

THE BULLETIN  
of  
RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*Headquarters and Museum*

THE FINLEY HOUSE  
BEECH TREE LANE AND BELLEVUE AVENUE  
WAYNE, PENNSYLVANIA

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## YOUR 1955 BULLETIN

Dear Members and Would-be Members of Radnor Historical Society:

Welcome to the "graduation" of the Radnor Historical Society! Your Board of Directors feels that this Bulletin, the fifth number to appear since our inception in 1947, marks a real turning point in our program. It is the graduation of MEMBERS into PARTICIPANTS. We think you will enjoy the Bulletin and will agree that projects in local history which **you** can do are really great fun.

The Saturday afternoon excursions of a Radnor Scoutmaster and his Troop made possible the delightful tale of a by-gone Radnor industry, which Albert N. Curley tells in "The Old Mills of Radnor." Two teen-age schoolboys, Charles David and Robert Bishop, interested themselves in the local tradition of Underground Railroad activity and here present their findings. It is indeed encouraging to have a fourteen-year-old turn to a research problem suggested by the Society and find that he has learned a great deal about the community in which he lives and had fun in the process. We can be sure he got an "A," too!

We feel that one of our chief contributions to the community is the publication of material on local history. Now, let's see **your** name in print! We have lots of ideas for you. Caroline Robbins' scholarly picture of school life in Radnor in the eighteenth century, which you will also find in the Bulletin, suggests lots of questions which can be answered by a glance at deeds at Media, at old Minutes of Radnor Meeting and St. David's Church. We would love to hear something about the history of your own house and land (and can tell you where to find material). We want you to take photographs for us, of bridges, barns, roads and waterways, to find service records of Radnor boys in all our wars. We want you to tell us what programs you would like and to suggest names of your friends who would like to take part in the Radnor Historical Society. Won't *you* PARTICIPATE?

The Society feels that it has an obligation to acquaint every resident of Radnor Township, "old" and "new," with the colorful and significant past of the beautiful community in which we live. Give us a call and help us make our goal possible.

RICHARD W. FOSTER  
President

## THE OLD MILLS OF RADNOR

Map No.

The beauty of the countryside along Darby-Paoli Road and the adjacent roads gives little hint of the industry which at one time flourished along the Darby Creeks. Today we see beautiful, spacious lawns, well cared-for farms and delightful woodlands. Sixty years and more ago we would have found strategically placed mills. Grist mills, saw mills, plaster mills, bark mills, tan yards, fulling mills, clover mills, tilt mills, paper mills, cotton mills and cider mills and their related blacksmith, wheelwright and other workshops were all actively engaged in filling the needs of the local citizenry as well as orders from foreign lands. Although these mills were not operating concurrently, some can trace their history back to the 18th century, and the mills of Tryon Lewis can claim the grist mill of William Davis which dates back to 1710, as their progenitor. Amid this scene of industry would be seen farm wagons lumbering to and from the mills, laden with raw material or finished products.

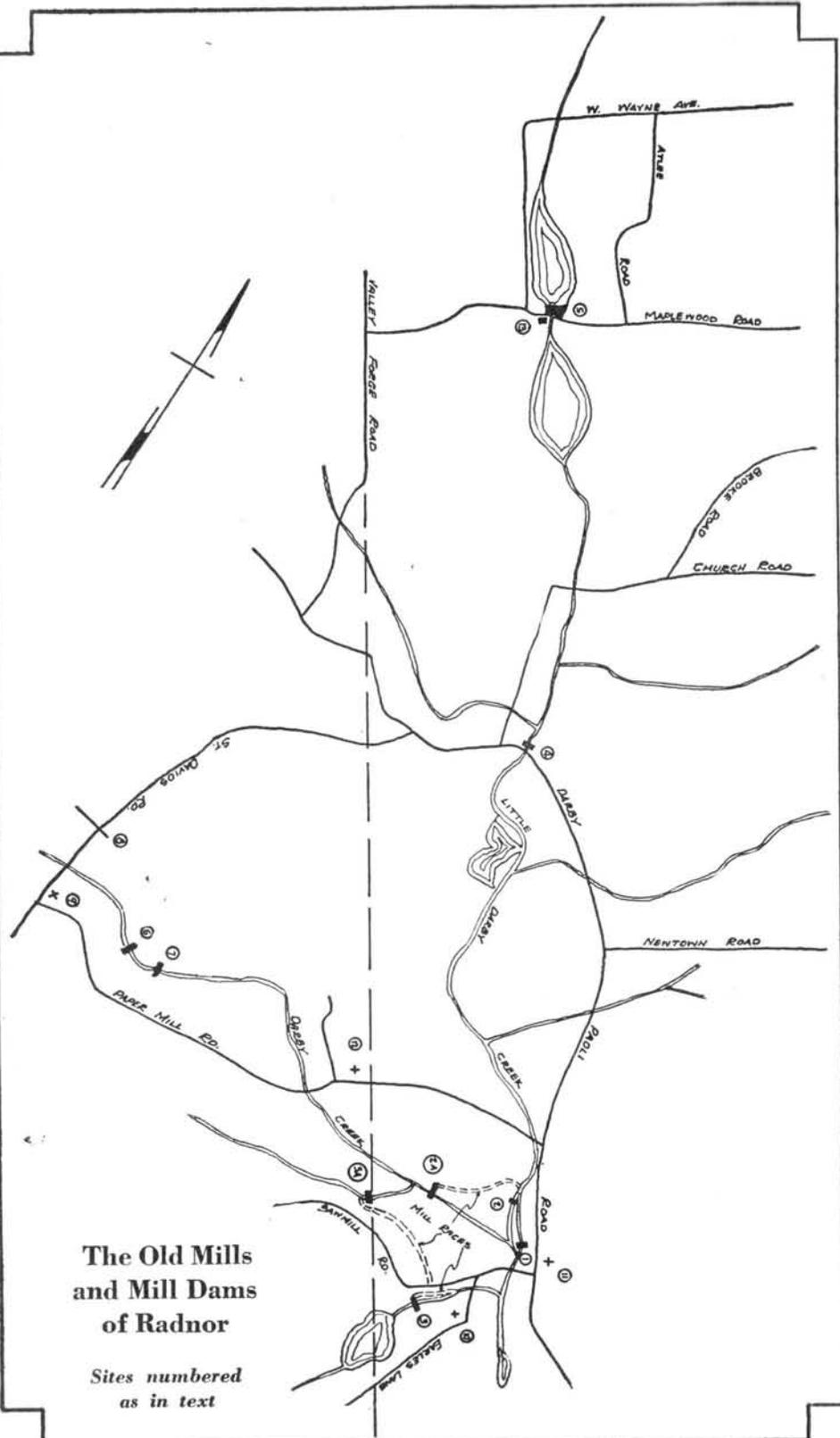
Until a year ago, I considered "Skunk Hollow" simply a pleasant picnic grove on Little Darby Creek across from "Ardrossan Farm." Now I know that it was once the scene of a thriving industrial community boasting two mills, a wheelwright shop, a blacksmith shop, the miller's home and the workers' homes. This sudden increase in my knowledge was the direct result of an invitation from James Dallett to Radnor Boy Scout Troop No. 1 to explore Darby and Little Darby Creeks for the remains of former mill sites and dams.

