The Architecture of Culver & Rogers in Wayne
Radnor Then & Now: Every Pitcher Tells a Story
“The Radnor Historical Society is committed to preserve, protect, present, and promote the history of Radnor Township.”

The Bulletin of the Radnor Historical Society has been printed annually and distributed to members of the Society since 1950. Today, each issue is printed the year following its cover date, so that reports on the Society's programs and developments correspond with the year shown on the cover. This issue was printed December, 2015.

On the Cover

A small portion of a very detailed glass plate negative in our collection showing the “Business Block” of downtown Wayne in the early 1890s. The huge building housed multiple stores in an impressive work of architecture by T. Mellon Rogers. An overview of the work of Rogers and his partner, Newton Culver, appears in this issue of the Bulletin.
Honoring Radnor’s Veterans

In the fall of 2015, the Society loaned authentic uniforms to a display in the lobby of the Radnor Memorial Library. Uniforms represented soldiers from the Army/Air Force and Navy, as well as the Nurse Corps. The objective of the display was to help viewers appreciate the numbers of individuals who placed their lives on the line for our country in various wars – both those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and the fortunate who survived. It is important to remember that the library itself stands as a memorial to soldiers from Radnor, hence its name.
In Memoriam

Steve Pendergast
1942-2015

Stephen Pendergast, a.k.a. “Mr. Radnor History,” passed away on November 9, 2015 after a courageous battle with lung cancer and COPD. Steve, a lifelong Radnor resident and member of the Radnor High School class of 1960, was a volunteer and board member of the Radnor Historical Society.

I first met Steve when he charged into the Finley House mad as a hornet over the demolition of one of North Wayne’s historic houses. He wanted to help preserve Radnor’s history, so I quickly put him to work scanning our photographs and documents, a task he did for over 10 years. My idea was to get our photographic collection online so that people could easily research the rich historical heritage of our community.

After a short time working on our archives, Steve joined the Board of Directors, and was a valuable sounding board for our progress over many years.

Steve and I spent several hours together every Monday scanning and archiving our extensive collection. His knowledge of Main Line families, properties, events, and esoteric trivia was encyclopedic. As we scanned and archived, we discussed the people, places, and events relating to the items we were working on. That really made history come alive for me!

Several years ago some volunteers began restoring Radnor’s World War I memorial on South Wayne Avenue. Part of the project was to find out more about each of the veterans listed on the memorial, and Steve dove headlong into the research, compiling an extensive database of all available information. As an outgrowth of this project, a group called Saving Hallowed Ground began working with communities to preserve their memorials, and use them as a teaching aid for school children. St. Katharine of Siena School students took up the challenge and used Steve’s research as the basis for their displays commemorating these fallen heroes. They’d ask Steve for help, and he was more than willing to supply what he had found. The students took it from there and developed amazing displays for each veteran. The result was remarkable. This will be Steve’s legacy and a project that all of Radnor can be proud of.

In recent years Steve expanded his research into all Radnor veterans of World War II and began compiling a valuable database.

The Society greatly benefitted from Steve’s knowledge, dedication, and generosity over the years. He will be greatly missed, but his invaluable legacy will remain a cornerstone of the Society and Radnor history.

Ted Pollard, President, 2003-2014
Many Improvements to radnorhistory.org

We have recently made several improvements to our home on the Internet. Our website is being updated with a fresh new look, but changes “under the hood” are what will really give us new possibilities for online expansion.

As our website has grown with content over the past ten years, it has become increasingly difficult to organize and make accessible each of the important content areas of the site. For the redesign, we have separated the site into five distinct sections: “About RHS,” “Archive,” “Projects,” “Events,” and “News.”

To take one of these sections as an example: “Archive” contains sections including our list of digitized maps and atlases and our ever-growing online collection of photographs. 20 years ago, RHS began its effort to catalog and number each photograph in its collection. While that effort is ongoing, as of 2015 all of the Society’s cataloged photographs are now available for viewing online. That totals nearly 2,700 of the best images from 150 years of Radnor history.

Digitizing images and making them available online serves several purposes. First, it lessens wear and tear on original documents, many of which are fragile. Second, it allows anyone, from anywhere in the world, to browse our collection without having to dig through filing cabinets during the Finley House’s open hours. We also provide high resolution copies of all photographs for moderate fees.

