whitpain McCarty.

George Reinick sold the property to John Todd, of Kingsessing, in 1731. Todd was not financially capable of buying the estate outright, so he took a mortgage. Six years later, 1737, Daniel Brynes became the new owner.

The Brynes family resided on Whitpain Farm for 33 years, right through the middle of the century to the period of political unrest that led to the American Revolution. There is no information or traditional tales of the Brynes family to tell except that, evidently, they were not outstanding farmers, for any increase in value per acre was credited to the general rise in value of the adjoining farms.

During the 33-year Brynes' ownership, the land was conveyed to and from several family members. Daniel Brynes, Jr., a shopkeeper from Wilmington, and Caleb Brynes, a Whitpain chair-maker, held the property jointly for a number of years. Then, Daniel, Jr. sold his half to Joshua Brynes who in turn sold the property to Caleb. Thus, Caleb became sole owner.



“Whitpain Farm” House and Springhouse



“Whitpain Farm” House

Financial troubles plagued Caleb Brynes, and he found it necessary to sell off portions of the large plantation. In 1763, a mortgage was given to Hugh Roberts of Philadelphia, and sometime between 1753 and 1760, the east corner was sold to Derick Van Pelt. This was the 25 acres which included the site of the Broad Axe Tavern.

In those years, roadways through Broad Axe, over the Plymouth and Upper Dublin Turnpike and some lands including the Whitpain Farm were popular as speedways for horse races. Prior to starting time, all loose stones and other obstacles were cleared from the course and enthusiastic spectators took favorite viewing spots along the fences erected on either side of the raceway. After the race, contestants and onlookers crowded into the Broad Axe Tavern to arrange future races, celebrate victory or drown defeat.

The next recorded owner of Whitpain Farm was George Bisbing. His residency extended from pre-Revolutionary War days, through the war and thereafter.

It was during Bisbing's ownership that history reports a skirmish took place in October, 1777, between some American patriots and a part of British Calvary. The patriots were being pursued by the Hessian detachment and the military scuffle caused quite a commotion in the neighborhood. This all happened after the time of the Battle of Germantown and the period when George Washington and his troops rested in Whitpain Township.

The pursuit ended on the "Whitpain Farm" tract close to the private graveyard and a nearby oil mill. After the combat, the bodies of dead Hessian soldiers dotted the woodlands and cornfields. A burial place was prepared for the soldiers on the hill above Skippack Pike near Mrs. McCarty's grave. Soapstone tombstones were erected on the graves.

It was not uncommon in the years to follow for one to find a cannonball near the battle site. A lead cannonball was found in the field of Morris Jarrett and was preserved as a relic by Charles Berkheimer. Both were owners of properties adjacent to "Whitpain Farm" in the late 1800's.

George Bisbing made the first of three annexations (to date) by adding an authentic English library to the original McCarty homestead in 1776. He is also, at a later date, credited with building a rather comfortable and hospitable looking fireplace at one end of the room. It was a controversial piece of architecture, for the fireplace and bake-oven were constructed of tombstones taken from the family graveyard. Tradition says that Bisbing would sit for hours before a fire built from cornstalks. It is also said that Bisbing's ghost has returned on several occasions to haunt the chimney corner of that fireplace.

(it is reasonable, at this point, to note that those of the successive owners who built extensions onto the original house were careful to preserve the layout, furniture, doors, floor, beams, fireplace and windows of the historic home. The architectural style has been retained and the building stone has been perfectly matched.)

Additional structures were put up on the property. Besides extra living quarters for employees on "Whitpain Farm," a springhouse was erected over the stream's cool running waters. The purpose of a springhouse was to preserve food in all types of weather.

The exterior appearance of the "Whitpain Farm" springhouse conceals the actual size and shape of the interior. The design is bi-level — above and below ground.

A dirt floor forms the base of a stone corner chimney where meat was "smoked" and then reserved for future consumption. Several steps lead down to the lower area where provisions that were to be kept cold were stored in metal containers and placed in about two or three feet of moving spring water.

An air of historic consequence surrounds the "Whitpain Farm" springhouse. Water marks, staggered at various heights, are etched in green algae as reminders of flood stages and droughts over the years. And, a seemingly perpetual shrine to the memory of the Hessian soldiers who fought American patriots during the Revolutionary War (not far from the springhouse) lies underwater in the springhouse. One of the owners (the name of whom is not known, for sure) took the soldiers' gravestones from the hill near the battle site and placed them in the channels. Time and running waters have erased the inscriptions which were visible until little more than a quarter of a century ago.

The "Whitpain Farm" property changed hands a number of times through the years and, to date, there were two additions made to the original stone structure during this century

The first was made by Mr. and Mrs. N. McLean Seabrease who purchased the house in 1925. They commissioned architect Brognard Okie the task of enlarging the living area. Okie was well known for his skill in authentically restoring early American homes. The extension was placed at one end of the Bisbing library, so that the floor plan became "L" shaped.

In 1939, another addition which continued the Seabrease wing was made by architect H. Martyn Kneedler for Mr. and Mrs. Morris Cheston who have owned "Whitpain Farm" since 1932. A room and a small greenhouse complete the additions.

The contour of the land has not been altered through the years, but the utilization of the land has been varied.

A post and rail fence surrounds the property where livestock once grazed. And, there is little doubt that the splendid landscaping of "Whitpain Farm" today contrasts with the cultivated crops and orchards and cornfields and private burial grounds of yesteryear,



House, Barn and Farm Pond

William Reinhart Farm

By Dorothy S. Conard

Photography by George S. Peck

John Etris and his wife, Dorothy, bought sixty-seven acres of land, with appurtenances, from Joshua Byrne and his wife, Ruth, and in 1776, John Etris sold this property to George Etris and his wife, Nancy. The deed specifies a messuage or residence and sixty-seven acres of land, for which George Etris paid 500 pounds. In 1782, George Etris sold fifty acres of this land, with messuage, to Wendall Keningsfelt and on March 24, 1796, Ulrich Schlater purchased the property and added another two acres which he had purchased from Nathan Shoemaker in 1807 for \$102.50, which gave him a total of fifty-two acres.

Ulrich Schlater and wife, Mary, sold the messuage and fifty-two acres of land on April 9, 1830, to Maurice Kensel and wife, Susanna, for \$3,695.55 and in 1841, Samuel Streeper bought the property for \$4,684.50. The next owner was a Mr. Mooney who bought in

1892. The executors of the estate of Mr. Mooney sold the entire parcel to Sarah Reinhart, of Philadelphia, and her sister on April 2, 1902, and they used it as a summer residence. When William Reinhart became twenty-one years old, the farm and residence were deeded to him by his cousin, Sarah Reinhart.

This beautiful old property located on the southeast side of Narcissa Road, southwest of Stenton Avenue, was once known as the "Plantation House." A terrible storm in 1930 took the top off the huge old buttonwood tree in front of the house. The ancient tree is recorded at the Montgomery County Historical Society.

William Reinhart related that his grandfather, who lived on the adjoining farm, told him that at one time there was a log blacksmith shop on the property in the vicinity of Five Points. According to old records, Narcissa Road was called North Wales Road and Norristown Road was known as Williams Road, after a family by that name who lived there in early days.

The large pond, which was constructed by William Reinhart, is fed by the many springs on the property. He and others operated the "Happy Acres Day Camp" here over a period of seventeen years. When they were doing the grading for the swimming pool, they found an arrowhead. The remains of a stone springhouse are still standing.

Mr. and Mrs. William Reinhart raised a family of three children: Betsy Reinhart Young, Robert E., and William Reinhart, Jr., and lived there until Mr. Reinhart's retirement in 1971 when he sold the farm.

There is another property with two interesting houses still in the possession of different members of the Reinhart family. One of the houses was built for John Reinhart, grandfather of William Reinhart, during the Civil War. The stone for the house was quarried from the hill on the property and there is a free-flowing spring under the house. The other house was the "original" John E. Reinhart property which was built by William Reinhart's great uncle.



House Built for John Reinhart



Original John E. Reinhart House



Cadwalader Property

By John Cadwalader
Photography by George S. Peck

This is the history, as best I can reconstruct it from some old deeds in my possession, of the farm in Whitpain Township on which I grew up. As I knew it, it stretched along Stenton Avenue from Butler Pike to Norristown Road, and comprised 105 acres. The story is incomplete, and someone who is better versed in such records than I am and who would take the trouble to fill in the gaps through a search in Norristown and Philadelphia for the period before Montgomery County was formed, could provide a much fuller account. Anyway, here is what I have found.

In 1761, Robert Greenway and others, of Philadelphia, deeded to Joshua Byrne tavernkeeper of Philadelphia, for £600, a tract of 200 acres which included what became this farm and other land extending to the Plymouth Township line. The deed states that Greenway had acquired this land in 1744 from a family named Tresse. The deed further states that this 200 acres had been part of a 5,000 acre grant from William Penn to William Standley in 1682, which was subsequently sub-divided into smaller and smaller tracts. The 200 acres which Greenway received having become the property of Thomas Fairman in 1688 and of Thomas McCarty in 1704, the latter selling it to Thomas Tresse in 1712

The record, as I have it, is sketchy from 1761 to 1833. In 1761, "the first year of the Reign of King George III over Great Britain," and before Joshua Byrne bought his 200 acres, a tract of 25 acres adjacent to the land formerly belonging to Thomas Fairman changed hands, but it was at the corner of Butler Pike and Township Line, as they are now known, and so does not concern us except as part of the pattern of small holdings which prevailed at this period. Joshua Byrne or his successors must have chopped up their 200 acres, for in 1787 two tracts, of 49 acres and 5 acres, were sold at sheriff's sale by Zebulon Potts, high sheriff of Montgomery County.

I cannot completely reconcile the metes and bounds of all these tracts as given in the deeds with those of recent surveys, but Butler Pike, described variously as the road between Whitpain and Whitemarsh and as the road leading to the Broad Axe tavern, is clearly recognizable, though never named. Stenton Avenue is referred to (though not by name) as a "new road" in a deed of 1796, but it appears in the description of the sheriff's sale of 1787 as the "road leading to Peter Robeson's mill." An 18th century grist mill on the Wissahickon near the "Blue Bell road" (as Stenton Avenue was still called in my youth) is referred to in another source as having once belonged to Jonathan Robeson, which seems to confirm the identification of this road with the present Stenton Avenue. Corners are usually stakes, stones, or long-gone trees (a "Spanish Oak," a "forked maple tree," etc.), but the distances (in perches) and compass bearings are close enough to approximate the location of these tracts on a modern map.

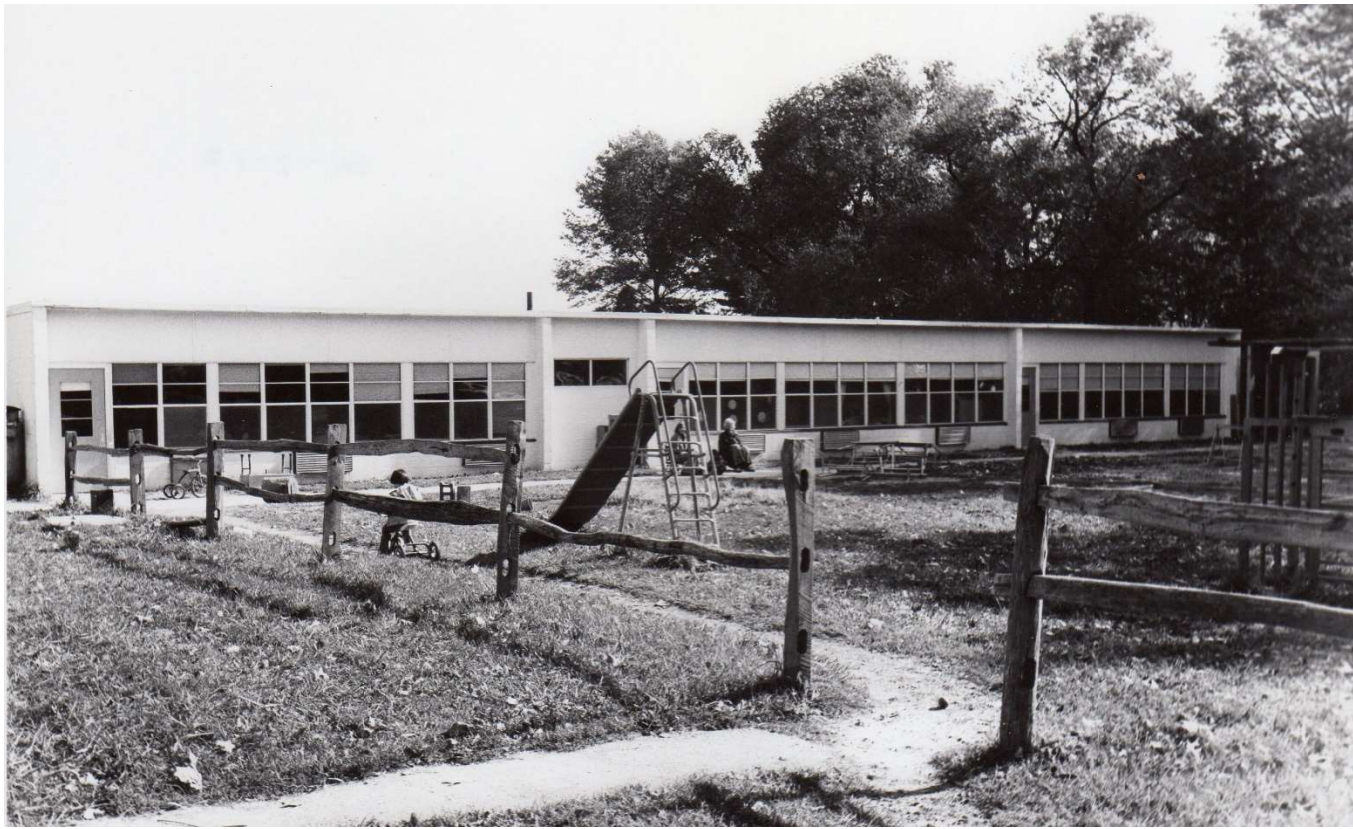
In 1796, Aquilla Tool, "yoeman," acquired from Samuel Hallowell, "tailor," tracts of 14 acres and 7 acres, both on the present Butler Pike. In 1800 and 1810, Jacob Weber, "mason," acquired these Tool tracts and bought a good deal more land besides, reversing the trend towards fragmentation, since his will, dated 1825, left to his daughter a "mansion house" and "plantation" of 67 acres, being only part of his holdings, as indicated in a subsequent deed of 1833. Although previous property transferrals refer to buildings and improvements in the usual standard legal phrases, this 1833 deed contains the first specific mention of any such. This deed, which conveys the "mansion" and 67 acres to William Zorn, referring back to Jacob Weber's will, quotes as follows: "I also give to my said wife during the time she remains my widow . . . the use of the last built end of my house with one-fourth part of the garden with privilege in the springhouse and right to pass to and from them." I am tempted to say that this is where I came in, because although the house as I first remember it was a single family dwelling, old-timers then recalled it as a double house, with one family getting water from the springhouse at the west end, and the other from a well at the east. This had been covered over, presumably when the double occupancy ceased, and nearly forgotten, until some time in the 1920's when my father, digging a hole to plant a tree, came on a big flag-stone about two feet down which rang hollow, and on being lifted revealed the well.

I know of no record of when any house on this land was built. There had been a small house close to Butler Pike which was torn down before my time and I suppose belonged to Aquilla Tool, whose property would not have extended to the site of Weber's house. In the 1920's, a new house was built on the same site. The earliest firm date I know of for any building is 1841, when the big barn, just west of Weber's "mansion," was built by William Zorn, whose initials with this date can still be seen on it. The "mansion" of course was earlier, and was probably preceded by a log house, as in most of the old farms.

Zorn (pronounced Zern, and spelled that way in the text of the 1833 deed) owned and farmed this land until 1876, when he sold it to Edward J. Stannard (signing the deed with his mark). The Stannard family remained there until 1914, when they sold these same 67 acres, accumulated 100 years earlier by Jacob Weber, to my father, John Cadwalader. In 1929, he bought the portion of the Frank Oat farm on the south side of Norristown Road, about 38 acres which adjoined the old Weber farm, and was apparently once a part of it, since the northern boundary of the land Weber sold Zorn is described as "by the other part of my said plantation."

My father died in 1934, but these 105 acres remained intact until my mother's death, in 1963, when they were sub-divided. The main house, barn, other farm buildings, and 28 acres' becoming the property of the Oak Lane Day School. My parents had made many additions to the old house, greatly altering its appearance, but it is still essentially the same building that the widow Weber lived in one end of. The springhouse of which she had the use also remains, dug out of the side of the hill which slopes away to the south, and the great old buttonwood by it must have been there in her day. The farm smokehouse remains above the springhouse, but has long ceased to serve its original purpose.

William Zorn's barn was badly damaged by fire in 1933, but the stone walls remained standing, and it was rebuilt exactly as before, except that sawed pine replaced the hand hewn oak of the earlier building. An old stand of white oak still grows above the hole from which stone for house and barn was quarried, and suggests where these old timbers came from. Today, Zorn's building still looks like a barn, but the school has gutted it, removing the mows which used to echo as the teams drew the heavy wagons up the bridge onto the barn floor, and then gradually fill as the over-head fork swung great loads of hay up to the track under the roof peak and over to where the tripping line released them. That kind of hay-making, and the skills which it required, are things of the past, around here anyway, and all the excitement and satisfaction of those long-gone summer days could not come again, but still I hate to look at that hollow shell which was for so many years the center of life on the farm. The stalls on the lower level are gone too, like the horses and cows that lived in them, and though the Zorn's and Stannard's would still recognize their barn from without, I am sure that it would seem to them, as it does to me, a ruin. This then, in outline at least, is the story of a Whitpain Township farm, from its earliest days to its end.



"The Oak Lane Day School"

By Elizabeth M. De Vincent

Photography by George S. Peck

The Cadwalader property now belongs to the "Oak Lane Day School," which is an independent day school offering children, nursery school age through ninth grade, a unique opportunity to participate in a stimulating educational process, via an individualized curriculum in a culturally integrated atmosphere. The school has a current enrollment of two hundred and thirty children.

Since its inception "Oak Lane Day School" has had two basic commitments — quality of education and diversity of students. The school was among the first of the private schools in the Philadelphia area to admit students without regard to religious, social or racial background and will continue to do so, as long as they have teachers eager to teach, parents willing to be committed to their philosophy and children who like to come to school.

