THE BULLETIN

of

RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME I SPRING, 1956 No. 6

INCORPORATED APRIL 30, 1948

Headquarters and Museum

THE FINLEY HOUSE

BEECH TREE LANE AND BELLEVUE AVENUE

WAYNE, PENNSYLVANIA

Visitors Cordially Welcome. Telephone WAYNE 0137-J

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MAKE YOUR SOCIETY USEFUL

Dear Members and Friends of Radnor Historical Society:

Your Society has a goal which we cannot emphasize too much or repeat too often. We want to make local history a matter of active, working interest for all the residents of our community. We want what is written about local history to be known, what should be written about local history to be recorded, and the physical remains of the past to be preserved. The ever-accelerating growth of Radnor and its neighboring townships is swiftly removing precious landmarks and the record of them. They may be saved only by your support and you will only know what is historic and worthy of preservation by studying Radnor history.

To enable everyone to have easier access to our collections, your Board has voted to place all of its books and bound materials in a special case in the Memorial Library of Radnor Township where, in the future, they will be easily available for reference purposes to all who ask for them. School children, those of you who want to know the history of your property or when an old house you admire was built, members of our School Board and Police force who want to check the history of their organizations, epitaph copiers who are interested in the burying ground at Old Eagle School, all will find their answers there. Our rarer manuscripts, pamphlets, programs and splendid file of photographs will remain in our little headquarters; a telephone call to Miss Finley at Wayne 0137-J will give you immediate access to them.

It is encouraging to note the activity of our neighboring historical society which concentrates activity in the King of Prussia area and which hopes to save and restore the King of Prussia Inn. Cooperation between local historical societies is increasing. We are making real progress towards saving and enjoying the buildings and artifacts of an earlier time but badly need your support and interest. The Radnor Historical Society needs NEW MEMBERS to take part in its activities. Yearly dues are but $2. Please join and help us make YOUR SOCIETY useful to YOUR COMMUNITY.

FRANCIS JAMES DALLETT, JR.
President

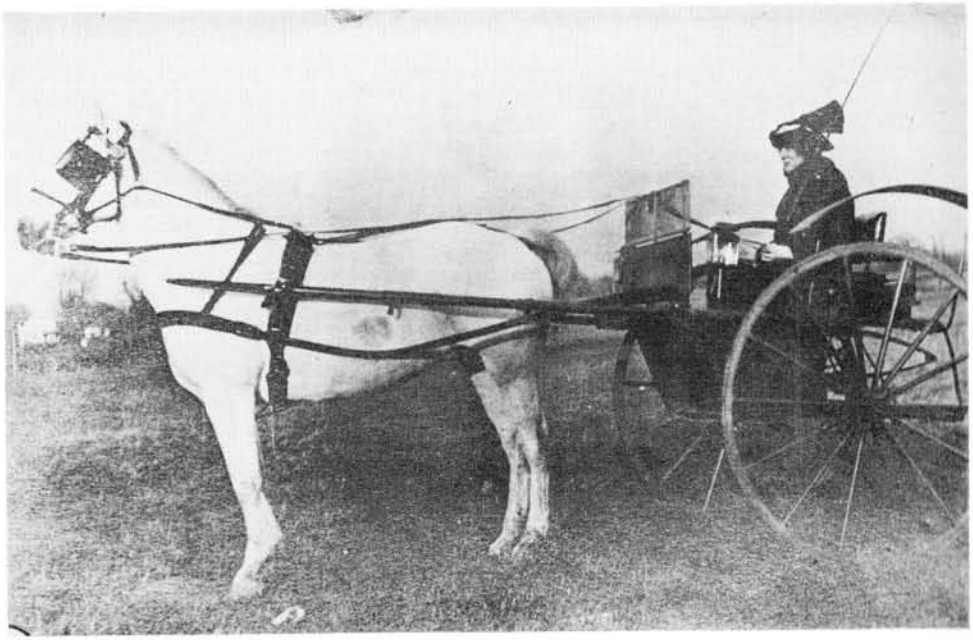
THE WATSONS OF KINTERRA

The only estate in Radnor Township still held in the same family name as in 1871 is the charming old farm house on Church Road across from Abrahams Lane, famous for its Penn oaks, its *Franklinia* and catalpa trees. It belongs now to the last of the Watsons, Miss Elizabeth Mary, nicknamed almost from birth because of the extraordinary whiteness of her skin, "Lillie." Miss Lillie and her sister, Agnes, were among the founders of the Radnor Historical Society. She most generously consented to give your reporter an account of herself and her family which follows substantially in her own words.

Early in the days of the Historical Society, "Kinterra," with its many treasurers, was opened to members of the Society and their friends. Miss Watson has given to the Society an issue of "Practical Farmer and Journal of the Farm" (for tenth month, 1874), which contains an article about the old house which is reprinted below, together with a picture of the Watson family on the steps of "Kinterra," and two snapshots of the mare Bert and her daughter Mistletoe, of which more hereafter.

There seems no doubt that "Kinterra" is one of the oldest houses in the township. The Richards, Welsh pioneers, bought the estate from William Penn and built about the year 1718, the older part of the house for their own occupation. The big fireplace upstairs in Miss Lillie's den can still be seen in its original form and some of the woodwork downstairs remains. Dr. Blackfan, Radnor physician of the Civil War period, acquired the property from the Richards family and in turn sold it to Mr. Richard Hubbard Watson in 1871. At that time Mr. Watson had eight children and a ninth, Miss Lillie, was born at "Kinterra" shortly after the family moved out here from the city.

