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RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Headquarters and Museum

THE FINLEY HOUSE
113 WEST BEECH TREE LANE
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Contents

President's Letter	3
Caesar — His Story <i>Carol Creutzburg</i>	5
A Tale of Two Places, The Paul and Walton Estates <i>John A. Baird, Jr.</i>	6
Fair Hill <i>James B. Garrison</i>	14
Excerpts from "Just Ring A Bell" by Dorothy Harrison Therman <i>Helen Stephenson Weary</i>	18
Gifts to the Society in 1998	23
Membership Report	25
In Memoriam: Caroline Robbins	27
1998 Programs	28
Treasurer's Report—1997-1998	31
Our Sponsors <i>Please support our generous advertisers</i>	32

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President's Letter

"I do wish you would play a more active role in preserving our historic assets."

THIS message was written on a membership dues return envelope this winter. When I reported it to our Board of Directors, it sparked some spirited discussion. What is — and what should be — the role of our Society in preserving our historic assets? I find we are not entirely in agreement on this point.

Our By-Laws, adopted in 1948, have this to say: "The purposes of the Corporation are exclusively...educational...as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation." Also: "No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying out of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation." This surely does not induce us to take a pro-active role.

Nevertheless, we have, in the last few years, taken some steps in this direction. With a view of making our neighbors more appreciative of our historic assets, we have organized two house and carriage-house tours in the Wayne and St. David's area. We have also collaborated with the Wayne Business Association in two October Sunday afternoon walking tours of the center of Wayne, ending with cider and cookies on the verandah of the Finley House.

More recently, we have written — and sent — letters of support for the restoration of the Wayne Train Station and of the Carr Schoolhouse, in Mount Pleasant. We arranged a visit to Fairhill, soon to be the 1999 Vassar Show House, on Goshen Road, where we took photographs and discussed development plans with Cas Holloway, the developer. An article about Fairhill, by our Board member Jim Garrison, appears in this issue of the *Bulletin*.

We are also in communication with the Suburban and Wayne Times about a proposal for conserving and reproducing back issues of

next page

continued

The Suburban, which are now moldering and virtually untouchable in their basement. This project would make a valuable historic resource available to the interested public; our Board member Helen Weary is pursuing this.

Finally, we have been asked to take a stand on the proposed demolition of the Radnor Middle School building on South Wayne Avenue. At this writing it is not clear what that stand will be, but we shall almost certainly express our concern.

You may recall that in my president's letter last year I referred to our responsibility, as a society, for supporting and encouraging "organizations and individuals who are trying to preserve bits and pieces of our past." We are certainly committed to doing this — in the most reasonable and responsible way. You will be hearing more about our efforts.

*J. Bennett Hill, Jr.
March 1999*

CAESAR — His Story

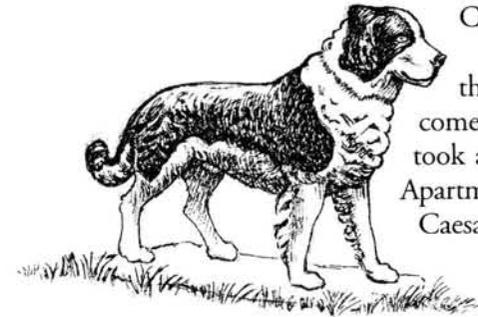
Carol Creutzburg

CAESAR, the cast iron dog, has been a long-time resident on the Finley House's front yard at 113 West Beechtree Lane. He came to Wayne as a young dog, when the town was called Louella, some 132 years ago. His sole function was to grace the lawn of Henry Askin's imposing Victorian home on the hill.

His origins probably were from the Hayward and Bartlett Company in Baltimore. In the 1850's they were making cast iron garden ornaments, with some in the form of Newfoundland dogs.

After Henry Askin's health failed, Caesar's next move was to the Hughs home, a 1775 farmhouse, on land between the Pennsylvania Railroad and Lancaster Pike, now the Genesis Elder Care on West Avenue. It was an ideal childhood for the three Hughs girls. They had a constant companion with Caesar.

At a much later date, the three Hughs sisters would come together again when they took adjoining flats at the Wells Apartments on Walnut Avenue. Caesar would come along with them.



Frances Hughs (Mrs. Malcolm Sausser) was the founder of the Radnor Historical Society. Before she left her Walnut Avenue apartment, she gave Caesar a new home, one that was very close to her heart. It was a gift to the Historical Society's headquarters at the Finley House.

Since then, he has made friends with generations of children, has had little essays written about him, and is the object of attraction to the dog world who bark and sniff.

A Tale of Two Places

The Paul and Walton Estates of St. Davids, A Study in Contrast

John A. Baird, Jr.

OUR topic today, “A Tale of Two Places - The Paul and Walton Estates of St. Davids - A Study in Contrast” is appropriate for the annual meeting of a historical society. We will be true to that term and be historical, deal with the past, but in so doing let us be aware that the objects of our attention and affection could not be more up to date. As you can see, these famous houses are on the cutting edge of current community interest.

