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RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Headquarters and Museum

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WHAT DO WE DO?

"Just what do you do?" is a question often asked of members of the Radnor Historical Society. The person making the inquiry usually knows that the Society holds a series of evening programs during the winter and spring months (but probably does not know that anyone is welcome to hear these excellent lectures on a great variety of historical topics!), perhaps he has visited historically interesting houses in the Radnor Township area on one of our "Open House Tours," and possibly he has seen a copy of the Annual **Bulletin**, of which this is the eleventh number to be issued since 1950.

But quietly and steadily the Radnor Historical Society does more. It encourages local people to participate in the lectures, as some seven friends did delightfully, despite protestations of terror, when we talked about "Old Private Schools" last year — and as Mr. and Mrs. William Fletcher did when we met at their Radnor Methodist Church. Mr. Fletcher's beautifully prepared and scholarly talk is reprinted herein.

The Society, with virtually no funds, does not entirely forget "preservation." Two fine hand-carved early 19th century mantelpieces were removed from the demolition of the Golf Club Cottage in Radnor and now await future installation in the Finley House. James Rawle and Mrs. Joseph B. McCall have been active in photographing local houses and shops facing alteration or demolition (and everything on Lancaster Pike, to take one example only, is changing fast); the Society's participation in the Historic American Buildings Survey was described last year. We have "saved" an early 19th century sampler, made by a scholar at "Radnor School," which went through Freeman's auction rooms, and important accessions have come by gift, notably a collection of scarce maps and pamphlets on early Wayne from the Estate of Mrs. William B. Linn. The death of Mrs. Linn, one of the great ladies of our membership and of Philadelphia, and the passing of Charles T. Mather, an original member of the Society and member of a family represented on the vestry of St. David's Church since 1742 — probably a unique record in the United States — were great losses during the year past.

What more do we "do"? For the second year, the Radnor Historical Society published an "Old Radnor Engagement Calendar." The Calendar for 1961, sold during the Christmas season, illustrated ten ancient Main Line taverns, several of them from old views owned by the Society. Unfortunately, the difficulty of merchandising the calendar means that this activity cannot be repeated another year.

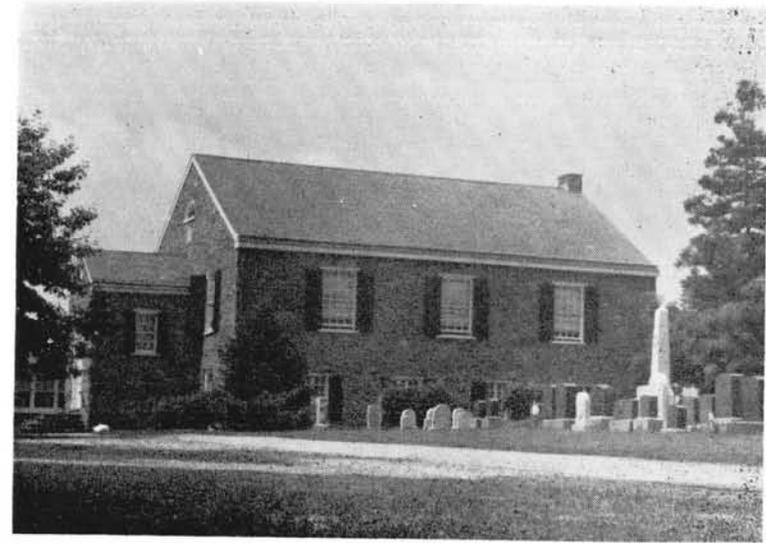
Also, during the year past, we have tried to make local history more a part of the life of our community. Caroline Robbins, President of the Society, talked on the early history of Radnor Township to a bus tour conducted by the League of Women Voters in September and F. J. Dallett spoke in December to a dinner meeting of the Wayne Rotary Club on the Society's interest in preserving local architectural amenities.

The Museum room of the Society in the Finley House was visited by classes from Agnes Irwin School and Radnor Junior High School and by a Girl Scout Troop. The Society's books remain in a special case in the Memorial Library in Wayne where they are available at all times.

Much more can be done with your help. We repeat our constant plea for MORE RESEARCHERS, MORE SPEAKERS, MORE LISTENERS, and, especially, MORE MEMBERS. We are a community organization. Please send your check for annual dues — \$3.00 — to:

O. LOUIS EHMANN, JR., Treasurer
123 West Lancaster Avenue
Wayne, Pennsylvania

THE RADNOR METHODIST CHURCH



RADNOR METHODIST CHURCH
A recent picture of an ancient landmark.

Three years before the signing of the peace treaty which officially ended the war of independence of Great Britain's colonies in America a small group of men and women gathered in a house at the bottom of a hill in Radnor, some ten miles west of the leading city of the colonies. Thus the Radnor Methodist Church had its birth.

Although Methodism was young in the colonies, the movement had begun some fifty years earlier at Christ Church College, Oxford, where John Wesley and his brother Charles, together with other students who decried the loose living of their associates, formed a group for the betterment of their souls. Dubbed in derision "The Holy Club" they eventually became known as "Methodists" because of the methodical way in which they ordered their lives.

These two brothers, who were later ordained as ministers in the Church of England, had no idea of forming a separate denomination but hoped, rather by their diligence to bring about a resurgence of faith and vitality in the established church. Much to their dismay, however, they found that they were not welcome in the churches, and they, perforce, had to make their fervent pleas in the out-of-doors. As the people responded they saw fit to set up a system whereby those who had been converted would continue in the Christian life, so the class meetings, which met in people's homes were established; the foundations for the new Church were laid.

John Wesley's early missionary effort to convert the Indians in America was a dismal failure, but upon his return to England the societies began to flourish and it was inevitable that the new movement should spread to the New World.

The first society in Philadelphia acquired a partially completed building from the Dutch Reformed Church in 1769, only a year after the first Church was founded in New York City. This sanctuary, located on South Fourth Street became St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. Continuing in use to the present time it is the oldest Methodist Church in the world where services have continuously been held. From this church many interpid men went forth throughout the surrounding country, preaching whenever they could get a handful of people together to hear their words.

In these early years the societies were under the leadership of laymen, there being no established church, as such. The first minister was sent out by John Wesley in 1769, and two years later, Francis Asbury, who was to become the first Bishop of the Methodist Church, arrived in America. He can truly be said to be the father of American Methodism, for it was through his untiring efforts and thousands of miles of traveling by horseback that the societies were nurtured and developed.

Thomas Rankin and George Shadford were two of the first preachers appointed at the initial conference of the societies in 1773. They divided their time between New York and Philadelphia, rotating every four months. This itinerancy is a heritage that is still preserved in Methodism in the sense that a Minister is never assigned permanently to a charge, but must be returned every year by the annual conference of the churches of the locality.

Tradition has it that in 1778, two years before the first recorded meeting, Radnor became a site of worship when a simple prayer meeting was held in the so-called "Mansion House" owned by the James family. Adam Cloud, a local preacher, conducted the service. This house is still standing; although many changes have been made, the original stone-work of the walls may be distinguished. It stands about one-hundred feet east of Conestoga Road on the north side of Montrose Avenue.