Mr. Watson came to Philadelphia from Yorkshire in England. One of his family,



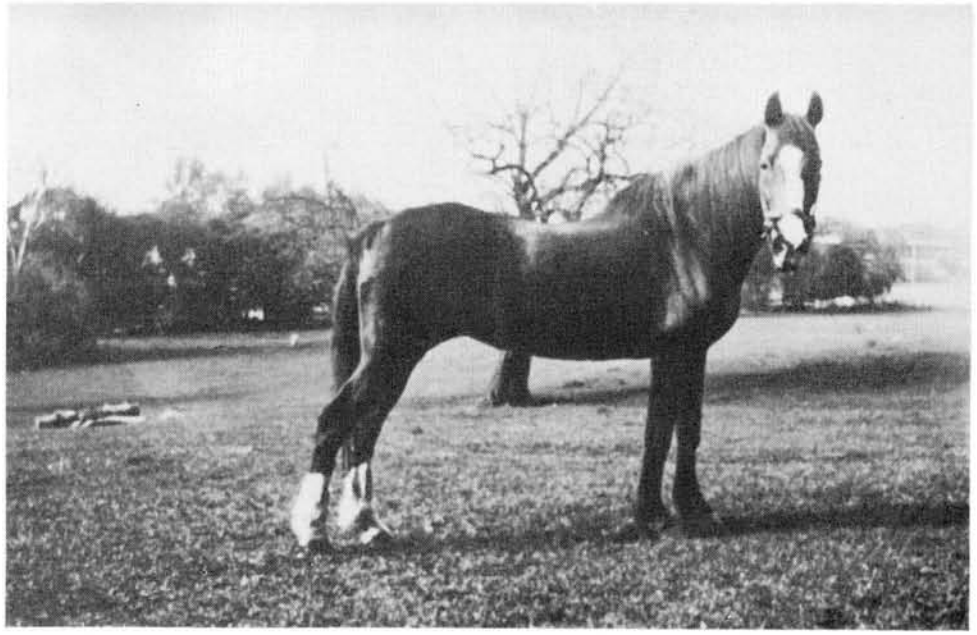
Miss Lillie Watson with Mistletoe

a brother Joseph, was a banker and evidently shared the family interest in horses. At any rate, many years after the move, at the Devon Horse Show a groom hearing the name of Watson introduced himself as formerly in the employ of the family in England.

Watson's wife, Katherine Mary Roche, came of an Anglo-Norman family from the Irish Pale. She claimed relationship to the Burkes and to the poet Edmund Spenser. Another ancestor was a handsome and gay young girl, Nano Nagel, educated in France where, in the midst of the social round, she became filled with a desire to bring up young people in the Catholic faith. She worked both on the continent and in Ireland where an Ursuline foundation still active in Dublin was founded by her. Though at first chiefly interested in the education of girls she later extended her benefactions to boys as well. She has been beatified and, so Miss Watson has been informed by Cardinal Spellman, will shortly be canonized for the great work she did.

When Katherine Mary Roche first met Richard Watson in Philadelphia she was sorrowing for the death of her mother and he had only been in America for some six months. He soon proposed but she was unwilling to marry a Protestant. He then took instruction unbeknown to her at old St. Joseph's in Willing's Alley, Pennsylvania's oldest Catholic church (c. 1729) and, having been received into the Roman communion, sought her out and they were married soon after.

At first they lived at Caleb Cope's boarding house in West Chester where they made friends with Dr. Walter Franklin Atlee, a Philadelphia physician also summering there. Some time afterwards, Dr. Atlee having moved to Radnor, he told them that Dr. Blackfan's farm was for sale. The Pennsylvania Railroad had recently begun a convenient service to what was to be called the "Main Line" and Mr. Watson who was engaged in the drug business on Front Street, decided on the move. Jeanie Watson, the child in the picture who is holding Miss Lillie, so much enjoyed her train ride to Radnor and was so charming and pretty in her pleasure that the conductor jokingly



The Mare Bert of Kinterra

asked her mother for her. Jeanie when asked her opinion averred she would much like a conductor for a "pop."

Both parents were handsome. Indeed Miss Lillie thinks none of their children were as good looking, though all were striking in their own fashion. Mrs. Watson had chestnut hair and lovely blue eyes. Katherine, her daughter, rather resembled her and was prettiest of the children. Later active in amateur theatricals in Wayne, she was educated at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in the days when it was on Walnut Street and, after it moved to Overbrook, continued throughout her life to interest herself in its activities. At her death she was much mourned by the Mothers, for her piety, her charm, her manner. She was laid to rest in Old Cathedral Cemetery at 42nd Street and Lancaster Avenue bought long before by Archbishop Kenrick from her father as the first Catholic burial place in the neighborhood. On the family lot above Mrs. Watson on a Belgian granite block is inscribed the motto of the Roches, "Dieu de la Roche" which might be freely translated as "In God is our strength."

Richard, a brother who died whilst Miss Lillie was still a baby, married one of the Fels girls and was engaged in the brokerage business in New York. Both his children died and he and his wife did not long survive them. John and Thomas were engaged in running the farm, in raising stock and in like concerns. John was a great friend of the late Frank Dallett, of Wayne, and it was a summer spent in 1874 at "Kinterra" that brought him as a boy, with his mother, to Radnor.

Tom did not share his sister Lillie's interest in family history, either their own or that of friends like the Lussons, the Harrisons, the Drexels, the Baches and the Atlees. He even threatened to name a colt after the saintly Irish Nano. He was married to Harriette Adler of Devon, a doctor's daughter. After her death he lived with his sisters at "Kinterra." Both he and his wife are buried in Old St. David's Churchyard nearby.