Visit our ever-growing website today! www.radnorhistory.org
Featured Articles

Radnor Then & Now:
Every Pitcher Tells a Story

By Phil Graham

Have you ever wondered what used to be on the land where you live? While in our gardens or out walking many of us have found assorted glass bottles or stone pitchers (usually broken), other assorted bits of pottery, old property line markers, rust-encrusted hinges, and occasionally a striated iron horseshoe. You might have been lucky enough to find a stone arrowhead or skin scraper, but would most of us even recognize other commonly buried Native American artifacts? What clues do they give us about what was on our property?

In recent years a friend of our Society, Prof. Camille Paglia, has been doing considerable research into Native American stone sculpture. Among the many artifacts she found in 2014 were remnants of ancient paintings on rocks adjacent to Little Darby Creek where Wigwam Run enters what we now call Skunk Hollow Park. One stone had been typically coated in clay to provide a smooth surface for the painting of symbols, and remnants of yellow and red paint were still to be seen. Nearby she located large boulders showing evidence of shaping, and one still requiring further investigation appeared to resemble an eagle’s head. This is just one of several sites she has investigated where an abundance of boulders left by glaciers attracted Native Americans who saw them in religious terms, meticulously shaping them into totem forms and moving them around to create ritual sites.

Ancient painted rock in Little Darby Creek
[Photo: Camille Paglia]

Most of us don’t have the years of study under our belts that allow us to recognize such tell-tale signs, but these days we can find plenty of clues about the ground we’re standing on from the vast collection of documents, maps and photos available to us all - it’s just a matter of tapping the right resources.

In 1977 historian and Radnor Historical Society board member Katharine Cummin published the singularly most informative book about our township: *A Rare & Pleasing Thing: Radnor Demography (1798) & Development*, detailing properties, owners, and an assortment of information regarding every plot. She also created a fascinating map showing the lay of the land in 1776. By comparing that map alongside today’s street atlas you can see at a glance what was in your neck of the woods nearly two and a half centuries ago. Nowadays satellite images allow us to spot tree lines that still show divisions where old, some defunct, roads and property lines carved up the township in a very different way.

“The Radnor Street Road, laid out in 1683, bisected the township in a straight line, bounding properties along its entire length. Neat on paper but impossible underfoot, it crossed rocks and swamps and section after section of sinuous Ithan Creek. Radnor Street Road led nowhere and was little used... [but] ... can still be discerned as a boundary marker on property maps.”

–Katharine Cummin

Some of today’s property lines still show the remains of 17th century Radnor Street Road, lining up perfectly with Radnor Street Road through VFMA&C to the northwest, and Mill Road in the southeast (see inset). [© Google Maps]
We can make similar “then and now” comparisons with official maps from the 19th and 20th centuries, though we sometimes have to take actual positioning with a pinch of salt since the precision of GPS technology was not even a pipe dream back in the day. Indeed we may well recall that, before Mason & Dixon came along, Philadelphia itself was once claimed by Maryland – an incident known as Cresap’s War – due to previous surveying being inaccurate to the tune of 28 miles! So the early map placing of a barn on part of John Morgan’s 150-acre estate at Morgan’s Corner is rough at best. Nevertheless, it’s fascinating to see how over time we’ve conveniently diverted or buried streams and either obliterated or converted massive estate houses to accommodate new housing, offices, or roads.

Many big estate houses and historic features have been demolished in Radnor in recent years. Unlike most neighboring townships, there has never been an ordinance that might question demolition. Estates like Camp Woods, Ardrossan, and Ravenscliff have remained in private ownership and either have been or will be meticulously restored. In some cases, large homes such as Louella (now condominiums) and most recently Almondbury (recently purchased by Agnes Irwin School), have been re-purposed. Many more smaller dwellings, barns, walls, and bridges have been restored either by private owners or with state or institutional help and hopefully now will be preserved for future generations.

Another example of a forgotten relic: how many know that in the 1930s there was a private airfield adjacent to Newtown Road in the center of Radnor? Here Ardrossan’s Robert Montgomery owned and operated four light aircraft.

Old aerial photos tell all sorts of stories and nowadays we can readily compare them with satellite imagery readily available online. Until 1903 one of the largest public swimming pools in the country was in North Wayne where Willow Avenue and Cowan Park now sit, and our present township building was ironically nothing but a sewage plant not so long ago. The land west of the Devon K-Mart in Tredyfrin was a drive-in movie theater and the St. Davids Square shopping center (home of Giant and TJ Maxx) was dead center on the former St. Davids Golf Club courses. The Flag Lady store (recently closed) was the site of the historic Unicorn Tavern. The Thomas Moser furniture store

1 See animation here: https://youtu.be/VsuDAF_2ZHs
(West Lancaster Avenue /Old Eagle School Road), which bridges two townships, was The Covered Wagon Inn, famous for ballroom dancing events, and before that a stagecoach stop and a farm outbuilding.