Starting with suggestions from Mr. Dallett, we located ten dams and several mill races. With this information and that gleaned from the memory of those whose lives go back many years, we were able to map out the approximate location of many of the mill sites. It would be nice to say that we had the same kind of cooperation from the elements but such was not the case as our final operations were greatly hampered by Hurricane "Hazel."

We will now start on the exploration. Let us gather together at Conestoga Road and Maplewood Road in Wayne. We will proceed along Maplewood Road until we come to the Mill Dam Club. This old white house was at one time the home of Mahlon Edwards who operated a saw mill located between his home and the dam. This mill, which bore on one of its front beams the date 1714, was on land which descended to William Siter who was miller in 1829. Across the dam and immediately to our left was a cider mill. Farmers came from miles around to convert their apples into cider and subsequently, I suspect, into applejack! (The winters were much colder then!) About 75' below the dam on the southerly side of the stream are the remains of a tail race which would place the cider mill in a small square area bounded on two sides by what is now the Pemberton property and on the other two by Maplewood Road and the creek. In the ravine below the dam have been found Indian relics. (5) (13)

You who are more venturesome may hike with us down Little Darby Creek to Route No. 252 where we will join the others. Somewhere along this beautiful glen was a small forge or tilt mill built in 1771 by Samuel Brooke (1717-97) and continued by his son John Brooke who made military equipment here during the War of 1812. The power came from the creek which was carried nearly half a mile via a large ditch. The ditch, foundation of the forge and the pit which was blasted in rock for the water wheel, were still to be seen in 1898. Spades, ice skates, parts for cotton gins and other iron products were forged here.

Jesse Brooke (1793-1868), son of John, ran the forge until his death and being an active member of St. David's Church was known locally as "Church Jesse" to distinguish him from his first cousin Jesse Brooke (1799-1882) who was called "Miller Jesse."



**The Old Mills  
and Mill Dams  
of Radnor**

Sites numbered  
as in text

We shall visit "Miller Jesse" later. "Church Jesse" Brooke lived in the present W. W. Montgomery farm house facing Church Road between the creek and Brooke Road. (5A)

Traveling down Little Darby Creek, we discover the remains of an earthen dam a few feet to the north of Darby-Paoli Road and east of Route No. 252. The purpose of this dam is still unknown. (4)

We continue in a southerly direction either along the creek or by Darby-Paoli Road until we come to Saw Mill Road on our right. Here we find the site of what must have been at one time, a thriving industrial community. Considerable engineering skill was called into action, for every stream has been dammed and the water diverted to industrial use. Here Tryon Lewis had his mills. Records of mills operated by members of the Lewis family on both the "East Branch" and "West Branch" of Darby Creek date back to 1735. As early as 1710 William Davis owned a grist mill which was located on or near the site of the mills operated by Tryon Lewis.

Northwest of the juncture of Saw Mill and Darby-Paoli Roads we can see the remains of a grist mill and dam. This dam and mill were fed with water from both the Darby Creek and Little Darby Creek. Approximately 500' west of its meeting with Little Darby Creek there is a dam on Darby Creek. The water from this dam flows in a northeasterly direction for approximately 900' to Little Darby Creek. Here there is another dam and the overflow serviced a mill pond which was the source of water power for the grist mill. This mill was operated at one time by Eber Siter. Directly in front of the remains of the mill and nearer the corner of the two roads previously mentioned, is the site of the blacksmith shop. One smith was William Epright. (1)

Hugging the east side of Darby-Paoli Road, directly opposite the site of the grist mill, is a one-story, single room stone building once a wheelwright shop, which even in the youth of Tryon Lewis Steele was not in use. That would be around 1870-1880. (14)

At the southwesterly corner of Saw Mill and Darby-Paoli Roads is located a cattle barracks. This spot is the approximate site of "The White Hall," a narrow three-story, three-dwelling house in which lived the above mentioned Siter, Epright and Charles Fritz, a farm hand, all of whom worked for Tryon Lewis. (11)

We will now go west along Saw Mill Road and turn left into Earle's Lane. Here we find a fine old two-story stone house, of eighteenth century construction, the home at present of Franklin H. Price. Back in the 1850's Dilwyn Steele moved here from his home near Goshen Meeting in Chester County. Here he became the manager of Tryon Lewis' saw mill. Steele, a Quaker, attended Newtown Friends Meeting and was also prominent in the affairs of Radnor Township, serving for many years as Township Supervisor. (15)

Leaving this lovely old home and returning to Saw Mill Road, we find the foundations of a small four-room house, two rooms up and two down. The actual site is located in the woods on the westerly side of the road immediately after it makes a 90-degree turn. Here Tryon Lewis housed various of his itinerant workers or rented it to workers from Garrett's Paper Mill located on St. Davids Road further west on Darby Creek. Among the persons who rented this house was a man named Wilfong. (10)

If we now go to a spot on Saw Mill Road about 700' south of Darby-Paoli Road and face the home of Mr. Price, we will find in the field to the rear of us, a mill race which brought either additional water or served an overshot wheel on the saw mill. The saw mill was located just off the road and in front of us.

This race is interesting in that for more than 1000' it follows a northwesterly

direction along the side of hill, turning almost due west until it merges with a small unnamed stream nestled amidst dense undergrowth. It is difficult today to understand how the flow from this small dam could have added much power to the operation of the saw mill.

Retracing our steps to Saw Mill Road and to the site of the former saw mill, we find a large mill race leading in a southwesterly direction to the remains of the mill dam and pond which was the main source of power. Near the northern end of this dam is found a "Cornerstone" inscribed "Levi Lewis, Lydia Lewis, Tryon Lewis, U S 70." Would this date the stone as 1846? Here, prior to the War for Independence and for many decades, the Lewises held sway conducting a thriving miller's business.

Just before we arrived at Saw Mill Road, you may have noticed on your left an old stone house on the "Ardrossan Farm," known for over 200 years as "The Holly Tree House." To the left of the front door of this farm house is a holly tree growing from the roots of an ancient holly tree which had lived for hundreds of years and was THE landmark of this section, giving the place its name. Tryon Lewis was proud of it. At the extreme rear of "The Holly Tree House" is a very small house. Both of these houses now are joined together. Here in the 1880's lived Charles Rezzer, Lewis' chief farmer.

Tryon L. Steele recalls that in his boyhood the kitchen of this small house was in its original Colonial form. It had an eight-foot crane in the fireplace, large kettles of all kinds, and pewter dishes and utensils in the cupboards and racks around the walls. Mr. Steele can recall Tryon Lewis showing visitors the kitchen of the Rezzer home and telling them that here the farmer's wife prepared food for the Revolutionary soldiers stationed at "Camp Woods," a secret outpost for Valley Forge, up the hill on Newtown Road. (The estate is still so named.)

Indeed this farmer's wife was none other than Tryon Lewis' grandmother and the daughter of Thomas Thomas. The small farm house was the Thomas home. Thomas Thomas was a member of Radnor Friends Meeting and the first grist miller in the neighborhood. He married Jane Miles (1687-1770). Their daughter, Margaret, married Nathan Lewis who continued operating his father-in-law's mill. In 1735 Margaret Thomas Lewis made a trip to London as a "Public Friend." In order to satisfy the curiosity of some of her English friends concerning maize or American corn, then unknown in England, she had her young son Levi Lewis send over a bag of meal, Radnor's first export to Europe!

