

THE BULLETIN
of
RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume III

FALL, 1978

No. 8



INCORPORATED APRIL 30, 1948

Headquarters and Museum

THE FINLEY HOUSE

113 WEST BEECH TREE LANE
WAYNE, PENNSYLVANIA 19087

Visitors Cordially Welcome. Telephone MURray 8-2668.

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REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

This year, with great regret, I must announce the resignation of Francis James Dallett from our Board of Directors. Mr. Dallett was one of the seven founders of the Radnor Historical Society in 1947 and was a member of the Board from 1948 to 1978. During this period he was Secretary from 1948 to 1950 and also from 1953 to 1955; President from 1955 to 1957; Recording Secretary from 1957 to 1959; Secretary again from 1959 to 1962; and Vice-President from 1976 to 1978.

During his absence from Radnor, mostly spent in England as Curator of the American Museum in Bath, he was continuously in touch with the Society and gave us many constructive suggestions and advice on the operation of the Society and the museum. On his return he was largely responsible for the renovation of the ground floor of the Finley House with special attention to the rebuilding and the orderly rearrangement of our display cases and exhibits. Now that he is retired from our Board after such long and valuable service his gracious offer is to be "always at the other end of the telephone when needed."

I must also note the retiring from the Board of Mrs. Edward W. Westhead who has been a faithful Director of the Society since 1960. The Board of Directors and I are most grateful for the unflagging interest and service of these two over the past years.

Our thanks also go to Mr. Herbert S. Henderson, a present Board member for his lettering of the various signs in connection with the remounting of our exhibits. His skillful renovation of John Rogers' group, "The Treveling Magician,"* as well as his attractive mounting of hand wrought hardware from various old Wayne houses given to us by Mr. & Mrs. Ives is also much appreciated.

Due to the generous response of our membership we were able to have a new roof put on the Finley House in the summer of 1977.

My thanks, as usual, for the support of our friends and members during the past year.

Sincerely,
DOROTHY H. THERMAN

*See Illustration and Text on Page 22

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

May 15, 1977

Dr. Stephanie Grauman Wolf (Mrs. Alfred E.) spoke at the annual meeting of Radnor Historical Society at the home of Mrs. Harrison Therman on May 15 on the subject, **Germantown, Myth or Reality**. Dr. Wolf, who received her B.A. at Wellesley in 1957 and her M.A. and Ph.D. at Bryn Mawr, is eminently qualified to address the subject. She collaborated with Nancy Hess in the writing of **The Sounds of Time: Western Man and His Music**, which was published by Lippincott in 1969. The Princeton University Press published her **Urban Village, Population, Community, and Family Structure in Germantown, 1683-1800** in 1976. Besides being occupied with her five children she has had numerous jobs in the historical field, being associated most recently with the Bicentennial College of the University of Pennsylvania. Next fall she will become associate professor and co-ordinator of the Master's Program at Winterthur.

Germantown is frequently presented as being a quaint little Pennsylvania Dutch Village of the 18th century, much as many of the little towns of today in the by-ways of Lancaster County. Although this village is rightly famous for a number of things, such as the slavery protest made by the Germantown Meeting in 1688, the printing of the first Bible in the Colonies, the establishment of the first paper mill in the colonies, and, of course, the Battle of Germantown, it was not the picturesque little German speaking community so often pictured.

This impression has largely grown up over the years as a result of one of the basic problems facing the historian in researching his subject. It must be remembered that very few people of those times, or of these times for that matter, kept any detailed records, even family bibles were in the minority, and a great many of the families living in a given area have either moved

away or have died out, leaving no records whatever of their activity, except those that can be garnered from courthouse and church lists. Therefore only the families who were successful, that is, perpetuated themselves, have maintained some amount of prominence in the historical scene and we tend to equate the times, in this case eighteenth century Germantown, in the terms of who these people were and how they lived.

This was largely brought about by the large population of summer residents in the Germantown area. These were very important, very famous Pennsylvanians. They went to their fair houses year after year and these are the homes that are still standing, such as Grumblethorpe and Upsala. We tend to think of these houses as being typical of the homes of the period, whereas they are actually atypical, as the usual Germantown citizen was not of the wealthy, ruling class, but a small craftsman indulged in a cottage type industry, or a worker in one of the tanneries or the paper mills which later developed. Therefore the summer people, on whose lives and records we have so frequently based our opinions of the times were really outsiders and did not reflect a true picture of life in Germantown in the eighteenth century.

So it was necessary to go back to the basic records of the times that are still available, the inventories made at a person's death, their wills, the deeds in the courthouse, the tax roles, and other documents on file in local government offices. Here, it can be developed how the ordinary people lived, what their homes were like and what was in them, and indeed even how they spoke. In the matter of what kind of houses they lived in, for example, it was the custom, in order to probate the deceased's estate, to have a complete inventory made of his possessions. This was usually started in a bed room, possibly where the owner was laid out and then progressed to the next rooms, and finally out back to the barns and stables, if any. From a careful analysis of these lists and other documents it has been concluded that the average home consisted of two to four rooms, was about 15 by 25 feet in size, had three or four windows and was almost invariably built of Germantown Glimmer stone, "because they had no other way to get rid of the wretched stuff." In any event there was very little wood because of the forests of the area having been denuded by the tanneries.

Although it is true that Germantown originally had a distinctly rural flavor this was soon lost by the large number of immigrants who rapidly settled in the area, who came not only from Germany, but from Holland, England, Sweden, France, Ireland and other nations. What is particularly interesting is that this was a true melting pot and not a mosaic culture; that is, the Germans did not settle in just one section, the English in another and so on, but they were all mixed up. They purchased the best house they could for the least amount of money where they could find it, they sold their properties to the highest bidder, "they were a very capitalistic, forward moving, individualistic bunch of craftsmen on the make. That's the best way I can put it. They exemplify a certain part of the American ideal in a strong, vigorous way."

October 16, 1977

The Society met Sunday, October 16, 1977 at three p.m. in the Radnor Friends Meeting House where Francis James Dallett and Katharine Hewitt Cummin described military activity in and around the Meeting House during the dark winter of 1777-1778. Mr. Dallett based his talk on a series of military letters written from the Meeting House and now reposing in the National Archives.

The Radnor outpost, set up in November 1777 on the hill behind the Meeting House by Major John Clark Jr., was directed in turn by Brigadier General James Potter, by Major General Lord Stirling, Brigadier General Daniel Morgan, Colonel Timothy Bigelow and Colonel Henry Beekman Livingston. From the heights they could survey the network of roads which joined at the Meeting House and thus could report enemy movements to General Washington. The Meeting House itself served as Officers quarters and as hospital.

The commanders relayed reports and rumors. Patrolling troops "annoyed" General Howe's forces, skirmishes occurring in Radnor, in Newtown, and in Easttown, Washington having placed troops in all three townships as a method of protecting his camp at Valley Forge and of preventing local farmers from trading with the British in Philadelphia. From the Meeting House officers informed Washington of enemy movements and also of their own problems in dealing with prisoners, British or collaborationist and in securing provisions from local residents who themselves faced winter shortages, and whose farms had been raided by both armies. The full story of the Radnor "Picquet" which patrolled the area until the British left Philadelphia in June, 1778, is told in detail in Mr. Dallett's pamphlet "Radnor in the War of the Revolution."

Mrs. Cummin described Radnor in 1777 as a land-locked agricultural community of some ninety families, half of them land-owning, half of them of Welsh extraction. Perhaps one-third were Quakers. Only one half had lived in Radnor over fifteen years.

The draft law of March, 1777, saw all able-bodied men 18-53 years of age divided by lot into classes, the first class being called to duty first. These lists, published in the Pennsylvania Archives, are often cited to establish military service although service is not thereby proven.

Because records are missing, because substitute purchase was legal, because some escaped service by paying fines, because relatively few appealed for pensions, and because of duplication of names (in 1777 there were at least three adult Radnor men named John Thomas), it is difficult to assemble a correct list of Radnor's fighting men. Ironically, Quaker records provide a direct source as the Meeting disassociated itself from soldiers. Some can be named with assurance and some who did not serve can be named.



The Radnor Friends Meeting House Today.

The Revolution came suddenly to Radnor in September of 1777. Residents survived an extraordinary week following the Battle of the Brandywine. On September 15, General Washington marched through Radnor to Malvern where the Battle of the Clouds did (or did not) take place the following day. On the 17th the British marched through toward Howellville. On the 18th the whole Rebel government moved west through Radnor to Lancaster. On the 19th a British detachment ravished the town severely. The Paoli Massacre followed on the 20th. Shortly after this, the enemy repaired to Philadelphia and fighting took place beyond the Schuylkill River.

War returned to Radnor in December. After General Potter's retreat up the nearby Gulph Road on December 10th, the British again raided Radnor. Whereas they seized horses (for transportation) in September, they seized food and clothing (for subsistence) in December. Whereas the first raiders invaded almost all of the township, their December successors avoided the large central area under the immediate scrutiny of the Radnor "Picquet" whose activities Mr. Dallett has so ably chronicled.