Before emphasizing their differences, we should note certain similarities. Some are obvious and others may surprise you. 1) Both estates were developed early in this century. 2) Each boasted a mansion with a name beginning with the letter “W” (“Woodcrest” and “Walmarthon”). 3) Both were built by ambitious men who married their bosses’ daughters and became CEOs of their respective companies. 4) Each house possessed enough architectural character and structural integrity to not only last for 85-90 years, but had the capacity for totally different use as both made the transition from single family abode to institutional occupancy. 5) Both properties were bought by religious organizations. 6) Each exists today for the education of young people. 7) Both estates, when created, reflected, in a sense, the cultural and social mores of the early 1890s in this area of the Philadelphia suburbs which became known as the “Main Line” - of the Pennsylvania Railroad, one of the most successful real estate developments of a transportation company in the nation’s history. 8) Both properties, today, illustrate the possibilities of broader use brought about by the great diversity of wealth, to say nothing of the veritable explosion in American higher education. 9) Although the

property where we meet today was originally almost ten times the size of the initial Walton tract, the two colleges occupy campuses of approximately equal extent: 112 to 105 acres.

So much for the similarities, which are of interest, of course, but when we consider the actual mansion houses the differences become immediately apparent and reflect greater importance. The two families, themselves, provide a good place to start, for their respective backgrounds, social position and tastes, defined the estates they created.

Let’s begin with that prominent financier, Anthony J. Drexel, whose banking house played a major role in developing the region around Wayne and Strafford in the 1880s.

Mr. Drexel had a son-in-law, James W. Paul, who worked in the family firm, did well, and rose to head the company. Later Mr. Paul served as executor of Mr. Drexel’s estate, and was to be the first board chairman of the Drexel Institute of Technology.

When Wayne was established, James W. Paul bought several hundred acres of land for his own use. According to documents nominating this building to The National Register of Historic Places, “Like a lord to his feudal domain, so existed Paul in Wayne.”

Mr. Paul was a widower with three children. His wife, Frances, died in 1892. “Woodcrest”, therefore, had no “woman’s touch” at either its conception or birth in 1900-1902. The owner, himself, died in 1907, so only enjoyed his suburban palace for five years. He left the property to his son who did not particularly like it, and who built a smaller home on Upper Gulph Road now occupied by grandson, A. J. Drexel Paul.

James W. Paul’s daughter, Mary Astor Paul Munn, and her husband often occupied the mansion although they spent a lot of time in Paris. After awhile they, too, built a smaller house “Woodcrest Lodge”, down the road. That building is now part of the Junior College of Valley Forge Military Academy.

James W. Paul, therefore, was part of a prominent, social family with enormous financial resources.

Charles S. Walton, on the other hand, came from a different kind of family. Charles Walton descended from one of four Quaker brothers who came to America from England in 1675 and settled near

Philadelphia in Byberry. The Waltons maintained the Quaker strain for generations before some of them embraced the Baptist faith. One Walton was kicked out of Friends Meeting for wearing a necktie to a religious observance.

Charles Walton was born in Philadelphia in 1862. He was a child who soon knew adversity. At the age of ten he lost his father. He and his mother then moved to Haddonfield, New Jersey, to live with his grandfather, who died only four years later. As a youth, Walton demonstrated a sense of purpose which marked his whole life.

During his four years at the University of Pennsylvania, he took the ferry across the river each day to Philadelphia and walked the thirty blocks from the waterfront to the campus. He rowed on the crew, earned the nickname "Jersey", and graduated a mining engineer.

Soon he went to work for a leather firm, England and Bryan. One of the partners, T.Y. England, had a daughter named Martha. Young Walton met her at a Fourth Baptist Church social at 5th and Buttonwood Streets. When they were first married, they lived with her parents at Fourth and Green.

Leather making is an ancient craft, and at least one practitioner, Simon the tanner, is mentioned by name in the Bible. In our era of lasers, space ships and computers it may be hard to realize that at the turn of the century leather manufacturing was big business. In 1900, when Andrew Carnegie put together the United States Steel Company, the second largest corporation in the country, on the equivalent of today's "Fortune 500 list", was U.S. Leather.

In 1904 England and Bryan changed its name to the England Walton Corporation with Mr. Walton as vice president and treasurer. A year later, CSW succeeded to the presidency upon the death of his father-in-law. The company greatly expanded, acquired timber reserves in several states, prospered, and made Mr. Walton a rich man.

Here, therefore, we meet a second Wayne-St. Davids area family of prominence, wealth and influence related by propinquity but differentiated by the fact that the Paul fortune grew from finance while the Walton wealth came from trade.

Now we turn from the families to the architects they selected to create the estates and design the mansions. We will soon see how the varied backgrounds of the former influenced selection of the latter.

The mystique of architecture as a profession reflects a blend of creativity and glamour. In actuality, however, as most practitioners confirm, it's a poorly-paid occupation which requires considerable toughness to endure the endless criticism of builders and some owners who tend to blame architects for every construction deficiency.

Be that as it may, Philadelphia has produced a series of noted architects beginning with Benjamin Latrobe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and followed by such men as Frank Furness (who was still alive when James W. Paul made his move).