On the crest of the hill overlooking this farm house is "Hickory Hall" (Alfred H. Geary), which was the homestead of Tryon Lewis. In the almost identical Federal style mansion on the same tract (now the R. Alexander Montgomery house) lived Lewis' parents, Levi Lewis and Lydia Evans.

Continuing to backtrack, we descend into the hollow below and walk through a heavily wooded area known 80 years ago as "Shellbark Flat" from the large cluster of shellbark hickory trees here. Continuing west on the unpaved portion of Paper Mill Road, we cross the township line into Newtown Township. Just at this point we enter a tract of 80 acres of land sold in 1835 by Adam Siter to Samuel, James and Alexander Moore, and on which the Moores erected a stone paper mill described as 40' x 60' and 3 stories in height, and also a one-story stone picker house. The Moores built 14 tenement houses and maintained a large business until 1855 when the main mill was destroyed by fire. The small one burned a few years later. Dr. Henry Pleasants later acquired this property. We find today, about 500' west of the township line and north of the road, the beautiful, ivy clad remains of a two-story stone mill, 70' x 34' and with a wall

thickness in a low archway of 42"! A mill race comes into it at the top and it is plain where the overflow from the wheel went. Although this mill has been thought to have been part of the Lewis domain, and despite a slight disparity in measurements, it seems almost certain that it is in fact the remains of the Moore establishment, which was the largest in Newtown Township.

We will now move through the Darby Creek valley and will proceed to the area east of Paper Mill and St. Davids Roads. Here the picture has not become clear. Our exploration in this area was continually handicapped by recent building operations, storms (including both rain storms and Hurricane "Hazel") as well as rubbish heaps, not to mention areas of dense undergrowth. However, it is known that about 400' northeast of Paper Mill Road on the east side of St. Davids Road was situated a mill, built in 1828 by William Crosley as a woolen factory. This building burned. It was purchased in 1861 by Dr. Henry Pleasants and then sold by him to Caspar C. Garrett. Garrett owned many mills in Delaware County, the foremost being the "Keystone Mill" in Upper Darby, and under his management the "Union Paper Mill," as it had become, entered upon a period of prosperity. Late in the nineteenth century it was finally abandoned and, according to Mr. George L. Harrison, its machinery shipped to Brazil. Another 50' to the northeast on the westerly side of St. Davids Road is a long low dam which formed a large shallow mill pond. Immediately above the pond was a small stone house which the Harrison family took down, after paying off an ancient \$600 yearly dower right on the place. Across the meadow in the background can be seen the white farm buildings and homestead of Major Whiteside (1816-1881), who is buried in Old St. David's Churchyard. According to Mr. Harrison, this property was sold to his father, Charles Custis Harrison, for \$1.00 an acre. The purpose of this dam and pond does not seem clear, for the race which causes a bump in St. Davids Road and hugs the side of the hill seems to have been too small to provide any appreciable amount of water power. Perhaps the water was used in processing paper.

The building which is still standing at the eastern corner of Paper Mill and St. Davids Road, was originally a double house. The section nearest St. Davids Road was the home of the superintendent of the mill, while the southern half was a store to supply the needs of the workers. Immediately below this house on Paper Mill Road, were some fourteen small four-room, two-story stone houses which housed mill workers. The names of some of these mill families were Rudolph, Harrison and Wilfong.

Retracing our path on Paper Mill Road, we come to the A. P. Pakradooni house on the north side of the road and about 150' west of Darby Creek. This house was originally three dwellings and like its twin across the road (which has long since rotted away) was the home of mill workers. It is said that somewhere in this vicinity was located a third mill, which sawed and shipped to Germany fine woods used in the manufacture of toys! You who are adventuresome may wish to explore this area and perhaps do a title search and locate in a more definite fashion some of the missing details of the Moore establishment.

Ithan Creek also had its mills which go back beyond 1826. "Near the head of Ithan Creek in Radnor, a grist mill and saw mill, head and fall about 16 feet grinds from 8-10 thousand bushels of grain per annum and about 50 ton of gypsum per annum." The saw mill was owned and managed by Jesse Brooke. This Jesse Brooke, to distinguish him from a cousin of like name, was called "Miller Jesse" (1799-1882). This would seem to be the mill later operated by Joseph W. Worrall who lived in the white house with the tall pillars on the east side of Ithan Avenue facing Clyde Road. Going north on Ithan Avenue about 1250' from Clyde Road we come to a driveway to "Ithan Mill Farm," the home of Mr. Charles J. Rhoads. This drive crosses the old mill dam. The mill race is clearly visible and runs by the side of the hill for about

(3A)

(8)

(18)

(12)

(19)

(8)

(9)

(21)

(23)

(21)

300' where the grist mill was apparently located. The site of the saw mill is still to be determined, or the mill may have served both purposes.

(22)

Clyde Road at one time did not follow its present course but ran through the property of Mr. Rhoads, curving along the front of the house and down through the meadow, fording the creek and up the hill to what is now the Booth School. This house which stands above the site of the mill was originally a two-story, two-room house. At one time it was the home of Enoch Matlack. Mr. Matlack and Edward Thomas of Thomas Nurseries, King of Prussia, had the unique distinction of keeping Radnor Friends Meeting "alive." Mr. Matlack went to the meeting all alone on Friday afternoons and the local children who played on the grounds thought him very odd to go to church on Friday.

(27)

Joseph Worrall, the miller, built in the 1870's the houses on Radnor Avenue which Mr. Tryon L. Steele thinks was the first real estate speculation in Radnor Township.

On Ithan Creek 250' south of Clyde Road on the property of H. Harrison Smith, is located another mill dam which apparently served "a grist mill and saw mill, head and fall about 23' owned and occupied by John and David Evans," (about 1826). This mill was located approximately another 400' south of Clyde Road and to the east of the Evans homestead. This would place it between the homestead and the small house on the creek bank which is now in ruins. Lumber for the Philadelphia market was sawed here, and the Evanses also ground grain in their corn mill.

(24)

(25)

(26)

In 1828 John Evans started a Botanical Garden and Arboretum here. He ranked with Bartram and Humphrey Marshall as the third Pennsylvania born naturalist. On the densely wooded hillside north of his home, he planted mountain shrubbery and below, on a flat on the opposite side of Ithan Creek, a "sand garden." Here were assembled pecan trees, cypress, larch, oriental spruce, magnolia and many other unusual specimens sent to the Radnor miller from Kew Gardens in England, the Andes, Himalayas and all corners of the world. Evans' collection was the most celebrated in America at the time. The Arboretum was kept up by the W. Hinckle Smith family for some time, but is now much overgrown.

In the heart of Wayne was located a large cotton mill operated in the 1880's by "Huts" (Hudson?) Worrall. This mill was located in the area of South Wayne and Audubon Avenues, in what is now a heavily-built residential area.

Our trek is now ended, but the work is not completed. Much can still be done to pinpoint and authenticate what has been written here. This has been an interesting venture and a most satisfying experience. In view of the history of "Radnor Valley" and its importance to the early life of Radnor, it would be grand if it could be turned into a Darby Creek Conservation Area. It would thus aid in preserving a great deal of our early history, it would aid in the conservation of our wildlife and botany and provide a place for wholesome recreation for all residents.

