The BULLETIN
of the
RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Headquarters and Museum

THE FINLEY HOUSE
113 West Beech Tree Lane
Wayne, Pennsylvania 19087
Telephone: 610-688-2668
Visitors Cordially Welcome

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Editor: Samuel F. Etris
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President's Letter

This will be my last president's letter to you. It has been my privilege to be your president for the last ten years, and it is time now to hand on the baton. I hope you will give the same support to my successor as you have to me.

We have accomplished a lot in the last ten years, thanks to the dedication and hard work of so many of you, and especially of our Board of Directors, for whose loyalty and support I am forever grateful.

We are also grateful for two generous grants, recently received: one, from the Commissioners of Radnor Township, for the new Finley House roof, completed this spring; and one, from the HBE Foundation, for repair and restoration of our Conestoga Wagon, which took its place in this year's Memorial Day parade, drawn by two strong horses. You will see more about these two projects elsewhere in this Bulletin.

But we are not resting on our laurels. Things have been set in motion which will develop over the next few years, and about which you will be hearing more. One of these is the possibility of our acquiring the ca 1900 Carriage House, about which I wrote to you last winter; we are still waiting to see how that will work out.

Our programs this year have represented an outreach to other organisations in our community, and this effort has been well received. I believe you will see more of this welcome initiative. You can read about some of these programs elsewhere in this issue of the Bulletin. It is good that we get to know each other better.
Serious and regular work has begun on organizing and cataloguing the materials in our File/Workroom, which you may also read about in this Bulletin. If you are interested in helping with this important project, please let us know. These resources are a significant reason for our existence, and they need to be properly cared for, and made conveniently accessible to our visitors.

As I have said so often, there is always more to be done in furthering our mission and purpose, and, as always, we are grateful for the support of our members - of all of you. To that, let me add a personal word of thanks.

J. Bennett Hill, Jr.
May 2003

Historical Society 2002 Programs


April 9 - Olde Inns Dinner, John Harvard’s Brew House (former Covered Wagon Inn): Clarissa Dillon, spoke on, “With Respect to Women: Their Role in 18th Century Pennsylvania.” She discussed the severe limitations faced by women in those early days and difficulties with their legal standing at home and in business.

May 5 - Annual Meeting, Presbyterian Children’s Village, Rosemont (the former “Glencoe” estate of Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Robinson): Loren Preheim, President and CEO of the Village reviewed how it came to be where it is. James Garrison, A.I.A., spoke about the estate and its interesting architecture.

October 2 - Wayne Italian American Club: “A Retrospection of the Italian American Community of Radnor Township,” was moderated by Joe Tatta with several of the Club’s members discussing the history and activities of members of the Italian community and their significant contributions to Radnor.
November 12 - The Winsor Room, Radnor Memorial Library: George E. Thomas spoke on “What Will Price Learned from Frank Furness,” lavishly illustrating his survey of the Philadelphia architects and the development of their work which influenced the nation. Mr. Thomas reviewed the development of the architectural principles on which the design of homes in Wayne was based.

December 22 - The Finley House: The Annual Christmas Open House was conducted jointly with the North Wayne Protective Association’s Christmas Carol program. The well-attended event began with neighbors carolling on the Finley House grounds and concluded with holiday refreshments, and a tour of the House.

Wish You were Here:
Postcards from Old Wayne and Radnor
RHS Spring Meeting, Tuesday, February 12, 2002.

By the turn of the century, Wayne became not merely a pleasant resort to escape Philadelphia’s hot and humid air, but an enjoyable place for permanent suburban living. The Pennsylvania Railroad offered convenient service from center city westward to create a new class of citizen, the commuter. Passenger service was encouraged by attractive stations with full-time resident station-masters. Wayne was a locale to write the home folks about.

“Wish You Were Here” presented by Greg Prichard, a young Wayne resident interested in history, showed how post cards showed folks back in the city just how lovely it was in Radnor. Intrigued by the post cards of old Wayne sold at the C.W. Bensinger store, Greg bought 101 cards printed between 1905 and 1915. He projected many of them which drew enthusiastic interest, discussion, and reminiscences from the 42 members and guests present.
Among the post cards were hand-colored pictures of the Cricket Club at Merryvale Park and the early Wayne Post Office located in then Opera House Building. There was the natural-surfaced Eagle Road, once an Indian trail, where horse-drawn stage coaches galloped to rest their weary passengers at the Spread Eagle Tavern at the Lancaster Toll Pike. Shown were buildings of the then new Central Baptist Church, the huge “Wesley” hotel, and the Wayne Sanitarium. Views of businesses included the Wayne steam plant which for decades heated homes in Wayne, the long gone Philadelphia & Western Strafford Station, and the L.K. Burket Coal Company’s huge railroad coal cribs (now Wayne’s oldest operating business).