The major classroom building is a one-story unit, built when the school purchased the property. This building contains pre-school through sixth grade classrooms, offices, the library and science room. Each classroom overlooks the school grounds.

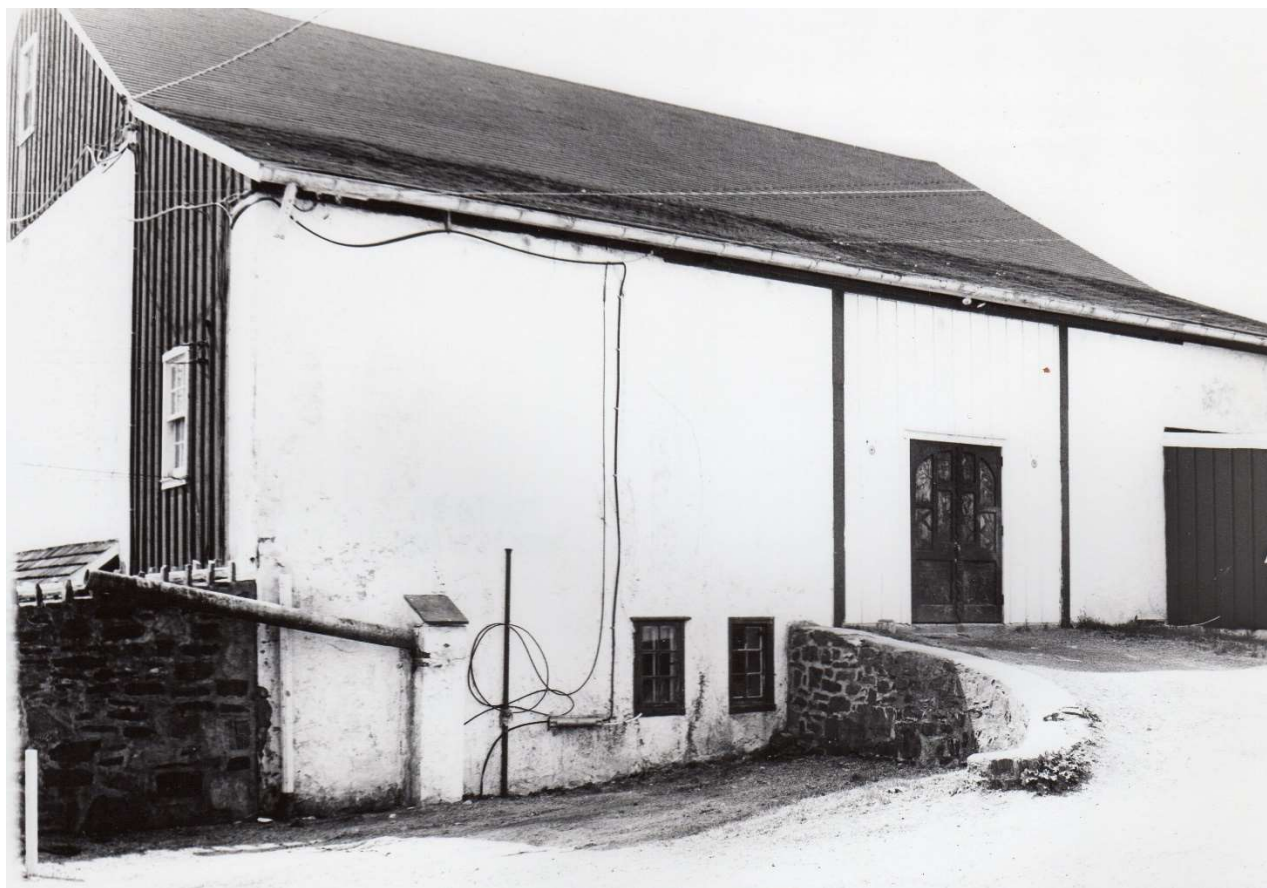
The only change to the outside of the barn is the replacement of doors to the central part of the barn. These doors were brought from the school's former location. They were designed and crafted by former art students and are very unique. The ground floor of the barn has been converted into an art studio. Water colors, pastels, tempera, charcoal, acrylics, crayons, wood, plaster, ink and clay are available from the three-year level on.

Extensive pottery experiences are provided through the four potter's wheels and large kiln. Macrame, batiking, collage, tie-dying and candle making are also taught here. There is also a photography studio and dark room. The only remnant of the interior barn as it used to be is the trough, which fits very nicely into the surroundings. The central part of the barn is used as a gymnasium and several refurbished rooms are part of the junior high school classrooms.

The old three-story plantation type mansion is used for the music program and the reading laboratory. Entering the hall from the front entrance of the house to the right is the room now called the music room. It is a high-ceilinged room that runs the length of the house and contains the original dark grey marble fireplace. From this room one enters the sun room with three window walls overlooking the beautiful grounds. Here instruments such as the recorder are taught in small groups, while choral work and familiarity with rhythm are introduced through a variety of easily handled instruments such as flutes, autoharps, drums, etc. To the left of the hall are two rooms that are used as the reading laboratory. The laboratory operates outside of the classroom and totally individualizes each child's skill development. A one to one relationship exists between trained volunteers and each student to increase developmental skills.

The headmistress of the "Oak Lane Day School" is Miriam Niebuhr.

The school continues to keep the mansion and grounds in good condition. "Fairview the Homestead of the Weber Family at Sandy Hill," an article written about the property many years ago has a description that is still true today. "The farm takes its name from the elevated position of the (and, from which the surrounding country may be seen in every direction for many miles. Few places in Montgomery County offer better facilities in the way of scenery than may be enjoyed from the door of the old stone mansion Fairview Farm."



Original Barn with Lower Level Converted to Art Studio



Garden View of Schaefer Home



Lovely Old Springhouse Adjacent to Home

'Quarterpeck Farm'

By Dorothy S. Conard

Photography by George S. Peck

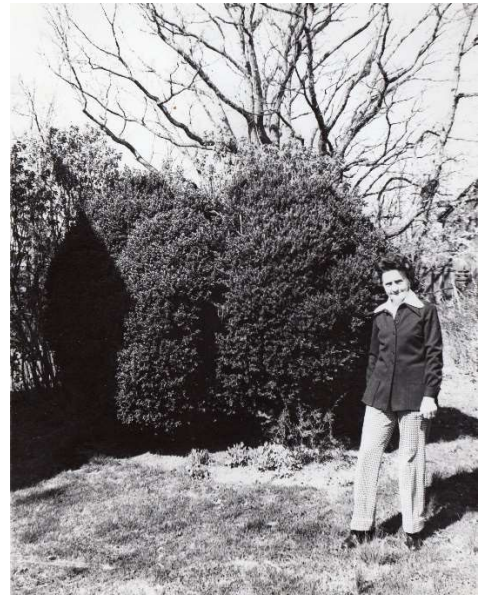
Mr. and Mrs. Adolph O. Schaefer have original deeds on the property, at 1351 Butler Pike, which show that this home pre-dates 1781. This was originally part of a larger farm owned by John Hallowell and Jonathan Davis which contained twenty-one acres of ground and two messuages or tenements. This was sold to Samuel Hallowell and his wife Elizabeth in 1781. Samuel Hallowell was a tailor and a constable of Whitpain Township in 1791. In 1796 the property was sold to Aquilla Tool for 500 pounds. The deed states "Aquilla Tool, being of the household of John Hallowell, moved here in 1796." John Hallowell had owned the property on both sides of Butler Pike and he retained the land in Whitemarsh Township. In the Glass or Windowpane Tax of 1798, which was devised to help pay for the Revolution, it shows that Aquilla Tool, whose property was listed as No. 99, was taxed eighty dollars for six windows and two windows on the third floor. A property tax list of 1799 shows that Aquilla Tool owned a stone house 15 X 15, a log kitchen 12 X 12, one log stable and seventeen acres of land. The present living room, which has original floors, was the stone section and the present dining room is possibly log covered with plaster.

In 1798, Aquilla Tool sold a little more than four acres to David Trexler and retained seventeen acres of ground. By 1810, Aquilla Tool had died and Aquilla Tool, Jr., and John Keyser were appointed by Orphans Court to sell the property. It was sold in 1811 to Jacob Weber who sold the same year to Jonathan Deavs for 450 dollars. This deed states the location of the property as "to the corner of William Greacy's land by land of John Rex, etc." Aaron Keyser was the Administrator of Deavs' will when it was sold to Charles Williams in 1850. The land was divided about this time since Silvester Jones bought the house and three acres in 1854 for 1,050 dollars. Adjoining properties were those of Zorn, Dutill and Rex. The estate of Silvester Jones sold the property to Katharine Burke in 1900 and, in 1917, Katharine Burke sold it to Joseph Fretz who sold it the same year to George W. Boice. The next transfer, in 1927, was to Thomas Downing who operated a dairy farm there. He had sixteen cows and sold milk and vegetables from a stand located in front of the house.

When Mr. and Mrs. Adolph O. Schaefer bought the property in 1939 they renovated the barn and cemented the floors to accommodate a two-car garage. The walls of the house have been replastered and the floors, which were painted different colors, were sanded and refinished. The improvements on this farmhouse have made it an extremely warm and interesting home.



300 Year Old White Oak Tree



and Mrs. Stratton in Front of Boxwood



Home of Fred and Edna Stratton

"Febas Farm"

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

On a four acre site, at 1301 Butler Pike in Broad Axe, that now belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stratton, there once stood a log cabin that belonged to an early settler in Whitpain Township. It was part of a larger farm of about twenty-one acres. There are deeds dated 1781 that show that two parcels of land with two messuages or tenements were transferred to Samuel and Elizabeth Hallowell by John Hallowell and his wife and Jonathan Davis and his wife. One piece of land was seven acres; the other, fourteen acres. In 1796 Samuel and Elizabeth Hallowell sold these properties and twenty-one acres of land to Aquilla Tool.

In 1798, Aquilla Tool sold a little more than four acres to David and Catherine Trexler. David Trexler probably built the present home, as he was married and raising a family. William Greacy bought the property from David Trexler in 1802 and in 1820 William Greacy sold to Baltis Hoffman. Rachael Welsh was the next owner in 1845 and after that the house came down in the same family through inheritance and purchase. John and Mary Dutill occupied the home and later the property was owned and tenanted by Harry Moyer. In 1945, Fred and Edna Stratton bought the property from Harry Moyer, an uncle of Fred Stratton, and it still remains "a little more than four acres" of land.

The present stone house, when it was first built, according to Mrs. Stratton, was one room downstairs, two rooms upstairs and two rooms on the third floor. The dining room and room above were built later, partly on the spot of the log cabin that had been torn down.

Outside the dining-room window is a very large ancient boxwood where remains of a log cabin have been found. It is believed the boxwood was planted at the window of the log cabin. The present owners were offered \$500 for the boxwood in 1945. Mrs. Stratton has found many pieces of old pottery and china and said that when they cultivate, they "always dig up something."

The white oak tree between the house and barn is 300 years old and is sixteen feet in girth and is registered in State records.

The dry wall at one end of the swimming pool is built from stones from two homes that were demolished at the North corner of Butler and Skippack Pikes.

This home has been in the Stratton family for four generations. Mr. Stratton related that one of the stories handed down through the family is that in Revolutionary days milk from the farm was taken to Broad Axe to serve the soldiers of the Continental Army.

Mr. and Mrs. Stratton have in their possession a copy of an Indenture of Apprenticeship dated February, 1803 whereby John Dutill, by and with the consent of his father, John Dutill, Sr., put himself apprentice to David Eastburn for a term of fifteen years and one month:" . . . during all which Term, the said Apprentice his said Master faithfully shall serve, his Secrets keep, his lawfull Commands every where readily obey. He shall do no Damage to his said Master, nor see it to be done by others, without letting or giving Notice thereof to his said Master. He shall not waste his said Master's Goods, nor lend them unlawfully to any. He shall not commit Fornication, nor contract Matrimony within the said Term. He shall not play at Cards, Dice, or any other unlawful Game, whereby his said Master may have Damage, with his own Goods, nor the Goods of others, without License from his said Master, he shall neither buy nor sell. He shall not absent himself Day nor Night from his said Master's Service without his Leave: Nor haunt Ale-houses, Taverns, or Play-houses; but in all Things behave himself as a faithful Apprentice ought to do, during the said Term. And the said Master shall use the utmost of his Endeavour to teach or cause to be taught or instructed the said Apprentice in the Trade or Mastery of a Farmer . . . and procure and provide for him sufficient Meat, Drink, Apparel, ... Lodging and Washing, fitting for an Apprentice, during said Term of fifteen years and one month and shall and will in the course of the said Term teach or cause to be taught the said Apprentice to Read distinctly write a legible hand and cypher through the Rule of three and at the expiration thereof shall and will give unto him One good new Suit of Apparel over and besides his common every day Clothing-. ..."

For some reason, John Dutill did not remain as apprentice to David Eastburn the full term of fifteen years and one month, since in October 1809, David Eastburn assigned over "Right Title Interest or Claim to A Certain Servant Boy Named John Dutill" to Joseph Phipps ". . . for the consideration of twelvedollars "

The Indenture of Apprenticeship was cancelled in March, 1818 after the fifteen years and one month had expired.

The H. C. Webster Home

By Marjorie H. Gerhart
Photography by George S. Peck

The home of Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Webster on Butler Pike, is one of five old homes described by the Honorable Jonas Detwiler in an article in the Ambler Gazette, January 31, 1909. It was mentioned at that time as the Schlater home where the widow Schlater lived with her son-in-law, Charles Biddle. It was a stone house near the highway between the Stackhouse and the Widmayer properties.

Detwiler related that in 1797 the land this house was built upon had been sold by a man by the name of Righter to Samuel McCool who may have built the house. McCool sold to John Slingluff in 1831. John Kibblehouse purchased the property for \$1100 two years later and remained there for twenty years. A better house was built between 1853 and 1865 and sold to Charles Schlater in 1865 for \$3500.

The Websters believe that the house was originally constructed as a "Father, Son and Holy Ghost house" — three rooms, one on top of the other — in the 1700's, as three rooms seem to be much older than other parts of the structure. The Webster's have enclosed porches and made a charming home that has the comforts of today and the charm of long ago.



Webster Home

The Bremier Home

By Dorothy S. Conard

Photography by George S. Peck

Jonathan Taylor owned 186 acres of land in Whitpain Township and when he made his will in 1776, he willed eighty-six acres to his son, Jonathan the second. Six months later, in 1776, Jonathan the second executed his will, requesting that the executors sell the property four years after his decease in order to enable the payment of several legacies and to provide for his child which was then unborn. Jonathan the third was the only heir and he and his wife, Ellen, sold to Miles Abbett in 1801 for £1,050. The sale is described as for a messuage or tenement and two tracts of land containing sixty acres and twenty-six acres.

On June 2, 1808, Miles Abbett sold to Leonard Weidner for £1,284 and six shillings. The twenty-six acres had been sold previously and this deed covers sixty acres with a messuage and "twelve acres being part of a lot supposed to contain fifteen acres and sixty-six perches, which Henry Harner and his wife, Margaret, had sold to Miles Abbett on Septembers, 1805."

The ancestors of Leonard Weidner were Germans from Württemberg who left their native land because of religious persecution. Leonard Weidner made his will on February 3, 1829 and the entire property was released to Samuel Weidner, son of Leonard, and his wife, Elizabeth, for \$1,200. Samuel was eighteen years old when he came to Whitpain where his father had purchased the farm; he farmed here until March 31, 1855, when he sold the sixty acres with messuage and twelve acres of land to Saunders Lewis, Esq., for \$8,000. On the same day, Saunders Lewis released the messuage and lot containing four acres and one hundred and sixteen perches back to Samuel Weidner for \$567. Samuel Weidner had two sons, Uriah and Ethan, and a daughter, Lavinia. Uriah resided at the homestead until he was twenty-two years old and taught school for twelve years at the Mount Pleasant School which he had attended in his boyhood. Later, in 1875, he was ordained as a Reformed Minister.

On October 22, 1884, Ethan J. Weidner and his wife, Anna, sold the messuage and four plus acres to Ann Jane Mercer. Payment of \$69.99 was to be paid annually on the first day of April of each and every year to Mary Weidner, widow of Samuel, for her lifetime and immediately after her death, the sum of \$1,166.66 was to be paid to the heirs of Samuel Weidner.

Less than two years later, in April 1886, Ann Jane Mercer died. She bequeathed her estate called "The Mount" to her brother, John Hamilton. Jr., in trust to procure a charter of incorporation for an institution to be called "The John C. Mercer Home for Disabled Clergymen of The Presbyterian Faith" to be established on the property and directed all the estate and property called "The Mount" to be conveyed to the Mercer Home for Disabled Clergymen. The Home was chartered on June 21, 1886, by a decree of the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery County.

Sophia M. Winship purchased the property on April 16, 1904, for \$3,500. There was some question regarding the legality of this purchase, since Ann Mercer had not cleared her debts with the Weidner family. The Weidner's released their legacy and Sophia Winship gained a clear title to the property at 146 Morris Road.

Gladys W. Meade bought the property on June 2, 1920 for \$5,500 and when she sold to Edward Haines, Jr., and his wife, Evelyn, on October 11, 1962, some of the four acres had been sold. David E. Graham and Caroline M. Graham purchased the property in 1967 and they sold to Gerhard O. Angermann, Jr., and his wife, Marguerite G., on June 11, 1971, who sold to Robert F. Young and Lois on May 15, 1973. Geraldine D. Bremier (Sally) bought the property on September 22, 1975, and resides there today.



Bremier Home, 146 Morris Road



Wertsner's Mill

B.H.

Wertsner Corner

By Marjorie H. Gerhart
Photography by George S. Peck

Three fine homes built on former "Dawesfield" property are associated with the name of Wertsner. Adam Wertsner was the one who bought the grist mill, built following the Washington encampment by James Morris, from his widow, Elizabeth, in 1798. There is a legend that this Adam Wertsner was the Hessian prisoner who was indentured to James Morris for his hospitality to Washington. However, it seems that Adam Wertsner actually came from Hesse in 1790, a number of years after the Revolutionary War.