George Gyger, a man who "hated run, tobacco, and the Devil with intense hatred" was the first class leader in 1780, the first in a long line of members who served the church faithfully and well. His father, Jessily, had come from Germany earlier in the century and purchased a large tract of land in Radnor.

The first Trustees of the Church were Isaac Hughes, Sr., Edward Hughes, Michael Cline, Clifford James, Abram Hughes, Mark Evans, Jesse Yocum, and William Jennings, while the first pastor of the Church, appointed during this year of 1780, was the Rev. John Cooper. The Rev. George Main was "Junior Preacher."

Over the old Lancaster Road flowed an almost constant stream of pack-horses, travellers on horseback and freight wagons which eventually gave the road its name. In 1783, as the wagoners rested their horses at the summit of what was soon to be called Methodist Hill, they might have seen great activity. The following anecdote was vouched for by Dr. Isaac James: "One day while Aquila McVaugh was at work hauling stones for the new Meeting House, one of his acquaintances passing along called to him, 'What are you doing there Aquila?' He replied, 'I am helping to build a meeting house for the Methodists.' 'Well,' the friend retored, 'there is no use of your doing it, for they will all soon be as cold as cucumbers. There will be no more Methodists.'" He certainly wasn't much of a profit; instead of being "cold as cucumbers" they became "live coals from off the altar of God," multiplying until Methodist Hill became the proud mother of three other Methodist Churches in the vicinity, Bethesda, Merion Square, and St. Luke's, Bryn Mawr.

When the Rev. Mr. Cooper appealed for aid from his flock in the building of the Church, it was reported that "they gave unto the Lord stones, lime, sand, logs, boards,

pounds, shilling, and pence." The original meeting house was small, and of simple construction, being about twenty-five by thirty feet with hewn logs being bound together with mortar. There were two small windows on either side of the one storey building which faced south. One aisle sufficed, with a stove in the center, vented by a chimney running up through the middle of the roof. In front of the high pulpit was a long, plain mourner's bench.

The ground upon which Old Radnor Methodist Church stands was deeded to the Society by Evan James, the owner of the "Mansion House." The land was originally part of the King's grant to William Penn, the first patent to the tract being given to one David Meredith, a weaver, of Radnorshire, Wales, and was for a tract of ground which would now be bounded on the east by County Line Road, on the south by Roberts Road and extending along Roberts Road westwardly for about seven-tenths of a mile, thence north about one-half mile to a point, and thence east to County Line Road. This northern boundary, for a great part, coincides with Lowry's Lane. On April 17, 1718, David Meredith conveyed the tract in which the Church is now located to David James and when he died in 1739 the land passed to his son, Evan James.

The deed of Evan James conveying the property to the Church is recorded in Chester County Deed Book "Y," volume 25, page 150 and is dated October 20, 1783. Evan James and Margaret his wife granted and conveyed for the consideration of five shillings to the trustees a certain tract of ground on which a meeting house was to have been erected " . . . to have and to hold . . . never the less upon special trust and confidence and to the intent that they and the survivors of them . . . do and shall permit Francis Asbury and those preachers in connection with him commonly called Methodists and such persons as they met in Conference shall appoint to have and enjoy the free use of said premises . . . Provided always that the said persons preach no other doctrines than is contained in Mr. Wesley's notes upon the New Testament and the four volumes of his sermons." A photo-facsimile of this deed now hangs on the wall of the sanctuary of the Church.

Among the sons of Evan James was Griffith James, one of the early trustees of the Church, who, along with other members of his family, is buried in the Radnor Churchyard. One of Griffith James' sons, Isaac was born in Radnor January 28, 1777, and joined the Church in 1790. In 1799 he was licensed as an Exhorter and in 1801 was appointed Steward of the Chester and Jonesburg circuit. Five years later he was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Asbury and an Elder, or fully ordained minister, by Bishop Main in 1819. In addition to being an Elder he was a graduate of the School of Medicine of Columbia College, New York, and actually pursued both of his occupations until his death in 1874 at the age of 97. He also is buried in the Churchyard.

During the last years of the Revolution, the Rev. George Main, the "Junior Preacher" previously mentioned, received Mr. Isaac Anderson and his wife Mary Lane Anderson into the Methodist Society, and there was preaching in the Anderson home.

Isaac was the son of a Captain Anderson and was born in 1760 and died in 1838. Though but a boy when the Revolution began he entered into it with a boy's enthusiasm; he was one of the squad who visited and searched the house of one William Moore, a Loyalist, looking for arms. In the fall of 1777 he was a lieutenant of militia whose company marched to Washington's assistance, and while the army lay at Valley Forge, Lieutenant Anderson carried dispatches to and from Congress which was sitting at York at that time. After the war he became a justice of the peace and was a representative in Congress from 1803 to 1807, the meanwhile maintaining his status as a local preacher in the Church.

Although the references to the Church in these early years are not frequent, Bishop Asbury alluded to it several times in his journals: "July 2, 1787 — on Monday, spoke to a few simple hearted souls at Radnor." "Riding westward from Philadelphia" on horseback with saddle bags in the year 1790, he stoppèd at the hospitable home of the Fishers prominent members of the Church. When, next morning, the boy William C. Fisher brought the Bishop's horse for mounting, the good Bishop gave the lad a New Testament which is, or was, a treasured possession of the Fisher family. The descendants of this boy were local preachers, trustees and active workers in Church for over a century.

"Saturday, June 2, 1804 — I rode through the rain in the valley 28 miles . . . On the Sabbath I reached Radnor. Here my little Jane was horned by a cow and lamed. She is done, perhaps, forever for me, but it may all be for the best. I am unwell and the weather is bad, but except my feelings for the poor beast I am resigned and peaceful. I am able to write but not to preach on the Sabbath. On Monday morning I desired Isaac James to ride 30 miles going and coming and purchase another little Jane at eighty dollars; he did so with great good will."

"Wednesday, August 7, 1805 — We set out and reached Radnor. We stopped to dine with Brother Gyger, and had a serious time of prayer in his new house, which they are about to move into."

"Tuesday, April 14, 1812 — I preached at Radnor. We dined at Brother Gyger's and slept under the roof of Isaac James. The peace and consolations of God abound toward me."

"The new Gyger house" mentioned by the Bishop in his journal is still standing and occupied; it is the first fieldstone house beyond what is now Meadowood Road on the northerly side of Conestoga Road, going west. Across the road from it is the house called Pine Cottage, the old home of the Henvis family, also active in the early history of the Church.

Meanwhile, in 1801, the Trustees found it necessary to have the 17-year-old frame church repaired and at the same time made some improvements in the graveyard. The money to pay for the work, \$161.40 (although some of the bills were presented in pounds, shillings, and pence) was advanced by the trustees and repaid to them by means of a general subscription. The Trustees of the Church saw fit, in 1825, to acquire more land for expansion of the graveyard but did not feel the necessity to erect a new church building until 1833, fifty years after the first structure was built.