The post cards of businesses on main street, Lancaster Pike, graphically revealed the significant, though minor, changes that have taken place in downtown Wayne over the years. The early post cards displayed more than mere nostalgia, they showed that not very long ago there was a more gentle and quieter pace of life than that of today.

Four Houses: Wootton, Woodcrest, Ardrossan, and Walmarthon.

William Morrison, author, lecturer, and researcher of architectural history, presented an illustrated lecture of four surviving magnificent mansions built on the Main Line. In a delightful and perceptive presentation, Morrison illustrated the influences of Gothic revival, English Free Style, and the Arts and Crafts Movement on the architects in their realization of these lavish homes.

Morrison noted that the Main Line became a “state of mind.” The upper class found attractive the Quaker landholdings dating back to William Penn, which by then were largely populated by dairy farms. The natural beauty of these lands combined with the accessibility provided by the Pennsylvania Railroad was a magnet to the Philadelphia business community.

Wootton was built as a 50-room Neo-Tudor centerpiece of the 400-acre Childs-Drexel Bryn Mawr estate. One of the largest private Main Line houses, Wootton was the summer retreat of George W. Childs, owner and publisher of the Public Ledger, at the time Philadelphia’s most influential newspaper. With his colleague, Anthony J. Drexel, the Philadelphia banker, who initiated mortgage loans, they developed the community of Wayne and St. Davids.

Wootton was built in 1880-1881 by John Ord architect, assistant to John McArthur, architect of the Public Ledger Building. A two-story great hall was added in 1908, greatly enlarging the building. Other additions were made to meet its present use by the St. Aloysius Academy. The name Wootton was taken from the ancestral home of the Duke of Buckingham, a family friend of the Childs.
Woodcrest mansion was the work of Horace Trumbauer, completed between 1900 and 1904 for the investment banker James W. Paul. Designed in Elizabethan-Tudor style around three sides of an open courtyard, Woodcrest is impressive in its scale and rich use of materials. In 1924 Woodcrest became the home of John T. Dorrance, president of the Campbell Soup Company. In 1954 it was sold for use as an orphanage, and in 1957, became the main building of Cabrini College.

Walmarthom, completed in 1914, is an eclectic mixture of Northern Italian villa and California Mission. Walmarthom was like nothing else architect David Knickerbacker Boyd designed; a stone three-story building topped by a stone observation tower, all surrounded by raised terraces and walled gardens. Morrison described the engaging collection of interior styles. The owner, Charles S. Walton, Philadelphia leather goods manufacturer, welcomed neighbors to enjoy his three lakes in summer and to ice skating in winter. Walton’s house is now the centerpiece of Eastern College, St. Davids.

Ardrossan is the best preserved of the great Main Line mansions. Built in 1912 for Colonel Robert L. Montgomery, it is one of Horace Trumbauer’s best works in a non-Beaux-Arts style. The house was designed with many interesting touches to provide a domestic warmth often lacking in English estates. It is well known to many in Radnor as it is often used for civic events. It is named for the Scottish village from which the Montgomeries came to America.


“With Respect to Women: Their Role in 18th Century Pennsylvania,” by Clarissa Dillon

Clarissa Dillon shared with us the details of her years of research into the life and legal standing of women during America’s earliest times. Her talk was the highlight of the Society’s Annual Olde Inns Dinner, held April 9 in John Harvard’s Brew House at Lancaster Pike and Old Eagle School Road. The hand hewn stone building was built about 1875 as a private residence and enlarged about 75 years later to become The Covered Wagon Inn. In its heyday the Covered Wagon Inn featured such performing artists as Count Basie and Duke Ellington. Its present owners began business in 1995.

Ms. Dillon called her discussion, “With Respect to Women,” because that was a very-18th century phrase meaning “about” women. During that period, recorded history was in terms of men, the actions of the great leaders of the time. However, as she said, you cannot have great leaders unless there are lots and lots of followers. And those followers included the women who did the cooking, cleaning, nursing, sewing, and having babies, and all other things that women have to do.

However, despite their subordinate legal standing and disenfranchisement, women did exert initiative when the time demanded it.

Among the many examples Ms. Dillon noted was Lydia Darragh, a Philadelphian who, under British occupation and with an older son in the army at Valley Forge, sent her younger son with food packages to his brother. Under the coverings of the buttons on his jacket, she sent messages with details of the British occupation forces to General Washington.
Another woman who strived for excellence was Rachel Darlington Seal (later Miller), who functioned as both a doctor and an apothecary because her father was a doctor and encouraged her interest and left her half his medical books and equipment; the other half went to an equally interested son. She was fulfilling the traditional role of women. However by the 19th century women were ejected from this role by the ruse of requiring people to be licensed as physicians, and the only way to get licensed was to go to the right school, and those schools only took white men.