Horace Trumbauer was one of the younger architects who gained local prominence in the years shortly before and after the turn of the century. Trumbauer has been described as "In an opulent age, one of the most capable displays of the ability of the fabulously wealthy Americans to consume conspicuously."

His contribution could be said to "Combine free medievalization in his early career to careful styling of his later work." It can be said that he was skillful in matching precedent to the American purpose.

The Architectural Record of those days noted, "If his work lacks the very decided individuality which has hitherto marked the better work here in Philadelphia, it is at the same time free from all eccentricity. It is never crude."

When Mr. Paul selected his architect, Trumbauer had already designed a number of other houses in the Wayne-St. Davids area including the one lived in by the Charles Waltons. Later he would go on to do "The Elms" in Newport, and "Whitemarch", the Stotesbury mansion near Chestnut Hill, as well as certain public building.

D. Knickerbacker Boyd descended from the Colonial American soldier and statesman, Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair, Governor of the Northwest Territory, and later a member of the Continental Congress. Mr. Boyd secured an education at Friends Central School, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the University of Pennsylvania. He first practiced architecture with his brother in the firm of Boyd and Boyd.

As a young man he soon established a reputation with the government of the Commonwealth as an authority, consultant and expert witness in matters of building codes and construction standards.

Boyd was more community minded than Trumbauer. He helped found the Pennsylvania Association of Architects, and led the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Knickerbacker Boyd's first commission in the Wayne-St. Davids area came when he designed the Memorial Library in 1893. Four years later he produced the Central Baptist Church. He also did several handsome homes in the immediate neighborhood including "Kaycrest", the Palladian house for William A. Wiedersheim on Chamounix Road and "Waldheim" for William H. Sayen on Eagle Road.

In summary then, Trumbauer could be said to be the more flamboyant architect whose work reflected ceremonial posture, while Boyd, on the other hand, embraced a more relaxed, informal professional style. C. S. Walton believed Trumbauer tended to copy European modes while Boyd worked toward the development of a truly American architecture.

Now, let us look at the actual estates with particular attention paid to the mansions.

"Woodcrest" comprises a spacious Elizabethan manor house with a number of utility buildings. Its architecture is modeled after the Tudor style of seventeenth century England. The mansion has two main floors and a third floor tucked away under a steeply-shingled roof (which was originally tile). The 51 - room home is symmetrically constructed with a central section, and as we can see, flanked by two wings and a third wing which contained the servants quarters.

The first floor held the public rooms while the second floor accommodated the family. While the impression is decidedly Elizabethan/Tudor, there are Gothic and Georgian touches which were intended to give the impression that the house had been added to over generations of old family ownership while in fact it was built in two years.

An architectural commentator noted, "Woodcrest" is positioned on a North/South axial plane typical of the 'Beaux Arts' style with the foyer as a center hall in the middle of the North/South axis."

Statistics include 13 chimneys, 26 flues and 25 fireplaces (although the house was heated with coal through a hot air system technically

advanced for its day).

An overwhelming great hall dominates the interior flanked by an immense dining room on one side and a large paneled library on the other. The dining room, as we see this afternoon, could accommodate fifty persons or more.

The building contains a certain amount of fakery. What appears to be a continuation of wooden ceiling beams in the dining room is actually plaster. Ascending the main stairway the walls of apparent travertine marble are also plaster.

"Woodcrest" served two families: The Paul from 1902 to 1925, and the John Dorrances from that year until 1954, and its sale to the Roman Catholic Church.

When the Campbell Soup tycoon bought the estate in the mid-nineteen twenties, he made two significant changes in the exterior of the mansion. He commissioned the walled courtyard as seen today, and he altered the front roof line by removing the original towers with pyramidal roofs and replacing them with half-timbered gables. Both alterations were deemed to be improvements which did not subtract from the essential quality of the home.

"Woodcrest" boasts 81 wood and stone gargoyles found under the eaves and within the cornices of the mansion - picturesque decorations depicting wood nymphs, fruits and mythical birds.

Now let us cross the road to Eastern College and come face to face with Walton's distinctive "Walmarthon." Incidentally, while this Cabrini College building where we meet today is named for its geographical position on the landscape, the Walton house name represents a combination of "Walton" and "Martha" euphoniously coined by the leather magnate to honor his wife.

The Waltons insisted their estate be approachable and the property line along Fairview Drive where the original entrance driveway begins (leading through the lakes up to the mansion) was and still is marked by a low, wide graceful wall constructed of stone and heavy mortar designed to match the color and texture of the buildings to come. No high iron fencing nor massive entrance gates.

The Waltons vacationed in Southern California - Redlands to be specific. They wanted a house reminiscent of the buildings they had

come to know there. This owner's wish enabled Knickerbacker Boyd to bring "Spanish Renaissance" or "California Mission" buildings to St. Davids, Pennsylvania. "Spanish Mission" to combine the terms is more a method of expression than a formal architectural style. A writer of those days said of "Waltharthon", "The extensive grounds were laid out and prepared in a manner which aided the scale, proportion and unity of the buildings and which gave the estate a distinctive accent and character."