May I express my appreciation to the boys of Radnor No. 1, B.S.A., for their field work, to Francis James Dallett, Jr., for his valuable suggestions and historical sketches, to the Radnor Historical Society which has provided data from Henry Graham Ashmead's **History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania**, and from Thomas Allen Glenn's **Merion in the Welsh Tract**, and to George L. Harrison, the sponsor of the project.

ALBERT N. CURLEY,  
Wayne, Pa.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Attached to this report and on deposit in the Headquarters of the Radnor Historical Society are an enlarged plan of the area described by Mr. Curley, topographic maps of the same locality and a series of some 80 Kodachrome slides illustrating the peregrinations of Radnor Troop No. 1, B. S. A.

Appearing here in the right margin are numbers referring to sites shown on the enlarged plan, which we illustrate.

We also illustrate here, with several older views, a few of Mr. Curley's slides and urge our friends to see them all. They are truly magnificent graphic records of the little realized beauties of our Radnor Valley.

## EXPLANATION OF NUMBERS ON ENLARGED MAP

### Mill Dams and Sites Located on Little Darby, Darby and Ithan Creeks

- (1) Dam located near corner of Saw Mill Road and Darby-Paoli Road. This dam is fed by an overflow stream starting at a dam (#2) located approximately 600' to the north on Little Darby Creek; also site of grist mill.
- (2) Dam on Little Darby Creek approximately 800' in a northerly direction from Saw Mill Road. This dam is also fed by a mill race leading from a dam on Darby Creek (2A) as well as providing water for dam (#1).
- (2A) Dam on Darby Creek approximately 500' from its juncture with Little Darby Creek. This dam provides additional water for the dam (#2) on Little Darby Creek by means of a mill race which runs along the base of hill.
- (3) Dam located on Price property (at corner of Earle's Lane and Saw Mill Road) approximately 600' to the northeast of Earle's Lake. A cornerstone in the dam is inscribed "Levi Lewis, Lydia Lewis, Tyron Lewis U S 70."
- (3A) Dam located on unnamed stream which empties into Darby Creek approximately 200' west of dam (#2A). This dam feeds a mill race which runs along the side of a hill for approximately 1000' toward the mill site on the Price property. Probably this race have led to an overshot wheel.
- (4) Earthen dam on Little Darby Creek at corner of Brooke Road and Darby-Paoli Road.
- (5) Dam located on Little Darby Creek at corner of West Wayne Avenue and Maplewood Road. This is now the site of the "Mill Dam Club."
- (6,7) Earthen dams on Darby Creek near Paper Mill Road about 1000' to 1200' south-east of St. Davids Road.
- (8) Shallow mill pond along St. Davids Road about 800' northeast of the corner of St. Davids and Paper Mill Roads. It is apparent that the dam extended across St. Davids Road.
- (9) Miller's house at the corner of Paper Mill and St. Davids Road.
- (10) Miller's house at the corner of Earle's Lane and Saw Mill Road. (Price)
- (11) Wheelwright shop located on east side of Darby-Paoli Road near Saw Mill Road opposite Dam #1.
- (12) Mill ruin on Paper Mill Road about 2000' west of Darby-Paoli Road. This mill is to the north of Darby Creek. We did not locate the water supply for this mill. It is set higher than the dams (#6) and (#7).

- (13) Possible site of Mahlon Edward's cider mill.
- (14) Site of Lewis' blacksmith shop.
- (15) Site of three-story, three-home dwelling — "The White Hall."
- (16) Foundation of dwelling for itinerant workers.
- (17) Site of saw mill.
- (18) "The Holly Tree House."
- (19) Garrett mill.
- (20) Pakradooni house.
- (21) Dam on property of Mr. Rhoads (Worrall).
- (22) Site of mill (Worrall).
- (23) Worrall house.
- (24) Evans' dam.
- (25) Site of Mill.
- (26) Evans' house.
- (27) Rhoads house (Matlack).

(Submitted May 11, 1954 from information gathered by the boys of Radnor No. 1, B. S. A.)

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY, 1954 - 1955

### May 17, 1954

The Seventh Annual Meeting of the Society, held at the home of Miss Lecian Von Bernuth, Strafford, presented to a gathering of 75 members and guests, Dr. Edward M. Riley, Chief Park Historian of Independence National Historical Park, who described the restoration and development of the Independence Mall area. The Society presented book prizes to pupils of the Radnor and St. Katharine of Siena High Schools who contributed winning entries to the Art Contest sponsored by the Society. Mr. Richard W. Foster, President, spoke of historical displays arranged in shop windows in Wayne by the Society during the Pennsylvania House and Garden Tour and asked for suggestions for housing the Conestoga Wagon bequeathed to the Society by the late Thornton Oakley.

Mr. Francis James Dallett, Jr., Secretary, told the meeting of the project undertaken by the Boy Scouts of Radnor Troop No. 1 of mapping and photographing remains of the milling industry in the Township, and presented to the Scouts a check to purchase kitchen equipment in appreciation of their competent research work. He spoke of the great need of original research on the history of the community and urged members to undertake such projects. It was noted that the Board of Directors had been increased during the year from 9 to 12 with the addition of Mr. Herbert S. Casey (a former President), Mr. O. Louis Ehmman, Jr., and Mr. H. Ross Watson. Returned to office at this time were Mr. Herman P. Lengel, Mr. Richard W. Foster, Mr. Herbert S. Casey and Mrs. Charles W. David. It was with much regret that the resignation was announced of Mrs. John Forsyth Joline, Jr., as Treasurer of the Society and a member of the Board.

### October 16, 1954

Demonstrating the Colonial tradition in domestic architecture in the area, the Society observed "Pennsylvania Week" by opening five historic houses between Bryn Mawr and Berwyn. The "Old Radnor Hunt," Darby-Paoli and Roberts Roads, Bryn Mawr, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Wood Easby and an early fieldstone farmhouse in which the Hunt organized in 1883, the Revolutionary period house on St. Davids Road at Paper Mill, now the Roberts Harrison residence, "The Homestead" (1789), North Wayne headquarters of the Radnor Historical Society and home of Miss E. Dorothy

Finley, the 18th century miller's house at Martin's Dam, now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Basinger, and finally, the ancient "Travelgwyn," built prior to 1722 on Waterloo Road, Berwyn, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. John N. Ziegler, were included in the program. As a special feature of the afternoon, Mr. Francis A. Chidsey, Jr., of St. Davids, gave a showing of the fine antique reproduction furniture which he creates in the 18th century manner.

Also in the month of October the Society cooperated in the Radnor Township celebration of United Nations Week and arranged visits to Independence Hall and Valley Forge Park for the visiting United Nations delegates.

### November 16, 1954

Mr. Albert N. Curley, of Wayne, who directed the mill recording project of Radnor Troop No. 1, B. S. A., described "The Old Mills of Radnor" to an overflow gathering held at St. David's Church Parish House, Wayne.

A superb series of Kodachrome slides made by Mr. Curley illustrated his detailed descriptions of the mills, mill races and streams, millers' houses and the general area along Darby, Little Darby and Ithan Creeks, in which this industry was concentrated in former times.