Deborah Franklin ran Benjamin’s business when he was away; that’s what women did. If her husband was away, she ran his business or farm until he came back, and she had to account to him afterwards for any decisions that looked like initiative. People would accept her initiatives because they saw her as her husband’s agent, not as her husband’s wife.

Clementine Rind ran her husband’s printing business and published the Virginia Gazette after her husband died and continued to do so until her eldest son was old enough to take on the business himself. She made all the decisions then, but she was answerable to her son when he became of age. That’s just the way it was.

Legally a woman was in a position throughout her life like a minor child today. A woman belonged to her father, and it was he who gave her away in marriage. (Now it has been modified to “Her Mother and I.”) He handed off his daughter to another man who became her husband and she then became a “feme covert” (covered woman), covered by the mantle of the husband’s name, body, and so on.

If a father had only one child and she was a daughter, and he had a great deal of property and money, she as his heir could come into a sizable fortune which would make her very attractive to a fortune hunter who could take over her property and handle it himself. However, her father could protect her by going to court and having her declared a “feme sole” (a woman alone), which recognized her legally as a person. When she married, her husband could not touch any of her property. This protected young women of property from fortune hunters, but it had to be done by the father through the court system. If a woman’s husband died it could be arranged in such a way that her fortune passed on to her son who took over the care of her and made all the decisions for her. There is a case in the register of damages, where a widow’s losses are claimed by her son.

Some history books imply that the Revolutionary War was a step forward for women, but Dillon does not think it was. There were indeed societal changes after the Revolution, but they did not open the world to women.

Clarissa Dillon detailed the position of women in the 18th century as a contrast as it to what their position is today. Regarding questions of the relevance of history, she said, “You have to find yourself in history -- if you don’t see yourself in history, you have no use for it.”
Glencoe – The Thomas McKean Residence
by James B. Garrison, AIA

The annual meeting for the Radnor Historical Society took place at "Glencoe", an estate in Rosemont now occupied by the Presbyterian Children's Village. The estate house and many of the original outbuildings are still in existence, supplemented by new buildings to accommodate the residents and programs of the institution.

The estate buildings were designed by Philadelphia architect George Bispham Page for Thomas McKean, Jr., in 1906. Page was one of the last of the generation of architects who learned the profession through office apprenticeship rather than formal academic training. After graduating from the Episcopal Academy in Philadelphia, he worked in the office of Cope and Stewardson with short stays in two other offices. He won a travelling fellowship in 1894 that enabled him to travel and study in Europe for two years. Upon his return he began individual practice, primarily in residential design. In 1912 he established the firm of Stewardson and Page with Emlyn Stewardson, brother of John Stewardson who had been the partner of Walter Cope. The firm prospered and ultimately designed the INA headquarters at 16th and Arch Streets in 1926.

Thomas McKean Jr. was director of the Reading Railroad and the Insurance Company of North America (INA) among other business pursuits. He was a member of a prominent Philadelphia family that descended from a signer of the Declaration of Independence. His father had a house designed by Frank Furness on Walnut Street just west of Rittenhouse Square.

The site for Glencoe was 44 acres on the west side of Roberts Road near the recently completed mansion "Beaupre" designed for Robert Cassatt by Page's mentors Cope and Stewardson. This section of Radnor Township was becoming a series of large "Gentleman's Farms" and estates beginning with "Castlefinn" for James Rawle by Furness and Evans in the 1880's, then "Wootton" for Anthony Drexel by John MacArthur Jr., and "Foxfields" by Theophilus Chandler for Rudolph Ellis. The rolling hills and numerous creeks provided picturesque settings for these complexes, designed to be largely self sufficient country pleasure palaces. The main houses were sited to command views across the valleys to the other mansions that were placed astride the numerous ridges.

By the early 20th century, many of the more exuberant Victorian eclectic styles had been superseded by more academic essays in European prototypes, and Glencoe was no exception. It was patterned after contemporary English houses that were regularly published in "Country Life" and architectural journals from England and America. It represented a "modern" interpretation of old English styles, though the interiors are more academic than the exterior. The exterior in brick and a dark buff stone mixes classical detailing in an arched loggia with Tudor details in the gable ends and chimneys combined with double hung sash windows with louvered shutters. It is a tribute to the skill of the designer that these disparate elements actually form a cohesive and convincing whole.
The plan uses a combination of symmetry and additive planning to balance the formal spaces for entertaining with the service functions required for a large estate. The entry is under a large porte cochere, then into a large Living Hall richly paneled in an English Baroque style. To either side of the hall facing out over the gardens and the valley, are the Library and the Dining Room. The Dining Room is notable for the elaborate plaster ceiling with the exceptionally deep relief in molded cornices and swags. A small oval Breakfast Room is located off the Dining Room. The pantry, kitchen and other service functions originally occupied an ell facing the entrance court and service court. The service court is still intact with the stable, garage, and water tower. Many country residences, especially those at higher elevations had their own water towers as well as generating plants for heat and electricity.