Interestingly enough, the Walton gatehouse was built before the great house and deliberately so, because it gave the owner and architect the opportunity to experiment with colors and textures as well as using a tower as the central theme of the structure - a motif to be used successfully in the manor house and one of the other buildings.

Another architect of those days described Walton's home as "a sweeping mass of stone." Two impressions stood out: the monumentality of it, and the atmosphere. The edifice spanned 216 feet from the northwest porch to the servant's verandah on the southeast. From the back wall of the patio in the rear to the bottom of the steps to the lake in the front the measurement reached 342 feet or longer than a modern football field. The two wings of the building were angled at 45 degrees on opposite sides of the central section, in contrast to the more commonplace 90 degree option.

Knickerbacker Boyd's "chef-d'oeuvre" included central heating and vacuuming systems, both in 1913 state of the art technology. It also featured extraordinary use of the decorative ceramic tiles designed, made and installed by Henry Chapman Mercer of Doylestown who became rich and famous through his patented process for the manufacture of those artifacts. Samuel Yellin handled the ornamental iron work both inside and outside the structure; and the noted American artist Albert Herter did the murals and tapestries on the second floor.

Mr. Herter's son, Christian Herter, would grow up to be elected Governor of Massachusetts and named Secretary of State in the Eisenhower cabinet. In the 1950s Eastern sponsored a program about those decorative effects, and Mr. Herter loaned the college photos and other memorabilia about his father.

Here then, side by side, in suburban St. Davids, Pennsylvania, lie two extensive properties both boasting impressive homes and adjacent outbuildings, sharing certain attributes, but each claiming distinctives which define their respective essential character.

President Theodore Roosevelt attended a wedding at "Woodcrest" in 1909, and President William Howard Taft came to dinner a few years later at "Waltharthon." Between those early visitors and those of us here today, countless thousands of people have not only been here and there but benefited from and been enriched by the Paul and Walton estates for which we should be truly thankful.

Editor's Note: John A. Baird, Jr. is the author of "Great House", a story about Waltharthon. See Main Line Life, November 14, 1996 for an article about Woodcrest and Waltharthon by Anne Lorimer Sirna.

Fairhill — The Isaac Norris VI Estate

James B. Garrison, AIA

HIGH above Darby Creek, Fairhill commands its site by virtue of its imposing castellated architecture. The house was designed in 1896 by Theophilus Parsons Chandler, Jr. who was known for his romantically inspired designs for churches and mansions. Chandler and Norris were both from old, well established families, tracing their roots to New England and Penn's Philadelphia respectively. The style of Fairhill recalled the architecture of the hereditary estates of England, as seen through Victorian eyes. The medieval towers, stained glass windows and stone buttresses are mixed with the large plate glass windows and porches typical for turn of the century construction.

Isaac Norris VI purchased one hundred acres of land bordered by Goshen and Darby Paoli Roads in 1891. The estate was located near the original home of the Radnor Hunt Club and the Hunt Station of the Philadelphia and Delaware County Railroad. Norris was a descendant of the first mayor of Philadelphia, Isaac Norris I, a Quaker who had come to Pennsylvania by way of Jamaica. Fairhill was named for the first Norris country house that stood in the Northern Liberties. The family distinguished itself in science, medicine and the law. Isaac VI was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Theophilus Chandler (1845-1928) hailed from suburban Boston, where he had spent a year at Harvard before a short stay in Paris at the Atelier Vaudremer. After working several years in Boston, he came to Philadelphia to participate in the development of Ridley Park. His work there, and family connections on his mother's side in the region, brought him in contact with the Du Pont family, professionally and personally. In 1874 he married Sophie Du Pont opening a whole new realm of potential clients. Over the next thirty years his practice was dominated by churches, large city and country houses. Financial



View of the garden facade and library wing, from the southwest.

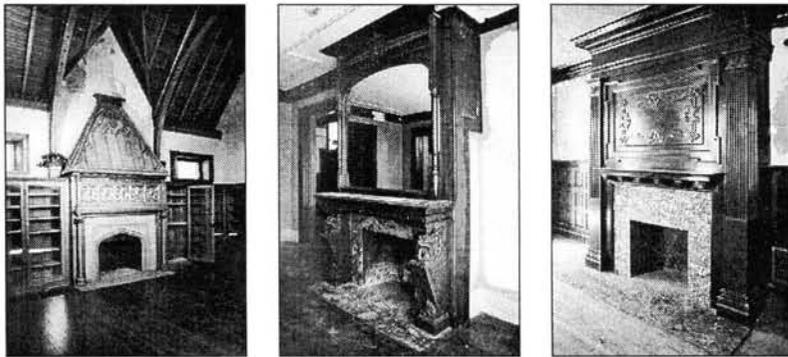
independence also enabled him to devote a large amount of time to professional and academic affairs, including presidency of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for eleven years and a founding role in the Department of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania.