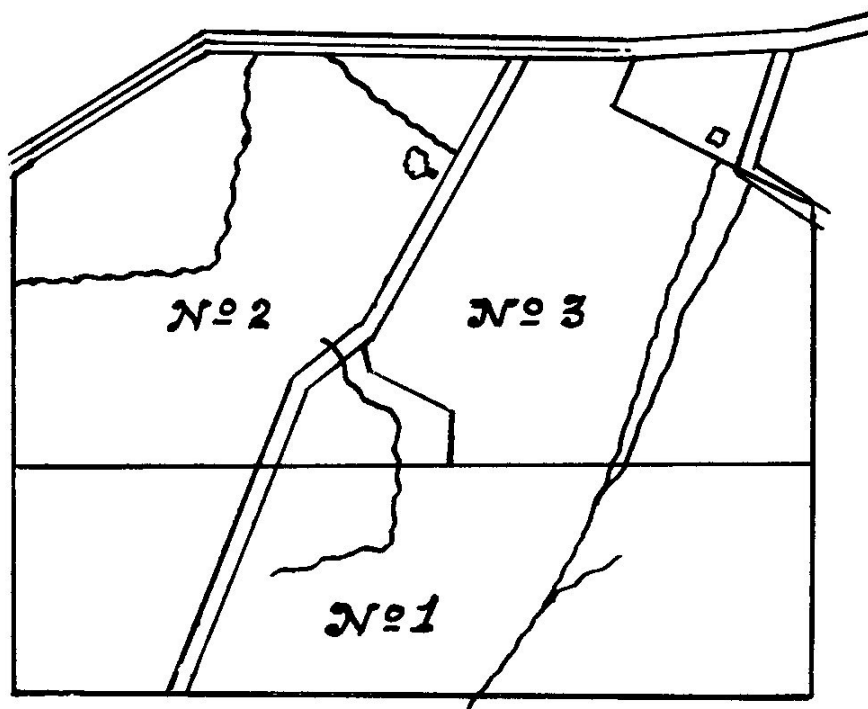
Like the names of Whitpain and Dawes, the name Wertsner has disappeared from this and the Philadelphia area, as the male line has died out. Until the early 1900's, there were prominent members of the family bearing the name. Benjamin P. Wertsner, grandson of Adam, was founder of the First National Bank in Ambler in 1884; the bank is now a branch of the Girard Bank. His father, George, son of Adam, was a member of the Pennsylvania State Legislature during the 1846-47 session.

Today, the blood line continues on the distaff side. Thomas Hallowell, chairman of the board of Standard Pressed Steel, had a grandmother who was a Wertsner. His cousin, Anne Wertsner Wood (Mrs. Harry Wood), who graduated from the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women (now the Ambler Campus of Temple University), is a well-known lecturer in the field of horticulture and has received many honors. It was Mrs Wood who gave information concerning the Wertsner family from an old Bible in her possession.

The Bible's record shows that Adam Wertsner came to this country from Hesse in 1790. He first settled in the Gulph Mills area. More information concerning Adam was obtained from various deeds and from his last will and testament. According to his will probated in 1831, he left a widow, Esther, two sons, Joseph and George, and a daughter, Sarah. Deeds show that Adam had acquired several properties, among them: the mill in Whitpain with fourteen and three-quarter acres of land, another mill in Norriton purchased in 1814, parcels of land in Whitpain, Gwynedd and Upper Dublin. In his will, he made provision that his widow, Esther, would have use of the part of the house in Whitpain (near the mill) "which was last built being the part that is now in the tenure of John Slingluff, Jr., together with the yard...." He left the Whitpain mill to George, whom he stated already lived there, and he left the Norriton mill to Joseph. He also left a certain number of cords of wood each year to his Widow and each of his children.

Joseph, who inherited the mill in Norriton died about 1849 and left that property to his two sons, Adam and Charles. Adam sold his interest to his brother, Charles. This mill was sold to Frederick Bushe in 1878. Deeds at Norristown show that Adam, the second, married a woman by the name of Sarah and owned properties in Norristown.

George continued with the ownership of the mill in Whitpain Township. In 1845, George bought a 107-acre tract of land, that had been part of the "Dawesfield" estate, from Rebecca C. James and Elizabeth A. James. The deed shows a messuage, which was probably the tenant house built in 1821 by Dr. James who was then master of Dawesfield. This purchase gave George ownership of the large southwest corner of land bounded by Lewis Lane and Morris Road.



1826 Map For Possible Division and Sale of Dawesfield Property. None Sold Until 1845 Purchase of Lot No. 3 By George Wertsner



Devereux Home Today



Copy of Old Photo

The Devereux Home

By Marjorie H. Gerhart
Photography by George S. Peck

The beautiful country-style home, white plaster over stone, on Morris Road that has been owned by Antelo Devereux and his wife since 1946, was once close to the Wertsner Grist Mill purchased with fourteen and three-quarter acres by Adam Wertsner from Elizabeth Morris, widow of James Morris in 1798. The mill, that is no longer there, had been built by James Morris soon after 1777. The house that seems to cling low to the land has been built in sections over the years. The taller structure nearest to Morris Road bears a datestone with 1768.

Windows on the terrace side focus on the mill pond with a few ducks gliding by. The old mill was demolished about 1877; but above the pond a distance, to one side of the house, there is still evidence of the great mill race, once 3,432 feet long. Actually, this mill race, which is mentioned in all the deeds to the property with provisions to keep it clean, is now only a great depression in the earth, overgrown with wild growth.



Remains of the Mill Race

Mrs. Devereux showed an interesting picture of a poster that announced that a sale of the house and mill would be held Thursday, November 16, 1876, by order of the Orphans Court to settle the estate of Albert G. Wertsner. That order signaled the end of the ownership of the mill by the Wertsner family. Adam's son, George, had been given possession of the mill property for his lifetime — with the provision that his mother would have the use of the part of the house that had been added to the north side in 1820. After George died in 1867, his son, Albert G. Wertsner who had married Hannah Keisel, purchased the mill property and an additional twelve acres from his father's bordering farm.

ORPHANS' COURT SALE

OF VALUABLE

REAL ESTATE

In pursuance of an order of the Orphans' Court of Montg. Co., Pa., will be exposed to Public Sale,

ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, '76,

At 2 o'clock, p. m., on the premises, the following described property, the estate of ALBERT G. WERTSNER, deceased, to-wit:

NO 1. All that message and tract of land situated in the township of Whitpain, in said county, fronting on the Morris Road and adjoining lands of Joseph Detweiler, estate of Coleman Fisher, dec'd.; Benjamin P. Wertsner and others, containing



12 Acres



(more or less) of very productive land, conveniently divided and enclosed by good fences. The improvements thereon are a commodious

TWO-STORY STONE HOUSE,

Calculated for two families, with 4 rooms on the first floor, 4 rooms and entries on the second floor, attic divided, cellar under the whole, out-kitchen back, piazza front and back, well of good water with pump therein at the house, spring house over a never failing spring of water, and other out-buildings. There is on this property an excellent variety of fruit, a large vegetable garden, enclosed; a nice fish pond and other advantages and conveniences for a nice home.

No. 2. A Grist Mill and Water Power,

With about 3 acres of land adjoining the above property and land of B. P. Wertsner and others. The improvements are a substantial two-story stone mill house with all the mill gearing and necessary attachments thereto, with the advantages of a 24 foot over-shot wheel, all in good running order and in a business location. After the sale of the mill we will sell the one-half interest of the apple pulping machine and apparatus for making cider, now connected and run therewith, also the one-half interest in the county right for said machine.

NO. 3. A Tract of Land Without Improvements,

Adjoining No. 2 and lands of B. P. Wertsner, Harper Nice and fronting on the mill road, containing 12 acres of land, about 5 acres thereof is farm land of excellent quality, one acre of nice young timber the balance meadow, very productive. The above properties are nicely located in the improved part of the county convenient to churches, schools, stores, &c., about one mile from the N. P. R. R. at Ambler station, making it easy of access to the city and elsewhere at all times. Would make a comfortable home or a profitable investment for any person and will be sold separately as described or together as a whole, as may best suit purchasers, and to command the best price therefor. Persons wishing to view the premises will be shown the same by applying to Mrs. Wertsner residing on No. 1 or to James Keisel, administrator, near Ambler station. Attendance and conditions at sale by

JAMES KEISEL,
C. S. WERTSNER, Administrators.

GEO. M. McNEIL, Auct.

HARRY C. SMITH, POWER PRINT., NORTH WALES, PA.

According to The Early History of Ambler by Dr. Mary P.H. Hough that was republished in 1977, the mill had an over-shot wheel of twenty-four feet in diameter that was replaced in 1870 with a new one that was thirty feet. A cider mill was added to the grist mill, which did fine business because there were no other cider mills in the vicinity.

When the terrible railroad accident occurred near Ambler on July 17, 1856, the engineer of the train took refuge in the mill to escape from the irate people who wanted him arrested, because they thought he was responsible for the several deaths. He eluded the crowd, but later committed suicide at his Philadelphia home. Dr. Hough told that Mrs. Eugene Nice, who was Albert Wertsner's daughter, described this event that occurred when she lived as a child at the mill.

Albert G. Wertsner was the great grandfather of Mrs. Anne Wertsner Wood who told of her family. She has an obituary that related that Albert G. Wertsner died as a result of an accident while carrying a hog. He was praised as a man of civic importance. Unfortunately, he had not made a will and since there was not enough money to pay his debts, the estate was advertised for sale. It was stated that there were no bidders; therefore, the administrators, Clayton G. Wertsner and James Keisel, sold the estate to the widow, Hannah Wertsner, on May 3, 1878. She sold the property on May 16 of the same year to Ann Jane Mercer.

Mrs. Mercer bought considerable other realty on both sides of Morris Road. After she died, about 1886, much of her property by her will went to a corporation to provide a home for Presbyterian ministers to be called "The John C. Mercer Home for Disabled Clergymen of the Presbyterian Faith." There was an agreement before Mrs. Mercer died that S. Wilson Fisher would purchase the mill property for \$1500, which would help provide an income for the home.

Dr. Hough, in her book, stated that the mill stopped operating in 1887. It was soon torn down.

By a deed in 1909, S. Wilson Fisher and his wife, Clara, turned the mill holdings over to S. Wilson's sister, Elizabeth, who also was given possession of the property where Dr. and Mrs. Haas now live. In 1916, Elizabeth Fisher released the mill and its land to Clarence Wilson Fisher, her brother's son. The Montgomery County map of 1916 manifests that the Mill House and 27 acres were held by Clarence W. Fisher. After Clarence died, some of his holdings were sold to pay his debts. Bertha Jenks bought the property in 1933 and then sold it to Charles and Rita Platt in 1935. The Platt's did much to restore and improve the house. In 1946, Antelo and Sydney C. Devereux purchased the mill house and the twenty-six and three-quarter acres from the Platts.

It is interesting that the Devereux deed mentions a water grist mill that no longer exists except in a few pictures that have survived from a more tranquil time.



Haas House as it was in 1845

The Haas House and "Yost Log Cabin"

By Marjorie H. Gerhart
 Photography by George S. Peck
 Artwork by Becky Huttinger

The book about "Dawesfield," *Reminiscences of Dawesfield and Vicinity*, by Saunders Lewis, Illustrated and Elaborated by Morris J. Lewis, M. D., 1896, shows a picture of the home now owned by Dr. and Mrs. F. Otto Haas. It is described as a tenant house built in 1821 by Dr. James. The Haases have owned about ten acres and this house which has grown over the years from a modest tenant house into an elegant, stately home with a large greenhouse and stone terraces since 1950. They more recently acquired an additional forty acres of former Wertsner property.

Dr. Haas has deeds and a description of his title that trace continuous ownership of the property on which his house stands from the purchase by George Wertsner in 1845 from Rebecca and Elizabeth James.

An Indenture dated June 3, 1856, shows that George Wertsner and his wife, Hester, sold a messuage and lot of a little more than ten acres to Coleman Fisher, Jr., of Philadelphia. Coleman Fisher was married to Mary, the daughter of Samuel Wilson, M.D. and Elizabeth Paul. The Fisher's had three children, S. Wilson Fisher, Sidney, who died in

1887, and Elizabeth. When Coleman Fisher died in 1876. he left his property to his wife, Mary, as long as she remained a widow. The estate was to go to his children after they attained the age of twenty-six. His widow died in 1887. Since Sidney had died. S. Wilson Fisher and Elizabeth inherited the estate.

In an article about S. Wilson Fisher in Biographical Annals of Montgomery County, it is related that the house was much enlarged and improved while Coleman Fisher lived. The estate became known as "Briar Hill." S. Wilson Fisher, who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and was admitted to the bar to practice law, lived there for a time with his wife, Clara Frances. He never practiced law because he was more interested in astronomy and the natural sciences. He purchased about thirty-eight more acres in the vicinity from the Mercer Home for Presbyterian Clergymen. In 1909, S. Wilson Fisher and his wife conveyed their rights to "Briar Hill" and the original ten acres to his sister, Elizabeth. Elizabeth Fisher sold the estate to Charles Chauncey Savage, Jr., and his wife, Silvine Von Dorsner Savage, in 1935. In turn, they sold it to F. Otto Haas and his wife, Dorothy W. Haas. in 1950.

The Haases have made many changes in the house. They added the greenhouse. They believe the present dining room. which was formerly the living room, is the oldest section of the abode. They marvel at the twenty-two inch walls throughout the dwelling. The outside walls, plaster over stone, are painted about every four years. The house has been a variety of colors and shades. Right now it is a soft tan with brown. Stables and barns have been added. They have also preserved another structure of the past by moving an old log cabin to their grounds to save it from destruction by the projected relocation of Route 202.

This reminder of early life in the township, known as the "Yost Cabin" because it was formerly located on Yost Road, was researched carefully by Price and Dickey, Architects, to ascertain its origin and condition before a decision to move it was made. Mrs. Elizabeth H. Dewey of Green Lane, Pennsylvania, had researched the chain of title in 1968. The property on which the log cabin stood was part of an original 200 acre tract of land that was divided into sections of different sizes as it was distributed to relatives or sold over the years. The exact date of the building was not pinpointed. Originally, the 200 acres were parts of grants from William Penn to Samuel Fox and James Claypoole. It became a portion of Richard Whitpain's holdings that were sold by his widow, Mary, to John Eldridge, William Ingram, J.B. Blackall and J. Vace. Later. John Whitpain recovered the land along with Rees Thomas and Anthony Morris. It was sold in 1748 by Thomas, Morris and Ann Whitpain, John's widow, to Randle Osborne. The land remained in the Osborne family for a number of years. Around 1784, Mary Osborne DeHaven received ten acres and Ann Osborne Cunard received eight acres from Richard Osborne. In 1798, Randle Osborne, Jr., sold fourteen acres to Daniel Yost.

Isaac Detweiler acquired the eight acre tract in 1807 and the ten acre plot in 1816 that had formerly belonged to the Osborne women. In 1846 and 1847, both properties were acquired by John S. Kolb who owned them until 1850 when his estate was sold by the sheriff. The ownership then passed into a number of hands until William Knoll, the uncle of the present owner, Mrs. Donald Spacht, came into possession of ten acres of the land in 1906.



Home of Dr. and Mrs. Haas Today and Yost Log Cabin



Interior of Yost Log Cabin

Exactly when or by whom the cabin was built is difficult to determine. The U.S. Direct Tax of 1798 shows dwelling houses and out buildings similar in description to what the Yost Road Cabin might have been at that time. It was thought by the writers of the report to Dr. and Mrs. Haas that this structure on this particular ten acres might be any one of several buildings described in the 1798 tax record, but most likely, the house of James Howel, located next to Valentine Bush, listed as "1 log house ... 14 by 16 ... value \$50 ... "

Tax records from 1769 for the Randles show a dwelling but this may have gone with any of the various divisions of the property.

A "Map of Montgomery County Pennsylvania from Original Surveys under the Direction of Wm. E. Morris, C. E., 1848" indicates a log house with "J. Culp" beside it, probably a misspelling of J. Kolb.

The log cabin, before it was moved, had an addition built in the mid-nineteenth century that was not recommended to be moved. The president of the Goshenhoppen Society who regretted not being able to add this log cabin to its collection described it as a "St. Gotthard" type because of the stone end that indicated Swiss influence, as noted in log buildings in the Canton of Uri.

The stairs to a second floor were thought to be original, although the door at the foot was not. The unusually high fireplace opening is off center to allow for the stairs. There is no evidence of a mantel, but there are open shelves recessed on the smaller side. Parts of the window frames may be original, but no initial sash remains. The Dutch-door to the outside has original strap hinges on both leaves. The log walls were covered with plaster on the inside and later clapboards on the outside.

The architects proposed removing the log cabin by disassembling and restoring the logs as they were originally, with the inside and outside exposed. A new, chemically fireproofed roof would be used. The beams and ceiling that had been frequently whitewashed over the years would be left unpainted. The cost of restoration was estimated as \$40,000.

Fortunately, the restoration was carried out and today there is a charming reminder of how many of the early inhabitants of this area lived.

