

The BULLETIN  
of the  
**RADNOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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Incorporated April 30, 1948

*Headquarters and Museum*

**The FINLEY HOUSE**  
**113 West Beech Tree Lane**  
**Wayne, Pennsylvania 19087**

Telephone: (610) 688-2668

*Visitors Cordially Welcome*

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Is it materialistic of me to be excited about a new brick path? Perhaps; but I hope you will have a look before you decide.

The path in question leads from the gravel driveway to the front steps of the Finley House. It was installed this past winter, and for some of us it is a dream come true, something we have wished for years. But I am excited about it because I believe it makes an important statement.

Do you remember the old path? It was blacktop macadam, and very narrow, not even as wide as the steps to which it led. Our tenant, which whom I was discussing it while the work was in progress, put it well: he said it was "not welcoming". That is now changed, as you will see, and I hope you will feel, as I do, that the new path is welcoming and inviting, and that is what we want.

Over the last decade – more or less- we have done many things to the Finley House, inside and out, to make it welcoming and inviting. We have spruced up the painting of the exterior woodwork, with a period-appropriate two-color effect. We have fixed up and furnished the back porch – the verandah. We have placed signs at the two entrances to our grounds, and installed an iron gate in the hedge on North Bellevue Avenue. We have planted several trees, replacing two we had to have removed.

Inside, we have put curtains or blinds in the windows, and rearranged the furnishings to make the rooms of the house look more "lived-in", and also more consistent with their respective periods of interpretation. This, of course, is a continuous, on-going process. And, finally, we recreated the "1789" basement kitchen, a room very popular with visiting school groups.

We know that the stewardship of our historic house and grounds is only a part of our mission, but we hope what we do with them will make a statement in our community. We hope it will encourage visitors to come and see us, and inspire the owners of other historic houses to treat them with the appreciation and love they deserve. We are fortunate to have what we have, thanks to Dorothy Finley's foresight and generosity, and we owe it to her to take the best care of it we can.

J. Bennett Hill, Jr.  
April 2000



## WAYNE, MAINE

Last year, we gave you a story about Caesar, the cast iron dog who lives at The Finley House. Radnor Historical Society Board member Mary Jane Shrader shared another story about Caesar which we wanted you to know:

In 1996, a class of third-graders at Wayne, PA Elementary School became pen pals with a class in Wayne, Maine. The Maine class came to visit the Pennsylvania class in April of 1996. The two classes visited Caesar at the Radnor Historical Society. The Wayne, PA class made a papier-mâché statue of Caesar in art class, and gave it to the Wayne, Maine class. Caesar II is happily ensconced in Wayne, Maine!



**ADOLPH G. ROSENGARTEN, JR.:**  
**A Patron Saint of Wayne**  
**1905-1990**

*Marilyn Caltabiano*

Adolph G. Rosengarten, Jr. was a Renaissance man in the true sense of the word. He was a businessman, lawyer, horticulturist, scholar, corporate director and philanthropist. Endowed with inherited wealth, he believed that he had an obligation to support the institutions of the community, particularly Wayne, and he was generous with his money, his talents and his time. Radnor and the surrounding communities benefited enormously because of his generosity.

Adolph, Jr. was born in St. Davids on May 23, 1905 at 41 St. Davids Avenue in a house that belonged to his uncle. The family had emigrated from Germany in 1819 and became pioneers in the chemical industry, founding a business, "Rosengarten and Sons". Adolph's father inherited this business.

The family's home was in Philadelphia, but they resided during the summer in Wayne, which was considered the country in those days and was reported to have a very healthy climate and environment. The father built Chanticleer in 1913. This home was built and designed by architects Louis, Boric and Madeira in the French style. The country home was a good place to raise children. Eight-year-old Adolph, Jr. and younger sister, Penny, could enjoy country life until after Christmas when the family moved back into the city. This was a pattern that many families followed in their social circle. It wasn't until 1927 when the family firm was sold to Merck and

Adolph's father retired that the family moved permanently to Wayne.

Adolph enjoyed reminiscing about these early years in Wayne when the coachman would drive him to the Wayne Station (automobiles were still not too dependable and tended to break down frequently). He would board the train to travel to Haverford where he attended the Haverford School. He comments with amusement about the prestige associated with the different postal addresses. His mother preferred St. Davids, which she felt had more prestige than Wayne.