Chandler's domestic and ecclesiastical architecture drew heavily on historical forms including the Gothic Revival and freer interpretations of European precedents. Despite Chandler's own rather thin academic credentials, his work displayed a close relation to the contemporary academic mainstream that had emerged in the new schools of architecture and architectural press. His houses displayed a different sort of originality than those of his contemporary Frank Furness, adhering more closely to the Anglophilic eclecticism of Philadelphia architects such as Addison Hutton and the Hewitt Brothers.

His circle of clients included the owners of William Simpson and Sons, a textile firm with strong connections to England. The family commissions included major residences in Haverford and Wynnewood, and for Lincoln Godfrey (now the Academy of Notre Dame) on Sproul Road in Radnor Township. Other Radnor commissions included 'Fox Hill' for Rudolph Ellis, an important member of the Radnor Hunt, his own house, 'Ithan Farm', St. Martin's

Episcopal Church, and Christ Church Ithan. The Radnor commissions are all united by family, social and professional ties, so his involvement in Fairhill is not unexpected.

When Fairhill was built, the local landscape was far less wooded than today. The house enjoyed splendid views in all directions, and its own form stood as a distinct marker on the horizon. The house is actually one of Chandler's more restrained works, but a large square tower and massive chimneys create an interesting skyline. The ties to his rustic church designs are clear in the entry porch and library wing represented by their pointed arches, steep roofs and buttresses. The south facing side looking down the Darby Creek valley has an arcade



Fireplaces, from left: library, ground-floor parlor, dining room.

and piazza opening off the main interior rooms. The house is gray local schist, with dressed stone limited to sills, copings, and the flat and pointed arches over wall openings. The ornamental stonework of his houses for the Simpson and Ellis families is not seen here.

The interior follows the powerful simplicity of the exterior, with discrete ornamental flourishes in a straightforward plan and limited palette of materials. A massive oak staircase dominates the first floor living hall and extends to the third floor. A heavy beamed ceiling and oak wainscot complete the hall decoration. The highlight of the first floor is the library wing with its hooded fireplace and open timber beamed ceiling extending to the underside of the steeply pitched roof. Elaborate mantelpieces are the highlights of the other principle rooms on the floor.

The second floor consists of several bedroom suites with large bathrooms and dressing rooms. The decoration is even more simple, with high wood base, plain plaster walls, and simple plaster cove mouldings. The fireplaces have classically inspired wood mantels framing marble firebox surrounds. The paneled doors and most of the woodwork remain in their original unpainted state, as do the bathrooms with their white tile floors, white porcelain and marble fixtures. Shiny nickel plated fittings are the only bathroom accents. The third floor is a series of servants' spaces differing only in size from the main quarters below.

In 1996, the house passed from the last Norris descendant, William Pepper Norris to the University of Pennsylvania. William Norris had expanded the book shelving to house the family's extensive collection, including many rare nineteenth century volumes on the natural sciences. The hundred acre property had shrunk to under twenty with some remaining landscape features almost totally obscured by plant and tree growth.

The house will be the Spring 1999 Vassar Showhouse and will hopefully find a buyer who appreciates its extraordinary state of preservation. The high quality of the original materials and design and ownership by one family have ensured that Chandler's vision of a castle on the hill remains pure after one hundred years despite radical changes to the surrounding landscape including the immediate site. The developer of the Fairhill property intends to demolish the house if a buyer does not emerge.

"Just Ring a Bell..."

Dorothy Harrison Therman

As excerpted by Helen S. Weary

JUST RING A BELL..." tells of a time when house doors were never bolted; when I could take the last Paoli Local home from Philadelphia, arrive after midnight at a dark, lonely train station, and get into my unlocked car without fear of assault; when "ladies" always wore a hat and gloves to town; when one could get a four course meal at a small French restaurant in New York for a dollar or two..." The title of the book comes from Mr. Harrison's habit of ringing a bell for a servant to come and see what he wanted.

The Harrisons were a privileged family, whose wealth came originally from sugar. The first American Harrison was Thomas, a Quaker, who came in 1763 from Cumberland County, England and was married to Sarah Richardson. His son was John, and his, George L., and his, Charles Custis Harrison. Charles Custis Harrison lived at Happy Creek Farm, just over the hill from Poplar House. He was a classical scholar, a Trustee of the University of Pennsylvania, and its Provost from 1894 to 1911. An auditorium at the University Museum is named in his honor. His son was George.

Dorothy Harrison Therman was the child of George Harrison (b. 1872, d. 1956) who married Miss Ingalls (b. 1879, d. 1951) of New Hampshire in 1911. George Harrison, a big game hunter, was a man who made wise investments and renovated Philadelphia houses for rental. He served on the board of directors of a number of Philadelphia institutions, including the Zoo and the Academy of Natural Sciences. Dorothy's mother was the granddaughter of Onslow Stearns, twice Governor of New Hampshire. Dorothy was the youngest of three daughters: Ellen Mary and Peggy were the others.

Poplar House was built in 1902 by Daniel Moreau Barringer, on 32 acres purchased in 1900. Constructed in the southern style, of Pennsylvania stone, with two wide porches and a widow's walk. There are seven family bedrooms and six maid's bedrooms, with many fire-

places. The property includes a number of out-buildings (garage-a former stable, a woodshed, a fieldstone cottage built circa 1790, and a spring house). George Harrison bought Poplar House on Brooke Road in St. Davids in 1914. The family lived part of the year at 2003 Delancey Place in Philadelphia, and part of the year at Poplar House until 1926 when the family moved full-time to St. Davids.