In 1925, Samuel Robinson, one of the founders of the American Stores Co. grocery stores, purchased the estate and lived there until his death in 1959. He donated the buildings and grounds to the Philadelphia Presbytery and it became the Presbyterian Children's Village, a school and residential facility for adolescent children with mental health and behavioral issues.

A series of cottages and other facilities were added around the edges of the property to accommodate the expanded programs of the institution.

The house and main outbuildings now serve primarily as the administrative center of the Village, and are in an excellent state of preservation, complete with many of the furnishings from the Robinsons. Glencoe remains as a reminder of a special time on the Main Line where once again the "Welsh Barony" was reincarnated in a series of large estates where the landowners were masters of all they could survey.
Radnor’s Ethnic Heritage--The First of a Series to Examine The Ethnic contributions to Our Area

To initiate a celebration of the ethnic foundations of Radnor, The Radnor Historical Society joined with II Circolo Italiano of the Main Line to present a survey of the Italian contribution to the growth and development of Radnor Township. It was held October 2, 2002, at the Italian American Club in Wayne.

Joseph Tatta, Instructor of Italian at the Main Line School Night, and retired teacher of history at The Haverford School, led a review of the magnitude of Italian contributions to the Radnor community.

Joanne DiGuinta described the establishment of “Little Italy,” the Highland Avenue original settlement of Italian Americans in Radnor Township. She reviewed its development from the turn of the century through WWII.

Alex Bruno talked about the founding of The Wayne Italian American Club, the necessities that brought it into being, and how it serves our community today.

Mary Ann DiMartini presented the background for the founding of Our Lady of The Assumption as a church-haven for the Italian neighborhood.

Jean Benning talked about the Italian influence in the history of St. Katherine’s church.

Joseph Tatta surveyed the range of businesses and professions founded and pursued by Italians that made Radnor a center for business and skilled labor.

Following the talks, members and guests reminisced about their early experiences in our neighborhood.

The Work of William L. Price, American Architectural Pioneer


Mr. Thomas displayed illustrations that revealed how Frank Furness, the renowned Philadelphia architect who became Supervising Architect for the U.S. Treasury Department, provided inspiration for William Price, an apprentice in Furness’s workshop. Will Price became a powerfully rational architect who dealt with the style of Art Deco (which could have been better called the “vertical style,” the name used in Price’s office) in fascinating ways.

The link between Price’s modern style of architecture and the industrial culture of Philadelphia was no coincidence. Philadelphia then was the leading industrial city for building ships and locomotives, the manufacture of steel and chemicals, and the production of textiles and clothing. The Franklin Institute For The Promotion Of The Mechanical Arts was leading the world as a locus for seeking solutions to difficult engineering problems whose illustrious members resolved such world-class problems as designing tests to determine the performance of metals, and setting the parameters for standard designs such as screw threads. And Philadelphia painters such as Thomas Eakins illustrated contemporary subjects in straightforward ways, eschewing classical subjects presented in classical ways.
Professional people employed in Philadelphia industries needed homes and Furness and Price designed and built fundamentally practical, modern styles disengaged from the transatlantic-culture styles sought by New Yorkers and Bostonians. Price’s contribution was to create an inclusive contemporary architecture that gave pleasure to both the old elite and a new sophistication of the avant-garde. Because Price believed in American culture and democracy, his domestic work focused on the modest in designing inexpensive houses to spread the message of modernism to the middle-class.

William Price’s legacy in Wayne is his exquisite houses which had their origin in the progressive culture of experiment and innovation by way of an examination of the possibilities of new materials and new methods of manufacturing and construction.

To foster the establishment of a community of his homes, Will Price sought the backing of Drexel and Company, the nation’s most powerful bank, to purchase 700 acres in Wayne and lay out two suburbs, one north of PRR’s Louella Station and the other to the south. They renamed the town Wayne after Anthony Wayne and prevailed upon the Drexel Bank to underwrite home mortgages, the first in history. This transformed the market for suburban home ownership and set the stage for the community of Wayne.

In answer to what an architect should do, Will Price said, “What we are going to do if we are going to have real architecture is to make our product more than beautiful, more than fitting to the situation, primarily fitting the man that is to live in it or the purpose for which it is to be used.”