Christmas at Chanticleer was a special time; for one thing, it was his great grandfather in 1832 who brought from Germany the custom of having a Christmas tree. The day started with the opening of presents, then off to 8:00 AM service at old St. David's Church, then back for a festive lunch with uncles, aunts and great-uncles.

When Adolph was older, he attended St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, graduated from Princeton in 1927 and from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1930. He practiced law and became a partner in the Philadelphia firm of Stradley, Ronon, Steven and Young. In 1933 he married the former Janet G. Newlin.

The depression years made a profound impression on Adolph. At that time he was deeply disturbed by the plight of many of the laborers who lived in abject poverty right in the township where he lived. He became involved in the Neighborhood League of Wayne. As Chairman of the Housing Committee, he was concerned about the appalling conditions of the homes (really hovels, as he described them). These laborers were making as little as \$.20 an hour and they worked ten hours a day for six days a week for a take home pay of \$40.00, when they were able to find work. The

result was a paradox. In Ardmore, Haverford, Bryn Mawr and Wayne, one found “beautiful houses in large grounds with winding well kept roads through woodland and private parks in which the well-to-do and the wealthy lived,” and “one also found real slums.”

In the article, which he wrote for the Radnor Historical Society Bulletin in spring, 1971, Adolph describes the conditions at Fritz’s Court (as these homes on Highland Avenue were called), calling Fritz’s Court the “worst slum on the Main Line if not actually in the State of Pennsylvania”. He was instrumental in getting the Works Progress Administration to give WPA funds to clear and rehabilitate these slums and erect public houses. These houses are known today as the Highland Homes. I sincerely believe from what Adolph has written and commented on that the elimination of the slums and the erection of Highland homes were the achievements of which he was most proud.

I had to chuckle when I read his written account in the Radnor Historical Society Bulletin. His droll sense of humor is so evident in this excerpt, “In September, 1933, on my return from my honeymoon, Dr. Jameson appointed me the Chairman of the Neighborhood League’s Housing Committee. I do not remember who else was on that committee. I suspect no one for I believe that a committee of not more than three can be effective, and then only if one member has gone big game hunting in Africa and the other has died, leaving the Chairman to do the work.”

During World War II, Adolph was attached to the top secret Ultra group at Bletchley Park, England, where German radio messages were decoded with the new “Enigma” machine. He was one of a small group of officers, most of them lawyers in civilian life, who analyzed the decoded messages. After the D Day invasion, he was

attached to General Omar Bradley’s First Army and became the first Ultra officer to cross the Channel.

In 1945, he left military service as a lieutenant colonel with a Bronze Star, the American Defense Medal and five battle stars on his European theater of operations ribbon. After the war, when popular books began to tell the story of Ultra, Adolph wryly wrote to a family member, “I had intended to be known as a good landscape gardener, not a spy!” However, I think he was secretly pleased because when a new book would come out on Ultra, he would come into the Radnor Library and he and I would track it down and check to see if he was mentioned.

After the war, Adolph enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania studying history. He earned a master’s degree in European history in 1949, and later, at the age of 70, received a PhD specializing in French military history.

He became a trustee of the Memorial Library of Radnor Township from 1956 to 1974, serving as President and Treasurer. He provided the funds to expand the Library on its previous Lancaster Avenue site, gave annual gifts to the Library for its collection, and established the Rosengarten Book Fund in memory of his wife, Janet, who died in 1982. He was instrumental in getting the present Radnor Library built because he provided the seed money to launch the plans for this library. He was always there for us because he believed that quality libraries were an essential part of a quality community.

This belief in the importance of libraries extended to his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania. It is impossible to walk in the Van Pelt Library at Penn and not see the Rosengarten name prominently displayed in its many rooms. In my research at Penn in their Development Office, I found out how closely tied the Rosengarten family

has been to the University and how well they have supported the Library at Penn over the years. For example, in 1993, the Library received from the estate of Adolph Rosengarten, Jr. the largest single bequest ever - \$9.6 million which was to be used to enrich the Library.

Adolph encouraged reading among the teenagers he hired to work on his estate during the summer. The "weed and read" program was one where high school students worked out of doors helping the gardeners in the morning. In the afternoon the students assembled in his study where he led discussions of assigned readings in important works of literature. In the final week, they all received the gift of a book.

Adolph served with distinction on many community boards: Bryn Mawr Hospital, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Merck and Co., and the Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Company.