At a meeting of the Trustees on May 17, 1833, with John Gyger, Isaac James, Isaac White, Dr. James Anderson, Benjamin Yard, Jacob Gyger, William Fisher and Sheppard Ayar present, it was agreed to erect a new meeting house, fifty-five feet by forty-five feet, "with a basement storey, but with no galleries." (Benjamin Yard, incidentally was a Revolutionary War soldier who was purported to be in the boat with George Washington when he crossed the Delaware before the battle of Trenton.)

The original carpenter's estimate for the work is a most interesting document: "June 3, 1833. To the building Committee of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Radnor; this is to certify that I, the undersigned, will agree to complete all the carpenter work of said buildings, forty-five by fifty-five feet, with a basement story; to have ten twelve light windows and twelve twenty lights in each frame and no wainscot in any part of the house; for the sum of three hundred and fifty-five dollars, with fifty dollars to be paid when the basement story is done and the rest when convenient. Signed — Evan Lewis."

The money, or at least a portion of it, for this work was also raised by popular subscription, the ladies taking an important part, as they do today, in this activity.

The exterior of the Church was much the same as it is now with the exception of the vestibule and the large chimney at the rear of the building, and of course, the two additional wings which have been added within the past ten years. The roof, also, is different today; in fact, for a number of years after the building was supposedly completed it was the complaint of the Trustees that the carpenter had not faithfully fulfilled his part of the contract for the snow would drift into the sanctuary between the top of the walls and the roof during bad storms.

Camp meetings in the early history of the Church played a vital part in the life of the religious community. The first of which we have record was held in the woods in front of the Church in 1804, and a later one was held in the grove on the property of Dr. James Anderson on Mill Creek Road (later Roberts Road), when "The woods was made sacred by the shouts of many new-born souls entering into the Kingdom of God."

Another, Camp Meeting No. 2 on the Radnor Circuit, held in September of 1842 "powerfully converted" many sinners, but one great sinner, not exactly converted, "seized, took, and carried away . . . one box lemons, fifty water-melons, (and) one kettle, of the value of one hundred dollars." The collections at the camp meeting were insufficient to cover this unforeseen disaster so a law-suit was instituted "at Old Chester, May and August terms, 1843." Whether or not a judgment was secured against the culprit is not clear, but the records show that the total expense of the suit was \$138.02½. There are no recorded law-suits in the Church from that date to this.

Ever since the days of John Wesley and his societies in England the Methodists have been known for their enthusiastic singing. Evidently though the congregation had been backsliding in this endeavor by 1847, for in that year the Radnor Methodist Episcopal Singing Association was founded with the following preamble: "Whereas, There is a great deficiency in the Singing Department of the Radnor M.E. Church, which arises from a want (among the members) of proper instruction in the elements (or principals) of vocal music; and as we believe that sacred music is an important part of (Christian) public Worship; therefore

"Resolved, 1st, that we whose names are hereunto attached for benefit of the church and our mutual benefit, that we may 'sing with the spirit and with the understanding also,' form ourselves into a body to be stiled "The Singing Association of Radnor M.E. Church."

John C. James was chosen president, Aaron E. Hunter, Secretary, and Daniel C. Gyger, Treasurer. The society must have had some salutary effect, for Maurice O'Neill, the watchman at the Bryn Mawr Bank remarked, "We had a great time gettin' broke in."

The cemetery around the Church has always had an interesting part in its history. The earliest marked grave is that of Margaret Cromwell, the infant daughter of the minister, July 29, 1791. The headstone of her mother is dated only two days later. This might not be the earliest grave, for to this day, there is a plot that is merely marked on the books as being occupied by "strangers." When funds were being raised during the first years of the nineteenth century a single grave plot was given to everyone who contributed five dollars or more.

In 1837 the trustees voted to give the church sexton exclusive right to gravedigging in the churchyard. A rate scale was established — "Adults, \$2 with box, and with

planks \$2.50; and for children not less than \$1." In 1849 a vault was installed in the church basement, where bodies might be stored until suitable weather for outdoor interment. It is not known whether it is of any significance or not, but this place has since been converted into one of the furnace rooms for the church.

By 1865, inflation had set in and the price for grave digging had gone up to "All over 5½ feet \$4; between 5½ feet and 4 feet, \$3; and under 4 feet, \$2."

Possibly to protect the Trustees against any debts that might be incurred by the Church, a Charter of Incorporation was secured in 1854 and the first Trustees included D. C. Gyger, William A. Hennis, M. A. Cline, William A. Fisher, and Dr. Isaac Anderson. Under the charter voting rights were for male members, 21 years of age and over, and having been members for two years. It was not until 1920 that the charter was amended granting women the right to vote on church matters. The charter has since been brought into conformity with the Discipline of the Methodist Church in all respects.

More land has been acquired by the church from time to time through the years; in 1865 the trustees authorized the purchase of three more acres of ground at a price not to exceed \$300 per acre, and then again in 1868 one-half an acre was purchased from Mrs. Mary McClain for a new graveyard. One year later, in 1869, the old sheds which had been erected in 1833 were taken down and the stones used in the wall on the north-westerly side of the property. Incidentally, the lots in the new graveyard had increased in price to \$40.00 for sixteen by twenty-two foot lot.

All of the sheds must not have been taken down, though, for in 1875 when more land was purchased from Jacob Seniff, south of the Church, some of the sheds were still standing. In fact, the sheds were not completely demolished until the construction of the present Fellowship Hall in 1952. It appears from the records that there was no actual addition to the property from 1875 until late in 1958 when the former site of the Rosemont School comprising some 2¼ acres on Conestoga Road south-east of the Church was acquired from the Radnor Township School Board.

Meanwhile, improvements were being made from time to time in the church building proper. For example, the minutes of the trustees' meeting of December 10, 1860 show that it was recommended "that the stove on the men's side be moved back opposite to the one on the woman's (sic) side and that a seat be put along the wall facing the stove." An iron roof was also authorized at this meeting.

It was not until 1880, however, that the exterior of the Church took on its present appearance when the vestibule was added in time for the one-hundredth anniversary celebration. Then in 1903 the building was again renovated, painted inside and out, old plaster removed, new roofing added, and electricity installed. Further work was done in 1931 and then in 1946 the interior was remodelled to its present appearance, except that the cove lighting was added when the church was redecorated in the nineteen fifties.

The Fellowship Hall was built in 1952, with provisions in the plans for a second floor to be added when needed; however, it was deemed more expedient to expand the first floor facilities first, which was done with the dedication of the Harold Gates Wilson, Sr., memorial wing in the fall of 1960. It is hoped that the Church, founded 180 years ago will continue to grow and be of service to God, its members, and the community.

WILLIAM M. FLETCHER

Note: Much of the source material for this paper are original documents bearing the dates mentioned which are in possession of the Church.