The owner of a house on Conestoga Road in Ithan recently contacted me about his property and we determined from maps and photos that his front lawn was one of the sites of the Sorrel Horse Hotel (a.k.a. The Plough), which burned down and was demolished in 1909. If he ever found a cellar and vintage stock buried there, he never informed me.

Then and Now: The Covered Wagon Inn has been a farm building, a stagecoach stop, a dance venue, and currently serves as a furniture store. [© RHS /Greg Prichard]

Then and Now: The Sorrel Horse Hotel, Conestoga (Old Lancaster) Road. [©RHS /Google Street View]

A division of Washington’s army spent the winter of 1777-8 on an exposed hill between what is now Academy of Notre Dame de Namur and Ardrossan (see airfield photo). Ithan was the primary central village and the hub of the wheel through which most of the main roadways fed. Today, while still providing essential local services, the village is a pale shadow of the importance it once boasted.

Other centers of industry, most notably the Skunk Hollow area, were occupied by blacksmith shops, wheelwrights, tanneries, and assorted woollen, timber, and grist mills. All of this can be visualized by comparing maps from different eras. Whole neighborhoods have come and gone, and others have simply been absorbed into the Main Line conurbation. Clyde’s Corners, Willow Burn, Garrettville, Morgan’s Corner, Banjotown, and many other Radnor names existed at one time or another. While there are tentative plans to mark at least some of these
locations with sign posts, most are sadly all but obsolete.

In recent years I discovered from RHS’s extensive archives that the owner of my own house had once been a toll keeper on Lancaster Pike. This was confirmed by census records and apocryphal tales from older ex-neighbors, so I went on the trail of finding exactly where the toll house was. I soon discovered that it occupied at least two different positions over the toll-collecting years (c. 1790-1917): first, on the northwest corner of Chamonix Road, and then it was transported eastward along Lancaster Pike around 1890 as the town of Wayne expanded. Although I had photos of the same house on two different sites it was the second position that caught my eye, because although the wooden toll house had long since disappeared, the adjacent house was built in stone and might still be there. Google Street View proved to be the perfect armchair guide and not only did I find that the adjacent house is indeed still there, but the location of what might be the exact footprint of the toll house also showed clearly in a section of grass that had been baked yellow by the hot summer sun. Today that same spot sports a flower bed and sign for Educational Services at 531 E. Lancaster Avenue.

But what of your own home? A whole range of high resolution aerial photos dating from the late 1930s are available from pennpilot.psu.edu. An even more comprehensive collection of Dallin Aerial Survey photos can be found at digital.hagley.org under the heading “Digital Collections.” And of course Radnor Historical Society’s own website radnorhistory.org is a must for local research. While not everyone has the time to visit the Delaware County Government Center’s Recorder of Deeds office in Media, that’s where you can find most property deeds dating back to the first European settlement. By taking along your Property ID Number (found on your real estate tax assessment) you can view electronic versions of beautifully hand-written deeds and find the name of every owner of your parcel of land dating back, in some cases, to the 1600s. Then from the comfort of your own home, on the Radnor Memorial Library website (> Adult Services > Heritage Quest), you can check census records of these names, discover what profession some of the more recent ones followed, and read details of everyone in their family. You can also look up anyone’s family history online (anywhere in the USA) absolutely free. All you need is your library card number, and if you’re not yet a member, joining is free to all Delaware County residents.

In conjunction with a range of detailed property atlases available online, dating 1870 onwards, at radnorhistory.org/maps, you can build up a complete story as to when your house might have been built, who the first owner was, their profession, and even in some cases the architect or builder. At Radnor Historical Society’s Wayne headquarters we have various additional resources where our helpful volunteers can help you find information to complete your project; perhaps even early photos.
of your street or property and its occupants. Before you know it you’ll have more information than you ever dreamed of - and the journey of discovery can be a fascinating one! Even if your home was built recently you can discover what was there before. It might have been farmland, a stone quarry, a carriage house, or barn. Radnor was not just extensively farmed; we had several brick works, a massive heating and power plant, many inns, taverns, at least one arboretum, many more schools than we have now, a pottery and glass works, a natatorium, and a military camp site west of Sproul Road long before Valley Forge Military Academy arrived on our northern border.