Mary Elizabeth, another beautiful sister named for another Mary and another Elizabeth than Miss Lillie whose names are reversed in order, became an invalid and for many, many years required the services of a nurse at the farm. Her great friends were the Drexels. As she lay dying she gave her mother's engagement ring to the daughter of one of her old friends and her father's signet to her doctor.

Agnes had gorgeous golden hair as a girl and wore it in great plaits around her head. She had a distinguished mien and once she and brother Tom were mistaken at the Opera for visiting celebrities and caused quite a stir in the audience. She was a keen gardener and the care she gave to the gardens of "Kinterra" was continued by the sisters until now. Miss Lillie planted catalpas which grew from seed and even Franklinia were raised in the same way.

William was the brother who did everything for them, Miss Lillie says. He managed the estates after his father's death, disposed at last, profitably, of some of the West Philadelphia holdings bought so long ago by Mr. Watson and invested the capital carefully. He was bookish. His library is an interesting tribute to his tastes. The Radnor Historical Society now houses the foxhunting books collected by the rest of the family. His interests carried him over into history and theology and he shared his young sister's curiosity about the past.

Miss Lillie herself was the baby, often left out of things by the older ones. "Don't let baby come," they would cry. But she soon began to roam freely over the farm which then extended beyond the present Brooke Road and included woods, meadows and water. There were ducks she loved to feed. There were the cows which supplied the dairy business. There were sheep. As the years went on there were horses

like Royalty II and Polonius. There were their own mounts. When Miss Lillie outgrew her nurse she had lessons at home. She never went away to school. She does not regret a minute of the years spent at "Kinterra" amidst its household treasures, like the china her father brought from England or the many photographs acquired since of the family. "Mine may seem a mundane life," she says, "but I've never been bored a single minute." As she tells about days in the happy past, her hearers cannot doubt her claim.

She early became passionately interested in horses and in driving. Three animals perhaps stand out in her memories, a filly called Firecracker, a mare called Bert and Bert's daughter Mistletoe who lived to be 32 years old. Brother Tom thought Lillie impractical in such matters. She would rather buy horse blankets than a fur coat, however cold the winter. She refused fantastically high bids for Mistletoe, a fierce, proud, steel-gray prancing steed, whom others envied and doubted Lillie's capacity to manage her spirit. Miss Watson once consented to sell Bert to a Wayne doctor she was friendly with but the mare herself balked at the sale; Miss Lillie never cashed the check; Bert found her way home and lived many more years tended by her kind mistress.

Miss Lillie thinks about her horses. She enjoys her house and its many mementos of the past. She recalls many stories about her friends and their descendants, now her friends too. She has been fortunate in such lifelong neighbors as the late George L. Harrison. She dwells affectionately on memories of her brothers and sisters. At "Kinterra," virtually unchanged since the day the Watsons took up residence in 1871, a happy past merges with a happy present. The Radnor police protect "Kinterra" by night. During the day Miss "Lillie's" thoughts are lively and pleasant. Her recollections enrich the lives of her many friends, old and new.

CAROLINE ROBBINS

"KINTERRA"

The Farm of Richard Watson near Radnor Station, Pennsylvania Railroad

(Reprinted from *Practical Farmer and Journal of the Farm*, Philadelphia, Tenth Month, 1874.)

We lately visited this farm, about 12 miles from Philadelphia, and saw several matters worthy of note. It was formerly the residence of Dr. Blackfan, and contains in all about 53 acres. Deducting from this the woodland, about five acres, and the space occupied by buildings and lawn, there remains about 40 acres for cultivation. On this are kept 15 head of Neat cattle and 4 horses, besides pigs, poultry, etc. The proprietor, an Englishman by birth, is largely engaged in active business on Front Street, Philadelphia, and spends at this place with his family, six months in each year, going and returning daily on the Pennsylvania railroad. This road, by its convenient time tables, suiting business hours, its frequent trains, comfortable cars and extraordinary precautions for the safety, comfort and convenience of passengers, is rapidly developing the country along its line of road, a few miles from Philadelphia, and attracting a population of permanent residenters from the city. Had it not been for such inducements our friend Watson would not have purchased in the country.

This farm is another illustration, of which we have met with many, where good results follow from city business habits being applied to the management of land. Everything here works with the regularity of a city business office, the three great rules of successful management being observed precisely, so far as we could see, of "doing everything in its right time, putting everything in its proper place, and converting everything to its proper use." This has not been done here and cannot be done anywhere without some capital This capital, however, has been so judiciously

The Watson Children at Kinterra About 1875

appropriated as to make every dollar laid out to tell, no useless expenditure of any kind or for mere show, being made. Every necessary implement appeared to be on hand, all in good order, and stored away out of the weather, such as cider mill, Boyer's grain mill for grinding grain; straw, hay and fodder cutter, Prindle's steamer, corn sheller, threshing machine, and horse power, hay unloading fork, &c.

The out-buildings are very complete, embracing wagon sheds and carriage house, tool shops for rainy days, corn cribs, granaries, harness rooms, ice house, spring house; while the barn and straw houses, wide stalls for cows and horses, were all arranged in the best manner and fully ventilated. Lime and whitewash were freely used in and without the buildings, and everything had a neat and cleanly appearance.