THE STORY OF WALNUT HILL



WALNUT HILL

The 18th century house as it appeared in 1862. Drawing by Emily M. B. Curwen, owned by Miss Elinor Ewing Curwen.

The railroad station and postoffice at Villanova, and the University which has made this Main Line residential community widely known, all lie in Radnor Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, but parts of Villanova's rolling, green and well wooded land which has so long offered Philadelphians the pleasant amenities of rural living just a half hour by train from a large city are across the county line in Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County. The houses north of County Line Road have, as it were, a foot in each Township and their history is written jointly in the annals of Radnor and Lower Merion.

One such property is Walnut Hill, a local estate which bears a name given it 175 years ago by the family which has occupied parts of the same land continuously since that time. The principal house on the property, which long since was divided and built upon in quite an agreeable manner, is a remarkable grey stone Gothic mansion, built by the Curwen family during the Civil War to replace an eighteenth century farm house. It has been sympathetically decorated by its now owners, Mr. and Mrs. George H. Thomas, and is one of the great "period houses" of the neighborhood. Miss Elinor Ewing Curwen lives nearby, at 341 Spring Mill Road, the fifth generation of her family at Walnut Hill.

It was John Curwen (1749-1825), a descendant of the Curwens of Workington Hall in Cumberland, who left that county in the lovely Lake District of England, to cross the Atlantic shortly after the American Revolution to try farming and a new

life in Pennsylvania. The young farmer wrote from Philadelphia on October 25, 1784, to the wife he left behind, telling her that he had been in the Quaker city for seven months and that already had "several good plantations in View within 20 and 30 Miles of this city," and that he intended to purchase land soon.

In May, 1785, John Curwen warrented 350 acres of land in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, and 1,070 acres in three tracts in Lycoming County (where the town of Curwensville subsequently was laid out), but looked upon this as an investment and continued to seek his own farm near Philadelphia where he met with a kind and open reception and where the company of educated men could readily be had. Before he found his future home, Mary (Fisher) Curwen (1750-1818) came across the ocean to join her husband, sailing from Liverpool with several of their children in the brig **Dove** in April of 1785. The Curwens, united in Philadelphia, moved out to the Great Valley in Chester County to spend their first months together in the New World. They buried an infant daughter that winter in the Great Valley Baptist Churchyard but had the happiness of finding the plantation they wanted.

A tract of high, fertile and partly wooded land, 195 acres 5 perches in extent, lying in the old "Welsh Tract" in Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County, bordered by the present Spring Mill and County Line Roads, Montgomery Avenue and part of the present Rosemont College grounds, was brought for 1,197 pounds and 18 shillings of the Administrators of William Thomas on October 10, 1785. A Deed of Trust, naming John Wilson, a Philadelphia merchant, Trustee for their children, was signed on March 13, 1786, by "John Curwen, late of Little Broughton in the County of Cumberland, now of the County of Montgomery in Pennsylvania, yeoman, and Mary, his wife." The land, adorned by a fine stand of black walnut trees, was promptly named "Walnut Hill."

A farmhouse already stood on the property, built probably about 1730-40, soon after his marriage, by William Thomas (born 1701), son of one of the Penn grantees in the district. In 1829, William Thomas' great-granddaughter, Mrs. Jonathan Jones, of Wynnewood (nee Mary Thomas and formerly widow of Charles McClenahan, of Harriton) wrote that her great-grandfather "built a very good substantial stone house, finished in superior style for that day, on a beautiful situation and improved a considerable part of his parental estate. The house, and part of his farm is now in the possession of George Curwen." This is the only record we have of the first house on Walnut Hill. Photographs and a pencil drawing of about 1862 show it to have been a two and a half storied L-shaped structure of fairly common type. The portion facing East was probably the earliest. It had a chimney at either end and contained three bays, the center bay on the ground story being the fan-lighted front door, covered by a small pedimented porch. The early, heavy double cornice of this part of the house was not repeated in the rear wing. The side door, which faced out from the wing toward where Montgomery Avenue is today, was framed by a vine covered arbor. The entire house appears to have been whitewashed over stone and had dark green shutters except for the one window, to the south of the front door which, curiously, alone had white shutters.

John and Mary Curwen, who seated their family at Walnut Hill in 1786, were staunch characters and hard workers. Their farm prospered and tradition tells that Mrs. Curwen, a short, dark woman, took her knitting to the harvest fields to keep an eye on the farm labourers. She evidently had the reticence and pessimism of the North Country of her birth for her son wrote of her that she "was wont to give away to imaginary fears, and too often to look on the dark side of things." Perhaps she missed the familiarity of her own family circle and her old home, Jenkin Hill, at Thornthwaite

near Keswick. John Curwen, on the other hand, was gregarious and quickly became a part of American life. On September 5, 1785, before his purchase of the Walnut Hill farm, Curwen joined the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture. He held the rank of Captain when he reported for local militia duty in October, 1792, became a Justice of the Peace for Montgomery County on November 11, 1797, and held various other rustic offices and positions of trust as his ancestors had done in Cumberland and as his descendants would continue to do in Pennsylvania. In 1810 he was a Director (and had originally been contractor for a section) of the Lancaster and Philadelphia Turnpike, the new toll road which ran within sight of Walnut Hill and which provided a fast, direct road to market in Philadelphia. In 1812, John Curwen, together with Samuel Davis, Maskell Ewing, Peter Pechin, Francis Sheets, Peter Gilchrist, John Taylor, Edward Armstrong and David Bicking, all neighboring landowners, served as an incorporating Trustee of the Lower Merion Baptist Church and Curwen held the office of President of the Trustees until 1825. Originally Anglicans, the Curwens formed an active association with the Baptists but a half century later became Episcopals once more.

The oldest son of the family, Joseph Curwen (1778-1848), was sent home to England for his education and upon his return to Philadelphia was taken under the wing of his father's friend, John Vaughan, prominent English-born merchant and scientist, who likely introduced the lad to the mercantile house of Stephen Girard; Curwen wrote



WALNUT HILL

The 1864 house, designed by E. F. Durang, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Thomas, as it appeared in 1910.



JOSEPH CURWEN (1778-1848)

From the miniature painted in 1804 by Edward Greene Malbone, owned by Mrs. Edward F. McKeen. Picture courtesy of Frick Art Reference Library.

gratefully years later that he had known Vaughan "since I was nine years old. I was brought forward in life by him." Girard, the foremost shipping merchant and importer of Philadelphia at the beginning of the new century, sent young Joseph Curwen to France in May, 1802, with a Power of Attorney to prosecute Girard's mercantile claims against the French Republic.