Chain of Title — Log Cabin Property - North Side of Yost Road, Whitpain Township

- c. 1967 William Knoll to Mrs. Donald Spacht, his niece, by will
- Feb. 7, 1906 Charles Irwin adm. for Jennie Miller to William Knoll (10A, 2A) Book 55U, page 160
- Jan. 18, 1902 Charles Thompson Gouldy to Jennie Miller
(10A, 2A) Book 475. page 232
- Apr. 2, 1901 Amos Beyer to Charles Thompson Gouldy
(10A, 2A) Book 470, page 438
- Apr. 5, 1886 Lewis Beideman to Amos Beyer
(10A, 2A) Book 278, page 382
- Jan. 6, 1884 Frederick G. Shepps to Lewis Beideman
(10A, 2A) Book 277, page 189
- Apr. 4, 1878 William W. Gilbert to F. G. Shepps
(10A, 2A) Book 242, page 283
- Nov. 10, 1877 Catherine A. Kinckiner to Wm. Gilbert
(10A, 2A) Book 239, page 452
- Dec. 24, 1874 Abraham S. Hallman for Joseph Kinckiner (d. 1870) to Catherine Kinckiner (10A, 2A,
18A) Book 22, page 234
- Apr. 19, 1851 Joseph Crater & Mary to Joseph Kinckiner (10A) Book 117, page 402
- Apr. 18, 1851 Joseph Swartley & Catherine to Joseph Crater (10A, 18A) Book 99. page 531
- 1850 Philip Hahn, Sheriff, estate of John S. Kolb to Joseph Swartley (10A, 18A)
- Tract I-A:
- Apr. 2, 1846 Jacob S. Bean & Jacob Clemens, to John S. Kolb (10A) Book 69, page 642
- Apr. 12, 1842 Issac Detweiler & Barbara to Martin Detweiler (10A)
- April 1816 Jacob Weber, Frederick Zeofos & John Shearer for Benjamin Weber to Isaac Detweiler
(10A)
- 1798 Howell James to Benjamin Weber (10A)
- n.d. Callawallader to Lawrence Egbert
- n.d. Samuel Maulsby to Callawallader
- 179! Part of land owned by Isaac DeHaven to Samuel Maulsby Book 7, page 543
- 1784 Randle Osborne to Mary Osborne DeHaven

Tract 1-B:
 April 1847 Henry Beideman to John S. Kolh l8A83p) Book 69. page 640

April 1842 Abraham Gotwals & Henry Detweiler tor Isaac Detweiler to Henry Beideman (18A83p)
 Book 67. page 666

April 1807 Valentine Bush & Elizabeth to Isaac Detweiler (8A) Book 24. page 5

Feb.1803 Peter Schneider to Valentine Bush (SA) Book 24. page 4

Nov. 21.1791 Henry Cunard & Ann to Peter Schneider (SA) Book 6. page 374
 Richard Osborne to Ann Osborne Cunard

Tract 2:
 Mar.26.1852 Joseph Crater to Joseph Kinckiner (2A) Book 117. page 404

Tract 3:
 Apr.4.1865 Isaac Detweiler& Ann to Joseph Kinckiner (ISA) Book 144, page 552

Original
 200A Tract
 May 23. 1791 Randle Osborne. Jr. to Daniel Yost (14A)

1785 Richard Osborne to Randle Osborne. Jr. (14A)

1784 Randle Osborne to Richard Osborne (14A)

1748 Rees Thomas. Anthony Morris and Ann Whitpain to Randle Osborne (14A)

c.1731 Rees Thomas, Anthony Morris and Ann Whitpain to Randle Osborne

May 28, 1718 John Whitpain to R. Thomas, of Merion Book F5

Apr. 24,1713 Wm. Aubrey, of London to Rees Thomas & Anthony Morris Book b7. page 25S

1690 J. Blackall to Wm. Aubrey Book E79. page 143

July 30, 1689 Mary Whitpain (Ex) of Richard Whitpain to John Eldredge, William Ingrain, J.
 Blackall & J. Vace Book E74. page 192

- John Marshall to Richard Whitpain (1000A) Book C23, Page 27
- James Claypoole to John Marshall (4500A) Book C23, page 25
- Wm. Penn to James Claypoole (1000A) Book A1, page 140
- Samuel Fox to Richard Whitpain (1500A) Book G23. page 52
- Wm. Penn to Samuel Fox (1500A) Book A5, page 136



Front View of Morris Cheston, Jr. Home



Side View of Morris Cheston, Jr. Home

Home of the Morris Cheston, Jr., Family

By Marjorie H. Gerhart
Photography by George S. Peck

The large, impressive home on Lewis Lane of Mr. and Mrs. Morris Cheston, Jr., stone covered with plaster painted a Mediterranean pink, was originally part of the Dawesfield farm. There is a date stone on a side of the house with the inscription, "G & H Wertsner, 1845." There are porches on the sides, but there is a ridge that indicates there was a porch around most of the outside at one time. Gigantic, old buttonwood trees hug close to the rear of the abode.

The overall structure is probably much the same as it was when it was built in 1845 by George and Hester Wertsner. According to records, George had been in possession of the nearby Wertsner Mill and its house since his father, Adam, died in 1831. George and his wife, who had been Hester Server, had four children, Albert G., Benjamin P., Amanda and Lydia Ann. In 1845, George purchased a 107-acre tract of land from Rebecca C. and Elizabeth A. James that they



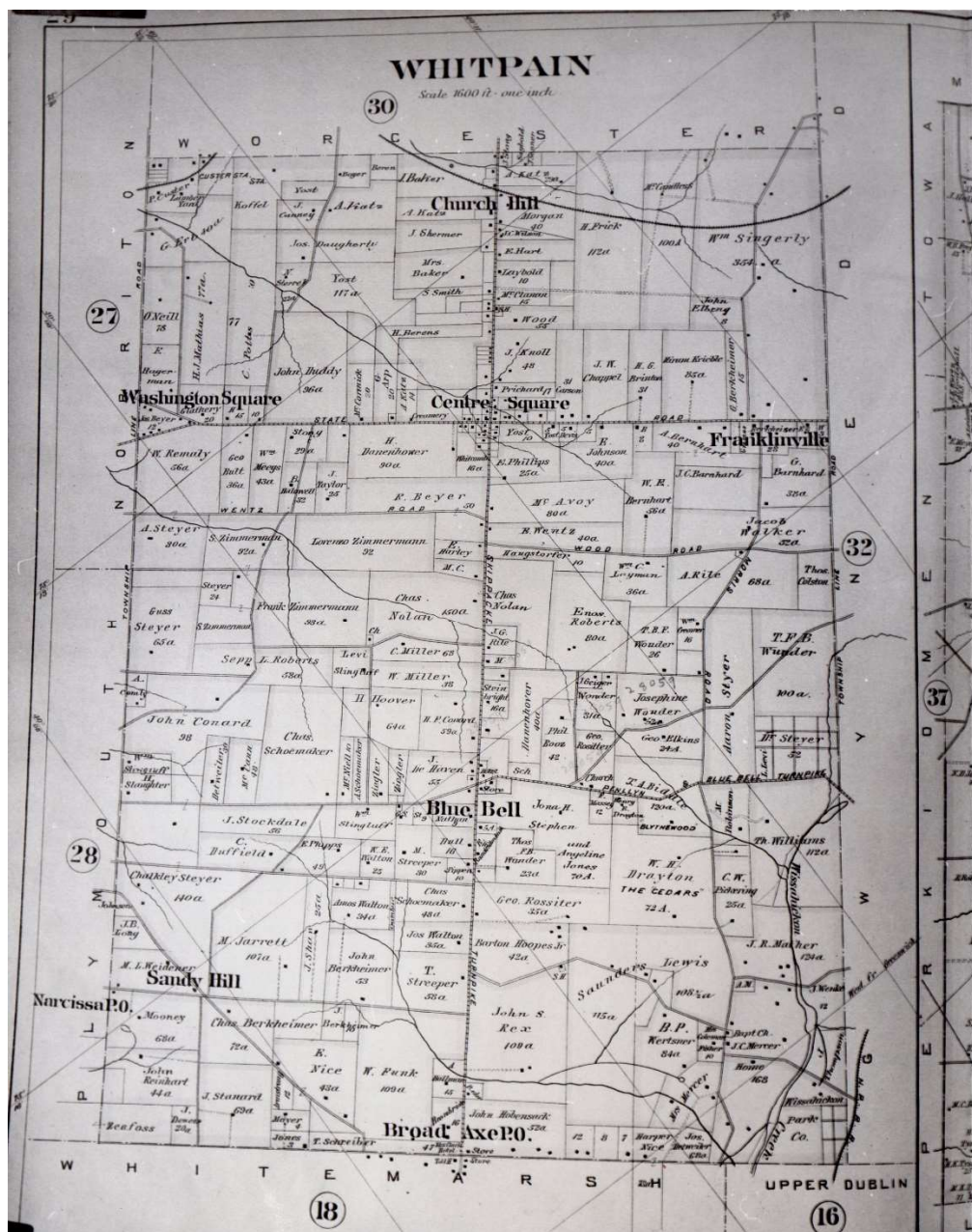
had inherited from Hannah M. James, the widow of Thomas C. James. A tenant house, built while Dr. James owned the property, and some ten acres were sold to Coleman Fisher, Jr., in 1856 This now belongs to Dr. and Mrs. Haas.

George died about 1867. His will provided that his widow, Hester, should receive \$500 income each year. Albert was to have the mill property and an additional twelve acres. Benjamin was to receive the farm on which he resided and about eighty-two acres of the land purchased from the "Dawesfield" estate. The acreage was estimated as being worth \$150 an acre. To meet the claims of the other heirs, Benjamin was to take out a \$6,000 mortgage and to pay other money to meet the yearly income of his mother.

Bean, in his History of Montgomery County, wrote an article about Benjamin P. Wertsner as a prominent contemporary resident of Whitpain Township. Bean stated that Benjamin was born in Norristown in 1829 and moved to Whitpain in 1833 when his father took over the Wertsner Grist Mill. From an early age, he ran the farm his father purchased from the Dawesfield holdings. He married Mary Gross, a daughter of General John E. Gross of Trappe, Pa., who was in the War of 1812. Her grandfather had been a member of the Continental Congress. Benjamin made many improvements to his property in 1876 and the lovely estate was known as "Evergreen Farm." As mentioned previously, he helped organize the First National Bank of Ambler in 1884 and was its first president. He was active in other business and civic affairs: treasurer of the Ambler Building and Loan Association as well as treasurer of the Plymouth Valley Creamery Association and the Whitpain Library Company. The Bean article mentions that he was guardian and trustee of several estates.

The 1893 Atlas of Montgomery County shows B. P. Wertsner as the owner of eighty-four acres across from Saunders Lewis and touching on the land owned by Mrs. Coleman Fisher. The 1880 census indicated that Benjamin P. Wertsner and his wife, Mary, were both fifty years old and had a daughter, Bertha, twenty-one, living with them. At that time his occupation was listed as a "retired farmer."

After Benjamin's ownership, all of the Wertsner lands in this corner of Whitpain Township went out of the possession of the family. The mill and its acreage had been sold to Mrs. Mercer in 1876. Exactly why or how Benjamin lost the tenancy of his property is not fully determined. There is a record that Sheriff I. Edgar Mathews, Esquire, took in the property of Benjamin P. Wertsner "late of my county" in 1904 because of a \$5,000 mortgage due the First National Bank of Ambler. After a year, it was decided that the income from the estate could not satisfy the debt and damages; and since there were no bidders, the bank bought the realty for a nominal fee.



J. L. Smith Atlas, 1893

Charles G. Davis and his wife, Eleanor, received the estate for payment of the mortgage debt in 1909. Different members of the Davis family owned the estate, but it was in the possession of Charles G. Davis when he died in 1921. The Montgomery County Map of 1916 shows the location as eighty-three acres with the names, "Louisa Gibbons Davis, res. J Corbit Davis-Pen-y-Byrn Farm."

After the death of Charles G. Davis, the Orphans Court ordered the sale of the site to settle the claims of the survivors. Eleanor P. Davis sold the estate to Hannah G. Hogan, singlewoman, in 1923. She later conveyed it to Edward J. Hogan, her brother, who died in 1959. As executrix for the estate of Edward J. Hogan, she sold the eighty some acres and buildings to C. Mahlon Kline in 1960. Mr. Kline broke up the estate into parcels. Dr. Haas purchased some of the land. Wilson and Harriet Prichett bought the house, accompanying buildings and a little more than six acres in 1961. In 1970, Morris Cheston, Jr., and Cynthia M. Cheston purchased the Prichett property.

There is a springhouse that is probably much older than the nearby main house. Its exact date is unknown, but there is a legend that Hessian prisoners were kept there during the period Washington and his troops were in the area. It appears more like a tiny dwelling than a springhouse. This building is also plastered over stone and painted pink. The walls are very thick. It is constructed on three levels. A huge fireplace takes up most of a wall in the ground floor room. The room above is reached, by a narrow spiral stairway. It has exposed hand hewn wooden beams with wooden pegs. At some time a large studio window was installed. The Cheston children have enjoyed using the walls for their original art. A bomb shelter, with a heavy iron door from a navy ship, was built deep in the recesses of the lower level reached from the outside by a trap door. Mr. Cheston explained that this was built by a former owner, Edward J. Hogan. It is a reminder of the uneasy 1950's with the build-up of the atomic threat.





Original House With Ailanthus Tree



Frank Pierce Home Today

Conversation With Frank A. Pierce

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

Mr. Frank Peirce, a builder in the Township, bought an older home in Whitpain Township and described the house he purchased and the remodeling he did. His conversation with Becky Huttinger and Dorothy Conard is interesting because of his professional insight into the way houses were built in early days and the materials used.

I bought this property about 1948 from a man who was in the real estate business in Chestnut Hill. His name was Eugene Kellner.

I came here after driving to New Hope and all over the countryside looking for a farm site. Then I happened to remember that I had shown this property to possible buyers at the request of Eugene Kellner. He had sent the prospects up here because he owned the property and some prospective buyers wanted a builder to advise them, before they bought, whether the property was conceivable as an alteration and remodeling job and how much it would cost. I had taken several people out in a business way and I didn't give it another thought. After taking this trip to New Hope, I happened to think, "why don't I consider that old place, that Kelner's been asking me to look at for others." So I called Kelner and asked him how much he wanted for the property on Morris Road. He told me how much he wanted for that. I believed he might want to dispose of the entire property and when he gave me a price for the whole sixty-one acres, it was only about twice as much as he wanted for just the frontage on Morris Road and I said, "I'll take it." I didn't realize at the time that there was another old house on the property. I had never shown the other house. I had only shown one.

The condition of the main house when I purchased it was not habitable. The windows were boarded up; floors were missing and the exterior was in poor shape. I started to work to make the house shipshape and structurally sound. I put on an addition and I moved in in 1949.

When I started the work the floors were all absent. A person couldn't walk through a room. If he did, he'd fall through. The windows were all knocked out and boarded up. The roof was in bad shape. The house was really a relic, or junk. The people had used the property as a public dump. There were truckloads of rubbish all over the place. I took twenty truckloads of rubbish away from the house. Then I began to tear off the old porch (which was a sham), tore off the frame end, which was asbestos shingles.

This was a typical Pennsylvania farmhouse. It was the kind of house farmers built from the 1700's for many years. The first floor had a door that led into the kitchen which was the general use area, serving as kitchen, dining room, family room. It was separated from the parlor on the opposite end. By going through a doorway in this partition, you could enter the parlor. The parlor had its own door going outside and the kitchen had its own door going outside.

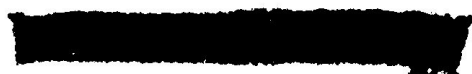
When I tore down the partition, I decided to make this one room instead of two, I decided that two doors on that front wall were wasteful, so I left the door that led to the parlor and I made a window where the door was on the kitchen side. The marble doorsill under the window is still intact. It is worn from the wear and tear of all the action on the kitchen side of the house.

The parlor was used only on special occasions. If there was a funeral, wedding, if the Preacher or other important people were visiting, the door was opened and they were entertained in that room. It was never for the family's general use.

Upstairs there were two-and-a-half bedrooms, reached by a stairway going up 180 degrees. Consequently, one couldn't get furniture up or down and I thought I'd make better use of it so I made it into a closet. There's no stairway there any longer. The stairway that goes to the third floor is still there and it is still a 180-degree winding stairway.

I added an addition to the house. On the first floor I added a dining room, kitchen, den and a powder room. On the second floor, I made two big bedrooms with large walk-in closets instead of the two-and-a-half small rooms. They rarely had closets in those days; if they did, they were only nine or ten inches deep. I built a master bedroom and adjoining bath with a big closet area so that there are three bedrooms on the second floor and two baths.

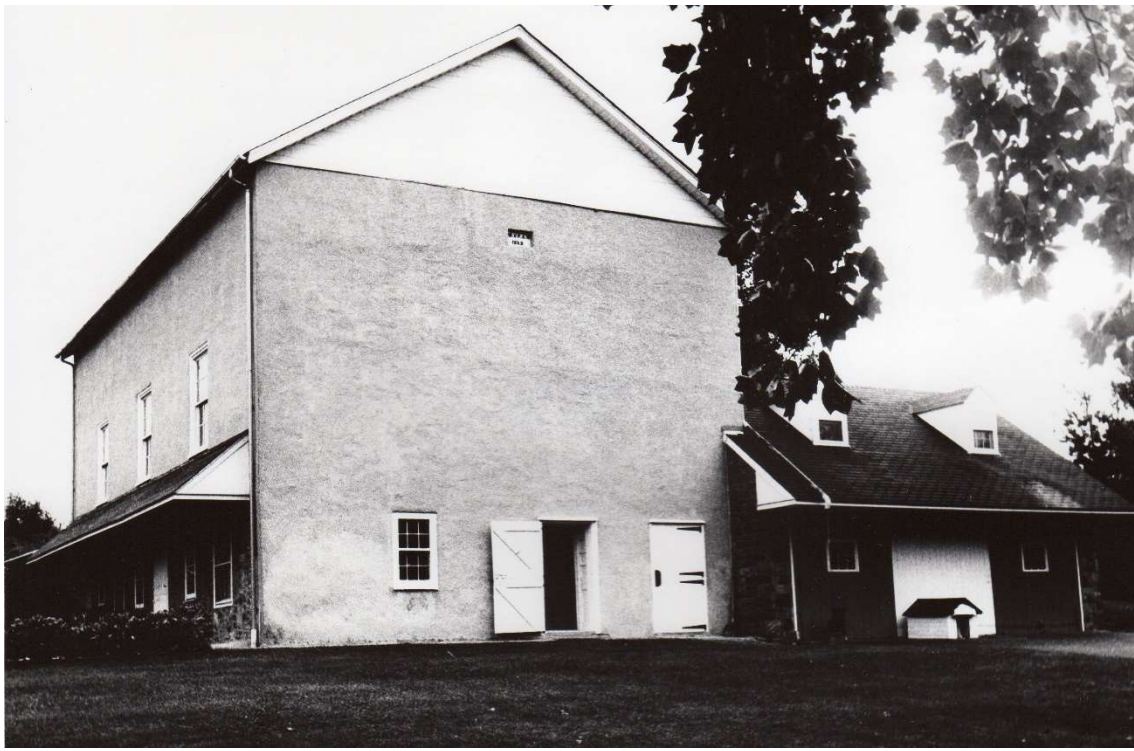
On the southwest corner of the house there was an ailanthus tree growing exactly out of the corner, next to the wall. This tree had started as a seedling and fastened itself around the corner. I wanted to take it down because it was an ugly looking ailanthus but everyone said, "You'd better not take it down because if you do you'll upset the house." I had no worries about that. As you can see by my before and after pictures, we cut around it and cut the tree down and never even had a stone loose in the wall.



M. & P. A. W.
1859.

I don't know when this house was built, but I would presume, if I were a farmer, I'd build the house before I'd build the barn. The barn does have a date stone carved in marble and it is authentic, and according to Mr. Walker's initials it was built in 1859. The house could have been built after that or before that date. I've never checked any records

I put a new roof on the stone barn, tore off the framing and put masonry in, made a two-car garage with an apartment over it. Eventually I sold everything off except eight acres, my house and barn.