High farming is the order of the day here, comprising heavy manuring and heavy crops, weeds of any kind not entering into the rotation. The manure is all kept under cover and its strength not allowed to drain off. A dam or pond on the place has been cleaned out, supplying about 2000 loads of rich, vegetable matter, which had been composted with lime and was being hauled out when we were there and applied to the wheat ground, as in previous years. Besides this, there had been applied 1500 lbs. of bone to the acre, the result being a wheat crop of 40 bushels to the acre, followed by a luxurious crop of grass. Hungarian grass is also much relied on and enters into rotation between corn and wheat. It produced this season three tons to the acre, making a very fine quality of hay, relished greatly both by cows and horses. Crops of ruta baga and common turnips are regularly raised for the stock, an example which is being followed in the neighborhood. A very fine apple orchard is on this place, which, we observed was loaded with apples, and is estimated to yield this season 200 barrels of cider for vinegar, worth $8 to $10 per barrel. The tenant living in the tenant house, goes to the market in his wagon once and sometimes twice a week, taking vinegar, apples, poultry, butter, eggs, potatoes, meats, etc, and anything to make up a load.

The cows, with two exceptions, are all pure Jersey and comprise several very

beautiful animals, with H.B. records. A young bull, grandson of C. L. Sharpless' imported 'Duchess' is a promising animal. The old bull, three years old, is also well formed and of evident royal lineage. The grandmother of the herd is a splendid cow, purchased of Hubbell, in Philadelphia, who procured her, and several others, of Glenn, in Maryland. We recollect seeing this lot of cows as they passed through Philadelphia, from Glenn's place on their way to Connecticut. They proved extraordinary milkers as well as butter cows. This cow has made 14 lbs. of butter per week, the large size of her udder showing also great milking capacity.

The work is done on this place by two men, one with family living in the tenant house and boarding the other at a fixed price per month. The tenant has a certain salary and no direct interest in the produce of the farm, the proceeds of everything sold being handed in to the owner. It is often objected by families used to city life, that living in the country involves additional labor within doors. Poultry instead of being bought in market all dressed, has to be fattened, killed and prepared; eggs have to be hunted, cows to be milked and butter made, vegetables and fruit gathered, &c. Our friend Watson avoids all this in his own good business style. The tenant raises the vegetable and small fruit crops, also ducks, chickens and turkeys, milks the cows and makes the butter, and performs all the out-door labor. Every day the milk, cream, butter, meats, vegetables, etc., in quantity as directed, and eggs are brought up to the mansion house, with a list of the same, all which **are credited to the farm in a regular book account.** This is a very proper entry, and if always made there would be less complaint of such farms not being profitable. The farm is charged with labor and other expenses, and certainly should be credited with the value of what comes off it and is consumed, as well as what is sold.

While 'Kinterra' seemed to us "a little farm well tilled" and profitably managed, we can not close this sketch without adverting to the ornamental features of a lawn in fine order, well studded with evergreen and ornamental trees and shrubbery, all tastefully arranged, and neat and clean flower beds, well filled with choice flowers. The oldest son, about 16, is called 'head gardener,' and all the work of the flower garden, wide gravel walks and drives is performed by the children, who take a real pleasure in it and are thus being educated in a practical and useful direction. The tastes thus cultivated will probably last through life, and this making homes attractive and beautiful and accustoming children to healthy out-of-door employment are important advantages connected with rural residences, for men who do business in cities.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY, 1955 - 56

May 15, 1955

Mr. George L. Harrison of St. Davids, was host to the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Society, which convened in his formal garden to hear Miss Joan R. Higinbotham, of the Arthur Hoyt Scott Foundation of Swarthmore College, tell the story of "Early Local Gardens and Arboretums." Miss Higinbotham presented the little known history of the nearby botanical garden of John Evans, the Ithan miller, and described the work of Bartram, Marshall and other pioneer naturalists of the area. Magnificent specimens of local **flora** were displayed by the speaker to fifty members and guests of the Society.

Elected to the Board of Directors for a three year term of office were Mrs. T. Magill Patterson, Miss Caroline Robbins, the Rev. John R. Dunne, O.S.A., and Messrs. Richard W. Barringer and O. Louis Ehmann, Jr. At a meeting of the Board of Directors held following the meeting, Mr. Dallett was elected President; Miss Robbins, Vice President; Mr. Casey, Corresponding Secretary; Father Dunne, Recording Secretary, and Mr. Ehmann, Treasurer. Mrs. Charles W. David was returned to office as Curator.

October 16, 1955

"Three Centuries of Historic Houses" were represented in the Sixth Annual Open House Tour of the Society. "Cherry Garth," the 17th century log house of Miss Emily Exley on Radnor Street Road, Wayne, with its beautifully landscaped gardens without and collections of pewter and antique furniture within, was the oldest house visited. At the Society's headquarters, "The Homestead," residence of Miss E. Dorothy Finley, at North Wayne, a house built partly in 1789, a special exhibit was arranged and tea served by hostesses under the direction of Hospitality Chairman, Mrs. J. Russell Hogeland. Four interesting structures of the 19th century were opened by their owners: Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Apple's fieldstone farm house at Croton and Knox Roads, Colonial Village, built about 1820 by farmer-miller Abner Hughes; the residence of Mr. and Mrs. E. Brooke Matlack, Homestead Road, Strafford, which was built in 1856 and purchased in 1857 by John Langdon Wentworth who called it "Strafford," which soon became the name of the old hamlet of Eagle; the home of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Borst, 125 Bloomingdale Avenue, Wayne, the finest surviving example of the Victorian mansard mansions erected here in the 1870's by James Henry Askin as Wayne's first suburban homes, and finally the stone gate house on the old Thomas Mott property on Gulph Creek Road, Radnor, built about 1880 and now the home of Mrs. Joseph B. McCall, Jr.