Before leaving Philadelphia, Joseph Curwen formed the firm of Willing & Curwen with William Shippen Willing, and while doing Girard's business at Marseilles, Bordeaux, Paris and Havre, was able to charter English vessels for the Mediterranean trade of both his own house and Girard's, this expedient being necessary because of the danger to American vessels, the War with Tripoli then being fought. In February, 1803, Curwen despatched Girard's ship **Rousseau** from Havre for Canton, taking \$200,000 in Specie (Spanish Milled Dollars) and this early connection with the China Trade led the young merchant into a life-long commercial connection with that country, largely in the trade of tea which he imported to Philadelphia and reimported to England. Willing & Curwen owned the brig **Lovely Lass**, 204 tons (1803), the ship **Portland**, 263 tons (1805), the schooner **Matilda**, 43 tons (1806) and the schooner **John Wharton**, 119 tons (1806).

Joseph Curwen was a member of the Society of the Sons of St. George, Philadelphia,

and Worshipful Master of Masonic Lodge 51 of Pennsylvania, an office he relinquished in 1812 when he went to South America on business. Later, Curwen maintained a house in Portico Row in Philadelphia and did extensive business in the importation of French cognacs. He also lived for some years in Savannah as a cotton factor. His interlocking business interests turned him ultimately into a financier, and his fortunes suffered in the Panic of 1833. Joseph Curwen had close connections with Charleston, the original home of his beautiful and accomplished wife, Selina Fenwick Gadsden, whose only child, a daughter, Martha Selina Curwen, died at seventeen.

It was Joseph Curwen, as eldest son, who inherited Walnut Hill upon his father's death in 1825. The third son, Jonathan, had died young, and the second, John, born at Walnut Hill, had purchased the farm called Dundale on the West side of the Spring Mill Road in Radnor Township.

John Curwen, with his youngest brother, George Fisher Curwen (1790-1847), was a frequent visitor at Woodstock Vale, the Honourable Maskell Ewing's house which stood a mile away on the hill south of the Lancaster Turnpike. The two brothers both proceeded to court Elinor Hunter Ewing, the Senator's only daughter. Elinor became engaged to John, but the young master of Dundale died in 1817 before the marriage took place. George Fisher Curwen, who had meanwhile been calling on Patty Humphreys of Pont Reading, at Haverford, proceeded to renew his suit with his brother's fiancée after a suitable interval. Elinor Ewing told him she was "entangled" elsewhere. George Curwen thereupon rode quickly to Pont Reading and perfunctorily asked Patty to marry him. He was so brusque she had to refuse, whereupon George returned to Woodstock Vale and was immediately accepted by his Elinor. The next day Miss Humphreys appeared at Walnut Hill to say that her niece had been too hasty and would accept him, and was met with the news that George Curwen was already engaged.

George and Elinor Curwen were married in 1819 and set up housekeeping with the groom's father at Walnut Hill. George Curwen, who had studied at Burlington Academy in New Jersey, was charming and somewhat intellectual. He seems not to have had his father's interest in agriculture, preferring to write poetry. From 1826 to 1853 he served as Clerk to the Baptist Church and he brought up his children to be strictly but thoughtfully religious; the family delighted to discuss theology and at times went with Mrs. Curwen's relations to hear sermons at St. David's Church or at Marple Presbyterian.

George Fisher Curwen was a member of a local political group, the Clay Club, and was president of Whig Meetings held at the White Hall and at "Pigeontown" (where is this today?) in 1844. On visits to Philadelphia, he read at The Athenaeum, where he had been introduced by John Vaughan years before. In 1844 Curwen served on a road jury along the Schuylkill River, below Spring Mill, in Whitmarsh Township, and on Matson's Ford Road in Radnor. He frequently played cards in the evenings at Mr. Castner's house on County Line Road in West Haverford (the old Bryn Mawr Polo Club building, as we know it today) and at the White Hall Hotel. As early as June of 1844 numbers of Philadelphians are recorded as being of the card parties; Messrs. Bohlen, Colhoun, Patterson and Ducachet were, even then, evidently spending part of the summer months in the country, and the Main Line attracted its summer commuters decades before its permanent development. In 1846 Curwen was elected a School Director in Lower Merion.

Although George Fisher Curwen spent his entire life at Walnut Hill, he did not become master of the property until 1833 when he bought out his brother Joseph, who had suffered heavy losses in the Panic of that year, the conveyance being subject to a mortgage of \$7,000. The farm had been appraised on April 15, 1826; Mrs. Curwen's

uncle, attorney James Hunter, valued it at \$16,000 while Joseph Hoskins and Peter Penn-Gaskell of Ashwood, also neighbouring landowners, put it at \$14,000. John Curwen, Jr.'s former home, the "Farm call'd Dundale occupied by James Pyatt" was valued at \$4,400.

Diaries are often our most valuable source of information for knowledge of the intimacies of domestic life in former years and it is fortunate that the Curwen family still preserves journals kept by George Fisher Curwen and by his son, Maskell Ewing Curwen. These volumes, already used in the account of George Curwen's life, enable us to reconstruct the life at Walnut Hill more than a century ago.

The Walnut Hill property at that time was entered from two gates, the main or "lower gate" being on County Line Road (which then ran straight), just east of the small double brick house which now (1961) stands in the shadow of the P.R.R. overpass at Ithan Avenue. From this the farm lane ran north, made a right angle turn through the woods and across what is now the bed of Ithan Avenue, continued through meadows across what is now Broughton Lane, cut across the picket fence which kept the cows in these lower meadows and past a spring house on the South to a fork, then up the steep incline to the house and on out the secondary gate on Spring Mill Road.

The principal buildings consisted of the 18th century stone farmhouse and, lying north of the fork in the lane below the house, an immense frame barn with stone end walls. Then, in April, 1840, Charles Humphreys, a local builder, erected a tenant house over and around the old spring house, for \$350. This frame and stucco structure (which stands today as 250 Broughton Lane, the residence of Wayne C. Astley) housed, in its east wing, the Walnut Hill boiler and was where the milk utensils were cleaned. Constructed in the local tradition, it is the oldest remaining structure on the Walnut Hill property and provides a link between the 18th and 19th centuries. Not far from the tenant-spring house stood the Curwen hay scales and other farm sheds.

In the 1840's the farm raised staple crops of hay, wheat, corn and potatoes and employed a number of farm labourers including John Super, W. H. Wilfong and a Mr. Sullender who, with his family, had lived in the "large kitchen" of the Curwen house until the tenant house was completed. Still preserved by Miss Curwen is an agreement of 1836 whereby Isabella Knessel became indentured to George F. and Elinor H. Curwen "to learn the art, trade & mystery of housewifery" for eleven years. Horses, mules, cows and sheep were kept as well as a brace of oxen which pulled an ox cart. The water supply came from two pumps, one in the house and one in the barnyard.

At this time, long before the Villanova Post Office was created, the family post office was in Litzenberg's general store at West Haverford and the Pennsylvania Railroad stops used were either White Hall (at West Haverford) or Morgan's Corner (now Radnor,) all in Delaware County, although the greater part of the Walnut Hill land lay, of course, in Montgomery County. "Litzenberg's" and a neighbouring emporium, "The Temperance Store," were the local shops patronized by the Walnut Hill household.