A number of servants assisted the Harrisons: chauffeurs and gardeners, and English cook and a Scottish parlour maid, French and Swiss lady's maids, and Irish kitchen maids, waitresses, chamber maids and nurses. Mrs. Therman describes the duties of the maids: "One wonders what so many hands found to do in the house, but it was long before modern 'time saving' machines. The parlour maid cleaned the first floor; the waitress took care of the pantry and served at the table, helped by the parlour maid when there was company. Each morning, they spent at least two hours polishing the silver (not all of it in use) and in the afternoons, they took turns sitting in the pantry, ready to answer the door or to serve tea. The chamber maid took care of the second floor and acted as valet to my father. While we had a nurse, she was in charge of the third floor where Peggy and I lived. The kitchen maid prepared the vegetables and some of the meats for the cook, and cleaned up the pots and pans. All laundry was done in two deep "laundry tubs" in the basement, except the bed linens that went in a large canvas covered laundry basket to Ardmore to be washed and ironed by Mrs. Gallagher. Once a year all the books in the many large bookcases were removed from the shelves and dusted. At the beginning of summer, the rugs were taken up and hung on lines in the laundry yard to be aired, and the accumulated grime of winter beaten out of them with a special raffia paddle. They were then rolled up and put in the store room and grass rugs laid in their place; fitted linen covers were placed on chairs and sofas to protect the upholstery from the damaging effect of the summer sun. All the household staff had one full Sunday off every other week (they were taken to church each Sunday) and a half day every other Wednesday, so arranged that there was always someone in the kitchen and pantry..."

"When we were young my parents spent a great deal of time with us. This was quite unusual, considering their generation, their way of life, and the fact that both had married late...My father provided all the things that were fun for children: enchanting expeditions, a

knowledge of and delight in nature in all its aspects, and very little discipline. My mother was responsible for all the things that are apt to cause resentment and spells of muffled rebellion in any child: our formal education, our general discipline, our health, and our manners, as well as such things as bed time, the dentist, dancing class, music lessons, and the boring business of being fitted for clothes. Although cooking was not in the curriculum, she saw to it that we were taught to make a bed, to stitch a hem, to knit and to darn a sock with the aid of a wooden "egg". (We never made our beds or darned anything, but, for a good many Christmases, various relations received a plethora of hand-hemmed linen shoe bags and knitted face cloths.) But she also took us to children's plays, encouraged an interest in gardens, allowed us a good bit of freedom in our wanderings in nearby woods and fields, and knitted us navy blue pullover sweaters. She read to us for an hour after lunch and usually before bed in the summer..."

"...What has been known for a long time as the Mill Dam Club came into being in 1907, as the Edwards Pond Association, its birth duly noted in the Philadelphia Ledger in October of that year. Described by the reporter as set among the hills south of St. David's station, in a neighborhood 'remarkable for the excellence of the roads and the beauty of the scenery', this particular tract of land had been for many years Edwards' saw mill, with a comfortable stone house, a good sized pond and its mill race in Mr. Montgomery's woods. When the property came on the market, a group of men who owned nearby estates and wished to keep this site intact, bought it for use as a place to swim and skate. A swimming pool was built which was, according to the newspaper, 'surrounded by a platform and equipped with a diving board...' and there were plans for a baseball diamond and two clay tennis courts. The mill house was turned into a club house and, due to the efforts of the ladies' committee, became 'a marvel of comfort and convenience', perhaps a slight overstatement...The club was unpretentious and never even began to resemble the usual country club; to this day, it retains its simple, rather rustic ambiance."

"My mother was responsible for our going to dancing class, considered to be an integral part of one's education. I viewed it with mixed emotions, Peggy hated it. For several years, during the spring and autumn months, accompanied by our nurse and driven by David, the second chauffeur, we went each week to the house of family

friends nearby where, in the ball room, a group of small boys and girls gathered to learn how to dance...After this, we progressed to a class in Chestnut Hill; and when I was thirteen, I went to the Friday Afternoons at the Merion Cricket Club, affairs to which Peggy stoutly refused to go. For me, these were followed by the Friday and then the Saturday Evenings, held in the ball room of the Barclay Hotel in Philadelphia." Swimming and riding lessons also occupied afternoons.

Beginning in 1926, the family traveled to Great Britain each summer until 1939. They left home the last week of July and did not return until the end of October. A house and moor in Scotland were rented for the grouse shooting. 'Our own procession, in the summers following our first journey, consisted of three stages: six or seven days on an ocean liner, a week in London, and finally the night train to the North.' Mrs. Therman describes the pre-trip excitement, the packing of steamer trunks, and the trip at sea.