Christmas Carol Sing at the Finley House
by Lorie Greeley

At dusk on a nippy but dry Sunday, December 22, the Radnor Historical Society hosted the families of the North Wayne Protective Association for their annual carol sing. As people gathered in the front of the porch, word sheets were provided by the Association while Geoff Chamberlain led the singing. The Star-Spangled Banner was sung by Claire Mahoney.

After the program the carolers enjoyed hot cider and cookies in the yard and Santa arrived on a fire engine to mingle with the group. The Finley House remained open to visitors who wished to tour the historical collection and see the Christmas decorations.

The event was deemed a success as a comfortable gathering place for this traditional event.

Our Conestoga Wagon
by George Wm. Smith

Adjacent to Finley House on the Radnor Historical Society property, is a smaller yellow frame building with dark green trim. This is the Brooke Waggon House, constructed by Mr. Ted Brooke in 1964 to house the society's collection of wagons, sleighs, and tools.

The pride of the Waggon House is our own Conestoga wagon, which the society acquired from Woodstock, the Thornton Oakley estate in Villanova, in 1964. It was built about 1805 mainly to haul food, raw materials, and manufactured goods, but could have been used as a farm wagon in the winter and spring when roads were often impassable. When canals and railways replaced wagons as the principle means of transporting freight, many Conestoga wagons were permanently converted to farm use. Today the Society uses our wagon to introduce school children to an early part of our country's transportation system.

In the Waggon House, a board describes the evolution of the covered wagon:

The Swiss-German farmers, wheelwrights, and blacksmiths who settled in the Conestoga Valley near Lancaster developed a wagon particularly suited to their needs that was modeled on German and English farm carts. There are two major parts of a Conestoga wagon: the running gear, including the axles and wheels, the bolsters, and the braking system, and the wagon bed with its associated tool box and feed box. The running gear was usually painted red and the wagon bed blue. The wooden hoops that held the linen cover were usually unpainted. The table following presents some information about our wagon.
Mr. Franklin A. Zirkle conducted a survey of our wagon on May 20, 2000. Mr. Reist made the survey available to us, and recommended Mr. Earl Livengood of East Lampeter Township in Lancaster County for the restoration of the wagon. Table 2 presents a summary of the assessment and a description of the repairs made to the wagon.

Table 2. Wagon Assessment and Repairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item evaluated and Finding</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Color of Paint, Box:</td>
<td>Greenish Blue Repainted, Gear: Red Repainted, Chip Carving Front and Rear Gates Completed; Front Gate Rebuilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Woodwork</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Bolster Installed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Ironwork</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brake shoes Installed</td>
<td>Metal Pins on chain Paint/Coat metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheels’ Tire</td>
<td>2.5 inches wide. Rebuilt right rear 4.15 foot dia., some new oak spokes and felloes fitted. Steel tire reinstalled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box dimensions</td>
<td>3.8 foot by 13.8 foot at the top, Panel rivets broken, installed new rivets to strengthen box.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The wagon was removed to Mr. Livengood’s shop in December 2002 and returned to Wayne in March 2003. The cost of restoration was largely underwritten by a generous grant from The HBE Foundation, Devon, PA.
"Conestoga Wagon, Masterpiece of the Blacksmith" by Arthur Reist, describes the main routes followed by Conestoga Wagon drivers from Philadelphia to the Susquehanna River on their way to Pittsburgh. All left central Philadelphia by crossing the Schuylkill River by bridge and following essentially the same path into Chester County before diverging between our present-day Malvern and Coatesville toward different crossing points on the Susquehanna. Following the map reprinted in Arthur Reist's book, the routes that our wagon may have traveled on its journeys between Philadelphia and Lancaster may be traced.

The Great Conestoga Road, built in 1714, ran from near Coatesville through Christiana, Gap, Strasburg, and Willow Street, then through the valley of the Conestoga River to the Susquehanna. The German wagon makers were among the first settlers of the valley, from which Conestoga wagons acquired their name.

Old Peter's Road, built in 1717, followed an Indian trail used by the fur trader, Peter Bizellion. Today it can be approximated by following Route 23 from Coatesville to New Holland and Route 772 from New Holland to Marietta on the Susquehanna.

The King's Highway was laid out by the provincial government in Philadelphia in 1733 to be the main transportation route between Philadelphia and Lancaster, which at that time was the western terminus for the middle colonies, at the edge of the frontier.

The Philadelphia-Lancaster Turnpike replaced the King's Highway following the same general route. In our area, much of it has been followed by US Route 30, although parts are traversed today by Old Lancaster Road and Conestoga Road.

The Evolution of the Covered Wagon

The English "Stage Waggon" was the common carrier of the 18th and 19th centuries. The Stage Coach was a faster, superior, and more pricey form of transport. The Stage Waggon was more heavily built, and had very wide wheels, usually 4 feet 8 1/2 inches apart. It was this spread that became the American railroad standard gauge.