November 25, 1955

Aimed at the younger generation of Radnor historians, "Davey Crockett's Country," a colored film with ballad accompaniment, was presented by Marguerite Phillips, of Germantown, at the Wayne Elementary School, Wayne.

Mrs. Phillips demonstrated early American crafts including spinning, weaving, quilting, candle dipping and dyeing as part of a program which described the major incidents in the life of the American folk hero, recently revived through the medium of a popular song.

January 18, 1956

"Chester County Covered Bridges" was the topic of an unusually interesting talk of local significance presented to the Society by Roy R. Fuller, of Sugartown, at a meeting held in St. Mary's Parish House, Wayne. Mr. Fuller wove his remarks around an artistic series of Kodachrome slides of the thirty wooden covered bridges remaining in our neighboring county. The audience was equipped with spectacles to enjoy the three dimensional quality of the slides.

Announcement was made of the resignation from the Board of Directors of Messrs. Charles E. Alexander and H. Ross Watson and of the election to fill their unexpired terms of Messrs. P. Nicholson Wood, of St. Davids, and George Vaux, of Bryn Mawr.

March 15, 1956

The recently organized King of Prussia Historical Society joined with our Society in a joint meeting held at the Great Valley Baptist Church, Berwyn. Charles E. Peterson, Supervising Architect, Historic Structures, The National Park Service, delighted a large audience with a description of "Historic Philadelphia in 1956." Mr. Peterson spoke informally of the experiences of the architects working to restore the Society Hill area and described in detail, with the aid of slides, the architectural history of the Colonial structures now receiving a face-lifting.

Refreshments were served by the ladies of the King of Prussia Historical Society.

MY UNCLE: GEORGE L. HARRISON

When the President of the Radnor Historical Society asked me to write a few reminiscences of my uncle, George L. Harrison, one of the founders of the Society, long a Director and its sympathetic friend until his death last year, I was leaving to dine with some friends in New York. At the dinner, there happened to be one other Philadelphian, and he and I found ourselves discussing with a New York woman the ridiculous lengths to which regional pride can go. As an illustration, she repeated a story that she had heard about a famous big-game hunter with a stammer, who, in the heart of wildest Africa, had been fatuous enough to inform an enquiring stranger that he came from "the M-m-main Line"! This story, needless to say, was received with more appreciation than she could possibly have hoped for, if not for the exact reasons that had prompted her to tell it: "That," explained the other Main Liner, "was George Harrison, and you would have to have known him to realize that the joke was not on him but on the man who took him seriously."

We then tried to explain Uncle George to her and as invariably happens when his name comes up, started exchanging anecdotes about him. None of his friends ever finds it sufficient merely to mention his wit, his modesty, or his original turn of mind, but must always go on to say, "Did you ever hear of the time when . . . ?" I can do no better than to follow their example, and that being so, it seems only fair to start with one of his own favourite stories.

A few years ago, he wrote to the "Evening Bulletin," explaining that he had been reading a lot about the numbers game in its pages and since he did not quite understand it, would they kindly tell him how it was played. In reply to this modest request, he naturally got an indignant letter, expressing amazement that he should expect a reputable family paper to give such information on any illegal activity. Uncle George, still all innocence, answered that he had always thought that murder was illegal too, but that almost every evening they went into explicit details as to just how various kinds of murders were committed, so that he could see nothing wrong with his request.

Besides diverting him, that interchange of letters illustrated one of his greatest charms; he was an omnivorous reader, especially of history and biography, but he always put his vast store of knowledge to the most unexpected uses. When we asked him to write for our sons to be put on the list for the Assemblies, I waited for one of his famous short notes—four pithy typewritten lines was usually his maximum—but I got even less than that; merely the secretary's reply to him, with a terse footnote in his own writing, "Job, xxi, 11." I rushed to my Bible and read with delight, "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance." A more protracted correspondence was started when he wrote to the nature editor of the "Illustrated London News," enquiring how a mother kangaroo keeps her pouch clean, for evidently that question had not previously come up in those fact-filled pages. The only side of reading that he neglected was modern fiction, but unlike so many non-novel readers, he did not parade this as a sign of superiority. At least, during the last few years, when well-intentioned friends asked him whether he had read the latest best-seller, he blandly replied that he had not yet had the time to do so, since he was then reading the "Encyclopedia Britannica." I am inclined to think, moreover, that he was telling the truth.

This independence of thought made it not only stimulating but also clarifying to discuss politics with him; he followed no kind of party line but weighed every case on its own merits and according to his own peculiar scale of values, and although I could not always agree with him, I had to furbish up my own wits to think up good reasons for not doing so. It was fatal in conversation with him to be lulled into any kind of shoddy thinking; some recondite fact, picked up in his extensive travels through the by-paths of history or over the face of the earth, would be used as a gentle barb to prick any easy complacency. This was usually done with a wickedly disarming modesty: I remember him expressing only polite bewilderment when his Republican friends, bitterly complaining about how taxes had gone up under a Democratic administration, never complained of the comparable rise in dividends.