December 1, 1977

The Society met at the Neighborhood League at 119 West Wayne Avenue, Wayne on Thursday, December 1st to hear talks by Miss Margaret Halligan, an early member of the League and by Miss Elizabeth Zimmerman, the present Executive Director on the subject of "The Neighborhood League - Past and Present."

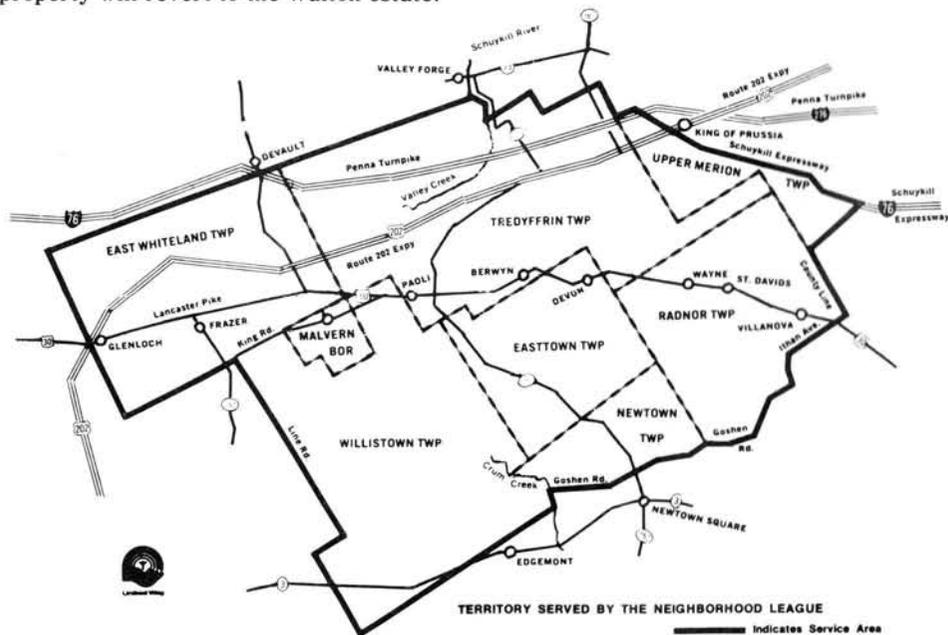
The Neighborhood League was organized in 1912 by a group of citizens concerned with local social problems. Its purpose was "the betterment of social and moral conditions of the community." A visiting nurse was employed to work for the organization and to assist in improving the general physical and sociological conditions in the area.

It was soon discovered that the work load was such that it was necessary to employ a general secretary in 1913 who would be responsible for directing both the family casework and the public health nursing components.

Growth of the community over the years has necessitated an extension of the area which is covered and now embraces not only Radnor Township but all or parts of surrounding townships as well, as can be seen by the accompanying map. The Neighborhood League joined the Community Fund of Philadelphia and vicinity (now the United Way) in 1941. In 1948, the Agency reorganized into two functional divisions each with its own policy making committee and budget: The Family Service Division, and The Public Health Nursing Division.

The Family Service Division merged in 1958 with Family Service Of the Main Line Federation of Churches in Ardmore, which eventually became Family Service of the Main Line which is still located in Ardmore.

The headquarters of the Neighborhood League on West Wayne Avenue was donated by Mrs. Charles S. Walton in 1925; if the League ceases to function from these premises the property will revert to the Walton estate.



In 1965, with the advent of Medicare, The Neighborhood League Nursing Service merged with the Community Nurse Association of Malvern, Paoli and Berwyn. This association had been founded in 1919 during the flu epidemic under the auspices of the Red Cross in Paoli. It was incorporated in 1930 as the Community Nurse Association of Malvern, Paoli and Berwyn, and operated successfully until the merger in 1965.

Over the years The League has developed into two broad functioning units: the Volunteer Programs carried on by the Auxiliaries, and the Agency work itself which the former ably supports.

The Neighborhood League Shops were begun in 1925 to sell some of the donated items of clothing and has now grown to four different locations. Organized to provide for supplementary income for the League, they have been able to raise considerable income from the commissions and sales at these shops. Between 1944 and 1947 they purchased the three buildings in which they and the Woman's Exchange operate and in addition have assisted in financing the Orthodontic Clinic. For the last two fiscal years they have also contributed to the Radnor Nutrition Program.

The other two Auxiliary branches are The Woman's Exchange and the Junior Service Board. The Exchange was founded in 1931 as a non-profit organization created for the purpose of "helping others help themselves." Consignors of food and articles come from both local communities as well as from many other states.

The Junior Service Board was organized in 1934 to assist the League in its community work which has come to include complete responsibility for the salaries, supplies and equipment of both the children's and adult dental clinics, contributions for necessary repairs and renovations to the League House, the establishment of a scholarship fund to aid students entering nursing and to aid Agency nurses, and the assisting of the League in driving patients and clients to hospitals, dental clinics, medical appointments, and so forth.

The Agency functions can best be described by this excerpt from the By-Laws:

The Neighborhood League is established as a voluntary, non-profit home health agency to exist perpetually to:

1. To provide in-home health services; including but not limited to, professional nursing, a psychiatric nurse, home health aides, physical therapy, and other professional services, on a part time intermittent basis; and to teach the patient, family and/or family substitute how to assume responsibility for his/her care.
2. To provide health maintenance, and anticipatory health guidance to individuals, families, and groups within the community through home visits, clinic visits, and community programs.
3. To collaborate with other community agencies to plan, develop and evaluate appropriate programs to meet the health needs of the community.

March 1, 1978

The Society heard a talk on Wednesday, March 1, by Dr. Carter W. Craigie, Chairman of the Social Science Department at Cabrini College on the subject of "Migratory Legends" in the Public Room of the Main Line Federal Savings & Loan Association in Wayne.

A good example of one of these migratory legends, one that seems to travel from place to place is the tale of the vanishing hitchhiker: A man picks up a young girl hitchhiking on a cold, dark night. She sits in the back seat of the car and says she is cold. The obliging driver gives her his sweater and drives her to her house where she gets out and goes in.

The next day, the driver realizes he did not get his sweater back, so he returns to the girl's house to retrieve it. A middle-aged woman opens the door, listens to the story and the girl's description and says tearfully that it sounds like her daughter who has been dead ten years. The driver insists that the girl was very much alive. "Her grave is on the hill. Go see for yourself," says the woman. The man goes to the grave and finds his sweater draped over it."

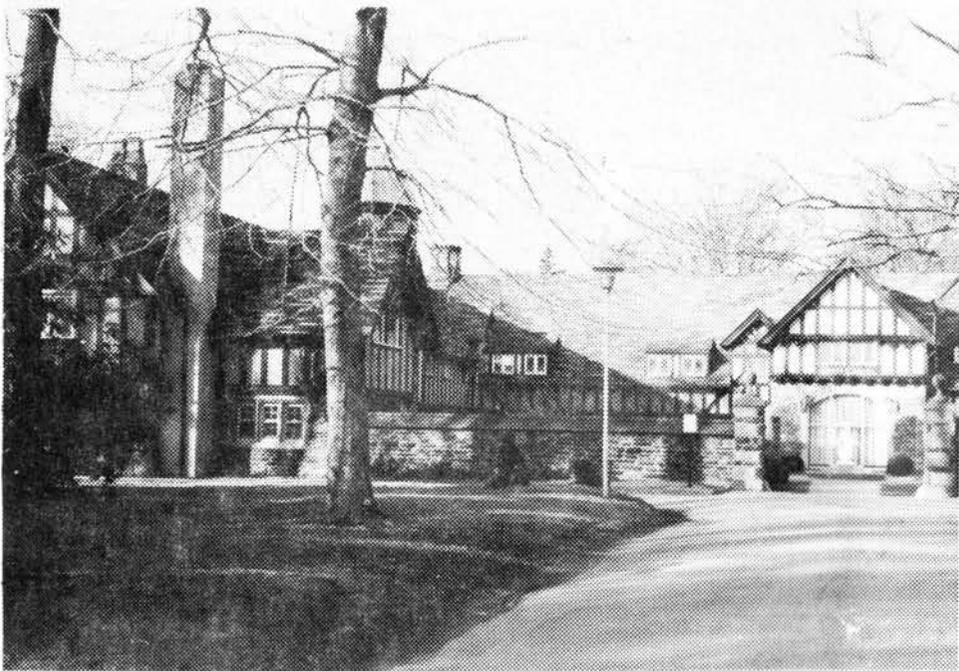
Dr. Craigie pointed out that "you think it's local until you do research. Then you find that few legends are confined to one area." There are many different versions of this same basic story.

One that is much closer to home has Mother Cabrini taking a taxi to the convent, getting out and leaving the cabbie unpaid. When he knocks on the door to collect his fare, all the nuns assemble only to have him point to a picture of Mother Cabrini. "That's the one who owes me money," he said. "That is impossible, sir," says one of the sisters, "Mother Cabrini has been dead for 25 years."