Life at Walnut Hill was punctuated by frequent visits to the family's closest relatives, the Hunters and Ewings at Woodstock, and here came often to visit Mrs. James Hunter's New York and Connecticut connections, Benedicts, Crosbys, Browns, Allens and Phinneys, most of them professionally engaged in medicine, law, college teaching and the ministry. The Curwen boys had the best intellectual stimulation of the day.

John Curwen (1821-1901) was educated at Yale and received his M.D. degree from

the University of Pennsylvania in 1844, served as House Physician at Wills Eye Hospital, later at the Asylum in Philadelphia under Dr. Kirkbride, and in other mental hospitals. His brother, Maskell Ewing Curwen (1825-1868), whose diary is so important in our story, became a prominent attorney in Dayton and Cincinnati, Ohio, published a history of the former city in 1850 and **Sketches of the Campaign in Northern Mexico in 1846-47, By an Officer** in 1853, as well as several legal works. When he was eighteen Maskell had had to give up his law studies for a year to help his father with the farm and it is delightful to read of the young man's activities and rides over the then very rural Main Line countryside.

On May 18, 1843, Maskell Curwen and a friend "rode down to Spring Mill, left our horses and rowed ourselves over to the eastern bank of the river and walked to the spring. On our return we proceeded up the river to Mr. Moore's factory where we crossed the hills and proceeded to Prospect Hill." (Prospect Hill, many years later the Villanova property of Moro Phillips, and another nearby eminence, Mount Pleasant, also a name we still use, were two popular pic-nic sites for the Curwens, each affording a glorious view over the Schuylkill River.) Later in the year young Curwen bathed in the falls at Conshohocken, and on one occasion "rambled over the Valley Forge Hills, crossed over to Bridge Town (i.e. now Bridgeport), dined, visited the English Cottage below Norristown . . . and . . . Indian Cave." Not as interesting to our present narrative but more satisfying to a bright young law student were such occasions as when he heard Dr. Patterson deliver the Centennial Anniversary Oration before the American Philosophical Society and was taken as a guest to Philosophical Hall, or when he discussed agricultural economy as practised by his Uncle Hunter at Woodstock. (James Hunter thought sheep raising highly profitable but gave it up because his tenants disliked it and carried on chiefly dairying although even this did not yield \$200 a year; Woodstock was actually a city lawyer's country place which provided little competition with more practical agriculture as practiced at Walnut Hill.)

It was not long, however, before both John and Maskell Curwen were carving out new careers for themselves far from Walnut Hill. Their only sister, Mary, who married Dr. Furman Leaming, also moved far away, to Romney, Indiana, where her descendants remain today.

The youngest son, left at home, continued to occupy the property with his widowed mother and to manage the farm. He was George Fisher Curwen, II (1828-1901) and from his earliest years he had shared with his father and brothers the hope that the family might one day be able to build a new, more commodious and elegant "gentleman's house" to replace the century-old farmhouse in which they lived. Fortunately, the day came when their hope could be realized. The second George Curwen inherited land in Venango County, Pennsylvania, and made further investments in oil lands which provided a rich return on his venture. The income from this new-found wealth enabled him to build a new house at Walnut Hill.

The Philadelphia architect Edwin Forrest Durang, who had a large practice in Gothic churches principally for Roman Catholic congregations in and around Philadelphia, was engaged by Mr. Curwen in 1864 to design a house in the Gothic taste which was built of local grey stone quarried on the Walnut Hill land, timber for the interior trim also coming from the property and being sawed nearby at Gulph Mill. The architect's drawing for the East elevation is owned by Miss Curwen and the plan appears almost as built, but Durang's interior floor plan, also in Miss Curwen's possession, is quite different from the one executed. A local builder, William Danley, of Old Lancaster Road, Bryn Mawr, constructed the house.

Although basically Gothic, the design incorporated Tuscan villa details: brackets



WALNUT HILL

The back parlor of the 1864 house as decorated by Mrs. George H. Thomas.



LOOKING EAST FROM 341 SPRING MILL ROAD

A view looking across the Walnut Hill fields to what is now Broughton Lane and Ithan Avenue beyond, from a watercolour by Julia L. Tanner, 1893, owned by Miss Elinor Ewing Curwer.

on the roof and porches and triple arch-headed windows. It was laid out on a straight forward center-hall plan, the ground storey having double parlors on one side of the hall with a library and the stairway on the other and the dining room at the end of the hall, with pantries and kitchens behind the stairs; the second floor incorporated six bedrooms, an upstairs sitting room and bathroom arrangements (now altered and increased in number).

The interior doors were all solid walnut and chestnut; the side panels of the back stairs were of birdseye maple. The mantels were of slate painted to simulate a dark green veined Siena marble. Centered in the ceiling of each of the ground floor rooms was a large plaster medallion designed for gas chandeliers which were not, however, installed. An oil lamp alone was hung in the front hall. Panels of etched white glass were used as a decorative feature on the front door and as borders around the clear glass in the windows of the two parlors. These two drawing rooms had an additional feature which was almost unique with the house: each window could be closed off with a solid sliding panel concealed in the wall.

The Walnut Hill house, new in 1865, has altered very little in the century since its construction; soundly and spaciouly built of the finest materials of the day, it remains a dwelling of great comfort and considerable style. Its mistress of recent years, Mrs. George H. Thomas, a student and writer in the field of decorative arts, has directed its interior rehabilitation and it is now superbly furnished with early Victorian furniture and period wallpapers, curtains and rugs.

The Curwens wished to keep the old house along with the new but were told it would be very impractical so it was entirely demolished and the new one built on the exact site. On December 6, 1865 George Fisher Curwen, II, his wife Emily Moore (Beatty) Curwen and their family moved into the new Walnut Hill house. A new main entrance, lined with spruce trees on both sides, was laid out into the house from Spring Mill Road (south of the present entrance which parallels it). Along Spring Mill Road Curwen erected a stone wall with high gate posts and an iron gate at the entrance. When the bed of the railroad and the line of County Line Road were altered, the family stopped using the old "lower gate" entirely.

The stone house was not the only building put up at this time. A frame Gothic cottage, possibly also designed by Durang, was built in 1864 to house the Curwens while their big house was under construction. It stood at what is now the corner of Montgomery Avenue and Broughton Lane and was approached either from the fork of the farm lane below the house which ran north past the barn or by a newly laid out lane which ran diagonally northeast from the Spring Mill entrance. The cottage was later either rented or occupied by members of the family during years when they occasionally rented the stone house. A stone stable and carriage house was also erected by George F. Curwen, II, soon after 1865, north of the fork in the lane below the house and just south of the barn; the site of the stable is today No. 256 Broughton Lane. Sometime in the '70's the old barn came down and a new barn was built on its site. This stood until 1903 when it was demolished and a third (frame) barn erected on what is now the site of the H. Orvel Sebring house at No. 257 Broughton Lane.

In the big stone house at Walnut Hill George and Emily Curwen raised four sons. These boys, Samuel, George, John and Maskell, were all educated at Episcopal Academy, where their names are commemorated. There were two daughters, Emily, who died young, and Christine, who married Dr. Francis R. Packard.