Once you have established the approximate date something was built, the first land owner, architect, or occupant, you might have the makings of your own RHS-endorsed bronze wall plaque bearing your house’s unique historical information. If maps show that your yard was once a brickworks, you will also be well on the way to understanding why you have so many red rocks under your flower beds!

Footnotes:

• A fascinating “Then & Now” map of Radnor can now be found online. Katharine Cummins’s map showing roads and land tracts extant in 1776 (too detailed to reproduce here), overlaid on a present day Google Map can be viewed here: banjotown.net/maps2.html
• Historic House Marker bronze plaque applications are open to all RHS members, subject to qualification. Full info and forms can be downloaded from: radnorhistory.org/marker
The Architecture of Culver & Rogers in Wayne

By Greg Prichard

Newton H. Culver and Thomas Mellon Rogers made an enormous impact on the Victorian-era Main Line, both as individuals and as partners in the short-lived firm Culver & Rogers. Despite a prolific architectural catalog, their influence has been overlooked by history. Proponents of exuberant Queen Anne design and pioneers of the Colonial Revival movement, Culver & Rogers’ visual legacy is immediately recognizable to anyone interested in the historic homes of the western Main Line, even if their name is not.

The early lives of these men give insights into their later work. Newton H. Culver was born in 1855 in New York State (though sources disagree on which town), and his parents relocated their family to Williamsport, Pennsylvania about a year later. Newton’s father, Eber Culver (1824-1911), became a prominent architect in Williamsport by designing several local landmarks and a multitude of residences. His work followed a standard interpretation of the fast-changing Victorian styles, from the grand Italianate design of the so-called Million Dollar Mansion of 1866 to the Queen Anne masterpiece E.A. Rowley House of 1888 (which is today a beautifully restored house museum). Thanks to these landmarks of Williamsport’s “Millionaires’ Row” as well as some of the most monumental public buildings downtown, Eber Culver’s name still resonates in the Lycoming County seat.

Newton worked in his father’s office for a time before spending a year surveying coal lands in northern Pennsylvania. He spent another year in Denver, Colorado as a draughtsman in the city engineer’s office, then came back east in 1880 to work in Philadelphia as an independent architect.

Philadelphia native Thomas Mellon Rogers (1857-1928) was more the consummate architect than his partner, having attended the Franklin Institute Drawing School in the late 1860s and early 1870s. He found jobs as a mechanical engineer, and then became a draughtsman for the Philadelphia Water Department in the mid-1880s, shortly before forming his partnership with Culver.

The firm Culver & Rogers began operations around 1886 with an office located at 901 Walnut Street, Philadelphia. Among their many projects were large suburban developments in Wayne and Wynburne (an area between Devon and Berwyn). Elsewhere, they designed a huge hotel for the Langhorne Improvement Co., as well as structures in Eagles Mere, Norristown, and Long Branch, New Jersey.

When the partnership dissolved effective September 28, 1888, T. Mellon Rogers went into business with the established firm of Constable Bros., previously of New York City. Their new office at 902 Walnut Street was designed to consist of three large rooms, “one of which will be fitted up as a museum of building construction containing all kinds of materials used in building and especially the latest improvements in sanitary apparatus.” (Builder and Decorator, 10/1888)

Newton Culver, meanwhile, succeeded the pair’s firm on his own, albeit briefly, at its old office at 901 Walnut Street. His commissions listed in the November, 1888 Builder and Decorator included continued work for George Fallon of Wayne, as well as a “block of eight room houses” at his hometown of Williamsport.

Shortly before the firm’s dissolution, Culver & Rogers had been referenced as proponents of Adamant Plaster, a modern alternative to traditional hair and lime building plasters. A year later, Newton Culver abandoned his architectural practice and moved to Detroit to act as the general manager of the Michigan Adamant Plaster Co., a new enterprise specializing in the material. Culver’s shift in focus from designing buildings to selling building materials was to be permanent. A few years later he joined his father in a similar venture in Williamsport, which they called the Diamond Wall Cement Company. This firm was incorporated in 1894 with Newton Culver as general manager and his father Eber as treasurer. At one point the company was actually called “The N.H. Culver Diamond Wall Cement” company, suggesting that the Culver name was recognizable enough in the Williamsport area to be attached to the company masthead.