However, the greatest legacy that he left to our community was the gift of his land, garden and home, Chanticleer. It was his dream that his estate which consisted of his sister's home, the main house, Chanticleer, and Minder, his home, would be kept as open space and available to the community as a pleasure garden. He established the Chanticleer Foundation to manage and fund this arboretum.

As you sit in this pleasure garden and gaze over the beautiful vista of open land, we think of Adolph G. Rosengarten, Jr. and his vision – and thank him for this magnificent legacy which we will continue to enjoy and cherish for years to come.

*This talk was given on May 1, 1999 at the Annual Meeting of the Radnor Historical Society in the home where Adolph G. Rosengarten, Jr. was born. Marilyn Caltabiano is the former Librarian of the Memorial Library of Radnor Township.*

## THE RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE OF R. BROGNARD OKIE

*James B. Garrison, AIA*



Several themes run through the work of Brognard Okie. From his early work rooted in the Colonial Revival, he developed a highly personal style based on the adaptation of traditional forms and motives drawn from the rich melting pot of the Middle Atlantic coastal region. Whether building new, or incorporating an existing structure, he infuses the work with his own personality, at once shy and retiring, yet witty and charming. In the pursuit of simplicity and an architecture drawn from folk tradition, his designs show a very studied approach that relies on artistic vision and a firm academic foundation. While Okie is often remembered for his Chester County work, he had many commissions in the closer suburbs of Radnor and Lower Merion Townships. Indeed his own

office was in Center City Philadelphia, and he was among the legions of pioneer railroad commuters on the Paoli Local.

R. Brognard Okie was born in Camden, New Jersey on June 26, 1875, the younger of the two sons of Dr. Richardson B. Okie and Clara Mickle Okie. The family moved to Chester County while the children were young soon after their father had re-married following the death of Clara Okie. Recollections of Dr. Okie suggest that he took a strong personal interest in his patients, making house calls and becoming well known in the area. The children seem to have readily adapted to the more rural/suburban lifestyle. After a false start at Haverford College, Brognard Okie enrolled in the architecture program at Penn, graduating in 1897, then traveling to Europe on a study tour. In addition to drawing and painting, he built up his library with books illustrating the historic domestic architecture of England and the continent. His own house, Hillside Farm, served as a laboratory for his evolving design motifs as the views from the early 1920s and present show. The unusual center dormer was later removed with a unifying cornice replacing it.

In partnership with H.L. Duhring and Carl Ziegler from 1899 until 1918, he reaped the rewards of the prosperity of the middle and upper classes, and the suburbanization of much of the countryside around Philadelphia. DOZ was known for its fine country houses in a number of historical styles ranging from the Tudor to Colonial Revival. During this period, the Colonial Revival was characterized by over scaled ornament and a free interpretation of precedents as is evident in the 1902 Percy Wilson residence in Devon. Much of the picturesque feeling of the preceding Victorian and Queen Anne periods was still strong, though the vocabulary had changed. In some works of DOZ, it

is difficult to sort out the specific contributions of Okie, yet when he went into independent practice in 1918, his personal style seems almost fully developed.

There are two important works from the DOZ years in close proximity to each other in Radnor, near St. Martin's Episcopal Church. The Charles Hart residence and the Ledyard Hecksher residence (now known as "Bolingbroke") are very different in design, and may in fact be the work of different partners at the firm. The Hart residence is a straight-forward example of the Colonial Revival style, simple in massing, yet including the overscaled classical detailing both inside and out that was typical for the time.



The Hecksher house, in contrast, incorporates a pre-existing farmhouse dating from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century that has been completely subsumed in the new construction. Early photographs indicate that the DOZ additions occurred in at least two phases, the first in 1912 adding a large wing and massive two story porches. The later work trimmed back some of the porches, but added an angled service wing, and a large unifying cornice using an imaginative interpretation of the standard pattern. The interiors were very similar to the Hart residence with robust classical moldings. Unfortunately, a fire in the

1980s damaged the interiors, and the subsequent renovation simplified some of the spaces.

A large part of Okie's reputation rests on the larger commissions such as Gulph Creek in Radnor for the Van Pelt's. His larger works more clearly show a narrative or episodic architecture. In studying the whole story, one can see that the various chapters have their own particular unity. The Van Pelt residence dating from 1926-36 displays simple massing and linear planning incorporating a long row of dormers that interrupts the cornice line is the pre-cursor to more elaborate variations on the themes. This house as part of a large country estate, also incorporated many outbuildings, but shows no evidence of incorporating pre-existing structures.