The coming-out ball: "In the spring of my seventeenth year, my parents gave me a 'coming out' ball at the Bellevue Hotel. I wore a pale blue chiffon dress with silver leaves at the shoulders, was the center of attention, danced constantly, and had a wonderful time. Two weeks later, I sailed for England, with Miss MacGeorge as chaperone, to be a bridesmaid at a friend's wedding...One had a dance card, in which prospective partners wrote their names for a certain dance; if, by any chance a dance or two were not taken, one could retire to powder one's nose and return at the appropriate time, knowing that a partner would be waiting."

The meals in Scotland: "Breakfast: oatmeal, bacon, eggs, grilled kidneys, kippered herring, sausages, broiled fish or Kedgerree, fresh fruit, cold game, cold beef and a ham.

Lunch: a first dish: eggs in some form, macaroni au gratin, Hot meat-chops, casserole or stew, salad, biscuits and cheese and a simple sweet, fruit.

Tea: various jams and honey, scones, various small cakes, bread and butter, plum cake, dropped scones, girdle scones, oatmeal cakes.

Dinner: soup, fish, game with vegetables and salad, a sweet, a savoury, dessert."

The outbreak of the Second World War put a stop to the Harrison family trips to Scotland. They sailed home on the Aquitania, arriving

back at Poplar House on September 16, 1939. Mrs. Therman's sister, Peggy, stayed, became an ambulance driver, and worked for the Polish Ministry and for the British War Office. Mrs. Therman, still Dorothy Harrison, took courses and became a Red Cross Nurse's Aid. She enrolled in Columbia University, taking writing and literature. She wrote letters to friends in the service, and received sad news about many of them. There were parties and dances during the war, and success as a supervisor of nursing aids. The end of the war brought a new way of life for all the Harrisons. By 1956, the senior Harrisons were gone, and life was much simpler.

Dorothy Harrison Therman is the author of the privately published "Just Ring a Bell...", a copy of which is in the Radnor Historical Society's collection. She is a former President of the Society, having served in that capacity for a record 17 years. The Society is grateful to Mrs. Therman for her many acts of support and encouragement, and for her kindness in allowing portions of her book to be excerpted for this article. See also Radnor Historical Society Bulletin, Volume II, No. 8, Spring, 1968: Excerpts from the Memoirs of George L. Harrison, by Dorothy H. Therman. See also Radnor Historical Society Bulletin, Volume IV, No. 10, 1990: Dorothy Therman's Stories from Tory Island, by Carol Creutzburg.

Radnor Historical Society

Gifts to the Society in 1998

The Radnor Historical Society accepts items donated either for the collection or for the general use of the Society. Items for the collection are accepted subject to the approval of the Collections Committee of the Board of Directors; all items are accepted with the understanding that they become the sole property of the Society, to be used, displayed, or otherwise disposed of as the Collection Committee of the Board sees fit.

Mr. Francis J. Dallett

Envelope ca. 1855 from letter addressed to Clara (Tyndale) Mickle who was visiting "Dundale."

Mr. & Mrs. J. Bennett Hill, Jr.

Victorian ceramic chamber pot and silver-plated punch bowl and ladle.

The Historical Society of Frederick County, Maryland

Twelve framed photographs from the estate of Charles Worthington Ross III (1903-1989) from his days at St. Luke's School in Wayne, Pa.

Mr. Matthew D. Kelley, Jr.

Framed plate (#17, Lower Merion) from Property Atlas of Main Line

Ms. Ann B. Longacre

Black carriage parasol, ca. 1880's, belonged to Annie Biever Bodenhorn, Anneville, PA.

Mr. and Mrs. Philippas Miller

Victorian metal lawn or porch chair with spring seat.



Mr. William Morrison

Seven 8x10 coy photographs of Main Line estates: "Dundale", "Castlefinn", "Fox Hill", "Wooten", "Lainshaw", "Cherwynd", and "Wentworth".

Ms. Jeane Popma

Turn of the century wall telephone

Radnor Township School Board (Petersen House)

Ceramic butter churn and decorative seashells and coral

Ms. Mary Jane Schrader

Thirty-four items of linens, clothing and accessories, including a lady's hooded cape, a pair of gentleman's spats, and a pair of wooden children's sock driers.

Mr. Cyrus J. Sharer

File of Radnor Township reports and maps on land-use, roads, etc.
Land-use map of Wayne produced by Villanova geography class in 1958.

Mr. Edward S. Sharpless, Jr.

Electrical panel from Wayne Hotel main floor and lobby.
One 2-man saw, one half-man saw and one 30" circular saw blade.

1998 Membership Report

New Members

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Mrs. Darragh B. Davis
Ms. Evie Giegerich
Mr. Richard H. Howson
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Mrs. Muffy Kerschner
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**student winner of 1998 Radnor Fall Festival contest*

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Mrs. Margaret G. Zehner

Tribute to Caroline Robbins

George Smith



CAROLINE ROBBINS, 95, a professor of history for more than four decades at Bryn Mawr College, died on February 8, 1999 at ManorCare, a nursing facility in King of Prussia.