There is a kernel of truth to these types of stories Dr. Craigie pointed out, but the thing that really makes them seem true is that people have a tendency to believe that they are true. There is a great deal of emotion invested in them. People feel they actually happened. They are not aware that the same story has attached itself to another area with the names and places changed to suit the location.

One recurring theme is the death of young lovers. Cabrini College boasts such a tale:

The first Cabrini Mansion residents were a wealthy family with a sweet, young daughter who falls in love with the stable boy, and finds herself in a family way. Recognizing the desperate situation, the stable boy hangs himself in the tower room of Grace hall which used to be the stables. Legend has it that the center of the room where his body hung is always cold.



The "stable" at Cabrini College

The fair daughter did one of two things, depending on the version. She threw herself off the balcony of the mansion and died. Bloodstains are supposed to be on the floor below the balcony. In the second version, the girl had her baby still-born in the apple orchard. Since there is a dormitory where the orchard used to be, there have been periodic reports of a young girl, fitting the girl's description roaming the halls looking for her baby and followed by an odor of rum and bananas.

To elaborate further, it is reported that on the first snow of every winter a figure of a tall man dressed in black with a high stovepipe hat is seen walking from the Mansion House to Grace Hall, but as soon as he is seen, he disappears.

These stories frequently fill a definite need, no matter how bloody and dripping with gore they may be. They must be looked at in the light of how they are used.

If, for example, they are about people who do foolish things and are governed by their passions rather than by their minds, these stories may be viewed as folk tales or folk proverbs teaching people how to live and what they may expect when the rules are broken. For instance, these tales may have credence to what will happen to children who open the doors of their homes to strangers, or get into strange cars, or accept candy from anyone they do not know. It is pretty well established that the family background has a great deal to do with how seriously stories of this nature are accepted, one fact seems to be clear, the closer they are related to our everyday experience and locale the more real they seem and the more likely they are to be believed.

May 14, 1978

Katharine Hewitt Cummin, former Secretary of the Society, gave a talk on the subject of "Researching Radnor" at the meeting of May 14 at the Finley House. This was an introduction to her newly published book, *A Rare and Pleasing Thing, Radnor*. Because of its special interest a summary of these remarks are reproduced as a separate article on Page 16 of this issue.

NECROLOGY

May 1977 to August 1978

Mrs. Herbert S. Cavey
Mrs. Thomas C. Cochran
Mrs. J. Montgomery Forster
Mr. William Gernard

Mr. William Hackler
Mrs. Lester Sellers
Mr. Albert A. Ware
Dr. Norman A. Wack

NEW MEMBERS

May 1977 to August 1978

Mrs. Edmund Cabeen
Mrs. Dorothy Evans
Mr. Robert Goshorn
Mr. Robert J. LaRouche
Miss Agnes Raycroft

Mrs. Bryce Templeton
Mr. James E. Thomason
Mrs. R. N. Williams II
Mrs. A.W. Patterson

THE FRY LETTERS, 1821-1824

by Conrad Wilson

Seven letters addressed to the Post Master, Spread Eagle Post Office, Pennsylvania, have been handed down in the Wilson family of Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, Pa. for the past five generations and are now in the possession of the writer, who lives in Radnor. They were written to David Wilson, Jr., who was postmaster and host at the Spread Eagle from 1817 to 1823¹ and for a period of about 16 years was a resident of Radnor. Six of these were written by one Henry Fry, sometime sojourner in Radnor who moved from here to Crown Point, New York in the Spring of 1822, and the other one by Mr. Fry's friend, Dr. J. B. Whitridge of Charleston, South Carolina.

Historically insignificant, the letters have apparently been preserved because of the flowery language used in them and the many references to the hospitality of the Wilson family. They are presented here because of references to agricultural practices and to a new barn in Radnor that had been erected in 1821 by David Wilson, Jr., on his property at Siterville (now Strafford) in the western corner of the township, near the Tredyffrin line. This barn stood until 1972 when it was destroyed by fire. It is mentioned by Katharine Hewitt Cummin in her recent history of Radnor² as situated on a 100 acre portion of (Lot 1) the Edward Jones's Estate, and is depicted, in ruins, on a plate in the same book. Fry was evidently so impressed with the structure of this new barn that he wanted to reproduce it exactly on his newly acquired property on the shores of Lake Champlain at Crown Point, New York. It is not known if he accomplished his desire.

David Wilson, Jr.,³ was born 20 March 1791 at the "Wilson Homestead" in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, and died 13 March 1873 at his new farm, built 1836 - 1840 in the same township and subsequently named "Elda Farm" for his wife Eliza and himself, David. He was the son of Captain David Wilson (1747-1828), a soldier of the Revolution, and his wife Sarah Davis (1751-1823) daughter of Isaac and Elizabeth (Bartholomew) Davis⁴ of Tredyffrin, and sister of Capt. John Davis (later Brig. Gen. and Judge) of "Chesterbrook Farm," who also served in the Revolution and was an aide-de-camp to Gen. Lafayette. David Wilson, Jr., was a grandson of John and Judith (Scott) Wilson of Tredyffrin who purchased land and settled there in 1760.

Wilson was married 30 April 1812⁵ by Rev. William Latta of the Great Valley Presbyterian Church to Eliza (or Elizabeth) Siter of Siterville, Radnor, born 28 Dec. 1789 and died 6 April 1870. She was a daughter of Adam Siter, Jr. (c.1756-1797) and his wife Sarah Jones (c.1759-1825) of Radnor and was descended from old Radnor families. After his marriage he settled on and eventually purchased⁶ a farm that his brother-in-law Edward Siter had inherited from his great-uncle Edward Jones II (1717-1793) following the death of the widow Abigail Jones in 1798. Here the seven children of David and Eliza (Siter) Wilson were born, between 1812 and 1825:

Sarah Ann, Mary, Caroline E., Edward Siter, John Morton, Amanda M. and Winfield Scott Wilson. But the family did not remain long in Radnor. Upon the death of his father in 1828, David Wilson, Jr. took his family back to the "Wilson Homestead" farm in Tredyffrin, where he soon commenced building his new place, "Elda Farm," two miles east of the older farm, at the northwest corner of Swedesford and Wilson Roads. He became a successful farmer and drover and eventually a director of the National Bank of Norristown and of the Chester Valley Railroad. He died in 1873 a few days short of 82 years and was buried in the graveyard of the Great Valley Presbyterian Church where his parents and grandparents and most of his descendants to this day also lie buried.

Before leaving Radnor he put his farm on the market by advertising in the newspaper: 7

Grazing Farm for Sale.

WILL be offered at public sale, on Saturday, the 22d of November, on the premises, the farm whereon the subscriber resides, situate in Radnor township, Delaware county, Penn. containing 100 acres of first rate soil, adjoining the Spread Eagle property on the Philadelphia and Lancaster turnpike, 14 miles from Philadelphia, possessing a commanding view of the road, and the village of Siterville, &c. The improvements are a substantial stone house, and a new stone barn, 58 feet by 40, built in the most improved modern style, with double floors, a large stone springhouse, over a never failing spring, sufficient for keeping the milk of twenty cows, there are a variety of fruit trees on the premises; a branch of the Darby creek, passes through it, and there are several springs on the property, watering different parts of it, which makes it doubly advantageous for grazing and dairying, the place is well set with natural and artificial grass; there are about twenty acres of woodland; the situation is one of the most pleasant and agreeable in the market. --- For further particulars enquire of the subscriber on the premises.

David Wilson.

Oct. 22d, 1828.

22

Letter 1

Addressed: "To The Post Master, Spread Eagle Post Office, Pennsylvania"

Postmarked, with pink ink stamp, "NORFOLK VA., DEC. 3," on upper left and, in handwriting, marked "Free."

My dear Sir, Norfolk, Virginia, 2^d December 1821

My passage to this place 'being nine days' was the most disagreeable of all my Sea voyages, having experienced a very severe gale of wind ---

I am happy to say that I shall leave here by this day week at farthest of my return to Philadelphia, and anticipate the pleasure of seeing you very soon.

I have taken the liberty to enclose a letter for my Espoused,^s as this is Sunday and the Post Office is kept closed it is not possible to pay postage on letters forwarded --- I hope you will pardon this infringement on the rules of office, and find my excuse as I feign would offer it: in the consideration that Mrs. F is one of your family: and the great prerogative of office being exemption from such system of taxation ---

Be pleased to excuse this hurried Sketch, having a benefit dinner given me to day by my friend M^r Young, and the hour of dining fast approaches: --- while quaffing his Madeira, may I strangle if I neglect mentally to toast your health and wish every happiness to your family ---

Make my best regards to M^{rs} Wilson, and believe me to be

Dear sir:

unfeignedly yours &c.
Henry Fry

To:
David Wilson Esquire

Letter No. 2.

Addressed: "To The Post Master 'Spread Eagle Post Office' Pennsylvania"

Postmarked, with pink ink stamp, "BALTIMORE MD DEC 4" (and) "SHIP," and, in handwriting, marked "free".