History, craftsmanship, and traditional building were all very important to Brognard Okie. He was an avid sketcher, and explorer of the back roads of southeastern Pennsylvania and the tidewater Chesapeake region. His interests in traditional architecture were shared by a core group in the T-Square Club, and paralleled the growth in the interest in regional vernacular designs throughout the country. Phillip Wallace, a photographer whose studio was a few doors from Okie's office on Smedley Street, recorded examples of the disappearing farmsteads of the region. He also photographed a significant number of Okie houses for several publications. One of the more notable books was Eleanor Raymond's "Early Domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania", published in 1930, with photographs by Wallace and a forward by Okie. This extended quotation embodies as much about his own design process as that of the original builders:

*"Those who built these old buildings, whether in stone, brick, logs or frame, had certainly a keen sense of proportion. They knew exactly*

*where to place their doors and windows, and how to design their cornices; and whether the roof pitches were as steep as in the earlier houses or flatter as in the later ones, they look just right and could to good advantage be more often heeded today... Often the simpler the house, the more interesting the arrangement of small wall cupboards, boxed in stairs, and so forth, and the ingenious use made of space that in larger houses would be wasted.*

*No mill was complete without its miller's office with wide board floors, fireplace, and a combination of wood and plastered walls, all as simple as possible and more pleasing for being so."*



The Herbert Egmore house in Wayne on Fletcher Road extends the existing structure using the same shaped mass. The windows clearly show that the building is made up of two separate pieces. The Egmore house was illustrated in the Philadelphia "T-Square Club" annual in 1925 and in a retrospective publication on his work authored by his son Charles in 1957. Despite its apparent simplicity, basic moves such as expressing two



distinct phases of construction within the same shape mass make this a work of considerable subtlety.

The Rhoads House, near Clyde Road in Ithan, effectively disguises its origin as a modest side passage double pile farmhouse. Only after studying Okie's drawings does it become clear that his project involved the re-work of a substantial recent addition to the farmhouse by the noted New York firm Delano and Aldrich, and further that Okie was not able to fully realize his vision for the house. He actually added only a small new area to the home but deftly re-detailed some of the existing structure to completely change its appearance and integrate it with his design. The large gable end chimney, slightly off center announces the beginning of his work. The change in the rendition of the stonework also dramatically differentiates the new wing.

Joseph Hergesheimer of West Chester has been called the perfect Okie client. He was a prolific author of fiction, historical and otherwise, with a romantic bent. From a small office in downtown West Chester he wrote novels of distant places and times. His imagination and sensitivity was well suited to the dialogue he would enter into with the architect, and later write about in "From an Old House", the story of the "restoration" of the Dower House for his wife and himself. It begins with the initial design meeting and a process of reduction and simplification. In the context of Okie's work, simplification does not mean a reduction of detail, but instead, creating a harmony, where the details are subordinated to an overall theme of tranquility. Hergesheimer writes:  
*"...we had started a process which it was not in our character to stop. A special connection with my inordinate love of detail: it might be reasonable for another man in my circumstances to rebuilding this*

*house, but where do I stop? That however did not bother the architect; he listened to the tale I liked and demanded with a growing and unconcealed pleasure. My passion for detail was his."*

Note the references to a narrative story embodied in the building. He describes the quest for the right materials; antique hinges, a crane for the fireplace, and weathered stone from old barns. He goes further on the design process with the architect: *"...Mr. Okie had the problem of making the shower-bath conform to his rigid requirement for the early tone of the whole. He provided it with a fine door in the earliest paneling, with H-L hinges and an old latch; but still I watched him steal toward it a bothered and resigned glance. Mr. Okie showed me his drawings for the walnut rails – a beautiful narcotic for the pain (of the bill). Then he indicated to Dorothy several more closets he had been able to work into spaces and corners; closets over doors and under...nearly everything was his specialty; and Dorothy, faithful to a domestic tradition, welcomed them all with an inexhaustible pleasure. Their usefulness was her opiate."*

Excellence in details, seen and unseen is a hallmark of Okie's work. His drawings often included assembly details for the joinery, and most pieces were drawn at full scale. This approach came from the traditional method of architectural study, measured drawings and a detailed analysis of existing or historic buildings. With the knowledge gained from the prototypes, very convincing reconstructions were possible, especially when accessorized with antique hardware or components.