Since I started these reminiscences with one of his favourite stories, I cannot resist the temptation of closing them with one of my own, especially since it is another example of what I have just said about the advisability of never being lulled by him. I once invited myself to dinner, and the maid answered that Mr. Harrison would be delighted to have me but that I was to leave promptly at nine. With a courtesy equalled only by his, I replied that I should leave when I pleased, and firmly resolved on outstaying my welcome, I spent a delightful evening. Uncle George was in fine form, and the conversation ranged over every possible subject, while I, with one eye on the clock, did my best to keep up my end of it. As so often happened, he illustrated his points with examples taken from his far-reaching memories, and as nine o'clock drew near, he was making illuminating comparisons between the way things had been done in his youth and the way in which they are done now. There were only a few minutes to go, and he was evidently quite oblivious of the passage of any such short span of time. Or so I thought: but at three minutes to nine, and without any noticeable transition, he remarked, "My maid is still very old-fashioned. She does not like it if I do not ring for her to show my guests out." At nine o'clock precisely, I was on the front doorstep!

I wish that he had allowed me to stay longer. From the days of my childhood, when he was the bachelor uncle whose visits always heralded a hilarious disruption of nursery discipline, to the last time that I saw him when, ill as he was, his comments on the recent growth of this part of the world and on its probable consequences had all his old curiosity and vigour, nearly fifty years had passed, but half a century is all too short a time to have been the niece of such a delightful and original man.

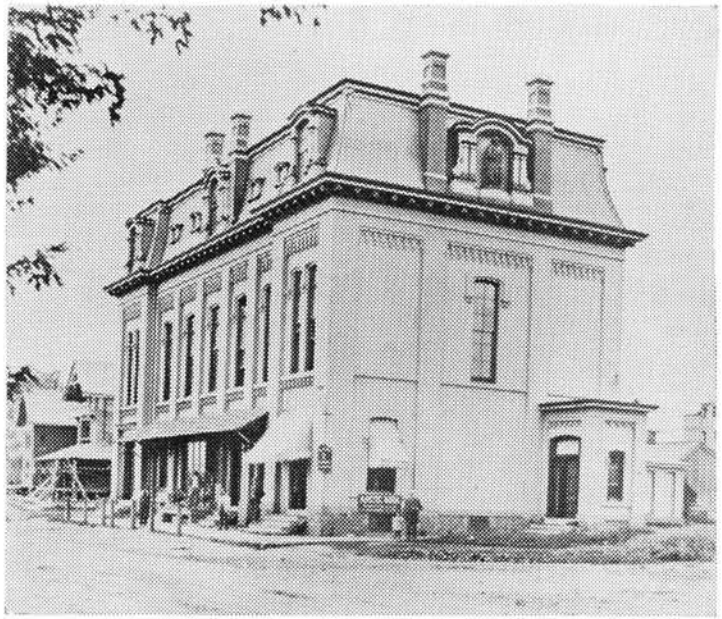
ESTHER ROWLAND CLIFFORD

THE OLD WAYNE LYCEUM HALL

"Wayne's most modern building" as the Colonial Building has been called since it was remodeled in 1951-52 is in reality one of the community's oldest edifices. For Wayne Lyceum Hall, a small, square building erected on the northeast corner of Lancaster Avenue and North Wayne Avenue in 1871 forms the nucleus of this structure.

J. Henry Askin, one of the founders of Wayne, whose original home was "Louella House," now the Louella Apartments, donated the ground on which the Lyceum was built. When the building was dedicated on October 24, 1871, Mr. Askin was the first speaker on a program which marked a great occasion in the history of early Wayne. More than 500 men, women and children filled to overflowing the large hall on the second floor of the newly erected Lyceum to witness the dedication ceremonies and to hear the various speakers.

On the shelves of the Memorial Library of Radnor Township there is a bound volume of old numbers of the Weekly Wayne Gazette of the years 1871-72. In this precious old book much valuable information of the early days of Radnor Township has been preserved. Editors of the Gazette at that time were John Campbell, Miss Sallie B. Martin and Miss Seba B. Bittle. In the October 28, 1871 copy of this Gazette



The original Wayne Lyceum Hall as it appeared in the middle eighties. On the near corner is the drugstore of J. M. Fronefield, Jr., with Mr. Fronefield himself standing on the steps.

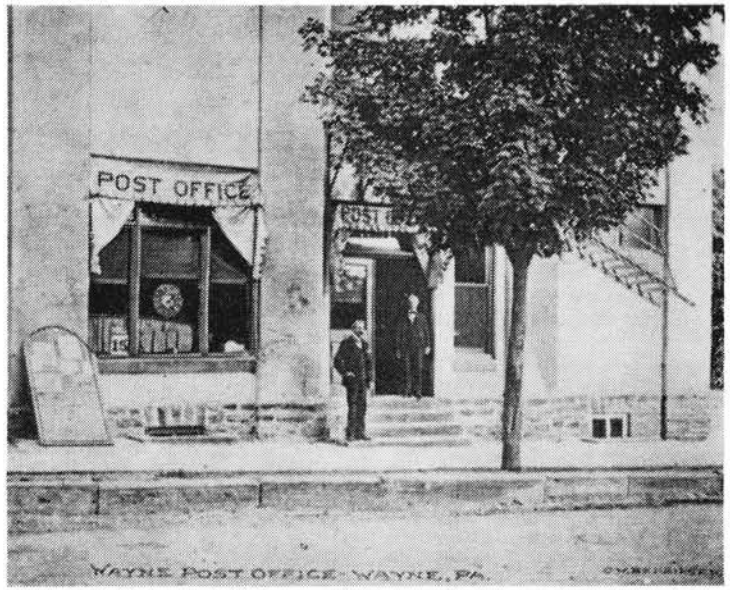
there is a complete description of the "Programme" of the Dedication Exercises of Wayne's Lyceum Hall, as it took place on the evening of October 24, 1871.