Descended from the English Stage Waggon, the Conestoga wagon was more graceful and higher raked allowing a faster pace, traveling 12 to 14 miles a day. It was drawn by 4 to 8 horses and carried as much as 6 tons of provisions. Because it was driven from the "lazy seat" on the left side, it inaugurated the American custom of driving on the right side of the road.

The Prairie Schooner of motion picture fame is a descendent of the Conestoga wagon. It had a flat, box-like bed and a front seat where the driver and his family could ride. It was the largest of the covered wagons used in the trek westward across the American continent. The Prairie Schooner was usually pulled by mules or by draft horses.
The Finley House’s New Roof
by Brian Noll

A few years ago, when it became apparent that the Finley House would need a new roof, we began a series of discussions about what was most appropriate given the age and style of the house. The original section of the house, built in the eighteenth century, probably had a wood shingle roof, but the house had major additions and renovations since then, the most recent being at the end of the nineteenth century. While we were not certain of the roof material used then, we did have a photo of the house as it appeared earlier in the twentieth century which showed a standing seam metal roof which appeared to have had several alterations to it, indicating that it had been in place for some time. Based on this information, we decided that this would be the most appropriate roof style since it was common from mid nineteenth to the early twentieth century.

Deciding that we would like to have this kind of roof was simple compared to determining how to pay for it. Hand formed standing seam roofs are expensive labor-intensive projects, not commonly used today, and few roofers have the skill and knowledge to install them. Also the Society did not have unlimited funds. Earlier, Hank Mahoney, a Radnor Township Commissioner, offered to solicit Township assistance for the Society, and he agreed to approach the Commissioners for help with the roof project. Don Merget, who specialized in historic roofs, was recommended based on his work on the original Baldwin School building and he supplied an estimate of $36,000 based on the details of our photo. We used this to present our plan to the Township, which agreed to a generous contribution toward the work. The RHS board then agreed to go forward with the project. Don Merget agreed to begin in the spring of 2002 and finish by mid summer.

Merget was held up on other projects and did not actually begin until September. We anticipated that other repairs would be required as the work progressed, and these would increase the cost. Two layers of asphalt shingles were removed revealing ¼ inch sheathing nailed over the laths used for the older wood shingles. These had to be reinforced with an additional layer of ½ sheathing.

The dormers had extensive deterioration. In the course of demolition, fish scale wood shingles were exposed on the sides of the dormers. New shingles were fabricated with new mahogany woodwork made to match the original and installed on the sides of the dormers.

Brickwork on the chimneys was repaired and other areas of the verge boards and eaves were replaced. Don Sullivan, a carpenter, who did earlier work for the Society and who recently fabricated and installed interior woodwork at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, took charge of the dormer repairs.

The black and white photograph the roof design was based on did not reveal the type of metal or color of the original. We conjectured that it was probably made of tin plated iron or steel sheets, hence the name “tin roof.” Don Merget’s price was based on the use of Follansbee Steel’s terne metal, rolls of steel coated with an alloy of tin and zinc and painted on both sides. While early roofs of this type could have been painted several different colors, a common paint of the time was “red lead” and we decided to use this color in a modern formulation from Follansbee. In deference to durability, the built in “pole” gutters were made of stainless steel painted to match the other parts of the roof.
An unusually wet fall and cold winter delayed the completion which should have been sometime in November. We are currently soliciting bids for general painting of the dormers and related areas of the verge boards and eaves, which we hope to have completed sometime this coming summer. All phases of the work have been documented by digital photos, which can be viewed on the Society’s computer in the file/workroom. They show the details of every aspect of the roof during its installation as well as the craftsmanship employed in its design and implementation.

The "1789" Kitchen
by Bennett Hill, February 2003

The Finley House “1789” basement kitchen like many a room in a historic house museum, is a work in progress. A lot has been accomplished there in the last twelve years, but there are always improvements and refinements to be made. This is as it should be.

When the Radnor Historical Society was founded, in 1948, Miss Dorothy Finley gave the use of her old basement kitchen as a place for keeping and displaying its records and artifacts. Because there was access to this room from the outside, members could come and go without disturbing those in the rooms above. Presumably it was then that a partition and door were installed at the foot of the basement steps.

In 1964 Miss Finley gave the whole house to the Society, as a memorial to her parents, William H. and Sallie Knight Finley. The Society’s collection and archives were then moved upstairs to more spacious and comfortable quarters, and the old kitchen was shuttered and locked. Ten years later an archaeological investigation in the old kitchen was undertaken, at which time the wooden floor was removed. After that, the space became a storage area for items which were not on display. And so it remained, for about twenty-five years, dusty, dark, neglected, and festooned with cobwebs.