The pursuit of simplicity and purity was not without challenges. Narrow stairs, low ceilings and sometimes-small rooms were part of the design ethos. Okie himself eschewed modern conveniences where possible. He lived on a 90-acre farm in Easttown Township, but worked in Center

City. He rode the Paoli Local like countless other commuters, but arrived at Devon Station via horse, since the livery stable there was better than the one at Paoli. He was also an active participant in the Devon Horse Show.

The palette of materials and details was more or less consistent, yet each house has its own persona. The materials and the woodwork details might not involve elaborate profiles, but there is a level of thought that goes beyond the ordinary. The simplest bedroom gains texture through the beaded paneling, and the mirrored sconces. The thinness of the wood contrasts with the deep window embrasures and the flat board lintels. The windowsills are rendered in several ways, either perforated for radiators, or with lift out panels for yet another storage space when the space below is a void.

Much of his work depended on finding the right materials, craftsmen or artifacts. Many of his houses incorporate antique hardware, but he also had local sources such as Marshall Forge on Latimer Street in downtown Philadelphia. The company manufactured hand made reproductions of early American designs, and no doubt designs sketched by Okie. He had sources at lumber mills to get timbers, and also the men to put the woodwork together, drawn from Chester, Berks and Lancaster Counties.

The individual words in his vocabulary included gutter and downspout boxes, the biscuit top fences, and beaded clapboard siding. Other favorite motifs included the flat board porch and stair railings, exterior bells and pumps. His porches employed the traditional whitewashed wall surfaces reported to keep the flies away for the doors and windows. The arched spandrels at the porch posts also are an interesting device when juxtaposed with the massive masonry walls where one might expect a true masonry arch.



Barclay Farm on Conestoga Road in Ithan is another example of a building that had a long history before Okie placed his indelible stamp on it. The Plough or Sorrel Horse on Conestoga Road and Ithan Avenue has had a long history punctuated by restorations by several distinguished Philadelphia architects. One portion of the building bears a 1768 date stone, but records indicate that it may have been started as early as 1762. It was listed on the tax rolls and “The Horse and Groom” in 1767. It was sold to Michael Stadelman in 1766 who enlarged the building. Competition from the nearby turnpike so adversely affected this tavern, which

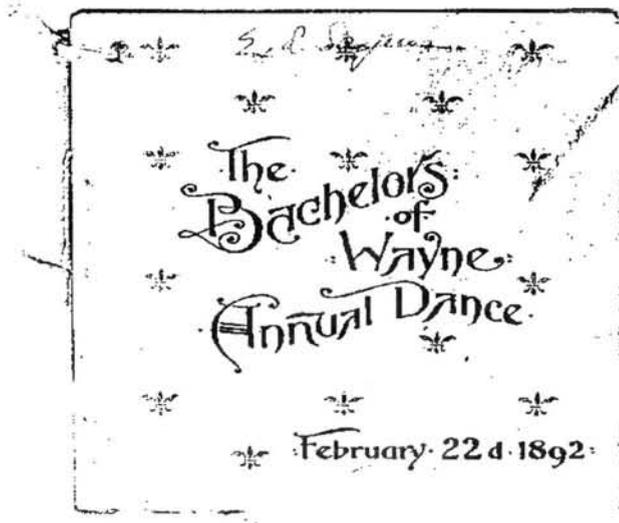
ceased operation in 1794. The property reverted to residential use being known as “Kirkdale” for Anderson Kirk, and then “Highland Farm”. In 1892, he sold it to George McFadden, a cotton broker. McFadden re-named the property “Barclay Farm” for his wife’s middle name. The Hewitt Brothers of Philadelphia modernized the building for him, adding early Colonial Revival touches such as a dainty porch facing Conestoga Road, and a larger curved verandah on the other side. In his 1897 book “Rural Pennsylvania”, Samuel Hotchkin reports that the Hewitts “renovated the building in excellent taste, keeping up the antique flavor”. Barclay McFadden engaged Richardson Brognard Okie to “restore” and enlarge the building from 1927 to 1934. Okie stripped much of the Hewitts’ work while making significant additions of his own. Okie demolished the wraparound porches and large addition on the eastern end before making his own additions on either end of the building. His work emphasized the linear telescopic nature of the original two-piece structure, but all of the visible detail on the finished work was his own, whether on the pre-existing or new fabric. Before becoming the Lower School building of the Agnes Irwin School, the house was again known as “The Sorrel Horse” under the ownership of Charles Grace in the 1950s.