The Rev. John R. Dunne, O.S.A., was elected to the Board to fill the vacancy of the Rev. Thomas F. Roland, O.S.A., whose retirement from this office and from the Vice-Presidency of the Society was deeply regretted. Miss Caroline Robbins became Vice-President.

### January 18, 1955

"Early Local Portraiture," was described by Mr. Charles Coleman Sellers, of Dickinson College, art historian and biographer of Charles Willson Peale, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. David, Wayne, in a setting of treasured family portraits loaned to the meeting by members and friends of the Society. Mr. Sellers showed Kodachrome slides illustrating the development of portrait painting in Philadelphia and made identification of period, school, and painter of many of the miniatures and oil paintings on exhibit. The Society was particularly fortunate to be able to exhibit Sharples pastel portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Maskell Ewing, of "Woodstock," Villa Nova. As Mrs. Ewing (Jane Hunter) was born at "Woodstock" in 1768, and was a girl in Radnor Township during the Revolutionary War, she is believed to be the earliest Radnor Township resident of which any likeness is known. Also shown was a portrait of Mrs. Ewing's son-in-law, George Fisher Curwen, painted by Peter Penn-Gaskell (1764-1831), of "Penn Lodge," Villa Nova, on the border of Lower Merion and Radnor Townships, a descendant of the Proprietor; Penn-Gaskell, an amateur, was probably the first person to paint in this area. A later distinguished Radnor Township artist, John Ramsey Conner (1869-1952), was represented by several canvases.

### March 16, 1955

Caroline Robbins, Ph.D., Vice-President of the Society, spoke absorbingly on "Pennsylvania Education in the Eighteenth Century, or The American War With the Romans," at a meeting held at St. Mary's Parish House, Wayne. Miss Robbins described the development of early schooling in Radnor Township (which chiefly centered in Radnor Friends Meeting) and in eastern Pennsylvania, against a broader background of the subject matter taught and principles of education which prevailed in educational practice of the period. The feeling of Benjamin Franklin and many of his College of Philadelphia associates that classical learning should give way to practical learning provided Miss Robbins with the sub-title of her address and her listeners with enter-

taining anecdotes. Miss Robbins quoted from original reports on Radnor schooling prepared by the Episcopal and Dissenting clergy as well as by the Quakers and her talk indicated the wealth of material available for a more detailed study of Radnor education.

Elected to the Board of Directors to bring its membership to a total of 15 have been Mrs. T. Magill Patterson, Mr. Charles E. Alexander, a former President, and Mr. William F. Machold.

### NEW MEMBERS

(Since Publication of Our Last Bulletin)

Mrs. Mary Rossiter Antrobus	Mr. and Mrs. William T. Machold
Mr. Murray Arnold	Mr. and Mrs. William Z. McLear
Miss Mary A. Bair	Mr. and Mrs. Charles R. Meyers
Mr. Michael Civitella	Mrs. Paul W. Neff
Mrs. Henry Clifford	Mr. and Mrs. Franklin H. Price
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Cochran	Mr. and Mrs. Carl K. Raiser
Dr. Robert Devereux	Mr. Evan Randolph, Jr.
Mrs. Thomas Harvey Dougherty, Jr.	Mrs. Priscilla Cox Southwell
Mr. J. Howard Groff	Mr. and Mrs. Winfred N. Stilwell
Mr. Melvin W. Hendren	Mrs. Boudinot Stimson
Mr. Robert C. Lea	Mrs. L. James Talbot
Mr. William Lovelace	Commander Henry R. Wharton
Dr. Douglas Macfarlan	Mrs. W. H. H. White

Mrs. P. Nicholson Wood

### OUR FABULOUS PHOTOGRAPHS

Can you picture Wayne and Radnor Township . . .

In 1870, in 1910, even as recently as 1950? Probably not, even in the later years, unless you have a very precise memory and are a long-time resident — and certainly not in the earlier years! Communities change very quickly and the members of one generation can often barely recognize the environment in which their predecessors lived. It is with this in mind that the Radnor Historical Society, through the collection of pictorial material, is seeking to preserve the appearance of our community and its inhabitants at various periods. Early photographs, modern reproductions of sketches and portraits done in the past, postcards even, all serve to help us understand the past. Our photographs are truly fabulous.

Almost unbelievable is the picture of Morgan's Corner, now Radnor, in 1856, when the Pennsylvania Central Railroad meandered through quiet countryside nearly one hundred years before the great express trains of today thunder by. There is the little toll-gate on Lancaster Pike in Rosemont, recalling the pleasant days before the advent of the automobile. On the other hand, for those who think Wayne of 75 years ago was only a country village, glance at the Victorian dignity of the Opera House, built in 1870, or at the formal gardens of the monumental Louella and Bellevue Hotels, popular summer residences of vacation-minded Philadelphians in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Old neighbors, clad in costume and mask, are shown in the views of the local Gilbert and Sullivan troupe of the 1890's, and behind the beards and stiff collars of members of the Wayne Business Association dining in early days at the Wayne Hotel, and of the cricket and tennis teams of the Wayne Country Club, are many other Radnor Township people whose identity we do not know. Maybe you can help us identify them!



SITER-EDWARD MILL

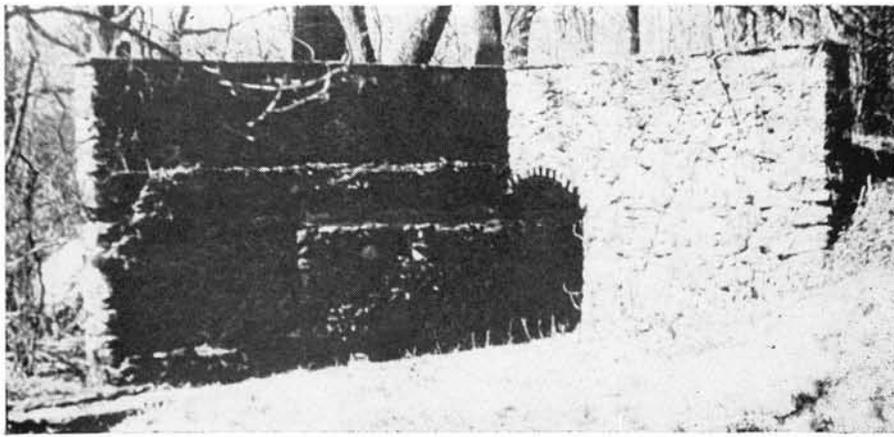
*About 1900 — Now the Mill Dam Club*



OLD TRYON LEWIS MILL

Saw Mill Road and Earles Lane (about 1900)

*From an oil painting by John Ramsey Conner  
(1869 - 1952) Owned by Henry Conner*



**DAM SITE ON LITTLE DARBY CREEK**  
Saw Mill Road and Darby-Paoli Road



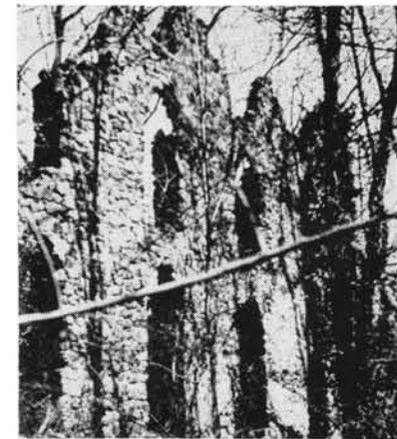
**OLD WHEELWRIGHT SHOP**      Darby-Paoli Road