This dedication was evidently a great occasion in the community. The opening paragraph of the article in the Gazette states that "we certainly must not be considered egotistical in saying that the dedication of Wayne Lyceum Hall was most successful. We doubt if an audience larger in numbers or one so highly intelligent has assembled in any public hall in Delaware or Chester County or any previous occasion. The hall will seat comfortably five hundred persons including those in the gallery, and since many of the audience were standing and others sitting very closely, we can safely say there were over five hundred present."

There were "introductory remarks" by the president of the Lyceum, J. Henry Askin; a prayer by the Reverend J. H. Watkins; singing of a song "Sunny Hours of Childhood"; a congratulatory address by Miss Lizzie Heysham, and again a song "Our Meeting." The dedication ceremony itself was conducted by Miss Mary C. Everman, secretary of the Lyceum, followed by a dedication prayer by the Reverend C. B. Oakley.

"Popular Education" was the topic of a talk by Miss Sallie B. Martin, director of the Wayne Lyceum School which was held daily. Then a thirty minute intermission "refreshed the audience" for two more songs, "Minute Guns at Sea" and "Sleighride Song," which were followed by the closing address made by the Reverend A. L. Wilson.

All of the addresses, quaint and even pompous at times as they may seem to present day readers, are yet full of real feeling occasioned by the completion of a great project made possible by a generous donor, Henry Askin. "We comprehend and



Post Office Quarters Added at West End of Building in 1903

appreciate this gift of love" according to Miss Everman as expressed in her speech of dedication where she added, "We contemplate the pleasant gathering, the intellectual strength attained. Here will the cultivation and development of the mind be produced, which shall not only affect and benefit those who are permitted to congregate within these walls, but its influence shall be felt in generations hence, when scattered here and there upon life's tempestous sea."

"The object of the erection of this building has been for the extension and development of knowledge, and we dedicate it sacred to the promotion of morality, purity and mental development. Let that which is just, virtuous and rightious be tolerated within this Lyceum — vice of every kind obliterated."

The building is described as "built of brick, rough cast in imitation of granite, three stories high. The first floor contains two large stores, each 20 by 40 feet, and an office the same size. The other room on the same floor (the reading and library room of the Lyceum) is 15 by 40 feet.

"The second floor of the Lyceum Hall has a gallery and a stage with rooms for the president and secretary. A beautiful painted curtain representing Wayne Hall of blessed memory, and the Spring House to the south of it, was painted by Mr. Chase, scene painter of the city. The Hall is well lighted with gas and painted in oak and walnut. The back and side of the stage and of the rooms are also handsomely painted. Beyond any doubt, it is the best arranged and the handsomest Hall in the County.

"The third floor is being finished as a Masonic Hall and is intended to be used by a new Masonic Lodge. It is rather larger than the Hall on the 2nd floor on account of having no stage. It will seat, if fully occupied, at least six hundred people. On the eastern outside wall of the Hall in a niche above the 3rd floor is a beautiful statue, representing 'Charity.' "

Eighty-five years later the list of those who did work on Lyceum Hall, or who furnished material for its construction or interior decoration, is still an interesting one to the community particularly as in some cases the descendents of these men are still living here. David S. Gendale, Esq., was the architect; Duncan and Richardson were the carpenters; Captain O'Byran, the master plumber; John Campbell, the bricklayer; Mahlon H. Rossiter, the stone mason; William Anderson, the marble mason; Thomas Wolf, the painter and glazier; James Mayhood, the tinsmith and roofer; W. Walter, the slater; W. Edward Rowan, the paperhanger, and Mr. Rusi, the upholsterer. Bricks were furnished by the Messrs. Gygar and Carroll; marble by Adam and Don; stone by the Wayne Quarries; carpets by the Messrs. McCollum, Sloan and Company; furniture by Mr. Buckley and the iron work by Samuel J. Cresswell.

Eighteen years after the completion of the original building, the Wayne Estate enlarged the sage, adding a new Proscenium and scene shifts. Then again in 1903, the building was remodeled and enlarged, provision being made at that time for the housing of the Wayne Post Office at the west side of the building on the first floor. Thereafter the building became the center of community activities for Wayne with the Euterpean Concerts and other events of social and musical interest being given there. The Opera House, as it was called by this time, rented space to the first motion picture theater in Wayne, which was run by the Mr. Allen.

In the early morning hours of December 30, 1914, the worst fire that Wayne had experienced since the old Bellevue Hotel burned to the ground in March 1900, practically destroyed the Opera House. Starting in the office of the Counties Gas and Electric Company on the west side of the building, the fire spread rapidly to the post office, also on the west side, and to the Welsh and Park Hardware Store on the Lancaster Avenue side in the center of the building. Soon the auditorium, the Wayne Plumbing and Heating Company office, the Wendell and Treat Real Estate Office and the quarters of the Wayne Lodge were also on fire.

The Opera House as it appeared after it was rebuilt in 1915, and as it remained until its recent renovations by its new owners, Main Line Investments, Inc., in 1950-51.

The W. H. Welsh & Co. Hardware Store and the David D. Mancill Grocery and Provision Store, about 1905. —From the Radnor Historical Society Collection

The Radnor Fire Company had but two engines at that time. However, help from neighboring fire companies arrived so speedily that eight streams of water were soon playing on the fire. The losses to tenants in the building mounted into many thousands of dollars, in addition to those suffered by the owners of the Opera House. However, within a comparitively short time extensive repairs were completed after which tenants returned to their former quarters. After the rebuilding program was completed the appearance of the Opera House remained very much as it was then up to the time of the extensive alterations made in 1950-51 by Main Line Investment, Inc. This is the Colonial Building as it looks today.