Remodeled Barn

I've mentioned the other house on the upper end of the property. I didn't do anything with that house for a long time. When I came here it was occupied by a man who was known as "The old Russian." He had his son living with him and he paid me ten dollars a month rent for the house. He had a house that had no conveniences. He dug the water out of a well. He had a kitchen range that he used for cooking and heat. The house then had two or three fireplaces but he didn't use them. The kitchen stove was much handier. I don't know how many years he had lived there before I bought the property. I raised his rent and I fixed the roof and made some minor improvements. He stayed there until he passed away at the age of eighty-five. Then I decided I would make something of the house; so I started to fix it up. Later I rented it for a couple of years. Eventually I sold all but eight acres and this house went with the acreage I sold. Sam Trueblood is living there now.

It has about the same proportions as the main house. The one difference is that my house is unusual for a farmhouse in that there was a ceiling in here which was much higher than in the average farmhouse. Most of them are about seven-and-a-half to eight-and-a-half feet high, but this ceiling measured nine-and-a-half feet. I dropped the ceiling - it's a hanging ceiling. It's not against the joists.

We stripped the walls, put in new floors, painted. We blasted the walls outside and put on new finishes, a new roof, new cornices. Everything inside the house is refinished except the windows. The doors are new because there were none, but they are replicas of old doors.

I had to replace everything because everything was broken or missing. Window sash were beyond repair; however, I used the old frame. There was no plumbing or heat. What I started out with was a wrecked building with no conveniences, a well with a hand pump, filth and rot.

I have axed beams in the cellar, about two-and-a-half feet apart, heavy logs, flat on the top, round on the bottom, with the bark still on. They were rotting so I had to put up shoring to hold the ends up. Then I put a new 3 X 10 joist in between every one of these to give it more stiffness. Because the old beams had settled so badly, we had to pad them before we put the new floor in.

I've done a lot of work for architects who restored historical buildings. Most of what we call colonial Pennsylvania homes were built by farmers and people who had little home businesses and industries. They were usually no more than two rooms on the first floor. The typical construction was native stone sometimes taken out of the nearest piece of farmland that showed stone and carted and hauled by sledge or wagon. There were no trucks, trains or bulldozers only horses, wagons, scoops and hard manual labor.

The lime probably came from Corson's Quarry as Corson's goes back earlier than many of these houses. There was no cement until about 1840 or 1850. Before that time, all mortars were made of lime and sand, but not washed or cleaned. In some of the old houses, the mortar is so poor that if the pointing was taken off, the rain would wash the mortar out of the wall in ten or twenty years. Pointing in those early days was made of lime because there was no cement. Some of the old lime pointing is still holding today because the quality of the native lime was exceedingly fine and durable.

The houses inside were plastered directly to the stone wall. Lime, reinforced with camel hair made the brown coat, or the first coat. The second coat, the finished plaster on the interior, was again lime and gauging plaster that went on just like the icing on a cake to make a white finish.

Most of the old houses have fine millwork in doors, door frames and window frames. Most of the wood was taken from the surrounding forest. Early in 1700 and 1800 there was an ample supply of Pennsylvania white pine, which was so popular in those years that almost every tree was cut down. There is no fine quality pine today. Windows were made of it. Some of the timbers were made of it. Shingles and lath were made of it. Most of the timber in the house was white pine and they selected the best for millwork, windows and doors. It is a durable wood; one of the finest woods we've ever had for millwork.

Most of the heavy structural timbers were taken out of the woods. Oak was very popular. They would axe the top of the log off to get a flat surface and lay their flooring down on top of that. On the second floor, they'd axe the top as well as the bottom to get a flat surface because the bottom side was going to be plastered. They cut it off with a broad axe. The introduction of brick came late into this area. Ambler had a lot of the brick imported. It was too expensive to bring brick out here from the city, so the native stone was used. The Marble Hall area is nearby and marble was used extensively and farmers had marble in their houses and even in the stable and barn.



"Pleasant Hill", Home of Dr. and Mrs. Harry D. Carrozza

"Pleasant Hill"

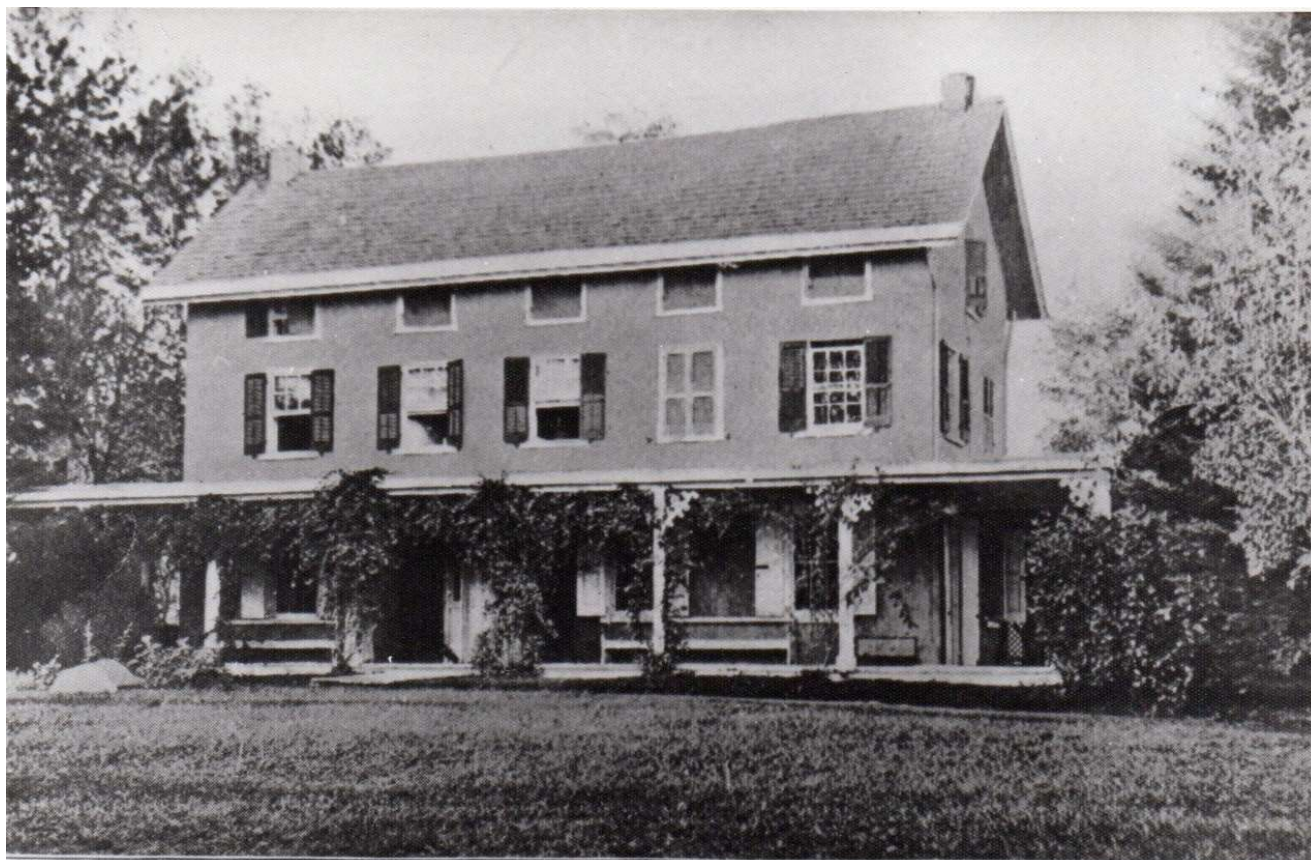
By Dr. Harry D. Carrozza
Photography by George S. Peck

The census of 1734 showed Cadawallader Morris to be proprietor of the land in the area of Mt. Pleasant Avenue. It is thought that in 1760 Johnathan Taylor purchased 186 acres from the original Morris tract; however, the deed for the area of Mt. Pleasant is missing. On February 19, 1776, at the death of Jonathan Taylor, the land passed to his sons. Isaac and Morris Taylor inherited the central part of the homestead comprising 100 acres. As the Revolutionary War drew on, the sympathies of Isaac Taylor were with the Mother Country. He was a Tory and eventually left home and entered the British Army. Prior to that, he aided the British by selling supplies to the British troops. As a result of his activities, he was arrested by the American authorities.

At a meeting of the Supreme Executive Council in Philadelphia on January 28, 1779, Isaac Taylor was ordered to be arrested for high treason. His property was ordered to be confiscated and sold as the lands of a traitor. This sale, however, did not take place until two years after the strife was over. Fifty acres were sold to the University of Pennsylvania on September 22, 1785. After Isaac's death in 1789, his brother, Morris, bought back the land from the University for £100 and the land again became known as the Taylor plantation for the next fourteen years.

Between 1803 and 1817, the land and homestead on the north corner, at Mt. Pleasant Avenue and Morris Road, passed through several owners. In 1817, the property was acquired by Dr. Thomas Chalkey James of Philadelphia. Dr. James was married to Hannah Morris, who was a descendant of Abram Dawes and James Morris. In 1834, Dr. James conveyed three-fourths of an acre of the property on the northeast side of Morris Road to Philip Matthias, Benjamin Mattis, and Jacob Conrad, trustees of the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, to erect a meetinghouse and provide a burying place for the dead.

In 1836, Dr. James died and the land passed through several hands eventually being sold to Saunders Lewis of Whitpain in 1854. At that time, a three-story wing was added to the original homesite by the Lewis family and the estate became known as "Sunset Hill." In 1867, the Lewis family sold the property to a prominent Philadelphia Quaker, Anthony P. Morris. Morris used the home as his country residence and renamed it "Farm View." In 1879, the Morris family sold the home to Ann Jane Mercer after which in 1885 it became part of the Mercer Presbyterian Home for Retired Clergy.



"FARM VIEW"—MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNA.

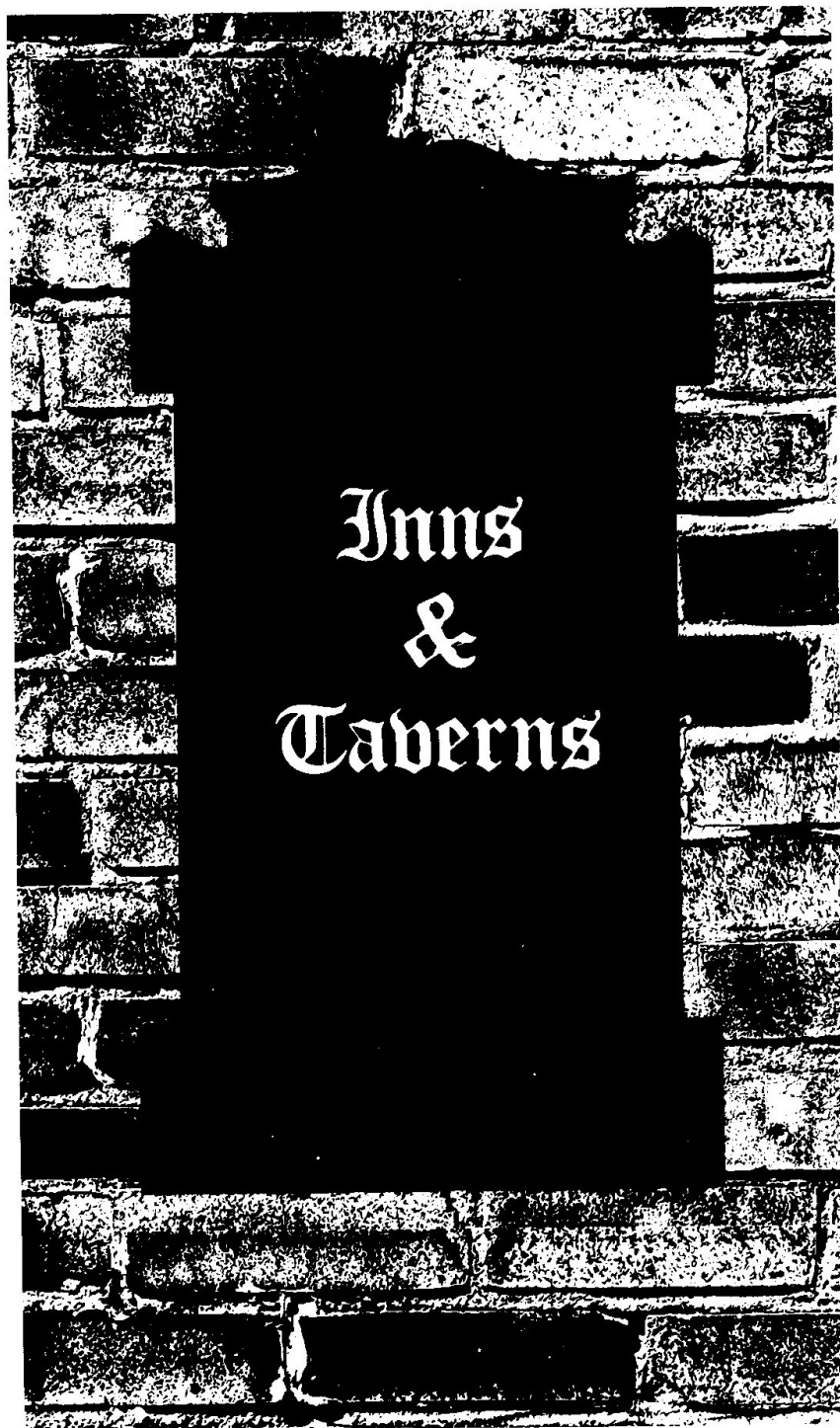
COUNTRY RESIDENCE OF THE LATE ANTHONY P. MORRIS

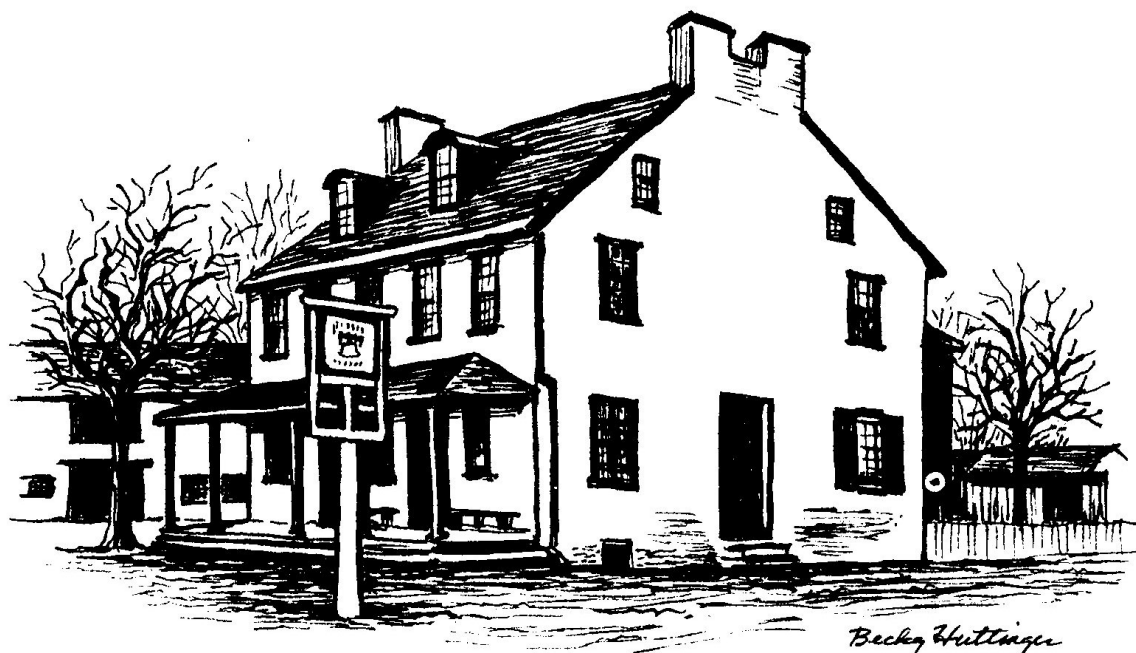
At around the turn of the century, a victorian carriage house was added to the property just adjacent to the Baptist Church and the old root cellar. In 1933, the property was acquired by Theodore Seeyle who lived there with his family until his death in 1963. During that time, many changes were made in all parts of the dwelling as well as the addition of a magnificent patio which overlooks the carriage house and fields.

In 1971, the property was acquired by the present owners. Dr. and Mrs. Harry D. Carrozza. Today, the home and land amount to well over five acres. There are many fine old trees on the property including several tamaracks and cedars which are well over one hundred years old. The carriage house serves as a bath house as well as a stable tor two Sicilian Burros, while the old root cellar still remains functional as a place for storing vegetables. During the spring and summer, the fertile soil continues to yield great amounts of vegetables. Presently, a formal garden which was started by Mrs. Theodore Seeyle is being restored to its original grandeur.



Carriage House





Early Sketch of Blue Bell Inn

"Blue Bell Inn"

By Herman J. Prischmann
Photography by George S. Peck
Artwork by Becky Huttinger

John Johnson and Agnes, his wife, sold their property at Skippack Pike and Blue Bell Road to John Phipps who retained ownership for over fifty years. Johnathan Phipps and Squire Phipps, who were executors of the estate of John Phipps, sold the messuage and over three acres of land to Joseph Pritchard, on April 1, 1797, for £316.

In 1777, Military Maps noted the location of the inn called "White Horse" when General Washington located his headquarters at "Dawesfield" on Lewis Lane. Some 10,000 troops were in the area of Whitpain Township.

General George Washington reputedly stayed in the second floor front room of the Inn, formerly known as room number six. This room displayed military equipment of the times and was a tourist attraction until 1928 when the second floor was remodeled and the room became part of a small banquet hall and the display was sold. The story goes that he had fun with the maids employed at the Inn.