Norfolk, Virginia 2^d December 1821
My dear Sir,
My passage to this place 'being nine days' was the most disagreeable of all my Sea voyages, having experienced a very severe gale of wind ---
I am happy to say that I shall leave here by this day week at farthest on my return to Philadelphia, and anticipate the pleasure of seeing you very soon.
I have taken the liberty to enclose a letter for my Espoused,
As this is Sunday, and the Post Office is kept closed it is not possible to pay postage on letters forwarded --- I hope you will pardon this infringement on the rules of office, and find my excuse as I feign would offer it: in the consideration that Mrs. F is one of your family, and the great prerogative of office being exemption from such system of taxation --- Be pleased to excuse this hurried Sketch, having a benefit dinner given me to day by my friend M^r Young, and the hour of dining fast approached, while quaffing his Madeira, may I strangle if I neglect mentally to toast your health and wish every happiness to your family ---
Make my best regards to M^{rs} Wilson, and believe me to be
Dear Sir, unfeignedly yours &c.
Henry Fry
David Wilson Esquire

Norfolk, Virginia,
Monday 3rd decr 1821

My dear sir,

I shall be with you er'e many days, and hope to find you all in perfect health -- M^{rs} F. is charged in the enclosed to apologise to you for the liberty I have taken in enclosing to you -- It is not I assure you to cheat the revenue but for safety of carriage, my best respects to M^{rs} Wilson --

Ever yours

H. Fry

By mail of yesterday I wrote you a line, this goes by Steam boat and leaves here this moment - of course it is hurried ----

Letter No 3.

Addressed: "David Wilson Esq. Spread Eagle Post-Office Pennsylvania."
Postmarked, with brown ink stamp, "CHALSN SC MAY 2" and, in handwriting, marked "Free".

Charleston, South Carolina
May 1 st. 1822. ---

Dear Sir,

By a letter received yesterday from your friend M^r Fry, I am requested to write for the purpose of giving you some information concerning Charles Hasser.

I once knew him personally, and attended him as a patient,⁹ but have not seen him for the last year or two. At that time he was employed by M^r Geo. Reynolds a Coach Maker in this city. The best information I can now give you on the subject is contained in the enclosed note.

If you should think proper to commence a suit, I can put it into the hands of a Lawyer who will do you every justice. If your claim has been acknowledged either by Note, Due-bill, or otherwise, there will be no difficulty in collecting the amount (provided the man has the ability to pay) but if you have no such acknowledgment, you will perhaps find it difficult to prove your claim.

Any thing that I can do for you in the business, I will do with pleasure.

Make my regards to M^r Fry, and believe me dear sir,

Your Obedt. Servt.

J. B. Whitridge.

(in haste)

David Wilson Esq.

Letter No. 4.

Addressed: "David Wilson Esquire Post Master Spread Eagle Post Office Pennsylvania" Postmarked, in handwriting, "Crown Point Ny 4th June" (and) "Free"

Crown Point 'New York' 2d June 1822

Here I am, giving laws to my own Empire; and though in a cottage, feel as great as if seated on a throne --- The beau monde may laugh, my happiness will not be measured by what the world may think of it. No envy now rankles in my bosom, no neighboring blaze of wealth, nor pomp nor pageantry intrudes to disenchant this fairy land. Lord of my own domain, I reign Supreme ---

Indeed my dear Sir, I feel that I shall be content; my Wife is also pleased with her new residence, yet I sometimes hear from her a sigh of regret at leaving her many friends in Pennsylvania and none are more frequently named than your family indeed (sic) she speaks of little John¹⁰ as of her own children. And should I not also think very often of David Wilson and family? when I forget them memory must have left her Seat -- and when I cease to reverence them "be my tongue mute, and dead to joy forget my heart to beat" --let me hear from you soon and often -- er'e long I shall commence an agricultural disputation with you ha! ha! what a farmer I shall be --- but Sir, let me tell you that from present appearances we shall cut 80 tons of Hay this Season - beat this if you can --- we have 10 acres of very flourishing wheat - besides much corn oats etc etc. and in course of few months I will have in new York market as fine a crop of marble as was ever seen in that City ----

My best respects and affectionate regard I charge you to tender to Aunt Church¹¹ and your Espoused --- To Sam¹¹ Cheever¹² John M^cCowan¹³ and all that I have any regard for, you will be pleased to make my best compliments --- and if it is your intention to write to me soon, and to keep up a close Correspondence, then may you assure yourself that at all times I shall be happy to subscribe myself your most cordial friend and Ob^ts,

Henry Fry

To David Wilson Esq^r ---

I have it in direct charge from Mary Helen¹⁴ that you kiss little John a thousand times for her --- and Wife also would have me write a long story for her --- but here is pen ink and paper let her speak for herself.

My dear M^{rs} Wilson After a tolerably pleasant journey we arrived here on the 26th May. I like our new residence very well, and should feel wanting in gratitude if I was not to express my feelings for the many kind attentions I received from Mr Willson and yourself. I beg you will tender to Aunt Church my best regards - and Sincerely hope her health may be much amended. I often think of you all - the children have a strong hold in my remembrance particularly our dear little John - Mary Helen often speaks of him and mournfully says - he will forget her - Make my respects to M^{rs} Cheever¹⁵ your Mother¹⁶ and Sisters¹⁷ - also to M^r Wilson¹⁸ and family and to the Miss Davis's.¹⁹

Mrs Mattson²⁰ and Rachel²¹ claim a great share of my affection to the latter I shall write soon - our Post Office is eight miles which will prevent my writing as frequently as I would wish. My best respects to Mrs. Sarah Siter²² M^{rs} Rambo²³ - and all who think worth while to enquire after me - We shall be pleased to hear from you. Mary Helen joins me in love to you, Aunt Church and the little girls.

To M^r Cheever &
M^r M^cCowen, I send my respects

I am very affectionately
Sarah Fry --

Letter No 5

Addressed: "To The Post Master Spread Eagle Post office Pennsylvania"
Postmarked, in handwriting, "Bridport Vt June 15," lower left corner; and "Free" in upper right corner.

Crown Point, Lake Champlain, New York
8th June 1822

My dear sir,

A day or two since I despatch'd p^r mail one of my ageable scrawls to you, and you see that I cannot wait your answer --- My object at this time is to ask of you to have drawn for me a correct draught of your new barn;²⁴ that my Stone Masons and Carpenters may be able to build one exactly similar and of same size --- If you please, employ any competent mechanic to draught, and whatever expense may attend I will refund you --- You will much oblige me by having a perfect draught, and sending the same to me as soon as possible as I am anxious to commence building immediately --- To Pennsylvania Farmers we Yankees owe much in the improvement of barns - but look out my boy! in the great and general science of agriculture I am determined to learn you something --- So soon as our canal is perfected your journey hither can be much facilitated and then I will know of no excuse to your taking your family a northern excursion, you will be amply compensated for your time in the knowledge you will acquire in the Northern System of Farming and would return to the Eagle and be able to cultivate your lands to much greater advantage, but enough of this --- and do not fail to remember my regards to every body that I care a d--n for affectionately, (I say affectionately, for I feel it) yours

Henry Fry

(on address side, written across one end)

does the north front of your barn come in close contiguity with the bank? (hand symbol, pointing) a bank of earth, not U.S. bank I think not --- as your bridge way intervenes --- I am to build on the South of a bank, and wish to know if a space is left between this bank and my Stabling. what is to prevent the snow from drifting between to the injury of the Cattle that shall be Stabled --- Give me I pray you a very particular description of your barn, and have the draught made perfectly to be understood by my Mechanics and myself. Have you heard from Charleston? What says my friend Doctor Whitridge to you?²⁵

Letter No. 6

Addressed: "To The Post Master Spread Eagle Post office Pennsylvania"
Postmarked, in handwriting, "Bridport²⁶ Vt Sept. 14²⁷, lower left, and "Free" in upper right corner.