The first picture illustrating this article was probably taken in the very early 80's. Close scrutiny of the original picture from which this newspaper reproduction was made reveals the interesting fact that the first floor corner of the building was then occupied by a small store. Even closer scrutiny reveals a sign which advertises;

Artic Sodas
with choice fruit syrup and
candies
Wayne Pharmacy
Joseph M. Fronefield, Jr.

This is the well remembered father of Joseph M. Fronefield, III, real estate dealer of Wayne. He was a citizen much loved and respected in the community to which he came as a young man in the very early '80's. After his death in August 1940, his son found in his desk a notebook in which his father had written a vivid description of Wayne as he first knew it. Old landmarks are listed, forgotten roads and lanes are retraced, old churches, business buildings and houses are described and dated in the pages of a chronicle written by a man who remembered all of them vividly.

The little drugstore which "brought the writer to Wayne," as Mr. Fronefield writes, "occupied the Pike side of the eastern end of Lyceum Hall. The Drexel and Childs office was in the rear. The second floor was a public auditorium and the third floor a Lodge Room." This was Wayne's Lyceum Hall before the addition at the western end was constructed. This early Hall is described by Mr. Fronefield as "a plastered mansard roof building of a dull grayish-brown color, occupied on the first floor by a general country store which sold dry goods, groceries, hardware and farming implements, under the proprietorship of J. Harry Brooke, who many years afterwards was real estate officer of the Merion Title and Trust Company. Mr. Brooke, his clerk and the writer occupied the green room and the stage wings of the auditorium on the second floor for sleeping quarters."

Mr. Fronefield continues, "The building was piped for gas and had a spring fed gas machine which was under my charge. A barrel of gasoline poured into the outside tank, plus the strength of six mules to wind up the machine, made sufficient light for months and months. This building was later greatly enlarged and its name changed to the Wayne Opera House."

In describing the immediate vicinity of Wayne Lyceum Hall as it was in the '80's, Mr. Fronefield continues, "The surrounding country was farm land. I could look out the drugstore door (it had no windows on the pike) and see cattle grazing in the meadow where the business block, fire house and school houses now stand. This was part of what was known as the Siter Farm. Its building stood with the spring house near the rear of what is now the Wayne Apartment House at the corner of West Wayne and Bloomingdale Avenues.

"The Izzacki Fritz farm adjoined it and had its buildings near where the Presbyterian parsonage now stands on Audubon Avenue. The buildings included some sort of an old stone mill. The Mifflin property lay south of the Siter and Fritz properties and faced on Conestoga Road. Its buildings were on Upland Way. It had an entrance lane from Lancaster Pike which left the Pike where St. Mary's Church now stands.

The Colonial Building as it appears today, with its spacious ground floor shops and its many offices on the second and third floors.

"The Wilds farm had its buildings east of where Midland and Pembroke Avenues intersect. The old apple trees on some of the properties of the 400 block of the south side of Midland Avenue are the last of the family orchard. The springhouse was in about the middle of the 400 block on the south side of Lancaster Pike. The George farm had its buildings on the north side of Lancaster Pike, west of St. Davids Road."

Still another farm which Mr. Fronefield described in his chronicle of early Wayne days is one in which the Radnor Historical Society has a very personal interest since the headquarters of the Society are now located there. Mr. Fronefield refers to it as the Ramsey place which in 1889 was acquired by W. H. Finley, father of Miss Dorothy Finley, one of the founding members of the Radnor Historical Society of this place. Mr. Fronefield writes "north of the railroad was the Ramsey farm, the house now being the home of W. H. Finley. Its entrance was from Eagle Road. Many times during the winter, Eagle Road was so blocked with snow that the occupants of this farm had to cross the railroad tracks and the Jones farm to the Lancaster Pike."

Miss Finley tells us that when her family acquired it in 1889 the original old barn was then standing. Her father had it torn down with the stone in it being used to build the addition on the north side of the house. The room which houses the treasures now being acquired by the Historical Society was the basement kitchen of the original old house.

More immediate neighbors of the Lyceum included the Wayne Presbyterian Church just to the East of it, which is now the Chapel of the larger Church building erected at a later date. The smaller building was a gift made in 1870 to the Presbyterian congregation by Mr. Askin, whose own large estate lay to the east of the Chapel. This was the beautiful and impressive mansion which he built and called "Louella." Completed in 1866-67 it was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Askin and their two daughters, Louise and Ella. Combining these two names Mr. Askin formed a third, that of "Louella" which has frequently been found in the annals of Wayne since then. For not only was it the name of the Askin homestead, but it was the second name to be given to our present suburb of Wayne, the first being Cleavers Landing. And now ninety years later there is still the Louella Apartment building and Louella Avenue. At the time the mansion was built, it was surrounded by various other attractive buildings belonging to the estate.

This then was the Lyceum as it was built in 1879-71 and dedicated in 1871. And this was its Wayne setting in the days when Wayne was still sometimes called Louella. And now, just as in days gone by, the old landmark even afer various additions and building transformations still predominates the scene in the center of Wayne's business area, only it is now the Colonial Building, Wayne's "most modern building."

EMMA C. PATTERSON

This article has been compiled from material contained in various "Your Town and My Town" columns, written for the Wayne "Suburban" by the author. With the exception of Welsh Hardware Store, all pictures have been taken from the files of "The Suburban."

* Small assembly hall that had stood at one time on corner of Lancaster Pike and Pembroke Avenue for many years.

** This was the first meeting place of Wayne Lodge No. 581, F. and A. M.

*** This statue is plainly discernible in the first picture shown with this article.

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