A story credited to Townsend Ward has been put to rhyme and is related in a newspaper article dated 1920:

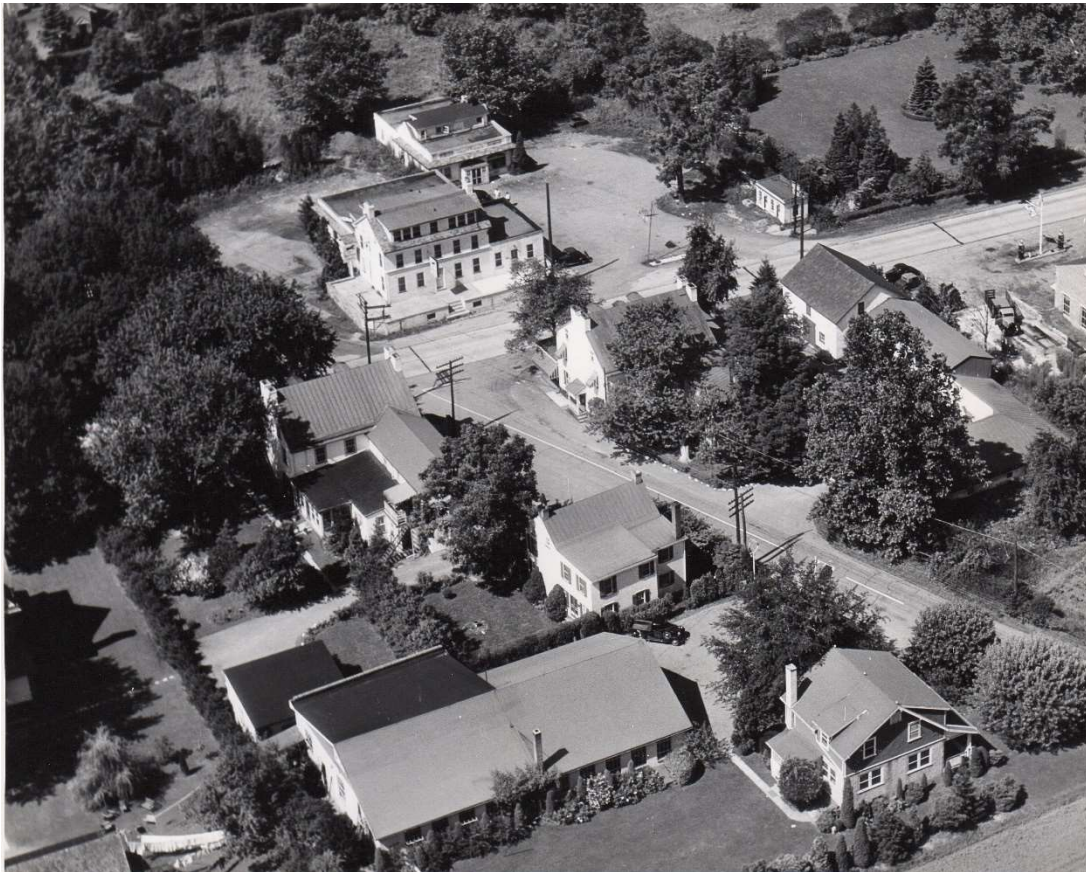
"George Washington, once a day,
At old Blue Bell Inn chanced to stay,
And as he stood not very far,
From the kitchen door, just left ajar,
He overheard a young maid say,
That if, for once, she had her way,
She'd ask on earth no greater bliss,
Than to give him one good, sweet kiss.
That door, flung open with a punch,
Revealed of girls a giggling bunch.
'Which of you girls,' he jauntily asked,
'Has just her dearest wish unmasked?'
But in response the bashful graces,
Did nothing more than hide their faces,
'Is that so?' said George, 'Oh, very well,
Though none the damsel's name will tell,
So fair a chance I shall not miss,
For each of you I'm going to kiss.'
Whereon, of course, he kept his word,
"And, strange to say, no maid demurred."

Joseph Pritchard, who was listed as "storekeeper," remained here for forty years when he sold, on April 5, 1837, to Jesse Fitzgerald for \$2,500. There were a number of transfers of the property over the next forty years. Jesse Fitzgerald sold to Benjamin Hill for \$6,000. It was then sold to William Michener, on April 5, 1847, for \$9,600 and he sold, in 1857, to John Whitcomb, who was owner for almost twenty years, when he sold to William Hood for \$6,700 on March 29, 1876. Eight days later, on April 6, 1876, William Hood sold to Daniel Erb for \$7,000 and he remained here twenty-seven years when he sold to Abram J. Unruh for \$11,500. In 1909, Frank J. Kraemer bought the property for \$10,000 with Abram Unruh holding a \$6,000 mortgage. A sheriffs sale, in 1913, brought the property back to Abram Unruh; and when he sold to Arthur A. Fretz, on September 5, 1913, two acres had been sold and the property now had a little more than one acre of ground. On August 16, 1917, Arthur A. Fretz sold to John C. Hinkle and in 1920 the Inn was purchased by Herman R. Prischmann and was subsequently transferred to his wife. Rose M. Prischmann, in 1928, and remained under that ownership until 1945 when it was sold to Karl Friedel and John Lamprecht. In 1960, John Lamprecht bought the Friedel interest and a family corporation was formed. John Lamprecht's son, John, is actively engaged in the operation of the Inn at present.

Extensive remodeling of the Inn took place in the sixties. The Skippack Pike entrance was closed in and attached to the garage and became the present bar-room. This room, in 1918, housed eight riding horses which could be hired for a ride over the surrounding countryside.



The Blue Bell In – 1977



Aerial view of Blue Bell Inn Intersection

During the period between 1918 and 1945, some guests of the Inn were: Senator Vare, who always arrived on horseback with his entourage; former Governor Fisher of Pennsylvania: Charles S. Johnson, prominent Montgomery County Republican leader and first Secretary of Revenue of Pennsylvania. Other prominent guests were: William H. Wanamaker and Charles Strawbridge. Some "film greats" of the period were dinner guests at the Inn, such as: Walter Houston, Billie Burke, Joan Fontaine, Joan Blondell and Raymond Massey. Other political figures also rendezvoused at the Inn and became known as the "Blue Bell Inn Gang" who named the Governors of Pennsylvania. They were: Senator James H. Duff; Harvey Taylor, of Harrisburg fame; former Governor Fine and Fred Peters, former Montgomery County Commissioner. Many fox chases originated at the Inn during this period and set out across the country toward Gwynedd. It is interesting to note that when the Pigeontown Post Office opened in 1840 it adopted the name of Blue Bell because it was directly across the Plymouth Road from the Inn, which, by that time, had a sign of a bell painted blue thereon.

The Blue Bell Horse Company, for the detection of thieves and recovery of stolen horses. was first organized on November 23. 1841. with fifty-four members. Officers were: President, George F. Shaeff, Vice-President. Linlord S. Preston; Secretary. Joseph Phipps Conard; Treasurer, David De Haven: Committee of Accounts; Jacob Hoover. Benjamin P. Wertsner and George G. McNeil. Annual meetings were held at Blue Bell Inn which had a special meeting room located on the North Court.

Other Organizations in Blue Bell during the 1800's were: Pigeontown Militia Company: Blue Bell Livestock Insurance Company, organised September 15. 1855: The Blue Bell Benevolent Society, organized April 15, 1867 with President, Jacob Hoover: Vice-President, George Shoemaker: Secretary: George G. Rossiter; Treasurer. William H. Slingluff: Trustees: Samuel D. Shearer. Linlord S. Preston, Henry Fasset Conard. All these groups met at the "Blue Bell Inn."



"The Blue Horse"

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

The "Blue Horse Tavern," a well known inn across from the "Blue Bell Inn," has been known by several names over the years.

In the 1700's, the property was owned by the DeHaven family and was a private residence until 1926 when it became the "Villa Mona Inn." Later, it was known as "Frank and Eddie's" and most recently "Tommy Woodeshick's Pier 37." Presently it is under new management.



The Blue Horse

The "Broad Axe Tavern"

By Christy Miller

Photography by George S. Peck

The term "history" may be defined as a systematic record of facts of the past. Facts, on the other hand, are truths that can be proven. When one is attempting to amass all the facts about a given subject, the distinction between fact and fable becomes immediately clear.

It was my purpose to uncover the history of the "Broad Axe Tavern," situated at the corner of Butler and Skippack Pikes, in the village of Broad Axe. The quite obvious place to start my search was the historical society. In this case, Ft. Washington was the most local. Having put together a most spicy collection of accounts and dates, I proceeded to discuss this compilation with a reputed historian. Upon meeting with this person of accumulated knowledge, two questions were continually being asked: "Where did this information come from?" and "How do you know the source was accurate?" Continuing this interview, I found that the only way to be absolutely sure of the truths surrounding this tavern was to go back to the original deeds, these deeds being recorded as the land changed hands down through the years. In this way I would know that the information I was gathering was fact, not just a tale passed on and changing with each telling.

Thus, I set about my task of going back through the deeds. Owing to the fact that the "Broad Axe Tavern" is in Whitpain Township, all records are kept on microfilm at the Norristown Court House in the Records Room by the Recorder of Deeds. I started with the present owner and went backwards. My findings are these:

Between the year of 1975 and 1784, which is the date of the last recorded deed at Norristown, that which is now the "Broad Axe Tavern," changed hands thirteen times. In less than two hundred years, the average number of years that it was owned by one person was fifteen. The name of the building changed three times. From 1962 to 1880, it was a Hotel, and from 1880 to 1796, it became a tavern again. Not only did the owners and its name change; so did the acreage of which it was a part. From 1975 to 1880, it existed as 3.79 acres of land and from 1880 to 1796 it was a 47-acre piece of land.



"Broad Axe Tavern" – 1977



"Broad Axe Hotel" - 1960

Perhaps one of the most interesting facets in taking a trip back through history is the English language itself. In our twentieth century, the ability to be concise is applauded. This is quite characteristic of the various deeds in the 1900's. They are concise and to the point, easily read, and having no unnecessary words. As we get in the 19th century, the language changes drastically. An example of this is the land demarcation. The "Broad Axe Tavern" is now located quite simply at the such and such corner and in a certain town or village and contains a certain amount of land. In the 19th century it is located at a stone's throw from a point and just so many paces toward or away from said point. In accordance with the boundary descriptions changing, likewise do the descriptions of the physical layout. In this century, the property is comprised of distinct buildings, whereby earlier the deeds refer to a messuage. This is a "dwelling house with the adjacent buildings and curtilage and the adjoining lands."

Thus, as the words become more flowery and less concise, it becomes increasingly difficult to put the facts together and to know just what actually existed on the property. Only by going back and resitting through these deeds, can some clarity be brought into focus.

As I reached my end at Norristown, I was referred to the Archives Room in the Philadelphia City Hall, where all the deeds prior to 1784 are kept. Rather than the well organized microfilm files, I was now leafing through endless deed books in desperate need of conditioning or repair. Often, I would find the appropriate deed but with no prior deed. This then meant looking through the will of the last owner-or owners hoping to find the name of the person from whom it was obtained.

My luck was slim, and my findings were few; however, the facts are as follows:

From 1796 to 1757 there were four separate owners. By this time, the land and buildings had ceased being sold for profit. Rather, it was passed down through the family, and with it, each new owner did what he could. The earliest owner that I have researched is Nathaniel Davis who owned it from 1757 to 1770. He was a yeoman who, with his wife, kept the property which contained 68 acres of land. In 1770, still alive, he deeded it to his son, Jonathon Davis. At this time Jonathon was a coachmaker while his father was the Innkeeper. In 1775, both father and son were deceased and a relation, John Ashmead, was willed it. John was then a blacksmith. In 1796, he died and passed it by will to his sister, Catherine Rex. She later married and it was passed to her husband's side of the family.

Throughout all my research, I was hoping to get back as far as 1685, which is the date previously marked on the building. It very well could be that this date is accurate as to being the first structure existing on this property. However, the facts that I have obtained take the Broad Axe back to 1757, and that, in itself, is a substantial history for one to be proud of.



Becky Huttinger

The "Waggon Inn"

By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck
Artwork by Becky Huttinger

The following account is taken from Historical Sketches by Clara Beck, pp. 139-

Thomas Fitzwater was the son of a prominent Quaker preacher, who came to America from Middlesex, England, on the ship "Welcome" in the company of William Penn. As early as 1705, the said T. Fitzwater saw a great opportunity while travelling along the Skippack Road.

Tradition credits him with having built the "Waggon Inn" founded in 1758, which was a modest one-and-a-half story building on the turnpike.

About 1761, Fitzwater sold the Inn and forty acres to L. Rennach. He, Rennach, became financially embarrassed because of pressure put on him from the two colonial churches, as to the kind of "social and moral activities carried on in his house, within a mile of the said churches."

In 1776, a Judah Folke, High Sheriff of Philadelphia, sold the "Waggon Inn" to John Porter. He was the landlord when Washington ordered "men to stand guard here with drawn swords while the Army passed on the way to Germantown."

In 1779, John Porter sold "the Inn" with thirty-eight acres to Benjamin Penrose, who owned it until 1793, when it came into the possession of the De Haven family — Issac, Samuel and Moses.

In 1797, the DeHaven's sold to John Wentz. Apparently the old Inn was involved in a series of "legal hitches," for the landlords came and went with surprising readiness: from Wentz to Lenard Styer, to Stephen Pott, to Ashmead, to Jacob Hawes. Finally, in 1804 the "Waggon Inn" turned a new leaf which made it, for years, a place of importance in township and county affairs.

Thomas Humphry, age 26, became the owner and colorful "host" and played a great part in the growth of the area. His thriving business prompted him to buy "all four corners." The original building, no doubt, was dilapidated, so he tore it down and erected another on the same spot where the present one now stands.

The building is described as having two stories. The first floor contained four rooms with a kitchen in the rear. There was a tap room at the east end heated by a great open fireplace where grog, flip and ale were served. The mason work was done by Edward Roberts and the carpentry work by William Hurst.

Humphry was politically minded. He was host to such organizations as County Commissioners in 1805, as well as the Federal-Republican Convention. He was a Colonel in the Light Dragoons in the War of 1812, and he championed all patriotic movements, and earned the respect of the business community by being a director of the Montgomery National Bank of Norristown.

In 1822, the genial host. General Thomas Humphry, died and was buried with his ancestors in Montgomery Township.

In 1824 Samuel Wentz, of the "Rising Sun" Wentz's down the road about one-half mile, after operating the establishment for two years, met a tragic death. His widow, Eliza Humphry Wentz, continued the business with son, Thomas, taking over the "man's" work.

The period between the last above date and 1857-1866 is rather vague with only these owner listed:

Dates of Transfer	Owners	Comments
1857	Wells Tomlinson	
1859	Ephraim Shearer	(lived on N. Wales Road)
	Enos Hoxworth	(Cattle drover)
	Joel Wentz	
	Jesse Fisher	(paid \$6,500 for property)

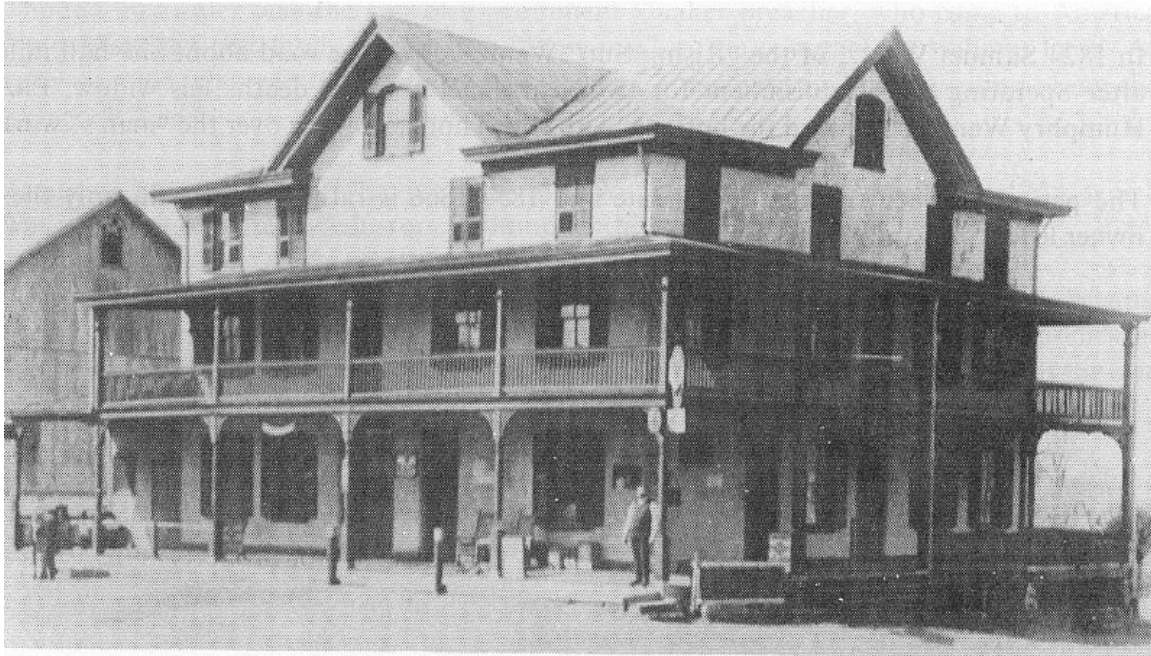
The remainder of the owners follows in this order:

Dates of Transfer	Owners	Comments
1866	William Hood	
1867	Charles Fillman	
1870	Albert Katz	Grandfather of Mrs. Otis Fry
1882	William Blackburn	Bought for \$12,000
1886	Ellen Eacock	Bought for \$14,000
1887	Elwood Hart	Bought for \$15,000
1893	Albert Mauch	Bought for \$16,000
1899	William Baird	Bought for \$16,000
1903	Mr. Snyder	
1906	Eban Clark	Bought for \$17,500
1907	Christian Illi	Bought for \$18,000
1908	Charles Spaeth	
1913	Mr. Shantz-Mr. Spaeth	
	Mr. Goetner	
1917	Harry Cassell	Father of Mrs Henry Whittock
1925	William Reed	

All during the nourishing years, the huge building on the opposite side of Swedesford Rd. (Rt. 202, where Mobile Station now stands) was the stable for the hotel.

An underground wooden pipe carried water from the hotel to the stables for watering purposes. It was dug up when the road was repaved in more recent years.

In 1913, the owner, apparently Charles Spaeth, allowed that corner to be used by the newly organized Fire Company. In 1917, through a series of legal maneuvers the old livery stable became the Fire Co. property.



Hotel Centre Square, c. 1922

That building became the center of social and cultural activities for the whole township. It was here that the Grange held meetings. Musicals, Chautauqua, plays, minstrel shows, carnivals, graduation exercises, church suppers, political rallies, horse company meetings, 4-H Clubs, and Halloween parties and dances, all took place at the Centre Square Fire Hall.

The auditorium would seat, on folding wooden chairs, between three and four hundred people in the summertime, but less in the winter because one could not sit too closely to the two or three pot-bellied coal-stoves. The stage was adequate and two dressing rooms or meeting rooms provided ample extra space. The kitchen and engine room took up the remainder of the building. In 1953, because of increased traffic on Rts. 73 and 202 the "Fire House" was demolished and the Fire Company moved to its new building at its present location.