Sometime in the fall of 1990 curiosity impelled a few of us to investigate what lay behind the long-closed door at the bottom of the steps. With flashlights in hand, we went in and explored. We removed a metal grille from the window, enabling us to raise the sash and unbolt the heavy wooden shutter, letting some light and air into the room.
Gradually the items stored in the room were moved out, and the room cleaned up. What we found then was an uneven dirt floor, stone walls with much plaster missing, a small fireplace with a brick hearth, and an opening for an oven in the fireplace wall. There were traces of a sink between the window and the door, and a modern gas meter prominently placed on the inside wall. Could we somehow restore and make use of this space?

In the spring of 1991 the Board engaged Bruce Cooper Gill, Curator at Harriton House, in Bryn Mawr, as our consultant to recommend and oversee steps to the renovation of the basement kitchen as an interpreted period room. He suggested that we treat the room as a late 18th to early 19th century farmhouse kitchen, illustrating the way such a room would function during the time when cooking was done on an open hearth. Appropriate items from the Society's collection could then be displayed there, and new items could be added to complete the picture.

In the meantime, Katharine Wood Leonard, a long-time loyal and generous member of the Society, became interested in this project, and supplied us with anecdotal information on the room. Her grandparents had rented the house as a summer retreat from the city for several years. At that time the basement kitchen was still used for preparing meals; these were then taken up to the back parlor by a dumb-waiter in the corner by the fireplace. She had heard about all this from her mother and uncle. Mrs. Leonard was eager to see the kitchen restored, and was the first major donor for the work.

Mr. Gill's recommendations were first to replaster the walls, and then to lay a brick floor, set in sand, appropriate to the period and consistent with the existing brick hearth. He further suggested removing the partition at the foot of the steps, replacing the more modern exterior door with a board and batten door, and moving the gas meter to a less obtrusive location. The partition was removed, and the plastering and floor were done in the summer of 1992; the other steps followed in due time. The initial work was made possible by a generous grant from the HBE Foundation.

Finally it was time to start furnishing the kitchen with items from the collection. Many of these, as it turned out, had been given by Mrs. Leonard herself, over the years. Dorothy Therman, another loyal and generous member and former president of the Society, offered her help in this project, and we were able to have a reproduction iron door made for the oven, to hang on the existing pintels. A fireplace crane, taken from the front parlor, was adjusted to fit into existing slots in the fireplace, and a set of iron pothooks was added.

Once the furnishing started, members and friends began to give appropriate items to complete the picture. In order to determine what would be suitable, we worked from household inventories from Margaret Schiffer's book, "Chester County, Pennsylvania, Inventories 1684-1850", using six dates from 1778 to 1824 - while the cooking was still being done on an open hearth rather than on a closed range. From these inventories we created a grid, showing the prevalence of the items, and helping us to see what we should be looking for.
When Mrs. Leonard died in 1997, many of her friends and family gave generously to the Society in her memory. We used these funds to have the kitchen walls and woodwork painted: the walls to suggest whitewash, and the woodwork to match several scraps of paint found in out-of-the-way corners. This pulled the whole room together visually, as well as making it clean and tidy and easier to care for. Thus, in many ways, our "1789" basement kitchen is a living memorial to Katharine Leonard. It is also a favorite with school groups who come to visit the house.

Significant furnishings in the kitchen include a Philadelphia ladder-back armchair, with a rush seat, ca 1730, originally at "Woodstock" in Villanova. It is set in the far corner, by the window, to take full advantage of the daylight. In front of it is a small spinning wheel, for spinning flax; the wheel would probably have been stored in the cellar beyond, out of season. Across the room is a larger wheel, for spinning wool; this was operated simply by turning the wheel, from a standing position.

In the center of the room is a drop-leaf kitchen worktable, probably late 19th or early 20th century. On this table are laid out a number of smaller kitchen items, including an iron candlestick and snuffer, a wooden lemon press, and a sugar cone with nippers, to nip pieces off the cone. Also on this table, and on a smaller table and shelves against the wall, are several pieces of Pennsylvania redware; some of these are original to the period of the kitchen, and some are modern reproductions.

Drawn up to the table are two Windsor side chairs, with broad-slat crest rails, ca 1730. In the corner, near the hearth, is a child's Windsor high chair, with original green and yellow paint, ca 1800.

On the hearth are two candle molds, a Dutch oven, a copper tea kettle, and a waffle iron with a long handle. A cannon ball, also on the hearth, is for breaking up dried herbs, by rolling them around in an iron pot; every well-equipped kitchen should have one! In the corner farthest from the fire - not over the fireplace - is a flintlock musket with a powder horn.