Okie lavished extraordinary care on the design of his buildings. The trained eye picks out the academic influences and the nuances of composition that speak of a laborious process of drawing development. To a casual observer, there is charm, wit, and a sense that there is something special about the building. There is a timeliness and a timelessness about the designs. The narrative quality is engaging to a viewer. The proportions may be a little different from other contemporary houses and the plans may offer challenges to the inhabitants, but the houses are designed for living.

Okie’s vocabulary was rooted in traditional forms but his architecture was highly influential since there was also such an academic rigor to his design. On an abstract level, the relationship of shapes, solids and voids was highly developed. On a detail level, the quality of design was exquisite, with a seamless combination of antique components or buildings with new construction and contemporary programs.

Joseph Hergesheimer takes a more romantic view of his shared passion with the architect for the past, but with the timeless quality of good design: *“Its beauty and utility would be obvious as long as stone stood on stone, as long as the beginnings of Pennsylvania, were remembered. It would be a memento of a time, before me, when women were a part of their dwellings and men of their fields, of a healthy and unrealized hardship. The town was reaching out, down the hill, toward the Dower House now; but the tide of raw brick and ornamentally cut stone and plate glass would never, if the faintest trace of country pride remained, obliterate it. It would remain to show men, deafened by what they had gained, a simplicity of quiet forever lost.”*

James B. Garrison, AIA, is a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a Director of the Radnor Historical Society, President of the Board of Trustees of The Old Eagle School, and Member of the Tredyffrin Township Historical Architectural Review Board. He is a Senior Associate of the Historic Preservation Studio, The Hillier Group, Philadelphia.



## ENTERTAINMENT IN THE EARLY DAYS OF WAYNE

*Carol Creutzburg*

With Henry Askin's new development of Louella (soon to be "Wayne"), entertainment came high on the list. The Wayne Hall, formerly on East Lancaster and Pembroke Avenues, was erected partially for that purpose, for the farming community. But the plan for Askin's town-to-be was of something far larger and imposing. So it was that in 1871-1872, the Lyceum (the present Colonial Building) was built.

It opened with much fanfare and became a focal point for those from miles around. Farmers arrived in wagons and on horseback. Some came in carriages and other people walked, and then there were those who came by train. The Pennsylvania Railroad wasn't averse to accommodating potential commuter traffic.

The new Lyceum served a variety of interests and needs in the small community. On the first floor were two large stores as well as a reading room and library. However, it was the second floor where most of the entertainment would take place. Up a steep flight of steps was a stage and large gallery that would hold as many as 500 people.

The Wayne Gazette of 1872 devoted long columns to the Lyceum's events.\* For members, there was a 7 P.M. meeting every Tuesday. Their evening wasn't a short one, since usually 18 or so presentations took place. They consisted of dialogues such as "The Bashful Lover" and "The Orphan's Prayer"; songs ("Don't be Angry with me Darling" was one); declamations; essays ("Love at Home"); musical numbers on the organ, etc. The evening always ended with singing "God Save the Flag".

When the Bryn Mawr Cornet Band came to play, the hall was filled to capacity. Interspersed with the programs were temperance lectures and other subjects

On Thursday evenings, the smaller reading room attracted a fair-sized number of people, who practiced readings and relating stories. When one of these sessions was going on, some women in the group found something extremely funny. The leader was less than amused, saying: "It would be a glorious thing if these ladies who are so fond of laughing would by all means desist while the readings are being delivered."

The Telephone Tower now marks the site of the Bellevue Hotel, which came to Wayne in 1881. There was gaiety, entertainment, and no one to discourage laughter, especially so under the ownership of Mary Berrell Field. Something was there for everyone. Sunday evenings it was hymn singing; Wednesday concerts, and Saturday evening hops (dances). Holidays were enthusiastically

celebrated and an annual Masquerade took place. Whist was taken so seriously that no conversation was allowed during the game. Card games had their own form of segregation, as there were two card rooms – one for gentlemen and the other for ladies.

Croquet and lawn tennis were popular and there was even a guest-waiter ball game. An afternoon horse and carriage drive was on the “must” list for ladies. A short and pleasant ride was to the Merryvale Cricket Club in North Wayne, on West Beechtree Lane, where a cricket game might be in progress. A disastrous fire made the Club’s life a short one. However, all activities came to a halt when everyone took a nap after lunch.