**MILLER'S HOUSE OF TRYON LEWIS MILL**  
Saw Mill Road and Earles Lane      *(Now residence of Franklin H. Price)*



**"THE HOLLY TREE HOUSE"**  
On "Ardrossan Farm," Darby-Paoli Road  
*(Rear elevation showing Revolutionary kitchen house)*



**RUINS OF MOORE PAPER MILL**  
Paper Mill Road



**SUPERINTENDENT'S HOUSE AND STORE OF GARRET MILL**  
St. Davids Road and Paper Mill Road



**ENTRANCE TO THE CELLAR,  
AMPOR HOUSE**  
*(Underground Railway)*



**JONATHAN ROBERTS BARN**  
*(Underground Railway)*



**COLD CELLAR, "BERWYN STATION"**  
*(Underground Railway)*

Would you like a photograph of your house in St. Davids in the days of bustles and family croquet teams, or of the old mill along the Creek below you, or a scene in the yard of the old Sorrel Horse or King of Prussia Taverns? If you do, our collection can serve you.

You can help us expand the collection by giving us old photographs of people, buildings, events, and by telling us who has others which might be copied.

It is also our duty to record the present for the eyes of future generations. With the technique of photography so readily available, you members of the Society can help us capture the present scene which will be of much curiosity fifty years hence. We will even buy Kodachrome or black and white film for you, but please go out and click the shutter yourself. We all should share in the pleasure of getting a good, close look at Radnor Township!

We are presently mounting and filing for ready reference all our loose photographs. Some of them are in album form as readers of Mrs. Patterson's delightful stories of nineteenth century Wayne which appear in **The Suburban**, will know. Much remains to be accessioned and made available for inter-library loan and for the use of the community at large. We welcome volunteers to assist us! A telephone call to the Curator will bring her to your door!

Help us all to enjoy our "fabulous photographs." After all, they belong to you.

MARGARET S. DAVID  
Curator

## EDUCATION IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RADNOR TOWNSHIP

### Caroline Robbins

Early settlers could of course educate their own children if they were themselves willing and able. Many must have done so. In Radnor before the Revolution there were available, at different times, three different systems of elementary instruction. Children could learn the three Rs at Richard Harrison's schoolhouse run in connection with Radnor Friends Meeting and mentioned as early as 1731. They could attend the classes of an Anglican teacher associated with St. David's Church. As early as 1722 a certain Rowland Jones was trying to persuade the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in London to pay for his services at Radnor. He was to try again in 1730, after an absence of some years during which, he wrote them, poor children, Welsh and Irish, had multiplied. In midcentury a schoolhouse, which existed on into the next century, was situated on the rising ground in front of the church and it is likely that the missionary rectors of the church taught there from time to time. Finally, soon after 1769, when German Lutherans were buying land in Tredyffrin township from descendants of the original Welsh settlers, they established what came to be called the "Old Eagle School" for the use of their families. Here before the present building dated 1788 went up, perhaps Christian Werkiser may have taught during the Revolution.

There were no secondary schools, academies or institutions of higher learning for laymen or ministers in or near Radnor, though the Reverend William Currie of St. David's prepared his own boys for the College of Philadelphia, and may, in spite of his poor health, have helped others. Within reach, however, of those who could afford to send their children away, were the resources of Philadelphia itself, such Presbyterian academies as Neshaminy and Nottingham, and some German schools in Germantown and Lancaster. In the capital from very early days, the William Penn Charter School offered instruction not only to the Quakers, who solely maintained it, but to some others

besides. There were also very early in our history, private teachers advertising lessons of all sorts. Anthony Wayne was prepared by his uncle for the College of Philadelphia. Benjamin Rush learned from his uncle, Dr. Samuel Finley, afterwards president of Princeton, but for a long while at Nottingham, Chester County, on the Maryland border. Rush had many distinguished classmates and has left in his autobiography a vivid and amusing account of his uncle's methods. Francis Alison, briefly associated with Finley, then taught at New London, and ended by teaching at both the Academy and the College of Philadelphia. Boys were sent abroad. Rush himself went later to Edinburgh for medicine and seems a little scornful of those without this advantage. Many, however, after the middle of the century could obtain an excellent education at the College under the influence, amongst others, of the Provost, Dr. William Smith (who had married a parishioner of St. David's, Radnor), and Benjamin Franklin.

In spite of the existence of a fair variety of schooling in and around Philadelphia, it must be remembered that there was never enough to satisfy the demand, especially in the country districts and at the elementary level. Schoolmasters were hard to find and harder to remunerate. Quarters for classes were not easily come by. Books were scarce. Roads were bad or non-existent. It was difficult to arrange for even those three or four years essential for teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic, together with some "religious and civil" truths. With means, parents might not be able to find a tutor. Without, they were entirely dependent on their church. In the early days the churches themselves were often without ministers and had to resort to meetings in private houses and readings of Bible or prayer book, in lieu of more formal services.

It might be thought that the proprietary interest or the English government or church, or the religious societies of London and Halle might have done more. They could indeed have sent more books, encouraged more missionaries, raised more funds. But the situation was far less simple than that of colonial New England. Pennsylvania's liberal laws encouraged a wide variety of nations to settle. They all, whatever their faith or language, enjoyed its freedom but they were not always tolerant of each other. Quakers put obstacles in the way of Episcopal teachers at Chester. Germans and English disputed in the Philadelphia suburbs. Possibly an early awareness of their complex problem led to the omission from the charter of 1701 of the clauses in Penn's Frame of Government about education. The early settlers entirely depended on their own efforts, and there was no public provision until after the Revolution.

We read of a Dutch teacher, Pietersen, at New Castle in 1657, of a Swede at Upland in 1679. In 1705 George Ross (afterwards to become father of George Ross, signer of the Declaration of Independence and father-in-law of the midcentury Radnor missionary, Parson Currie) described the situation in Chester. Here, persons sold for servants were given charge of schools. Schoolmasters might be hired by the year by groups of families who entertained him a month at a time in their houses and treated him very poorly. "When a ship arrives in the river," he claimed, "it is a common expression with those who stand in need of an instructor for their children, 'let us go and buy a schoolmaster.'" Nothing better, he thought, was likely until the whole matter was seriously reviewed.

In 1752 things were still difficult. In the German *Almanac* printed in Philadelphia in that year an imaginary but pretty lifelike dialogue illustrates colonial anxieties:

*NEW COMER. A matter that is of very great importance to me is, that, in Germany, one is able to send his children to school to have them instructed in reading and writing. Here it is well nigh impossible to get such instruction; especially where people live so far apart. O! how fortunate are they who have access to a good teacher by whom the children are well taught and trained!*

*INHABITANT. It is true. On that account many children living on our frontiers grow up like trees. But since the conditions are such that few people live in cities and villages as they do in Germany, it is natural that one meets with certain inconveniences. Where is there a place in the world where one does not meet with some objectionable features during his natural life?*

*NEW COMER. But this is an exceptional want, for if children are thus brought up in ignorance, it is an injury to their soul's welfare . . . an eternal injury.*

*INHABITANT. That is true, but, alas, how few good schoolmasters there are!*

The New-comer was eventually told of one good teacher, "the pious School-master on the Skippack" whose methods will be presently described.