Samuel Moore Curwen, the eldest of the family, was in later life President of the Brill Car Company and as such, a prominent Philadelphia businessman, but he enjoyed

country life at Trefriw, his Haverford house, and belonged to the Radnor Hunt. However, it was again a younger son who lived at Walnut Hill.

George Fisher Curwen, III (1861-1945) took over the management of Walnut Hill after his father's death in 1901. His younger brother, John, and their father had carried on a large and well-advertised nursery business on the ancestral acres in the '90's and John later developed a similar business at Berwyn. George F. Curwen, II, was, however, chiefly occupied with the development of the land, as we will see. He took an interest in the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, of which he became a member in 1916 following his great-grandfather who had joined in 1785. His wife was the daughter of Edwin Osborne, of Philadelphia, who purchased a piece of the Spring Mill Road frontage to the south of the Walnut Hill entrance lane and built thereon in 1892 the shingle house which was Curwen's home and which is now occupied by George and Helen Curwen's daughter, Elinor Ewing Curwen, the fifth generation of her family on the property.

The story of Walnut Hill would indeed be incomplete without some mention of the residential development of much of the Curwen land which has actually followed a very interesting and happy pattern. Most of this building took place prior to the end of World War II and was aesthetically and practically far superior to the housing which has blighted other neighbouring tracts since.

Although the seclusion of magnificent ash trees, a huge pair of larches, a swamp cypress and flowering magnolias as well as a notable display of box bushes give one the feeling of the once very rural setting of the big house at Walnut Hill (sold by the Curwens in 1925 to George H. Stuart and by the Stuarts in 1949 to the present owners), the encroachment of adjoining houses and gardens makes it difficult to visualize the extent of the old Walnut Hill "plantation."

The beginning of development of suburban residences west from Bryn Mawr was signalled in 1873 when Montgomery Avenue was laid out along the northern edge of the Curwen farm. In the mid 1880's the first part of the land to be sold since John Curwen's purchase in 1785 was conveyed to John F. Sinnott. This was the portion lying between the present Curwen Road and Montgomery Avenue, adjacent to the entrance to Rosemont College. The College acquired it from Sinnott. The old stone quarry, which provided material for the big house in 1864-65, was on this tract and is now a grotto. The land has never been built upon.

In 1902 Philadelphia architect William Lloyd Bailly built for the widowed Mrs. George F. Curwen, II the property now numbered 355 Spring Mill Road. The old lady left the big house at this time and thereafter it was always rented by the family until sold to Mr. Stuart. Then, in 1904, Thomas E. Baird, senior, bought the frame Gothic Cottage at the corner of Montgomery Avenue and Broughton Lane, pulled it down and built for his son on the site the large fieldstone Colonial style house now the John P. McCoy house at No. 272 Broughton Lane. Baird also put up the adjoining house for his daughter, Mrs. Eisenbrey (now No. 1612 Montgomery Avenue) and built himself a house again adjoining to the west on Montgomery Avenue; recently destroyed by fire, it has just been replaced by two Walter Durham-built houses. A little after the Baird enterprises, Joseph Y. Jeanes built a residence (to the design of architect J. Barton Keen, of Philadelphia) at the southwest corner of Montgomery Avenue and Spring Mill Road, still standing.

In 1907 George F. Curwen, III laid out Broughton Lane to run due north across the property just east of the old farm picket fence. Quite appropriately, it was named for the Cumberland home of old John Curwen. Curwen's own interest in architecture

is manifest in the brick Georgian Colonial house built on Spring Mill Road about 1911 adjacent to his own shingle house (the Osborne-Curwen house) to the north. The house was put up by E. H. Hollenback, a Philadelphia builder, to incorporate Curwen's ideas. It was rented for years and finally sold.

Much earlier, Morris Stroud bought land at the intersection of Spring Mill and County Line Roads and built the large brown shingle house (now No. 1731 County Line Road. William Robinson bought the adjoining piece of land on County Line Road and erected Oak House where Mr. Stroud's son, Dr. Stroud, lived in recent years. Then, in the 1920's, the land between the Osborne-Curwen house and the Stroud purchase was built up. In this decade an English Cotswold stone house was designed by architect Charles Willing Huber (now occupied as No. 327 Spring Mill Road by G. H. Brown) and the present E. M. K. Klapp house was built in the French Provincial style based on ideas brought from France by Mrs. Morris Stroud, Jr.

The prosperous years of the 1920's saw more development on the property. Curwen



MR. AND MRS. GEORGE FISHER CURWEN, II
Taken in January, 1901, in the second floor sitting room at Walnut Hill.

Road and Curwen Circle were laid out and received substantial houses built of Pennsylvania fieldstone in the tradition of the Colonial farmhouse and George F. Curwen, III again in collaboration with builder Hollenback put up the Broughton Lane houses now numbered 201, 211, 219 and 227. Others were built privately. In particular should be mentioned the handsomest house on the entire tract, the stone Heatly C. Dulles residence conceived in the best Cotswold vernacular and beautified by a lovely walled garden, the entire structure well integrated with the undulating slope and old trees of its setting. The present James B. Francis house, a symmetrical brick Georgian, is also well done.

The old Walnut Hill spring house-tenant house became the present Astley house on Broughton Lane, as we have seen. This tan stone and stuccoed building sits quietly in what was once a meadow, just as appropriately sited as is the large Gothic grey stone house framed in large trees and flowering shrubs which looks down on it from the hillside above. A basic and functional creation which although actually of the 19th century belongs to the earlier 18th century tradition here meets the elegant and romantic creation of the 19th century. But our story which has digressed to mention so many derivative buildings of more recent date must return to the main path to conclude with a true 20th century structure. This is the one storied contemporary house of cypress and fieldstone designed in 1951 by Philadelphia and Radnor Township architect Theo B. White as his own residence, adjacent to the Astley house.

The White house, too, behind part of the old farm fence, belongs completely to the land and to the setting. It completes an architectural cycle which began with the eighteenth century farmhouse of the Thomases and Curwens, the first habitation on the Walnut Hill land. The Curwen property, indeed, contains within its own original bounds one of the most complete records of American architectural development which can be found anywhere in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia.