Crown Point & September 13th 1822

I feel some remorse I must confess at not answering your kind letters sooner, but believe me my dear Sir there is no diminution of my friendship and attachment to your family: I have been closely occupied in haying and harvesting -- and would that you were here to witness my doings

--- yours of 20th. inst. came to hand yesterday (with Mumfords²⁷ enclosed) --- True, my Father²⁸ and myself are two as the saying is, yet do I feel all that becomes a Son. his blinded policy and self will'd governance of affairs had ruined both him and me. and I have definitively declared off, unless he will remove from Newport²⁹ and allow me to have some controul (sic) -- He is far advanced in life, "Old folks think young folks fools" and he pertinaciously persists in a System altogether ruinous --- his health is much impaired yet I learn by recent letters from Newport that he will effectually recover ---

I sincerely regret the illness of your venerable Parents³⁰ and at heart Sympathize in your Sorrows: The age of man is wisely limited, and your Parents have nearly reached its acme -- they will descend to the grave in peace and carry with them the sighs of all that are virtuous --- You express Sorrow at the fate (Political) of Jonathan Russell³¹ --- when I left you there was some trouble just brewing in the Wigwam Since which I am totally ignorant of the fate of the great ones, as I never See a newspaper nor a Person who can inform me beyond his barn yard --- Suppose you should send me occasionally an old newspaper that I may now and then know how the big world rolls on --- Apropos: have you received your money from Charleston? -- Tell Sammy Cheever that I will at any time give him a letter to Whitridge if he wishes his agency ---

I wish it were practicable and feasible for you to Pack up your Son John and send him to M^{rs} F and Miss Helen -- he is their theme morning noon and night. --- Madam is this day visiting a neighbor. and I am at home housekeeper -- she has declared to me her intention of writing a long letter to M^{rs} Wilson and Aunt Church and I suppose I should now have to give up the goose quill were she present but I have stolen a march and must stand by for a Scolding ---

To all that I love remember my best wishes --- not forgetting M^{rs} and Miss Mattson (to whom please say that they will er'e long get a letter from my Espoused) --- Sammy Cheever. Reese Rambo³² and every honest and clever fellow that I knew. --- and always know that I am yours sincerely

Henry Fry

To David Wilson Jun^r Esquire)
Spread Eagle)

As Crown Point Post office is 12 miles distant from our house, and a Post office in Bredport Vermont is close at hand (just across the Lake which is here very narrow) I have determined to receive all my letters hereafter from Bredport therefore be pleased to let your next bear this Superscription "H. Fry
Bredport
Vermont

Letter No. 7.

Addressed: "To David Wilson Jun^r Esq^r Spread Eagle Post office Pennsylvania"
Postmarked, in handwriting, "Bridport Vt. May 21," in lower left, and "18 1/2"³³ in upper right corner.

Crown Point 15th May 1824

"After a fund of procrastination" &c &c &c ----

But what has caused this procrastination? -- The same indifference and carelessness that was evinced by D. Wilson? NO, for my heart is ever warm to one whose gentlemanly deportment and manly friendship justly entitles him to so much from me --- I have been from home, and so much has my time been occupied at a distance from my family that indeed Sufficient excuse may be found for thus long delaying this letter. Now my dear sir, how are ye all? Give us an account of yourself directly, of the health of Wife & children, of Aunt Church, Father & mother, and all those in whose welfare you know us to feel much interest. Where the Devil do you date from? I can't make it out in your last letter, Mount Hybla Mou(n)t Olympia, Mount Something or other & the deuce a bit can I tell what -- but you were ever mounting³⁴ -- & your high aspiring fancy has at length carried you to some mountain that I know not.

You ask if Cattle & Sheep may be bought low in this part of the world -- I can assure you that cattle as good as the world can produce are plenty here, and in the months of February & march may be bought very low. I name those months because nearly every Farmer here strains hard to keep a large Stock, and most of them are cursedly run to find hay and grain to feed their number and many of them compelled to sell for the want of feed for the number of cattle on their farms --- I bought last February a yoke of Oxen that would do to exhibit through the streets of Philadelphia at the Butchers fare, for 57 dollars -- and as handsome Cows as were ever milked

for 12 dollars. Horses also are Sometimes very low -- but the winter is the best Season for the purchase of Stock for the reason above given
large flocks of Sheep are not to be found with every farmer as they are endeavoring to get into the Merino³⁵ blood --- I have a few full blood Merinos -- and when I eat Mutton I can at any time buy a fat sheep for one dollar,

But come here and try your luck, and should you find it not to your advantage to buy sheep & cattle you can at least Eat Beef & mutton with me ---

Let us hear from you soon, and give us all the news of the times -- you are I suppose closely engaged on your farm -- let me know all you do, and be sure to tell me that you are making money hand over hand --- Believe me I should indeed be happy to see you here: the Summer is the most pleasant, but for the purchase of cattle Winter by all means.

M^{rs} Fry & Mary Helen have given me a thousand Messages for Aunt Church, your Wife, Rachael Mattson and others, but all I shall say is that they remember with much gratitude and affection all the kindness they received --- Make all our respectful compliments to your father mother & Sisters.³⁶ And be ye Sure of the high esteem of

Henry Fry

To
David Wilson Jun^r

FOOTNOTES

1. Julius F. Sachse, *The Wayside Inns on the Lancaster Roadside between Philadelphia and Lancaster*, Lancaster, 1912, page 35. The history of the "Spread Eagle" in Radnor has been so well covered by Sachse and by Katharine Hewitt Cummin (see note 2) that no further references to it need be given here.
2. Katharine Hewitt Cummin, *A Rare and Pleasing Thing: Radnor Demography (1798) and Development*, Owlswick Press, Philadelphia, 1977, pages 101-103, and plate 17.
3. Samuel T. Wiley and Winfield Scott Garner, *Biographical and Portrait Cyclopedia of Chester County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1893, pages 748-750.
4. J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, *History of Chester County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1881, pages 515-516.
5. Reported in *The American Republican*, Downingtown, Pa., of Tuesday, May 5, 1812.
6. Delaware County Deed Book M, page 531. The farm had already passed through two other owners, Benjamin Maule and John Snyder since Edward Siter of Radnor, innkeeper, and Sarah his wife sold it in 1811. Cummin, *op. cit.*, page 103.
7. From a newspaper clipping in family archives.
8. Mrs. Sarah Fry and daughter Mary Helen, both named in letter No. 4, were probably staying at the Spread Eagle Inn while Mr. Fry was away on a business trip to Norfolk, Virginia. She is not known to have been related to either David Wilson or his wife Eliza (Siter) Wilson. Hence "one of your family" probably means one of the guests at the famous inn where David Wilson, Jr., was host at this time.
9. Charles Hasser was the patient; the writer, J. B. Whitridge, was a medical doctor (see last line of letter No 5).
10. John Morton Wilson (1820-1887), 5th child and 2nd son of David and Eliza (Siter) Wilson. A farmer in Tredyffrin township, Chester County, he became president of the National Bank of Malvern in 1886. He inherited the Wilson Homestead from his father, but in the late 1870's built the Victorian mansion on the north side of the Swedesford Road known as "Wilson Farm," now the home of his great-niece, Mrs. Emily A. Wilson Nassau.
11. "Aunt Church", always a mystery to recent owners of these letters, is here for the first time identified as a real aunt of David Wilson, Jr. She was Mary Wilson Hunter Church, daughter of John and Judith (Scott) Wilson of Tredyffrin, and named in his will dated 5 Nov 1792 as "my daughter Mary Hunter, wife of William Hunter" (will probated in Philadelphia 19 Nov. 1792; original probate and copy in possession of the writer). This William Hunter is not identified, nor is it known when or where he died. But evidently the same Mary Wilson Hunter married, as his third wife, Major Thomas Church (c.1743-1812) after the death of Church's second wife Ann Lane in June 1807. Thomas Church died in Sept. 1812 at Coventryville, Chester County, and was buried at St. James Episcopal Church, Evansburg (Montgomery County), Pa. His will at West Chester, dated 26 July 1812, names wife Mary and "my Brother-in-law David Wilson" and two sons as executors. The original petition of David Wilson to the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas of Chester County, dated 14 May 1818, bears the known signature of (Capt.) David Wilson of Tredyffrin.
12. Samuel Cheever's name appears in an 1830 List of Innkeepers of Willistown township, see Futhey & Cope, *op. cit.*, page 419. He may have been working at the Spread Eagle in 1822.
13. John McCowan has not been identified; he may also have been working at the Spread Eagle.
14. See note 8.
15. Wife or mother of Samuel Cheever.
16. Mrs. Sarah (Jones) Siter, widow of Adam Siter, Jr., and daughter of Amos and Hannah (Tucker) Jones, according to the conclusions drawn by Mrs. Cummin after extensive research to ascertain her parentage. John Tucker, brother of Hannah (Tucker) Jones, was one of the guardians of the Siter children