Wherever the immigrant went he was likely to attach himself to his co-religionists and to share, as his means or lack of them dictated, in the elementary teaching available to them. Lutherans and Mennonites may have received books from home but depended largely on their own subscriptions for support of their schools. The Society of Friends depended likewise on subscriptions, on fees from those who could pay and on legacies and gifts or loans of property. They probably were the best organized. The Anglicans lacked any formal organization within the colony or any nearby supervision. The Church of England authorities at home failed to grasp completely the difficulties abroad without the old English order of parish, glebelands, tythe, etc. The letters to the bishops and to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel are full of complaints about poverty and non-payment of salary as clergyman or teacher. This meant that services were intermittent in Radnor Township which also suffered from the fact that during the eighteenth century duties connected with the church were often only a third part of the parson's work.

Although we cannot be certain that Radnor Quakers and Episcopalians had regular teaching in every year of our period, we can picture fairly accurately what that instruction when given, was like. Rowland Jones already mentioned as anxious for his salary as a teacher here, wrote to the secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1730 pressing his claims and giving testimonials from men like the Reverend Richard Backhouse of Chester, himself a Radnor missionary for a short time. He also described his own methods at great length, and claims to have made converts from Quakerism and Presbyterianism in Long Island and New England before his return to Pennsylvania. This is his description:

*I endeavour (for beginners) to get Primers well furnished with syllables, viz. from one to 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8. I take them several times over them until they are perfect by way of repeating according as I find occasion, and then to some place forward, according to their capacities and commonly every two or three leaves, I make them repeat 2 or 3 times over. And when they get the Primer pretty well, I serve them in the Psalter . . . I give them that to learn the which I take to be very agreeable and still follow repetitions till I find they are masters of such places. Then I move them into such places as I judge they are fit for either in the new or the old Testament . . . so making them perfect in their consonents and diphthongs and they then go on their reading clean without any noising, singing or stumbling.*

They then read the whole Bible and then began writing words of one and more syllables and then learned some verses, on their duty and their behavior to their parents. When they took up cyphering they still repeated everything. Jones thought this excellent and mentions with pride a girl who had the whole of St. John by heart. He says he has been commended by several gentlemen for this. His students in fact learned their lessons and their Christian duties together.

At Richard Harrison's schoolhouse, Quaker instruction of a similar sort would be given but its religious teaching would, of course, follow the beliefs of the Society of Friends. George Fox's *Instructions for Right Spelling, Plain Directions for Reading and Writing True English with several delightful things very useful both for young and old to read about and to learn* was used. Benjamin Franklin reprinted this small volume in Philadelphia in 1737. It contained the alphabet, capital and small letters, double letters (ff, ss, etc.), vowels and consonants. Then came the syllables to which Rowland Jones refers arranged alphabetically:

Ca la mity	Cal dron	Can dle stick	Cap ti vity	Cap tain
La bour ing	lurk ing	Lan guage	etc.	

Then followed some phrases for reading of a pious character; then a list of the seven liberal arts: grammar, rhetoric, logic, astronomy, music, geometry, arithmetic with their definitions. Punctuation was described. Some difficult words like Ax and ask, meat and meet, and also words they might not understand were explained. Some information about the Quakers in the form of question and answer was given. The catechism is a universal pattern of teaching. Quakers, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Mennonites, for example, all had regularly questions to which the proper answers gave a guide to religious and social beliefs and duties. Both questions and answers would be memorized and repeated frequently.

Another essential book would be something like Gough's *Arithmetic* long in use and printed in this country at Wilmington in 1800. This contained whole numbers, weights and measures, fractions, mercantile arithmetic and roots. It brightened its instruction by rhymes—

What is subtraction?  
Subtraction from a greater takes a less  
And thereby shows the difference or excess.

Dr. Isaac Watts whose hymns are still familiar was a teacher of the time who made rhyming answers and sentences very popular. The *Arithmetic* also introduced useful knowledge when giving exercises; page 17 of Gough has five notable events, the invention of the compass, gunpowder and printing, the discovery of America and the Reformation. If the date of the last is 1517 then the student may discover the dates of the other by subtracting the number of years before that time of each discovery.

Church libraries existed but were small. Radnor Meeting probably had copies of Barclay's *Apology*, the Bible, Penn's *Maxims* and may have owned the elementary texts used in the school. St. David's Church was sent sermons, testaments, and prayer books. Learned clergy like Griffith Hughes (later to be an overseer of Codrington College in Barbados) and Currie may have had some books from student days at Oxford or Glasgow. The Evangelical Lutherans sent books from Germany from time to time.

Teaching was not confined to Christian boys. According to the Reverend Robert Weyman there were both black and white heathen in Radnor in 1724 and the statement is repeated by Currie in 1750. The latter incidentally guesses the population of the township to be almost equally divided between Episcopalians and Quakers or other 'sectaries' and lists heathen as seventy. The term however was loosely used and covered not only Africans (and Indians where there were any) but also whites who did not attend any place of worship. The Quakers of course were much interested in the negroes and could boast that their Radnor congregation was free from both trade in slaves or slave owners, 1757-1778.

Teaching at the Lutheran school at Strafford just at the end of our period may have been in English and in German. A little later ministers and teachers there had very

friendly relations with St. David's and helped in time of difficulty with school and with church services. Though at first probably a very small class of immigrant children studied there it may well have had methods and teachers in advance of either the meeting or the church classes in Radnor proper. In the *School Order* (or plan) of the Montgomery County teacher Christopher Dock, printed in 1771 in German, describing conditions and methods used since 1716 at intervals by this popular teacher, we have a mine of information about the difficulties of colonial education and one man's solution for them. Since his is the fullest account of any method used locally before the Revolution in the one room schoolhouse, it is well worth studying.

The children cannot all arrive together, he notes, because of the distances they travel, so he devises ways of keeping those arrived usefully employed. Of course once all are there a hymn is sung and he speaks to the children and looks at them to see if they are clean and tidy. He was the first to use a blackboard for teaching the Alphabet and it stood by the teacher and near the stove, on the other three sides of which the children stood or sat in conditions very similar to those at St. David's. Dock kept the children of all stages busy, some helping with younger children not as far advanced, some reading the Bible and learning it, some working with him at their letters and syllables at the board. Dock not only seems to have anticipated the Lancaster system so long used in the State, he also used original methods for stimulating his students to greater exertions. He asked parents to fry two eggs as a reward for progress, or he would mark the good child's hand or send a card with "Diligent" on it. Naughty children would be shamed by their fellows. Elsewhere the birch was perhaps more common than prizes and praise, although Rush reports his uncle as using it as a threat rather than a weapon. There were in old Philadelphia however masters famous for beating.