FRANCIS JAMES DALLETT

REFERENCES

- Manuscript material owned by Miss Elinor Ewing Curwen and by her sister, Mrs. Edward F. McKeen, of Winterport, Maine, including:
- Letter Book of Joseph Curwen with letters written from Bordeaux, Paris, Havre and Philadelphia, January 11, 1803 to January 5, 1804.
 - Typescript copy of manuscript Journal of Joseph Curwen, January 5, 1840 to April 11, 1840.
 - Journal of George Fisher Curwen, I, June 28, 1844 to January 6, 1845. (Other portions exist but were not used.)
 - Journal of Maskell Ewing Curwen for 1843.
 - All original deeds and land warrants cited in the article and John Curwen's commissions as militia captain and J.P., and Curwen family Bible records.
- Manuscript material owned by Radnor Historical Society, including a copy of an account of the Thomas family, written 3rd month 10th, 1829, by Mary Thomas McClenachan Jones.
- Manuscript Registrations of Vessels, Port of Philadelphia, at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Horatio Gates Jones, *History of the Lower Merion Baptist Church* (Philadelphia: 1892).
- Theodore C. Knauff, *A History of the Society of the Sons of Saint George* (Philadelphia: 1923), p. 202.
- Memoirs of Lodge No. 51, F. & A.M. of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: 1941), pp. 109, 111, 116, 131.
- Memoirs of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture* (1939), Vol. VI, p. 203.
- The National Recorder, Philadelphia*, issue of December 11, 1819.
- Ruel Pardee Tolman, *The Life and Works of Edward Greene Malbone* (New York: 1958), pp. 157-158.
- J. W. Townsend, *The Old "Main Line,"* (1922).
- Extensive and valuable personal reminiscences of Miss Elinor Ewing Curwen and notes on the 1864 house from Mrs. George H. Thomas.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY, 1960-1961

May 15, 1960

The Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Society was held in the garden of the Society's headquarters, the Finley House, Wayne, with sixty members and guests attending.

The stories of many of "The Old Private Schools of Radnor and Vicinity" were told informally by a panel of speakers which included Miss Lilian Alice Walters, Mrs. Robert W. A. Wood (by proxy), Miss F. Neail Randall, Mrs. Richard Tunis, Mrs. Henry Ecroyd, Mrs. Sherman Coates, the Rev. Thomas F. Roland, O.S.A., Miss Caroline Robbins and F. J. Dallett. Horace Binney Montgomery, the principal speaker, gave an interesting and vivid account of his own experiences at St. Luke's School, Wayne. One of the papers presented is printed in this **Bulletin**.

Reelected to the Board of Directors for a three-year term were Herbert S. Casey, Theo B. White and James Rawle and newly elected for the same term were Mrs. Edward W. Westhead and Robert I. Cummin. At a meeting of the Board of Directors held following the meeting, the officers reelected were President, Miss Caroline Robbins; Vice-President, George Vaux; Secretary, Francis James Dallett; Treasurer, O. Louis Ehmann.

October 15, 1960

The Eighth Open House Tour conducted by the Society included visits to Kinterra (ca. 1718), Church Road, Wayne, residence of Mr. and Mrs. J. Barclay Jones and restored by its present owner, Robert W. Hompe, since a former visit to the house by the Society in Miss Watson's time; the Agnes Irwin School building (1768), Ithan, an old tavern known in the eighteenth century variously as "Stadleman's" and "Sorrel Horse" and visited by the Society in 1953 (the history of the place was printed in the 1960 **Bulletin**); Maple Farm (1834), 1000 Sproul Road, Bryn Mawr, house of Mr. and Mrs. Leighton P. Stradley, Jr.; Highland Farm (1833), Highland Lane, Bryn Mawr, home of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Wagner; and Mr. and Mrs. George H. Thomas' Gothic Victorian house, Walnut Hill (1864), 361 Spring Mill Road, Villanova, the old Curwen family place which is described in this **Bulletin**.

Historical data on all of the houses was printed in the invitation and by the local press. Hostesses for the houses were under the able direction of Mrs. Robert I. Cummin.

November 16, 1960

Dr. Mary Maples Dunn, Department of History, Bryn Mawr College, spoke to a meeting held in the Radnor Friends Meeting House, Ithan, on "Peaceable Penn," giving an amusing and penetrating account of the land and political controversies in which the Proprietor took a vigorous role.

Mrs. Edward W. Westhead and Mrs. Gertrude Ware Case provided seasonal refreshments as they so graciously do throughout the year.

January 10, 1961

The Wayne Iron Works, the principal manufacturing concern in the community, received the Society for a novel program in its plant. Charles H. Wetzel, President, and Charles M. Wetzel spoke on the history and operation of their business which in former years made virtually all of the ornamental iron fences on the Main Line and in recent years has principally produced grandstands.

Members of the Society toured the Works and saw the machinery, both for iron-working and woodworking, and some of the products.

February 15, 1961

In connection with a week long celebration by the First Wayne Federal Savings & Loan Association of the opening of the Civil War Centennial throughout the country, the Society met in the Community Room of the bank to see a National Park Service film on Civil War battlefield sites and to enjoy a large and notable collection of Civil War relics, loaned for display by local residents. The Society itself provided many items for the exhibition which was visited by thousands of school children.

FORM OF BEQUEST

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absolutely, free and clear of all taxes, unto RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY, for the uses and purposes of said Society.

THE WAYNE FRENCH AND ENGLISH SCHOOL

The Wayne French and English School was founded and taught by Miss Nina, Miss Julia and Miss Frances Miel, the daughters of the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Charles Miel. I am not sure of the exact date the school was started, but from the records I have, it must have been prior to 1894, possibly about 1892. The school building was in one of the brick and frame houses on the south side of West Lancaster Pike, east of Bloomingdale Avenue. I remember running up and down the high bank above the pavement at recess, playing tag.

I have attached a program of "Closing Exercises" which is most interesting, and an invitation to "Tea" at Dr. and Mrs. Miel's — these were under the date of 1894 — fortunately for me, my Mother marked and dated everything. This program shows that the school had a Primary and a Junior Department.

Many of the names of the students have escaped me, but with the help of others, I have listed those we do recall and hope others will be able to fill in some of the gaps!

Boys

Allison Baer	F. Gilbert Farrell	Garrett Gilmore
William Fox	George Miles Wells	Kendall Mulford
E. Jansen Wendell	E. Reeves Hart	Robert W. A. Wood
H. Frederick Wendell	De Bourg Tees	Wm. H. Sayen Schultz
Thomas English Walton	Charles W. Bergner, Jr.	

Girls

Katharine Wiedersheim	Marguerite Fox	Dorothea Tingley
Edith Williamson	Yvonne Spiers	Beatrice Carr
Josephine and Francesca Wood	Alice Rush	Frederica Bremer
Anna Johnson and Marguerite Johnson	Helen Martin	Esther Mulford
Edith Suffren	Marguerite Armstrong	Wilhelmina Thudichum
Jessie Fulweiler	Clara Hart	Katharine Schultz
	M. Stewart Wells	

As this was a day school, I think the pupils came mostly from Wayne and St. Davids. This was during the horse and buggy days as I remember my brother and I were driven to school each morning from St. Davids by "Old Joe," a jolly colored man who drove the "hack" or station wagon which met the few daily trains at St. Davids from Philadelphia. This vehicle was all black, with facing seats, and covered with a black material to keep out the stormy weather, with a door in the center back, a rather gloomy affair.

It is appalling how one forgets — I wish I could have done better. However, this may serve to refresh the memories of others. Anyway, it has been a privilege to help, in a small way, pay tribute to our early Radnor educators and their noble efforts in our behalf

KATHARINE SCHULTZ WOOD

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