The hotel, although in Wayne, but not necessarily of Wayne, would attract local organizations such as The Citizens of Wayne, who sponsored balls at the Bellevue. In the 1890’s the “Bachelors of Wayne” hosted popular and elegant dances. As was the custom of the day, there were dance cards, whose covers were embossed in gold script. According to these cards, most dances were waltzes, followed by a few polkas. Evidently, they didn’t believe in departing early, as Emily Longstreath Sayen’s dance card read “left for home at 2:00 am”.\*\*

After Drexel & Childs bought the former Askin property in 1881, local entertainment increased. By 1887, the Lyceum had acquired a new name: The Wayne Opera House. At that time, the small stage was enlarged, with an addition of a proscenium and scene shifts. It was rumored that the opera star, Mme. Homer, who lived in West Chester was once a guest performer.

In 1891, the Euterpean Society, a men’s chorus, gave their first concert there, continuing for 27 years. Their two yearly concerts were always a white tie affair and invitations requested evening-wear. It was considered by many the most

outstanding social event of the year. Their first concert included Faust’s “Soldier’s Chorus” and Grieg’s “Land Sighting”. There were, as well, several public rehearsals during the year. They staged in 1894 “Gentlemen in Black”, a sedate minstrel show.

Few musicals were more popular than Gilbert and Sullivan. When put together by a local group, as many as 30 appeared on their lavishly decorated stage, accompanied by a 12-piece orchestra. Again, formal invitations were sent. One for the “Mikado” was printed in full color on the most delicate of paper.

After fire destroyed the Bellevue one winter night in 1900, there was no shortage of places to dance, in fact even a choice. The Louella mansion had recently been enlarged and turned into a hotel. There was the Wayne Opera House, and the Merryvale Cricket Club. Admission was one dollar.

On the streets of Wayne during the early 1900’s, it was a rare evening that one didn’t hear the pleasant sound of the piano wafting through open windows. Weekends were a time for harmonizing around the piano with tunes from Victor Herbert and Sigmund Romberg operettas. Ukuleles and mandolins often went along with their owners to college and young people gravitated towards front porches on summer evenings. On one North Wayne porch, after a certain hour, a heavy shoe was dropped from the room above, which was a father’s hint that it was time to go home.

Entertainment also centered on the church, with oyster suppers, socials, hayrides (always well chaperoned), etc. For fund-raising, the Methodist Church often rented the Wayne Opera House. Once, members appeared in a tableau of Mr. Pickwick, while three men from Haverford College provided the music. By 1913, the Opera House was

enlarged again, and became Wayne's community center, where among other things, the first motion pictures were shown.

Evenings could be spent playing charades. More games were played then, such as mahjong, parcheesi, and dominos. With children, tops, marbles, tiddly-winks, and hoop rolling were all favorites. Young girls had taffy pulls and a special fondness for cutting out paper dolls from magazines.

Walks were for all ages, as was roasting chestnuts. Life was simpler then. Soon the tango glided into the world of dancing. The Castles, Vernon and Irene, created the "Castle Walk", after which dance steps would never be the same. With the coming of the horseless carriage and World War I, entertainment would be ushered into a new and vastly different era.

*\*Wayne Gazette, 1872, is in the collection of the Radnor Historical Society.*

*\*\*Mrs. Sayen's dance card is in the collection of the Radnor Historical Society. Several appear in scrapbooks donated by her family.*

## Gifts to the Society in 1999

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 Collections Committee of the Board sees fit.

### John and Laura Remine

1 apple butter stirrer  
1 iron orange squeezer  
assorted linens  
one quilt, blue and white, ca 1920.  
one laundry bag, "Thomas Slocum,  
April, 1884".  
one crocheted antimacasser with  
chicken, ca. 1920.

### Mr. and Mrs. Samuel F. Etris

Wooden rocking cradle

### Shirley J. Winters

Lot plans and house plans for  
324 Orchard Way, St. Davids,  
built by her father.  
Air Raid Warden's hat, WWII,  
worn by her mother.

## 1999 Membership Report

### New Members

Henry Parkman  
Beverlee Barnes  
Judy Bloomgarden  
William Keller  
Belle Keller  
Eleanor Carson Donato  
Lois Mamourian

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Mrs. Margaret G. Zehner

## IN MEMORIAM

**George Thomas Walker**

**7/2/1922 – 10/11/1999**

**Board Member**

**1990-1999**

The Radnor Historical Society expresses its appreciation to Hank U. Davis of Living Waters Landscaping for his assistance with the transportation for the Conestoga Wagon in the 2000 Memorial Day parade.