It should be noted here, that on the May 14, 1949, cover of the Saturday Evening Post the old "Waggon Inn" received nationwide coverage. The painting by Steven Dohanos, of the

Post staff, was created to take in the front of the now Reed's Country Store and the

Fireman "on call." The original is in the present Fire House and a copy is placed in back of the counter in the department store.

William Reed, purchaser in 1925, during the Prohibition and Depression era, operated an all-purpose, all-product type store. He and his industrious wife and children worked practically around the clock. Reddie's favorite bit of advice to all customers for any and all ills was; "drink hot water, it will cure everything."

Today, the building houses a furniture, lamp, and antique store conducted by Theresa Reed Murphy, with the help of her Aunt and Uncle, Theresa and Howard Faust.





Skippack and DeKalb Intersection.c.1920



Firehouse.c.1917



Firehouse Today



“Rising Sun Inn” Now A Private Residence

"Rising Sun Inn"

By Dorothy S. Conard
Photography by George S. Peck

This homestead, a red brick house on Skippack Pike at Cathcart Road, was for more than a century a "wayside inn," one of the most notable along the Skippack Pike. It was one of the few old taverns that was not built at the crossing of important roads. Here have stopped innumerable way-farers, an endless succession of teamsters and market men with their loads of produce. At no inn along the road did so many wagons stop and remain overnight. It was called the "wheat market" because the millers and farmers met here for the sale and purchase of wheat.

From 1831 to 1867, the elections of Whitpain Township were held here. On October 4, 1788, a county meeting for the nomination of a ticket was held at this house, then kept by John Wentz. The old tavern had a "rising sun" for its sign and was known as the "Rising Sun Inn." The brick house, still in fine condition today, was erected by Abraham Wentz in 1764. It is reputed to be the oldest brick house in Montgomery County. Tradition says that John Wentz, his son and future landlord, had just been clothed in trousers at the time it was first opened. It was a public house until 1867, more than 100 years.

Abraham Wentz came to Whitpain in 1759. In the list of taxables of the year 1760, he is called an "innkeeper." He bought 110 acres of land from John Johnson, which was part of a larger tract belonging to Anthony Morris and Rees Thomas that had originally been purchased by Richard Whitpain. A dwelling was there and sixty-acres of land had been cleared on one or both sides of the road when Abraham Wentz purchased the property. He speedily added other surrounding lands to his farm.

The name "Abraham" was popular in the Wentz family and there have been three owners of the Inn by that name, including the first and last.

Abraham Wentz was born in 1725 and died in 1774, at age 49. He left no will and the estate went to his widow, her children and four grandchildren, who were sons of Abraham, Jr., who had died shortly after his father and before the estate had been settled. During this time the property was greatly neglected. In 1784, the Orphans' Court adjudged the plantation and tavern to John Wentz, son of the first Abraham, who also owned the property across from the tavern on Skippack Pike.

Abraham Wentz, the oldest son of John Wentz, became owner of the tavern and homestead in 1818 and remained there as inn-keeper until 1867 when the tavern ceased to have a license. He died in 1870 and willed the estate to his son, Joseph Tyson Wentz. Finally, in 1887 Joseph Tyson Wentz conveyed the property to his brother Abraham, who was owner until 1888 when it passed out of the Wentz family.

An article in the Times Herald, April 26, 1939, reported that the inscriptions on two tombstones in the woods on the property, that once marked the graves of early settlers, were still quite discernible: "Barbara Kres, died January 16, 1757, aged 62 year - Charles Kres, died November 10, 1766, aged 72 years." They were evidently husband and wife. He had been born in 1694.



B. H.

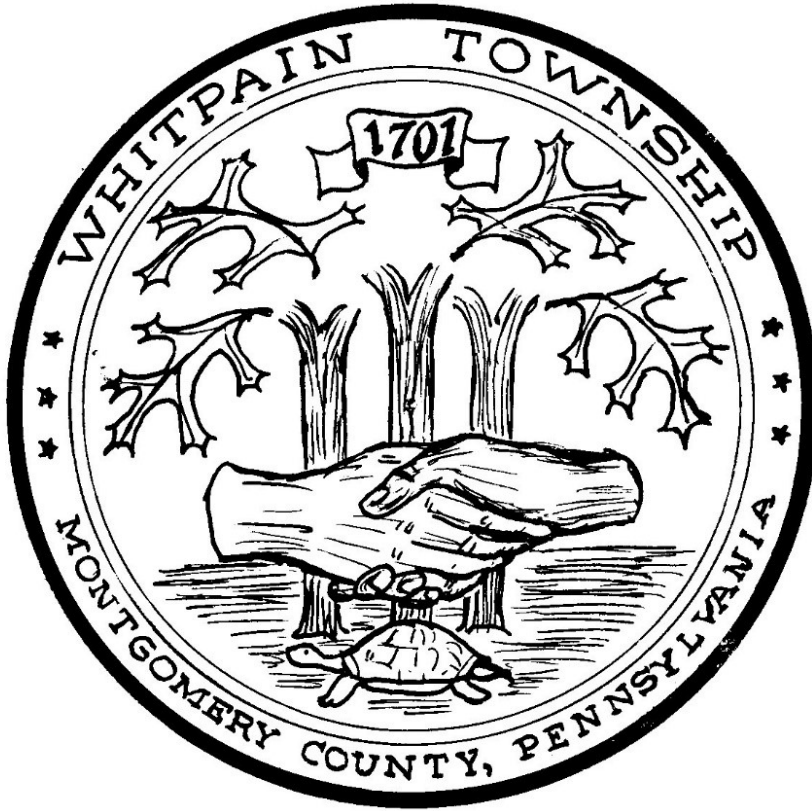
BARBARA KRES
Died tanuary 16
1757 Aged 62 year.

Edward Mathews, in an article in a scrap-book at the Montgomery County Historical Society, conjectured that they might have been tombstones from a graveyard established there when there was an intention to build Boehm's Church on that site instead of on Penllyn Pike in Blue Bell.

Bicentennial Activities

1975 - 1977

This book is one the endeavors Whitpain has undertaken to honor our Nation's Bicentennial. There have been many others, including the formation of a Historical Society which, we hope, will continue to foster interest in Whitpain's past and future.



The Whitpain Township Bicentennial Seal
By Dr. Robert Carlson

The Whitpain Township Bicentennial Seal
By Dr. Robert Carlson

Summation of Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission

By Ellen Pittenger Gladeck

At three o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday April 13, 1975, a representative group of the citizens of Whitpain Township gathered at the township building to discuss the possibility of Whitpain Township becoming an official Bicentennial Community.

It soon became evident that the Bicentennial Era was an excellent time to remind the Whitpain community of it's rich historical heritage and that Whitpain Township should, indeed, become an official Bicentennial Community.

It was decided at the outset that this undertaking was to be of a voluntary nature. That was not really a very hard decision to make considering the fact that there was no money to be had.

The following officers were duly elected:

Chairman: Ellen Pittenger Gladeck

Vice Chairman: Carolyn Marie Gormley

Treasurer: Elizabeth M. De Vincent

Recording Secretary: Malcolm McFarland, Jr.

Corresponding Secretary: Susanne E. Whann

Meetings were set for the third Sunday afternoon of each month. However, we planned to meet each week for the rest of the summer.

The Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission has been a very ambitious and industrious group. The Commission, with the cooperation of the members of the community at large, has been able to sponsor and carry to fruition many very worthwhile projects.

The following paragraphs will deal with the projects attempted and completed by the Whitpain Township Commission.

Saturday, September 20, 1975, dawned fair and the members of the Parade Committee had high hopes for good weather for our first venture.

The sun had disappeared behind the clouds by nine o'clock, but the parade marched bravely away from Shady Grove School and up Skippack Pike into the face of a growing mist. In fact, by the time the marchers had found their way to the fair grounds of St. Helena's Catholic Church, they had marched through mist, wind, and rain and were glad to accept the hot dogs being given out as a small reward for their efforts. In spite of the weather, the parade was a huge success.



Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission Float – Courtesy North Penn Reporter

November 16, 1975, was a beautiful cool Sunday in which the first Historical House Tour of Whitpain Township was held. Eight houses and three churches, two of which were colonial and one modern, were opened to the public.

The houses were staffed with guides clad in colonial dress. Refreshments were served at Boehm's Church.

The house tour was greatly appreciated by the people of Whitpain Township.

The evening of July 17, 1975, found the members of the Historical Society Committee of the Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission and interested members of the Ambler Bicentennial Commission meeting at St. John's Lutheran Church, Center Square. That evening the By-laws of the fledgling Wissahickon Valley Historical Society were written.

On September 2, 1975, officers were elected and on the following May 10, 1976, the new society was incorporated with the State of Pennsylvania. With this act of incorporation the third objective of the Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission was realized.



Wissahickon Junior Historians Float, First Place Trophy Winner – Photo Courtesy North Penn Reporter



Bicentennial Float and Flag, 1977 Parade

In the fall of 1975, it was pointed out to the Bicentennial Commission that Whitpain Township had no official seal. Therefore, it was decided to hold a contest during which members of the Township might submit renderings of their ideas of a suitable seal. When the contest drew to a close, the judges chose a drawing that had been submitted by Ur. Robert Carlson to present to the Supervisors. It was accepted as the official Bicentennial Seal.

When a township has a new seal, it needs a new flag to go with it. Therefore, we began to look for someone who was an expert with a needle and thread. Donna Cook Stockett, an artist in her own right and a resident of the township, stepped forward and volunteered her talents. She constructed a beautiful hand embroidered flag; faithfully following the seal Dr. Carlson had drawn.

On the evening of July 6, 1976, the new flag, securely fastened to a new wooden pole that had been constructed by Malcolm McFarland, Jr., also a resident of Whitpain Township, was presented to the Whitpain Township Board of Supervisors along with the handsomely framed seal.



Presentation of Whitpain township Flag, L to R, Ellen P. Gladeck, Donna C. Stockett
Dr. Robert Carlson, Malcolm McFarland, Jr.

Saturday, May 15, 1976, found members of the Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission manning a booth at the Bicentennial Fair of the Wissahickon School District.

On June 14, 1976, the Bicentennial Commission sponsored the opening night performance of an original drama depicting the court martial of Anthony Wayne entitled "Anthony's Mad, Anthony's Mad" and presented by the Montgomery County Community College.

During the summer of 1976 Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission co-sponsored a contest for the painting of fire plugs with the Township Park and Recreation Board.

The Bicentennial Commission also sold mugs and ashtrays imprinted with the new seal. We also sold note paper designed by Becky Huttinger.

October 16, 1976, was a bright, windy and quite cold Saturday on which the Commission held "Colonial Saturday." This was the occasion of our second Township Parade and a Colonial Craft Fair.

The Parade again began at Shady Grove School, and found its way to the parking lot behind the Montgomery County Community College where our Colonial Craft Fair was being held. There, fifty-different colonial crafters either sold or demonstrated their crafts.

Sunday, November 14, 1976, found hundreds of men, women and children again visiting the opened colonial homes and churches of Whitpain Township. The event was the second Historical House Tour sponsored by the Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission. Seven houses, two churches and the Whitpain Library were opened to the public.

One of the greatest decisions of the Bicentennial Commission was to write down the history of Whitpain Township in book form. A committee of interested persons was formed for this purpose.

The men and women on this committee have worked unceasingly for two years, reading and digging up the historical facts about the Township. A great deal of praise should be given to these dedicated people for the effort that they have shown in bringing this book to it's final completion.

On the evening of October 22, 1977, the Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission brought its active participation in the Bicentennial Celebration of the American Revolution to a close with a brilliant Colonial Ball held at the William Penn Inn. At this occasion, the committee writing the history of Whitpain Township presented the finished book to the public.

It is felt, by the members of the Whitpain Township Bicentennial Commission, that the original intent to remind the residents of Whitpain Township of the rich heritage of Whitpain has been accomplished.



Appendix A

Early Roads From The Notes of John N. Mears

No system or schedule for anything has ever been devised that has not been favorable for some and unfavorable for others. The same with toll roads. Because of the location of properties on toll roads, some farmers or travelers could travel to their local railroad stations to ship their products or pick up freight without payment of toll, because their property or property gate entrances were located between two toll-gates or toll-houses. Others would sometimes be compelled to pay one or more tolls to get to the nearest railroad station, and also have to pay one or two tolls to return home. Naturally they used bypass or public roads and back roads to avoid payment of the toll or tax.

Today you might laugh at the toll of 2, 3, or 5 cents, but in those days a nickel or five cents was a lot of money. A resident of one of the nearby townships was said to be a counterfeiter of nickels, but according to information it was never proven, but seemed to be common knowledge. Tradition has it the reason he was never caught with the home-made nickels because he always kept a coffee pot perking on the store and they were hidden in the pot.

Farmers approaching up the present Butler Pike from the Skippack Pike were able to get to and from the Wissahickon, now Ambler, station without payment of any tolls. However, farmers approaching from the north down the Butler Pike were waylaid at the intersection of the present Main St. and Butler Pike and compelled to pay a toll at the toll-gate at the site of the present Ambler Borough Building, formerly the Bell Telephone Building.

Farmers and owners of properties along a proposed highway were sometimes strenuously opposed to the opening of the road through their property. Isaac Norris, from whom the present Norristown and Norriton Townships were named strenuously objected to a new road being built across his property and even petitioned the court to prevent it, stating that there was already one road and that a second one was not necessary.

On the old turnpikes young boys were often stationed at treacherous places in the road to warn the travelers so they would not become mired in the deep holes. Sometimes a pole, a tree branch, or rails borrowed from a farmer's rail fence nearby was removed and placed across the dangerous spot. Probably many a rail disappeared from the farm fences. In the early days of railroading in Montgomery County, the crews of the wood-burning locomotives of the Reading, Philadelphia, Germantown, Norristown, and North Penn Railroads had strict orders not to remove the farmers fences along their right of way to use for fuel in the engines.

You may wonder why we Americans drive on the right side of the road instead of on the left as in England and some European countries. The early Americans didn't always drive, as we do, on the right. The colonists after England's example, kept left. Then along came the famous Conestoga Wagon. It was guided from the left side so in order to get a clearer view ahead, its drivers kept to the right. There from regular use it formed deep ruts in the highways into which the other vehicles slipped. Finally, all America followed the practice of the Conestoga wagon and kept to the right-hand side of the road. There may have also been another factor. The long, heavily loaded, Conestoga Wagon trains may have been reluctant to give up their share of the road, possibly fearing the wagons may have upset if driven to close to the edge of the road, the overhanging branches of trees would have been annoying and obscure the view of the drivers. The drivers of the Conestoga Wagons may have been the ancestors of our present highway road-hogs, who speed along the roads in their modern oily winged-horses, the automobile.

Skippack Pike

By Ellen Pittenger Gladeck

Before the year 1713, settlers had begun to occupy the country along the Skippack Creek, then known as Bebbber's Township or tract. It began to be felt necessary to have a central public highway leading to the northwest that would serve better than the crooked, winding paths through the woods and in places over almost impassable swamps. Accordingly, a petition was drawn up and presented to the Court of Quarter Sessions, held in Philadelphia, June 2, 1713.

"To the Court of Quarter Sessions held, in Philadelphia, June 2, 1713.

"The petition of the inhabitants of the townships of Skippack and several adjacent plantations in said county, humbly sheweth, that whereas, in the aforesaid township and neighbourhood thereof, pretty many families are already settled, and probally not a few more to settle in and about the same. And yet no road being laid out and established to accommodate your petitioners; but what paths have hitherto used are only upon sufferance, and liable to be fenced up. Therefore, your petitioners, both for the public good and their own convenience, humbly desire an order for the laying out and establishing a road or cartway from the upper end of said township down to the wide-marsh, or Partner's mill, which will greatly tend to the satisfaction of your petitioners, who shall thankfully acknowledge the favor, etc."

This petition was signed by twenty-nine men.

A report from the jury to lay out said road was received February 26, 1714.

The following are the courses and distances:

"That this is a true return of the road from Skippack Creek, in Bebbber township, by Edward Farmer's Mill, unto North Wales road; bearing in course from the Skippack Creek 380 perches, varying from southeast seven degrees easterly; thence due southeast 2829 perches, except two small variations."

(Signed) "Matthew Zimmerman."

The bridge on the road over the Wissahickon Creek, near Farmer's Mill, was built about the year 1796.

The bridge over Oil-Mill Run, near the Broad Axe, was built in 1804, and cost \$1,054.15.

The Skippack Creek at the road-crossing was bridged in 1826.

On March 13, 1853, a charter was obtained to "turnpike" the road. It was to commence at the Chestnut Hill and Spring House turnpike in Whitemarsh, passing through the villages of Broad Axe, Blue Bell and Centre Square. A supplement to the charter was procured, and extended the distance to St. John's Lutheran Church.

Morris Road

By Ellen Pittenger Gladeck

The first record of the Morris Road is to be found in Road Docket Book No. 2, pp. 239, December Sessions 1734.

"Upon the Petition of divers of the Inhabitants of the Township of Perkyoming and others. Setting forth the Great Necessity of a road to be laid out for the Convenience of the said Inhabitants, Beginning at Garret Clements Mill on a Branch of the Perkyoming thence leading down thro' Salford and Towamensin into a Line between the said Towamensin and Worcester with other Lands to John Debwin's and Samuel Morris' Mill. It is ordered that Henry Hendricks, Peter Wence, Robert Jones Taylor, William Robinson, Thomas Foulk, and John Shull or any four of them do view if there be Occasion for the said road, and if they see Occasion to lay out the same and make the next Court in order to be Confirmed."

It appears that the road was not then laid out, as on page 276 of the same book, June Sessions 1736 the entry shows some opposition and after a lengthy discussion the men responsible reported that they had reviewed the said road and altered two courses of the eleven and one half mile long road. The Court then confirmed the road and ordered it to be opened.

Morris Road appears to have been laid out, at first, only as far as the present Butler Pike. In all the descriptions of the road the last "course" mentioned is always "Samuel Morris's Mill."

The road from this point to the Bethlehem Pike was opened at a later date.

A Turnpike That Had A Good Reputation

From The Notes of John N. Mears

The highway popularly known as the Blue Bell pike has been reopened after having been rebuilt at a cost of \$26,000.

The county was fortunate in being able to wait nine years after the freeing of the pike before its reconstruction was found necessary. It is evidence of the fact that the old pike was well built.

This road, 2.8 miles in length, from Blue Bell to Penllyn, and its continuation, the Springhouse and Penllyn turnpike, 1.8 miles long, were among the best roads in the county back in the days when good roads were the exception rather than the rule. That was because the two corporations were maintained by well-to-do residents along their course who were more interested in having a smooth roadway than in declaring dividends.