There are two butter churns in the kitchen; one, of course, would be enough, but these two are quite different. One is the familiar kind, a ceramic crock with a wooden lid and plunger, and the other has a crank handle, with paddles inside, and dates probably from the mid 1800's.

Before you leave the kitchen, see if you can find the mouse trap. It is under the armchair, by the window.
The interpreted rooms in the Finley House now illustrate three distinct periods of occupancy in Radnor Township. The basement kitchen shows rural life in the late 18th century; the "Victorian" bedchamber the mid 19th century (before the Civil War); and the front and back parlors the late 19th century, when suburban Wayne began. The Historical Society is fortunate to have a house so rich in history, and members and friends so interested and generous.

Notes:
1 1789 is the putative date for the earliest part of the house, built by Captain John Pugh, a veteran of the Revolutionary War.
2 These are not the original steps; in the closet below the landing are traces of a box stair. We do not know when the present stairs were built.
3 This investigation was done by Dr. Carl Saalbach, Professor of Archaeology at Eastern College (now University); see The Bulletin, Vol. III, Number 5, pp 10, 11.
4 The plastering was done by Luke Connell, of Wayne; the floor by the Masonry Preservation Group of Merchantville, N.J.
5 The oven door was made by Stephen Sears, of Sears Ironworks, Ottsville, PA. Mr. Sears also made adjustments to the fireplace crane.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE REPORT
by Ted Pollard, Chair

In February, 2002, I began the daunting task of what I thought would be a year-long organizational project for our vast archives. How wrong I was! We have 50 years of accumulation that desperately needs help. This had to be a one-person job until the full scope of the problems was identified. For eight months I went through the collection and organized the files so that information was easy to locate and devised a comprehensive list of what else had to be done. In November I was joined by several volunteers who have been entering information into our new computer system, cataloging and archivally encapsulating photos, and filing stacks of donations and mis-filed material. Our group of 2-4 meets weekly and, I am pleased to say, is making great headway!

Besides the work mentioned above, we will be copying old newspaper articles and removing the originals from the files because they can damage other material due to their acidity. In addition, there are possibly 1,000 or more photos, negatives and glass slides that need to be identified, cataloged and archived. It will be very interesting to see what images are produced from the negatives!

We are continually digging up exciting finds and in the near future will be able to share them with the community. Our short term goal is to scan our photograph collection for easy research and copying so that the original photos won't be damaged by repeated use. Copies can be easily made from the scanned image. Our long term goal is to create access to the collection through a hookup with the Memorial Library of Radnor or our own website.
Several of our board members will be visiting local historical societies and contacting manufacturers to find out what scanner and copier will be needed to round out our technology. We are also developing new file handling procedures and looking into security issues so that our precious collection is well taken care of.

If you have any interest in helping with one or more of the important tasks mentioned above, please contact the Society. We appreciate your help!
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Mission Statement

The purpose and mission of the Radnor Historical Society shall be:
1. to develop, maintain, and preserve a permanent collection of
   manuscript, printed, and iconographic records pertaining to the history of
   "Radnor Township and its immediate environs."
2. to provide library facilities for the interpretation of the collections and
   for the purposes of research.
3. to collect, maintain, and preserve and exhibit artifacts from the
   Township's past, and to provide access to them for visitors.
4. to maintain a historic house museum, and any auxiliary buildings and
   grounds, for the purposes of education and for any meetings or other
   events desired and/or approved by the Board of Directors.
5. to provide a regularly scheduled program of speakers on topical
   subjects, and to make this program available to the community as well as
   to the membership of the society.
6. to support a publications program, through various media, including a
   regularly issued Bulletin, devoted to the study of Radnor Township and
   other relevant subjects.
7. to collaborate with local schools and colleges, and especially with the
   Radnor Township schools, on programs of education pertaining to the
   history of Radnor Township and its environs.
8. to cooperate with other historical and community organizations in
   support of programs undertaken for the purposes of historic preservation,
   conservation, and education, as the Board of Directors may deem
   appropriate.

Approved: 4 April 1994
LOANS TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The Radnor Historical Society has loaned a musket and powder-horn to Historic Waynesborough. A schoolmaster's desk is on loan to Old Eagle School. Perhaps the most significant loan is of 722 architectural drawings and associated Wendell and Smith manuscripts to The Athenaeum of Philadelphia. The drawings represent the work of more than 30 architects, including David K. Boyd (1872-1944), Joseph Huston (1866-1940), William L. Price (1861-1916), and Horace Trumbauer (1868-1938). This collection is particularly helpful to researchers who are interested in the development of Wayne. The cataloging records are available at www.PhlAthenaeum.org.

To apply for membership in the Radnor Historical Society visit or write the Society at

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