- after the death of their father Adam Siter, Jr., in 1797. John Tucker of Easttown named "my kinsman Edward Siter" as one of his executors in 1809. The fact that Adam and Sarah (Jones) Siter had a son Amos and a daughter Hannah further confirms Mrs. Cummin's conclusions.
17. Eliza (Siter) Wilson's sisters were Hannah (Siter) Bowen (1783-1860) who had married Abijah H. Bowen in 1806, Ann (Siter) Jordan (c.1792-1862) who had married prior to 1817 one John M. Jordan who later deserted her and in 1825 she married again to Hiram Taylor, and Mary (Siter) Davis (c.1795-1837+) wife of Charles Justice Davis of Tredyffrin, a first cousin of David Wilson, Jr.
 18. Capt. David Wilson of Tredyffrin and his wife Sarah (Davis) Wilson, and their daughters Elizabeth Wilson (1780-1833), Mary Wilson Price (1784-1881), and Sarah Wilson Caskey (1788-1828+), all living at this time. A son John (1782-1792+) and a daughter Anne (1785-1813) were already deceased.
 19. "The Miss Davis's" were probably nieces of Sarah (Davis) Wilson; her own sisters had married.
 20. Not identified.
 21. Rachel Mattson, daughter of the preceding, is mentioned again in letter No. 7, as if the Mattsons may have been members of the household.
 22. Mrs. Fry repeats herself here, as just above she paid her respects to "your Mother." See note 16.
 23. Probably Mrs. Reese Rambo. See note 32.
 24. See note 2. The barn stood on Sugartown Road, one block south of Lancaster Avenue. A Victorian springhouse and gateposts labeled "Islebrook 1893" are still standing, but the modern apartment complex called "La Maison" replaces the stone house and barn.
 25. See letter No. 3.
 26. Bridport: a town in Addison County, Vermont. West Bridport is directly across Lake Champlain from Crown Point, New York.
 27. Mumford: not identified.
 28. My father: not identified.
 29. Possibly Newport, Rhode Island, but many States have a Newport and the one in Perry County, Pennsylvania, on the Juniata River, was a flourishing small town at this time.
 30. See note 3 and third paragraph of the introduction.
 31. Jonathan Russell, a member of the American commission, headed by John Quincy Adams, sent to Ghent by President Madison to negotiate the treaty of peace with the British government in 1814 at the close of the War of 1812.
 32. Reese Rambo was a blacksmith at the Spread Eagle to whom Wilson sold 30 acres of Lot No. 1 in April 1829. See Cummin, *op. cit.*, page 103 and Delaware Co. Deed Bk. U-211.
 33. This is the only letter for which postage was paid. Wilson was no longer postmaster after 1823.
 34. Mounting, underlined, sounds like a teasing reference to a young man's escapades.
 35. Merino sheep from Spain had been imported into the United States early in the 19th century and were very popular in New England.
 36. See note 18.

RESEARCHING RADNOR

(The following article is an abbreviated account of remarks made May 14, 1978, at the Finley House by Katharine Hewitt Cummin, former secretary of the Society, in introducing her book, *A Rare and Pleasing Thing: Radnor*. Ed.)

When Francis James Dallett left Radnor in 1960, his office of Secretary of the Radnor Historical Society fell to a newcomer unequipped to answer the incoming mail. School children wrote constantly to request "everything you have on the history of Pennsylvania." Residents of other states wrote for genealogical help. Every local Open House tour provoked questions on Radnor's buildings. Perforce, the new secretary turned to official records.

There are fashions in questions. We have not received an out-of-town school child's letter for several years; but we have received many on Centennial buildings, postal history, railroad station names, on ethnic groups and on ghosts. At the moment, architectural history, business history, and oral history are popular. And every church, club and school seems to be collecting information on its own past, in the wake of the Bicentennial.

Industrious thesis writers circularize lists of historical societies. We are thus asked if we can help with items such as Civil War Music (we can), Canals (we cannot), Ford dealerships on the Main Line (we can), and the Molly Maguires (we cannot). Serious collators of the papers of outstanding people write assiduously for help, usually to no avail.

Most questions fall into one of two categories. They refer either to properties and buildings, or to people. Some biographers combine these categories by wanting information on the properties their subjects occupied.

Radnor's residents like Radnor as it is; they want to retain its older buildings. When development threatens old houses, the Society is asked for information to help preserve them. Even PennDOT perforce came for help in writing the Historical Sites section of the Environmental Impact Study for the Blue Route. People ask the history of their houses before selling, to add

glamor to their advertising. Those seeking variances from the Township often try to use historical information. Now that financial benefits are available to owners of properties on the National Register of Historic Places, some are asking the Society's help in placing buildings on that list.

When a young man wrote a letter addressed to "Town Hall, Villanova, Pennsylvania" a few years ago, the postman, who had a choice, decided to deliver it to the Radnor Township Building whence it was forwarded to us. The writer had found a diary a hundred years old, he said, kept by a girl named Adella Pierce who lived in Villanova. He wanted to know **everything** about her. When we asked him for more information, he countered by sending the diary (on loan). Clearly, on the flyleaf, was this inscription: Adella Pierce, Villanova (sic), New York. When questioned further, the youth said he had written to Pennsylvania because he knew there was no Villanova in New York. He was wrong, of course, Adella knew where she lived. The diary was also of some interest as she lived near Chautauqua and attended the very first of the Chautauqua meetings.

The Society receives many queries on the origin of local names. One careful researcher, listing all Hebrew names in Delaware County, wrote to ask about Abraham's Lane (named for a Welsh family!) in Radnor. Others have asked help in naming properties and parks. The Society has assisted several institutions in designing their logos. It also helped one gentleman by providing a street name. He had called from Lancaster for information needed to win a newspaper contest!

The mail has increased of recent years with genealogical questions in particular. We still expect the usual questions on the Strafford Station, on the Conestoga Mill, the King of Prussia Inn, and on tollhouses and milestones, as well as new queries on new subjects which will require new research.

And now for **A Rare and Pleasing Thing: Radnor**.

In 1964 Mr. Dallett, on a brief visit to Pennsylvania, addressed the Society on the Welsh background of Radnor's first settlers (see the *Bulletin* of Radnor Historical Society for 1965). His talk introduced me to the First United States Direct Tax. This tax, levied in 1798 on dwellings, on buildings appurtenant to dwellings, on lands, on slaves, and on wharves, was designed to raise money for an expected war with France. Because local assessors actually measured buildings, we have a description of the dwellings of that period — their size, materials, windows, and relative value. Because properties were listed by owners (unlike earlier county assessment lists) as well as by occupants, recourse to the land (and other) records showed where each property was and permitted us to determine which of the houses of 1798 remain. This title search also made it possible to construct property maps for any designated year.

The book is in two parts: Part I gives a history of the township with a demographic account of conditions there in 1798. Part II presents a history of each of the 114 properties of 1798, at least until 1850, with some notice of the families which owned them. The book is based on information in the federal tax return of 1798, on land and probate records, on early county assessment lists, on census records, church, court, Meeting, and business records.

There are pitfalls in using these sources. Because many county records are themselves but copies of original documents, and because people are fallible, the official books contain copying errors. One Delaware County Will Book, for instance, shows Lewis Lewis of Radnor to have mentioned his "sister Eachus." His actual will showed the proper reading to be "my sister Rachel." The name Fiance is indexed as Tyance in the Chester County land records. One must beware comparing assessment lists one with another as assessment levels — not only millrates — changed from time to time. Thus a rise in a building's value does not necessarily imply improvements to that building. The many eighteenth century individuals of duplicate name (John Jones, Lewis Lewis, James Miles etc.) can easily be misidentified and early handwriting easily misread.

The search for information is fun; sometimes the sought is found. The researcher always meets appealing people — sometimes other researchers like himself, sometimes the helpful custodians of the records, and constantly the subjects one meets in the records themselves. The very welfare of our predecessors becomes important. One worries about the "weak" children for whom parents made provision. Hezekiah Thomas, charged by his father's will for maintaining his weak brother, in turn relayed this responsibility to his son fifty years later. The weak child had survived happily, I hope. One is drawn toward those who, like William Burn, cherished books. He left his "library of books" not to be sold but to remain in the family "for the purasal (sic) of my children and grandchildren and their offspring forever." One wonders where the books are now. One also wonders at the wealthy Treasurer of the Radnor Library

Company who was expelled from that organization in 1825 for owing over five dollars in uncollected fines.

I worried about Bridget Ellis, exempt from taxes in 1798 as a "middle-aged woman with an aged mother to maintain." Two years later, when she inherited property from an aunt, the assiduous tax collector returned her small house to the tax rolls. When she died in 1811, she specified that her mother must be tended day and night by a cousin who was to be compensated for this care. She left her brother the lifetime right to live in the building adjoining her house, if he chose, but only if he lived alone. (There must be a story there.) Finally, she left property to each of fifteen women, probably not all relatives, and gave ten pounds to be applied by the Radnor Friends Monthly Meeting "for the use of poor females." This early feminist's aged mother lived four years more.

I enjoyed the Haverford resident, that township's Assessor in 1798, who, also owning property in Radnor, listed it on the Haverford Return with the notation that it would be assessed in Radnor. When Radnor officials overlooked it entirely, he failed to complain.

Unintentionally, but clearly, the records show the pestilence of the winter of 1707-08, the disruptions of the French and Indian Wars, the inflation and other hardships of the Revolutionary period, the changes in the ethnic make-up of Radnor's landowners, the lessening of Quaker influence, the constant clearing of land, the gradual change from log buildings to those of stone (no brick in Radnor until after 1800), and finally the impact of roads and railroads.

They tell us little of where those who left Radnor went. They tell us little of a man's appearance or his humor. They seldom date the erection of buildings. Nor do they explain why the Welsh families of 1798 raised only half as many children as other Radnor families.

Protection of records occupies county officials. In the Montgomery County Courthouse, records are available only on microfilm, albeit files may be consulted in an auxiliary building and the early deed books, in the Historical Society of Montgomery County. In Chester County, after a massive microfilming project, there are plans for housing the original documents in a central repository. In Delaware County, the deed books are being replaced by Xeroxed volumes reduced in size from the originals. This conserves not only space but also the books. However, the new, small copies demand more time to read than the originals. Had Delaware County undertaken this change earlier, the title search which provides much of the background of **A Rare and Pleasing Thing: Radnor** would still be under way.