The Radnor Historical Society records its great sorrow at her death. She was a Finley House Benefactor in 1964 and also a Bicentennial Benefactor in 1976. Caroline was a dedicated board member from 1948 through 1981. (She is seen above in 1969, seated at the desk, surrounded by other members.) She served as vice president of the Board from 1950 through 1957, as President from 1958 through 1964, and as assistant to the president from 1965 through 1971.

Miss Robbins taught at Bryn Mawr College from 1929 until retiring in 1971. Her husband, Stephen Joseph Herben, a retired English professor at the college, died in 1967.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Miss Robbins was a major force in the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, a group of professional women from various colleges that met in the Northeast to discuss women's issues.

Miss Robbins, as she was always called at Bryn Mawr, was named a full professor at Bryn Mawr in 1949 and served as chairwoman of the history department from 1957 to 1969. She was Marjorie Walter Goodhart professor of history from 1960 until her retirement in 1971.

She was a founding member of the Middle Atlantic Renaissance Conference in 1950, held a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1953, and won the Herbert Baxter Adams Prize from the American Historical Association in 1960.

Miss Robbins was also a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in England, and in 1981 was named a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania. She received the American Historical Association's award for scholarly distinction in 1989.

She was born in Middlesex, England, and earned her bachelor's and doctoral degrees from the University of London.

Caroline Robbins lived most of her adult life in Ithan and Rosemont. She moved to ManorCare about six years ago. She is survived by a sister, Nancy Robbins; a brother, Rowland W., a niece and a nephew.

Caroline Robbins is remembered for her dedicated participation in all phases of the Society's activities for thirty-two years. The Society owes her much for her outstanding leadership and sterling scholarship.

1998 Programs

10 February **Tuesday, 8:00 p.m. at the Finley House**

Mary Jane Taylor, a graduate of the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture, spoke on "High Style and Home Comfort: 19th Century American Interiors."

10 March **Tuesday, 8:00 p.m. at the Finley House**

Herb and Sandy Kaufman, living historians of the Victorian Age, presented a program, "Lifestyles of the Victorian Age." Dressed in period clothing, the talk featured aspects of life, history and culture in the U.S. from 1850 to 1880.

14 April **Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. at The Willows**

Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Radnor Historical Society. Speakers at the Dinner included Arthur Moss, Dorothy Therman, George Smith, Jim Dallett and Bennett Hill.

2 May **Saturday, 3:00 p.m. at Woodcrest**

Annual Meeting of the Society held at Woodcrest, the former home of A.J. Drexel Paul, now Cabrini College. John A. Baird, Jr., spoke on "A Tale of Two Places: the Walton and Paul Estates". Mr. Baird's talk appears as an article in this edition of the Bulletin.

14 June

Sunday, 4:00 p.m. at Finley House

A Fiftieth Anniversary Garden Party was held on the lawn at Finley House (once known as "The Homestead"), with a festive tent, harp and flute duet, period dress, and croquet. Over fifty members attended the party hosted by 'Mr. and Mrs. William Harris Finley.' A beautiful summer afternoon helped to launch our second fifty years.

27 September

Sunday, 2:00 p.m.

The Society sponsored a trip to "Collen Brook," a 19th century farmhouse in Drexel Hill. Now the Smith-Lewis Center for Local History, Collen Brook is maintained by the Upper Darby Historical Society.

13 October

Tuesday, 8:00 p.m. at the Finley House

Ted Goldsborough, President of the Lower Merion Historical Society, spoke on "Roads, Railroads, and Mills in Lower Merion Township."

10 November

Tuesday, 8:00 p.m. at the Finley House

Jerry Francis, director of the Lower Merion Historical Society, spoke on "The Lenape — First Inhabitants of the Welsh Tract." There was also a display of Lenape artifacts.

20 December

Sunday, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Finley House

Our Annual Christmas Open House following the North Wayne carol sing was held. The Finley House was beautifully decorated for the season. The occasion and the Finley House were enjoyed by those present.

27 December

Sunday, 8:00 p.m. at the Finley House

A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens, was read by Bennett Hill by the fire in the Front Parlor. Refreshments were served.

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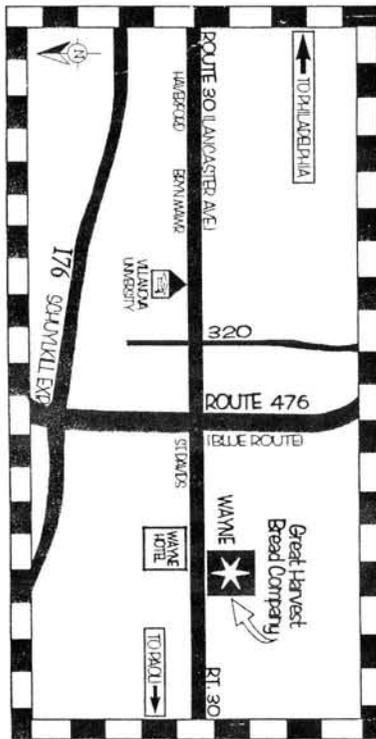
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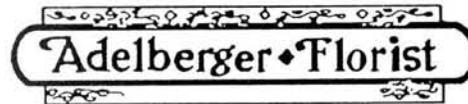
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