Those who were wheelmen in the bicycling era of the nineties recall these roads with pleasant recollections. There was little incentive to dodge the tollgates, of which there were two between Blue Bell and Penllyn and one between Penllyn and Springhouse.

It was no doubt because of the good reputation of the Blue Bell pike that the first effort to have it freed was not successful. In 1909, upon petition of the citizens, the court appointed a jury to consider the propriety of condemning the road. The jury reported against freeing the pike. Not until 1917 did it become a county road.

The original toll road did not run into Blue Bell village at the junction of Plymouth road and the Skippack Pike. It began at the ancient Plymouth road at Boehm's Reformed Church, east of the crossroads. Then the highway from Gwynedd to Plymouth, opened about 1710, continued its course back of the church and partook of the character of a by-road, until Gwynedd Valley station was reached. From there to Gwynedd there was another turnpike.

The Springhouse and Penllyn pike, one of the shortest in the county, had the distinction of being the last toll road to survive. It was not freed until 1923. The tollhouse that stood on this pike is still in existence, but not on its original site. Following the freeing of the pike, it was sold at public sale, and the buyer moved it into a lot in the west end of Penllyn, where it serves as a dwelling.

The process of moving the house was one of the most exciting occurrences in that region in many years. The building was placed on skids and slowly pulled over the road by motor trucks. It collided with wires crossing the roadway and snapped them off, and then the house slipped from the skids and crashed into a tree. There it reposed until the next day, when a force of men retrieved the house and started it on its journey once more.

The two previous articles are from the notes of Mr. Mears dated November 23, 1926. Mr. Mears is remembered and respected as a dedicated historian of Whitpain Township. His notes are now in the Montgomery County Historical Society.

Road Milestones

By George S. Peck
Photography by George S. Peck

According to Milestones and Highways around Philadelphia by Fred Perry Powers, colonial highways leading out of Philadelphia were all measured "from the so-called Golden Milestone, at the old Court House at Front and High streets." These first milestones were laid out and paid for in 1764 by the "Philadelphia Contributionship for insuring Houses from Loss by Fire."

Milestones were of great help in keeping the post riders up to their schedules. Benjamin Franklin, Deputy Postmaster General at this time, appreciated the value of milestones in expediting the postal service.

In the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary period, the counties above Philadelphia, including Whitpain, were sparsely populated, with great distances between houses. Mr. Powers states in his book: "in sending and receiving letters and in public documents the milestone nearest the dwelling was mentioned. When General Washington had his headquarters at Dawesfield during the Whitpain encampment, he headed his letters "Skippack Road, 15th milestone."

Actually, the 16th milestone at the present Farview Farm is closer to Dawesfield.

The placement of milestones on Skippack Pike and Morris Road in Whitpain and Worcester Townships are shown here. One in Whitemarsh Township is also shown because it includes a date (1768).

MILESTONES

Miles to Phila.	Road	Location on Road	
Whitemarsh Township			
15	Skippack Pike	Just below Butler Pike	South Side
Whitpain Township			
16	Skippack Pike	Farview Farm (Kime)	South side
17	Skippack Pike	At Blue Bell School Tennis Courts	North Side
18	Skippack Pike	Centre Square Fire Co.	South Side
18	Morris Road	Below Cathcart Road	North Side
19	Skippack Pike	St. John's Lutheran Church	South Side
Worcester Township			
20	Skippack Pike	In front of Bethel M.E. Church	South Side
21	Skippack Pike	missing	
22	Skippack Pike	At Center Point just north of Valley Forge Road	North Side
23	Skippack Pike	Cedars	North Side
23	Kriebel Mill Rd.	Center Point south of Skippack Pike	East side

(This milestone is not a Skippack Pike milestone - correct location not known.)

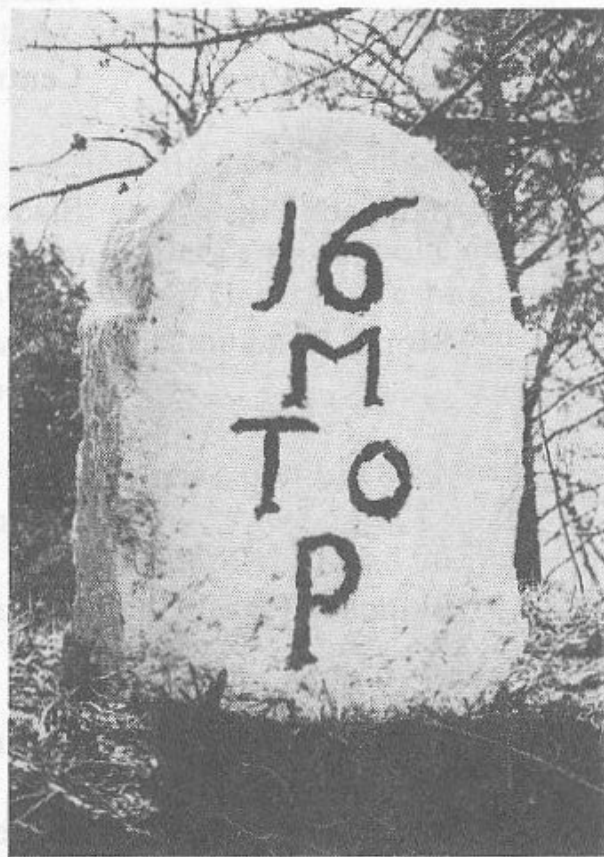
While locating and recording the present milestones on Skippack Pike, it was found that the nineteen mile milestone was missing. Later, it was found at Dibble's Country Store at Cedars in Worcester Township. How did it get there? The Dibbles explained it this way:

In approximately 1965, a new power line was being constructed across Skippack Pike, just above St. John's Lutheran Church. The construction crew was also widening Skippack Pike. This was the very spot where the 19 mile marker was located. Mr. Robert Dibble passed this spot several times and saw the marker lying among the rubble, with no apparent effort to salvage or reset it. Fearing that it would be gathered up and buried ignominiously with the other debris, he brought the heavy stone to his store and placed it in a conspicuous place along his driveway.

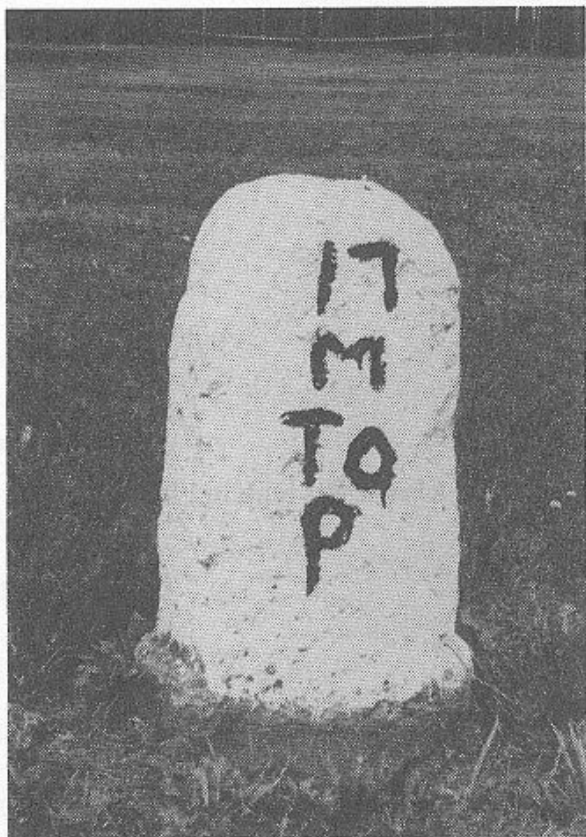
By this act, Mr. Bibble saved this valuable historic marker until 1977. It was then returned by permission of Mr. and Mrs. Dibble and the Church Trustees to a site on the grounds of St. John's Lutheran Church. Don Spacht, a long-time Whitpain resident, moved the "Wandering Milestone" back home.



Skippack Pike, Whitmarsh Township



Skippack Pike, Whitpain Township



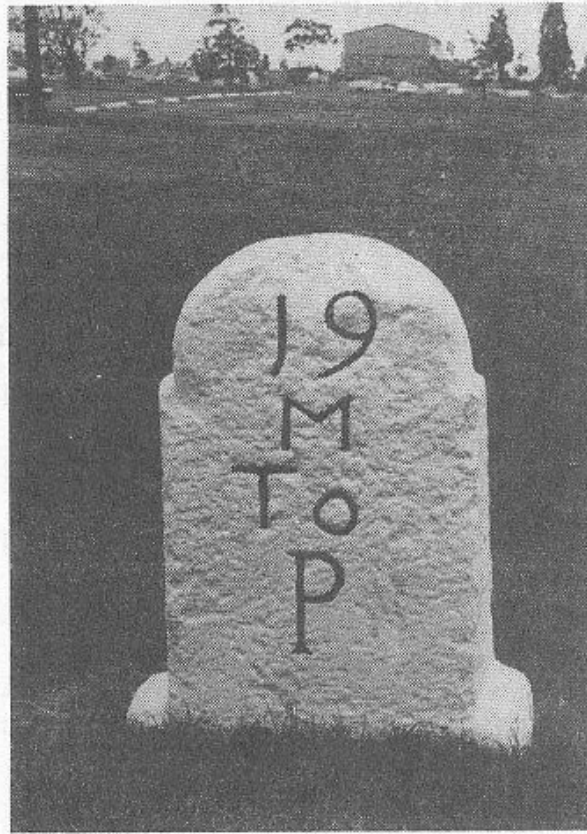
Skippack Pike, Whitpain Township



Skippack Pike, Whitpain Township



Morris Road, Whitpain Township



Skippack Pike, Whitpain Township

Land Owners In Whitpain Township In 1734

Phillip Boehm (John Pillip Boehm, Pastor of Boehm's Reformed Church) — 200 acres

* Peter Indehaven (DeHaven) — 200 acres

* Cadawalader Morris — 200 acres (The Merser property later owned by Jonathan Taylor whose son Morris Taylor was a Whitpain Militiaman in 1777)

* John Rees 150 acres

* William Couston — 100 acres

* Humphrey Ellis—50 acres

* William Robinson — 150 acres

* Thomas Fitzwater — 150 acres (owner of "Waggon Inn" later when it was built in 1758)

Henry Levering — 100 acres

Alexander Till (Dill?) - 100 acres

* Henry Conard — 200 acres

* Jacob Yost — 80 acres

George Franks — 200 acres

* William Roberts — 100 acres

Daniel Burn — 40 acres

John David — 170 acres

* Isaac Williams — 100 acres — gave land for St. John's Church

George Castner — 200 acres (An area in the southern corner of Whitpain was once called Castner, then later Caster — when the Stoney creek Railroad went through, there was a Caster Station in this vicinity.)

William David (Davis) — 100 acres

Peter Hoxworth — 100 acres

* John Thomas — 100 acres

John Mircle (Merkle) — 100 acres

Jacob Levering — 100 acres

* Abram Dawes — 350 acres

NOTE: * Last names the same as last names in Whitpain Militia of 1777. Total acreage listed equals 3,340

List Of Taxables In Whitpain Township — 1785

Andrew Knox — farmer
John McGlathery — farmer
Issac McG Lathery — farmer
Valentine Shearer — farmer
Henry Shade — farmer
Randall Osborne — farmer
Abraham Phillips — farmer
Evan Thomas — farmer
Owen Thomas — farmer
Robert Thomas — farmer
Jacob Levering — farmer
Isaac Mastin — wheelwright *
Thomas Hess — tanner
Adam Miller — farmer
John DeHaven — cordwainer •
Peter Bisbing — blacksmith •
Patrick McGarge — farmer

Barney Gerhart — laborer

Henry Conard — farmer *

Baltzer Spitznagle — farmer
Thomas Fitzwater — farmer
Adam Lutz — farmer*
George Syphert — laborer

Henry Still — farmer *

Silas Jones — farmer

Peter Wentz — farmer
Mordecai Jones — cordwainer
Leonard Metz — farmer *
Godlieb Shcoltter — laborer
Simon Fales
John Porter — farmer *
Jacob Shade — cordwainer
William Elits — farmer
George Smith — laborer
Joseph DeHaven — saddler
Lawrence Egbert — farmer for Geo. Etricks
estate
Wendell Kingfield — farmer
Peter Bakler — laborer
Nicholas Reinart — farmer for Widow Zimmer-
merman's estate
John White — carpenter *
Peter Conard — farmer
Henry Schneider — cordwainer
Margaret Fawaritz — widow

Issac Illis — farmer
John Wentz — innkeeper
James Morris — farmer, owner of a grist
mill*

Philip Shenenberger — farmer for his fa-
ther's estate.

George Bisbing — farmer *

Morgan Morgan — blacksmith *

NOTE: * These names are the same as those of men who served in the Whitpain Militia of 1777.

Philip Richardson — farmer

John DeHaven — farmer *

Christopher Grooshop — laborer

John Miller — tailor and farmer for

Issac Shoemaker estate

William Divison — farmer

John Davis — farmer

Jonathan Phipps — laborer *

George Berkheimer — farmer *

John Hallowell

Joseph Conard — farmer

Mathias Shoemaker — farmer

George Drake — farmer

John Lassure (Laser) -weaver*

Samuel DeHaven — farmer •'.

Isaac DeHaven — farmer for Peter

Schneider Estate

SINGLE MEN . . .

Peter Sterger (Steringer) *

Mary Shearer — widow

Nicholas Gerhart

John Markee — cordwainer *

Henery Styer — farmer •

Baltzer Yetter — laborer *

Michael Siegfried — laborer

John Barner — farmer

John Phipps — farmer *

George Kreegar (Gregar) — farmer

Jacob Dager — farmer

John Roberts — farmer

James Knettle (Netles) — miller and farmer

Eleanor Taylor — widow

William Abbott — farmer for Hugh
Roberts estate

Mathias Wentas — farmer
Edward Roberts *

Jacob Welder (Walter) — tailor *
Michael Sympsim — schoolmaster

Micheal Hoffesker (Hoofacre) — weaver *

Jacob Boac — laborer *

Frederick Rodemick — saddler

David Davis — gentleman

Jacob Whiteman — farmer

Israel Robinson — farmer for Samuel De-
Haven estate

Jesse DeHaven • Jacob Kurr — farmer
John Greenwalt (Greenwalt) — farmer *

Phillip Cornderiffer — laborer *

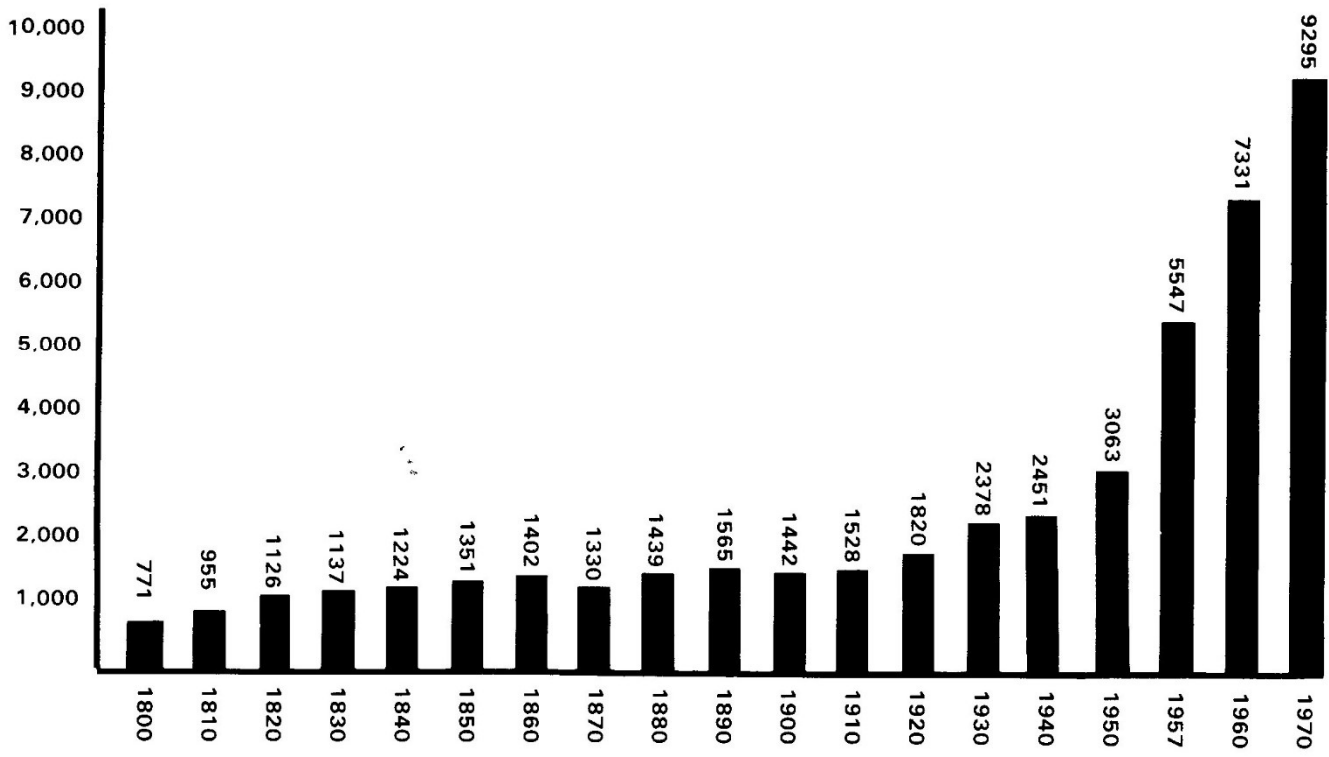
Michael Bisbing *

David DeHaven *
Samuel DeHaven •
Amos Ellis *
Owen Evans
John Griffith
Robert Knox *
John Steiger
John Styer *
Joseph White
Israel White
John Williams
Jacob Yost *
Morris Taylor *

Occupations Of 1785 Taxables In Whitpain Township

Farmers - 56	Laborers - 14
Wheelwright - 1	Tanner - 1
Cordwainers - 6	Blacksmiths - 2
Saddlers - 2	Carpenter - 1
Innkeeper - 1	Tailor - 2 (one also farmer)
Weavers - 2	Miller - 1 (also farmer)
Schoolmaster - 1	Gentleman - 1
Widows - 3	Single men - 13 (no occupation listed)
Other persons with no occupation listed - 5	

CENSUS OF WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP



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