ACCESSIONS

April 30, 1977 - September 1, 1978

Charles E. Alexander:

Ms. article, "Playing Fields in Wayne"

George M. Aman jr.:

Booklet, **The Men's Club of Wayne**, Directory of Members, 1918. Newspaper, **The Wayne Argus**, Vol. II No. 10, December 10, 1896. Newspaper Supplement, **Suburban and Wayne Times**, May 14, 1970. "One Hundred Years of the Wayne Presbyterian Church"

Theodore B. Brooks:

Book, **An Historical Sketch of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Rosemont** by E. Osborne Coates, 1934

Mrs. Robert I. Cummin:

Pamphlet, **Berwyn Centennial 1977**

Mrs. William Geary:

Blueprint, Wayne in 1935

Robert Goshorn:

Pamphlet, **Rambling Round Radnor (Wales)**

Heinz Endowment:

Book, **Pittsburgh, the Story of an American City** by Stefan Lorant

Herbert S. Henderson: Mounting for hardware

Rev. W. Richard Hess:

Map, reprint of H. Moll map of 1739, showing St. David's Church

Mr. & Mrs. James B. Ives:

Handwrought ironwork from an old Wayne house.

Mrs. John Lawlor:

Photograph, Radnor High School, 1908

Lower Merion Historical Society:

Book, **Enquiry Concerning Political Justice**, Volume II, London, 1793, formerly the property of Joseph W. Anderson, J.G. Henderson, and the Radnor Lyceum, in turn. Cover bears the Lyceum imprint.

Mrs. James Spencer Maguire:

Silver ring holding red stone (garnet?) excised from boulder in yard at 310 Oak Lane, Wayne

Timothy Michel:

Six early Wayne postcards, found in flea market in Scottsville, Va.

Miss Caroline Robbins:

Bedspread and curtains for the Victorian Room. Book, **A Rare and Pleasing Thing: Radnor**, by Katharine Hewitt Cummin.

Saturday Club of Wayne:

Ms., "History of the Saturday Club 1886-1970" by Mrs. J. LeRoy Vosburgh

Charles M. Tatum:

Book, **The Footsteps of a Giant** by Emlen Tunnell

Mrs. J. LeRoy Vosburgh:

Book, **Dedication of the Equestralian Statue of Major General Anthony Wayne at Valley Forge June 20, 1908**

EARLY LANDOWNERS IN RADNOR

by
Mark F. Lloyd

The men and women who made the original purchases of Pennsylvania land from William Penn and his agents did so while still living in the British Isles or on the Continent. One of the most common assumptions in regard to early Pennsylvania history is that those same men and women became the first settlers and hence the "Founders" of the communities in the new province where their land was laid out. Thus the lists of original landowners, compiled from the first deed books and land commissioners' minute books, have taken on great significance for the local historian and genealogist. These lists and the assumption which enhances their significance have traditionally played a large part in the study of the Welsh companies which settled the townships of the Welsh Tract, including Radnor. Thomas Allen Glenn's **Welsh Founders of Pennsylvania** (1911-1913) and Charles H. Browning's **Welsh Settlement of Pennsylvania** (1912) expend a great deal of energy scrutinizing every scrap of available information on the original landowners in the townships of Merion, Haverford, Radnor, Tredyffrin, Newtown, Easttown, Goshen, etc. Recently, however, a major historical study has been published which goes a long way towards placing the original landowners in their proper historical perspective.

Katharine Hewitt Cummin's **A Rare and Pleasing Thing: Radnor Demography (1798) and Development (1977)** is primarily a study of the development of eighteenth century Radnor Township culminating in a careful analysis of the area as it is revealed by the United States Direct Tax of 1798. Mrs. Cummin's most substantial contribution, however, is her incredibly meticulous and comprehensive treatment of land ownership and occupation. By tracing the ownership of every acre of Radnor Township land one hundred and twenty-five years past its original sale by William Penn Mrs. Cummin reveals that only a minority of the original purchasers of land in the township ever settled on their land and some of those who did settle did not stay more than a few years. Those who did settle Radnor Township were very much like the original purchasers in racial stock and religious persuasion and thus the character of the township was very much as had been planned, but the majority of original purchasers either did not cross the Atlantic or settled somewhere other than the locality where their land was laid out.

In Radnor one well known example may best demonstrate this point. Much has been made of Radnor Township's name; it is obviously taken from the shire in Wales of the same name. Glenn and Browning and others have pointed out that fourteen of the original twenty-seven purchasers of Radnor Township land were residents of Radnorshire in Wales.¹ The fourteen are as follows:

David Kinsey, carpenter, Nantmel..... 100 acres
John Evans, gentleman, Nantmel..... 350 acres

Ellis Jones, weaver, Nantmel.....	100 acres
Margaret James, spinster, Newchurch.....	200 acres
Richard Miles, weaver, Llanvihangel Helygen.....	100 acres
Roger Hughes, gentleman, Llanvihangel Rhydithon.....	250 acres
David Meredith, weaver, Llanbister.....	100 acres
Richard Corn, glover, Llangynllo.....	50 acres
Richard Cooke, weaver, Llangynllo.....	100 acres
Thomas Jones, gentleman, Glascwm.....	100 acres
Evan Oliver, gentleman, Glascwm.....	200 acres
John Lloyd, glover, Disserth.....	100 acres
Edward Jones, gentleman, St. Harmon.....	250 acres
David James, mariner, Glascwm.....	100 acres

These are the Radnorshire men and women who are generally thought to be the "Founders" of Radnor Township. But close examination of the land records presented in Mrs. Cummin's book (checked and verified with other sources²) reveals that only seven of these fourteen — Kinsey, Evans, James (Margaret), Miles, Meredith, Oliver and James (David) — ever came to Pennsylvania;³ that of the seven who did come to Philadelphia, Oliver settled in Philadelphia and never lived in Radnor;⁴ that of the six who came out to Radnor and cleared land and established a community, Meredith did not stay but bought a large tract of land in Gwynedd, across the Schuylkill River, and moved there;⁵ that of the same six, two — Kinsey and David James — were dead by 1693;⁶ that at the time of the levying of the first tax in 1693 only four of the original fourteen purchasers of Radnor land — John Evans, David Meredith, Margaret James (now married to Samuel Miles), and Richard Miles — and the remarried widow and surviving children of a fifth, David Kinsey, were occupants of the land they had purchased less than a decade earlier.⁷ Thus of the fourteen Radnorshire "Founders" of Radnor Township only five — Kinsey, Evans, Samuel Miles (as the husband of Margaret James), Richard Miles and David James — crossed the Atlantic, settled in Radnor, and called their new residence "home" for the remainder of their lives; only four — Evans, Samuel and Richard Miles, and Meredith — lived in Radnor for more than ten years, i.e. long enough to establish a character for the community by way of their own lifestyles.⁸ In sum the original purchasers of land in Radnor Township were far less active in the "founding" of the community than has been traditionally supposed. Mrs. Cummin's new book brings together in one place the information necessary for establishing an historically accurate picture of the group of early settlers who formed Radnor's first community.

But what then of the original land purchasers who did not come to Pennsylvania? Apparently several of them made arrangements with one of the emigrants to act as attorney and custodian for them. This arrangement is documented between Roger Hughes, Richard Cooke, and John Lloyd who remained in Wales and David Meredith who came to Radnor. Meredith was acting as attorney for these men as late as 1702. Hughes was the best known of these men. He was the leader of the Radnorshire Monthly Meeting of Friends and in 1695 the Wales Yearly Meeting was held in his house in the parish of Llanvihangel-Rhydithon.¹⁰ He disposed of his 250 acres by selling half to Meredith in 1691 and the other half in 1693 to Thomas Parry, a weaver, of the parish of Llanelweth in Radnorshire.¹¹ Parry then emigrated to Radnor, took up the land and stayed a few years until he moved to what is now eastern Montgomery county. Meredith apparently did his work well in registering the rights of Cooke and Lloyd to their Radnor land; as late as 1726 and 1722/3 respectively, Cooke and Lloyd descendants (having emigrated to Pennsylvania) were able to sell their fathers' purchases at current market prices.¹²

In two instances in addition to the Hughes-Parry sale, original Radnorshire purchasers sold to other Radnorshire Quakers who then emigrated to Radnor and settled. This was the case of Edward Jones of St. Harmon who sold his 250 acres to James Morgan of Nantmel, whose son, John Morgan, came out to Radnor in the mid-1690's and took up the land.¹³ Thomas Jones of Glascwm died and left the rights to his land to his nephew, John Jones. The younger Jones sold the land to one William Davis (Davies) in 1685. William Davis took up the land in Radnor in the late 1680's.¹⁴ Thus in the cases of Hughes, Jones and Jones the purchases from Penn were held for a few years and then sold to fellow Radnorshire Quakers intent upon emigration. It is very interesting to note that Roger Hughes, Thomas Jones, and Edward Jones are all described as "gentlemen" and two of the three purchased rather

large tracts of land. This would suggest to me that all three were in fairly comfortable settings in Wales and probably had no intention of emigrating; their land purchases were most likely real estate investments to be sold after the first and (hopefully) successful settlement of Pennsylvania and Radnor, when the land would increase greatly in value. In the case of Richard Corn, his son and heir, William Corn, sold the Radnor Township land to John Evans in 1690.¹⁵ There is no evidence that either Corn ever came to Pennsylvania. Hence it seems certain that the Corn-Evans sale was achieved with the two parties on opposite sides of the Atlantic. This was also the case in the Hughes-Meredith sale and as attorney and custodian for Hughes, Cooke, and Lloyd, Meredith necessarily had a sizable amount of correspondence with his fellow Quakers in Radnorshire. Thus the maintenance of regular communication and the execution of trans-Atlantic business deals becomes another part of the emerging picture of the "founding" of Radnor.