## 1999 Programs

**9 February** – The Finley House: Clarissa Dillon, PhD and a member of the Society gave a most interesting talk on “Eighteenth Century Childhood – from Birth to Breaching”. Along with it she brought examples of baby clothes.

**16 March** – Audubon Inn: Roger Mower gave a detailed presentation of the “History of Mill Grove, from Audubon’s Arrival to the Present”. His talk was illustrated by slides. The Annual Dinner was served in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Inn.

**13 April** – The Finley House: Jean Kessler Wolf spoke at the Finley House, on “Welsh Settlers and their influence on Main Line Architecture. Ms. Wolf is a historic preservationist and her slides showing architectural features gave added depth to her talk.

**1 May** – The Annual Meeting was held at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Michael J. Ryan in St. David’s. Marilyn Caltabiano, former head librarian at the Radnor Memorial Library spoke on “Adolph Rosengarten, a Patron Saint of Wayne”. The setting was especially pertinent, as this home, which one belonged to Mr. Rosengarten’s aunt and uncle, was where he was born.

**16 May** – A tour of sculptor Edward Fenno Hoffman’s studio in Villanova, followed by refreshments in Mrs. Nadine Hoffman’s garden. Some of Mr. Hoffman’s work could still be seen in their 2-acre sculpture garden.

**12 October** – The Finley House: Herman Benninghoff, who has spent a lifetime of study on the Revolutionary War, spoke on the American War for Independence: A Global Conflict”. Slides illustrated his talk. His knowledge on this subject has involved him writing articles and participating in the American Revolution T.V. series for the Arts and Entertainment Channel. He displayed some of his artifacts after his talk.

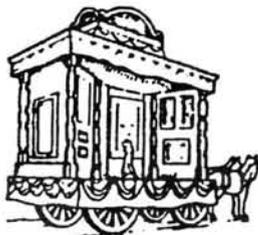
**17 October** – Mr. Benninghoff invited the Society to the Valley Forge Historical Society’s Museum, where some of his 6,000 Revolutionary War artifacts were on display. His generous gift doubled the size of their original collection.

**9 November** – Radnor Memorial Library: Karl Klingelhoefter presented a verbal “Tour of the 15 Covered Bridges of Chester County”. The talk was illustrated with Mr. Klingelhoefter’s paintings that he had done in a year’s time. An additional painting showed the longest covered bridge in the world, which crossed the Susquehanna River to Harrisburg.

**19 December** – The Finley House: The Annual Christmas Open House was held at the Finley House, which followed the North Wayne Carol Sing. Children and adults mingled in the festively decorated rooms, sampling hot cider and quantities of cookies.

**26 December** - The Finley House: A pleasant evening was spent sitting around the fire as Bennett Hill read *The Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens.

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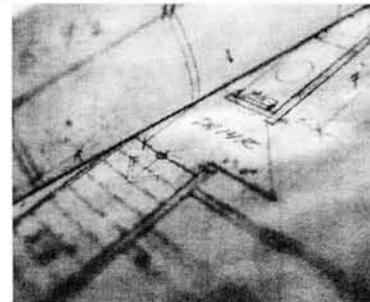


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Mission Statement**

The purpose and mission of the Radnor Historical Society shall be:

1. to develop, maintain, and preserve a permanent collection of manuscript, printed, and iconographic records pertaining to the history of Radnor Township and its immediate environs.
2. to provide library facilities for the interpretation of the collections and for the purposes of research.
3. to collect, maintain, preserve, and exhibit artifacts from the Township's past, and to provide access to them for visitors.
4. to maintain an historic house museum, and any auxiliary buildings and grounds, for the purposes of education and for any meetings or other events desired and/or approved by the Board of Directors.
5. to provide a regularly scheduled program of speakers on topical subjects, and to make this program available to the community as well as to the membership of the Society.
6. to support a publications program, through various media, including a regularly issued Bulletin, devoted to the study of Radnor Township and other relevant subjects.
7. to collaborate with local schools and colleges, and especially with the Radnor Township schools, on programs of education pertaining to the history of Radnor Township and its environs.
8. to cooperate with other historical and community organizations in support of programs undertaken for the purposes of historic preservation, conservation, and education, as the Board of Directors may deem appropriate.

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