It is not very easy to know how long the instruction lasted. Dock taught three days at Skippack and three at Salford and carried letters from the pupils of one school to the other — letters being another favorite exercise in the eighteenth century schools. He also taught in Germantown during the three months when harvest closed his other schools. Woody mentions in his study of Quaker education complaints about the length of the day — eight or nine hours. Indeed, it is impossible to see how with students at all stages from alphabet to Bible, numbers to mercantile arithmetic, in the same room, and exercised every day in memory work — usually reading and writing before dinner and arithmetic after — how with all this going on, hours could be short. But we do not exactly know how many years of instruction at this level were given but probably not more than three or four. There were play periods after the noon meal but at all times children were urged not to rant, to shout, or play roughly. Silence was then regarded as golden.

Besides the subjects discussed, some instruction was given in sewing to girls and in measuring to boys, and in the use of the Globes, but the curriculum was limited not only by the age of the pupils but by the material available for teacher and student alike. Dr. Smith of the College of Philadelphia wished to see some civic instruction and indeed Penn had hoped that the laws of the state would be taught in its schools. As time wore on, men like Rush, Franklin and Smith saw in the schools a valuable aid in the assimilation of all differing parts of the population. Good subjects were very important, and the schools could help parents make them.

The lack of public provision for education was kept constantly in mind. The three men mentioned already, Franklin, Rush and Smith, all devoted considerable attention to the matter, each in his own peculiar idiom. They were all aware of its importance, and Smith declared in 1754:

*Without Education, it is impossible to preserve a free government in any Country, or to preserve the Spirit of Commerce. Should these Emigrants*

*degenerate into a state little better than that of wood-born savages, what use could they make of English privileges? Liberty is the most dangerous of all weapons in the hands of those who know not the use and value of it. Those who are in most cases free to act and speak as they please, had need be well instructed . . .*

That the efforts of poorly paid and precariously employed instructors in Radnor and all other settled parts of Pennsylvania were successful is attested by the loyalty and services of so many of them in the anxious days of the Revolutionary period. Whatever their particular creed, they all endeavored to install a sense of duty and religion into the children they taught under such difficult circumstances.

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## THE "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD" AND ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENT ON THE UPPER MAIN LINE

The antislavery movement in the Union states was very unpopular among most conservative people. Pennsylvania was no exception to this, especially along the Main Line. Thus the actions and meetings of the local antislavery societies were very secret. However, although this was true, there were a number of radical abolition groups in this area, among them the Wilberforce Antislavery Society in Berwyn.

The Society was organized on January 23, 1837 by residents of the Wayne-Berwyn area. Rev. Leonard Fletcher and John Jones led the founding of the Society with the help of George W. Lewis who acted as secretary. It is through the accurate minutes of Mr. Lewis that much is known about the Society. (The minute book is still in the possession of Mr. Lewis's grandson, Brooke Longaker.) The Society first met in the Glassby School House, situated between Berwyn and Devon, and there elected Thomas Adamson chairman and appointed a committee to draft a constitution. The Society took its name from William Wilberforce, the English champion of emancipation, who died in 1833.

George W. Lewis was born in 1800 and died in 1892. He worked as a carpenter and was also a schoolteacher at the Old Eagle School in Strafford. As we have already said he worked for a long time as the very efficient secretary of the Antislavery Society.

Leonard Fletcher was born in Massachusetts in 1796. In 1832 he became pastor of the Great Valley Baptist Church. Rev. Mr. Fletcher was responsible for the anti-

slavery movement in this region, and for the formation of the Wilberforce Antislavery Society. His radical views on abolition caused a split in the church's congregation and in 1840 he was forced to leave.

One of the activities of the Society was to obtain and distribute such abolitionist pamphlets as "Human Rights" and "Facts for the People." They also adopted such resolutions as the following:

"Resolved that we look with alarm, horror, and indignation upon the recent outbreak of mobocratic violence in the City of Philadelphia in which the law and Constitution were trampled under foot, the liberties of the citizens cloven down, and a deep stain cast upon the reputation of our Commonwealth.

"Resolved that the Mayor and Civil Authorities of Philadelphia in neglecting to nip the spirit of disorder in the bud, virtually connived at it, and are therefore morally responsible for the mischief done, and deserve the faithful rebuke of every friend of law and good order."

These resolutions were ordered published in the "Pennsylvania Freeman."

It was because of such activities that at one meeting they were forced to meet outside.

"The blue vault of heaven was over us, the curtains of night were around us, and the hand of tyranny had shut the door against us, the lecture room of creation was open to us and the fine voice of the speaker sounded far in the stillness of the night — all nature seemed to listen. The thought passed in our mind: "Though man is against us, God is for us, and the principles held forth now will one day be spread over all this land, and no hand so daring as to lift itself against us, no freeman's tongue so recreant as to oppose the progress of Universal Emancipation."

In 1838 the Wilberforce Antislavery Society joined with other antislavery societies such as those at nearby Gulph and East Fallowfield and the Chester County Antislavery Society in a general resolution denouncing all slave labor or "the fruits thereof." Each society sent delegates to the meetings of the other societies; thus they kept in touch with each other. There was a lull in the activities of the Society between 1840-1843 which was partially due to the break in the Great Valley Baptist Church over the question of abolition.

After the meeting of August 24, 1844, the Society seemed to break up. We should not conclude from this that the Society lost interest, but that it had to abide by the law which now recognized slavery and the rights of slave owners. Therefore in 1850 when the Fugitive Slave Act was passed, Southern Pennsylvania became a "fertile hunting ground" for slave owners.

There were stations of the "underground railway" in the neighborhood and known abolitionists were watched. It is probable that the members of the Wilberforce Antislavery Society felt they could be of greater service "under cover." Certainly the abolition movement continued in Chester County until its purposes were accomplished. There were in the Wayne-Berwyn area a number of houses that were reputed to be "underground railway" stations.

The present Billy Walker Farm located on the north side of U. S. 202 and east (½ mile) of King of Prussia was before and during the Civil War a notorious station of the "Underground Railway." Formerly it was part of the estate of Senator Jonathan Roberts (12th Senator from Pa.: 1814-21) who was an ardent supporter of Emancipation and equal rights for the Negro. He even let the local Negroes use his family

cemetery. The slaves were hidden in secret recesses of the barn and under the porch of his house, which was torn down about two years ago for the Pennsylvania Turnpike. One story concerning this farm tells how early one morning his children came down to breakfast and found two Negro men eating at the table. We can be fairly sure this story is true as it has no refined parts and is very simple.

"Amport House," on County Line and Gulph Creek Roads in Radnor, is another reputed station. It was built in 1855 by a member of Lucretia Mott's family. Behind the stable there is a stone which, we are told, marks the grave of the builder of the house. One of the main attractions of the house is the story that an underground tunnel connecting the cold cellar and the field beyond County Line Road once afforded a safe means of escape for hidden slaves in the event of an attack on the house. Although the tunnel has never been found by the present owners, the Springfield Water Company did run into a brick wall, which they had to detour around, when they were laying the water main.

In Berwyn, a third but less important station, existed in a large stone house north of Darby Creek and west of Newtown Road. Below the house is a small cold cellar built against the bank leading down to the stream. It was here that the slaves were supposedly hidden.

ROBERT BISHOP  
CHARLES DAVID  
Third Form  
Episcopal Academy

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- 1.) Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club Quarterly, 1943.
- 2.) Mr. James Dallett, of the Radnor Historical Society.
- 3.) Mr. Howard S. Okie, a local historian and member of the Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club.
- 4.) Mrs. John Tyson who is the present owner of "Amport House."

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