Among the first purchasers of land in Radnor only Ellis Jones was dispossessed of his land for failing to exercise rights in regard to the property.¹⁶ He alone among the Radnorshire purchasers remains an unknown figure in the early Pennsylvania records.

It is hoped that this discussion of the original Radnorshire purchasers, brief as it is, has provided a few new ideas on the "founding" of Radnor Township. More thoroughgoing research would, of course, provide a fuller body of information on the people and process of settlement.¹⁷ This is just one example of the many ways in which Mrs. Cummin's important new book may be used for the study of Radnor history.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) See Browning, p. 214.
 - 2) In particular I have used Marion R. Balderston, Hannah Benner Roach, Walter Lee Sheppard, Jr., eds., **Passengers and Ships Prior to 1684** (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1970)
 - 3) John Evans, David Kinsey, Evan Oliver and David James apparently all came together aboard the **Bristol Factor** in 1682; see **Passengers and Ships**, pp. 55-6.
- Margaret James married Samuel Miles in 1682 in Radnorshire and Samuel Miles and his father, James, are named on passenger lists as arriving in Philadelphia in 1683. Richard Miles and Margaret (James) Miles are presumed to have come with the other two; see **Passengers and Ships**, pp. 119-20.
- 4) David Meredith had a certificate of removal from Radnorshire MM dated 20 July 1683 and registered his deed to Radnor land in Philadelphia on 16 February 1683/4; see Lewis D. Cook, "David Meredith of Radnor, Chester County," **The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine** Vol. 19, No. 3 (September, 1954), pp. 217-42.
 - 5) See **Passengers and Ships**, pp. 55-6; Cummin, p. 199.
 - 6) Cook, *ibid.*; Cummin, p. 365.
 - 7) Kinsey died in 1687 and is buried at Haverford Friends burial ground; letters of Administration were granted in Philadelphia in 1689; see Clarence V. Roberts, **Early Friends Families of Upper Bucks** (Philadelphia: Published by the Compiler, 1925).
- James' land was occupied by Stephen Evans (ap Evan) in 1693 and his daughter sold the land to Evan in 1702; see Cummin, 393.
- 8) Cummin, pp. 4-5, 232.
 - 9) John Evans died in Radnor in 1707 (Cummin, p. 335); Samuel Miles died in Radnor in 1708 (Cummin, p. 218); Richard Miles died in Radnor in 1713 (Cummin, p. 211) David Meredith left Radnor between 1702 and 1705 (Cook, *ibid.*, p. 219). The Mileses were among the founders of the Great Valley Baptist Church; Meredith and Evans were very active in Radnor Monthly Meeting.
 - 10) See for example, **Pennsylvania Archives**, Series III, Vol. I, p. 14; or Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Bureau of Land Records, "Philadelphia Olds Rights" book D-69-52 and D-69-57.
 - 11) T. Mardy Rees, **A History of Quakers in Wales** (Carmarthen: W. Spurrell and Son, 1925), see chapter on Radnorshire.

- 11) Philadelphia Deed Book G.12.550-3, City of Philadelphia, Department of Records.
 12) Chester County Deed Book F. 342, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, microfilm, for the Cooke deed.
 Chester County Deed Book I. 437, HSP, microfilm, for the Lloyd deed.
 13) Cummin, pp. 296, 303; John Morgan was residing in Radnor in 1693 (Cummin, p. 5).
 14) Cummin, p. 198; William Davis was residing in Radnor in 1693 (Cummin, p. 5).
 15) Cummin, p. 335.
 16) This Ellis Jones is not to be confused with the Ellis Jones, servant to William Penn, who came on the ship **Submission** in 1682/3 and also owned land in Radnor Township. On Ellis Jones the servant to Penn, see **Passengers and Ships**, pp. 64-5 and Cummin, pp. 211, 218 (where Mrs. Cummin notes his status), and 225. On Ellis Jones the Radnorshire purchaser see Cummin, pp. 123, 303 and especially 225n.
 17) A promising source would be the microfilm copy of the Radnorshire Monthly Meeting Registers of Births, Marriages, and Deaths at the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College. In particular the volume which relates the vital statistics of the Radnorshire Quaker group which sent the first settlers to Radnor is entitled "Book 653b," "Supplement to the Digested Copy of the Registers of Births, Burials, and Marriages of the General Meeting of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Wales, which said Supplement comprises Registers within a period from the year 1680 to 1804." The originals of the registers are at the Friends Library, Euston, London.



The Travelling Magician, by John Rogers (1829-1904)

This genre grouping was long in the possession of the Finley family and came into the collection of the Society through the generosity of Miss Isabella Auld McKnight. John Rogers' patented story-telling groups, of which this is a good example, were issued in great numbers in New York between 1859 and 1893. One catalogue description reads: "... weight 100 lbs. packed, price \$12." Although possibly not "works of art" they are well modelled and no doubt inspired other potters who worked in more sophisticated media. Their themes were from the Civil War, domestic life of the time, or from popular legends. Collections are in the New York Historical Society and the Essex Institute, Salem.

RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY Annual Treasurer's Report May 1, 1977 to April 30, 1978

RECEIPTS

Dues 1977.....	\$ 69.00	
Dues 1978.....	885.00	
Contributions for Finley House roof	2,120.00	
Contributions in Memory of Mr. & Mrs. Herbert C. Casey	175.00	
Contributions from Non-Members	63.00	
Contributions of Stock Proceeds	219.65	\$3,531.65
Cash Dividends on Investments.....	685.67	
Reinvested Dividends	135.00	
Interest on Savings Certificates	1,151.48	
Interest on Savings Account	134.88	2,107.03
Reimbursement from Caretaker for Utilities		2,322.00
Proceeds Publications	160.47	
Advertising.....	125.00	285.47
Balance 5/1/77 Checking Account		\$8,246.15
		967.98
		\$9,214.13
DISBURSEMENTS		
House Maintenance & Furnishings.....	450.14	
Water	127.50	
Telephone	138.90	
Electricity.....	815.62	
Fuel Oil	1,260.07	
Yard Maintenance.....	560.00	
Cleaning.....	108.00	
Insurance	210.00	\$3,670.23
House Reroofing.....		2,560.00
Printing & Postage		422.41
Refreshments & Meeting Costs		21.55
Contributions to Others		35.00
Miscellaneous		50.78
		\$6,759.97
Reinvested Dividends Account		135.00
Current Balance Savings Account	3,342.74	
Balance 5/1/77 Savings Account	2,410.21	932.53
Current Balance Checking Account		1,386.63
		\$9,214.13

ENDOWMENT

Savings Certificate	\$15,000.00
Common Stocks (valued 4/28/78)	9,943.38

Membership is open to all persons interested in the Society. Minimum dues are \$3.00 per year. Contributions to the Society are tax deductible.

JOHN TODD STEWART,
Treasurer

Contributing Membership	\$10.00	All contributions are deductible (to the legal limit) for United States Income Tax purposes.
Sustaining Membership	\$25.00	
Student Membership	\$ 1.00	

ATTENTION HISTORIANS!

**LIST OF PUBLICATIONS
FOR SALE AT THE RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Historic Wayne, by Katharine H. Cummin. (The Graphics Center-Argus Printing Co., 1975). 47 Pages, illustrations. \$2.95 per copy.

"Comfortable Homes in the Suburbs on the Hillside at Wayne and St. Davids," pictorial poster of 1890. (Reproduction) \$.50

"Map of Radnor Township Showing Ownership in 1776", research by Katharine H. Cummin, drawn by Herbert S. Henderson (1976). \$3.00

"Rural Homes," Wayne advertising pamphlet of 1890, illustrated. (Facsimile). \$.50
Radnor in the War of the Revolution 1777-1778, by Francis James Dallett (1976). 15 pages, illustrations. \$1.00 per copy.

A Rare and Pleasing Thing: Radnor, By Katherine Hewitt Cummin, Owlswick Press, 1977, \$19.75.

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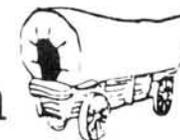
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