Although Newton Culver faded from the architectural scene shortly after Culver & Rogers dissolved, T. Mellon Rogers remained in
practiced for many years to come. The firm Constable Bros. & Rogers existed barely a year before Rogers broke off to form his own private practice, making a name for himself working on historic structures as well as a multitude of original creations.

Evidence of Colonial influence, or at least a Victorian interpretation of the Colonial aesthetic, had been present in the work of Culver & Rogers since the firm's beginnings. Some of their buildings, such as the public school at Wayne, incorporated ornate exterior details including dimensional shapes made to look like ribbons tied in bows, balustrades with overly detailed turnings, and window surrounds with finely carved aprons and bonnets resembling highboy wardrobes.

Of course, such detail is anything but authentic to 18th century architecture. The architects may have taken influence from more subdued architectural details and period furniture and blown them out of proportion. Such was their right when creating new projects; applying that interpretation and aesthetic in a “restoration” sense is another thing.

During this era, there were no Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation or any academic recommendations for how to properly restore historic structures. Questions such as what materials should be retained and how to properly reconstruct missing architectural elements were seldom considered.

T. Mellon Rogers was a vestryman at Old St. David's Episcopal Church in 1893 when he began alterations to its historic 1715 chapel, one of the most notable landmarks of the Main Line area and the most popular local tourist destination of the Victorian period. Rogers added raised panel wainscoting and Georgian Revival lampposts to the interior to evoke an earlier time. He also designed the lichgate (covered gateway) that is part of the south wall of the churchyard. Modifications would persist in the following years: another vestryman and noted architect, R. Brognard Okie, is said to have designed a new Georgian style pulpit around 1912.

In 1896, upon the relocation of the Philadelphia city government from Independence Square to the new City Hall, T. Mellon Rogers was commissioned by the Daughters of the American Revolution to “restore” Independence Hall, with the intention being reconstruction in the appearance of originality. The hall's side wings and arcades were replaced to better resemble the known attributes of the original structures that stood there, and various changes, interior and exterior, were made to “restore” the original appearance of the complex.

A write-up in the Philadelphia Inquirer of June 24, 1896 described the thorough research conducted using the original plans of the complex and physical evidence of past details. The article stressed the care being done to preserve original elements and reproduce them according to the best sources available. When complete, however, the architectural community disagreed strongly with the result. In fact, the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects spent the next few decades un-doing much of the work Rogers supervised in the 1890s. The result of these AIA changes of the early 20th century are largely what is visible at Independence National Historical Park today.

Despite the derision he received from his own professional community, T. Mellon Rogers remained in practice for many years after the changes to Independence Hall. He even continued his focus on historic Colonial-era structures, including modifications to the Tarleton mansion in Devon and Wayneborough, the Paoli home of General Anthony Wayne. At Wayneborough, Rogers' revivalist flourishes installed around 1902 have since been removed.

While other local revivalist architects such as R. Brognard Okie have earned acclaim in posterity, Thomas Mellon Rogers is largely remembered for what he did incorrectly by modern preservation standards. While it is not difficult to find condemnable examples of Rogers' heavy-handed approach to renovation, much of his original work along the Main Line deserves recognition and respect.

Newton Culver and T. Mellon Rogers should be remembered best for their brief but lasting influence on the western Main Line. They arrived and took residence in a place that was at the cusp of a great boom; the towns of Wayne, Devon and Berwyn saw huge growth in the 1880s and '90s. Although most of Culver & Rogers’ grandest statements in the area – their schools and hotels – have fallen for the sake of progress, many of the residences they designed still stand as some of the most notable and intact examples of Victorian Queen Anne architecture remaining on the Main Line.

(A corresponding article about Culver & Rogers, covering their work in Tredyffrin and Easttown Townships, can be found in the April, 2015 issue of the Tredyffrin Easttown History Quarterly.)
PROJECTS IN WAYNE

= Extant  = Not Extant  = Questionable Sources or Unproduced Project

Culver & Rogers

1886  
1. Residence - Lincoln
2. Hotel
3. Frame church (chapel of Episcopal Church)

1887  
3. Residence - For George P. Fallon, “facing Lancaster Pike”
2. Two frame and stone houses
1. Residence & Stable - Martha M. Brown

1888  
5. Residence - George P. Fallon
2. Boiler House, Dwelling, Stable - Richard H. Johnson
3. Stable - John B. Saxon
1. Stable - Thomas S. Wood

Newton H. Culver

1888  
4. Four cottages for George Fallon

1889  

Constable Brothers & T. Mellon Rogers

1888-89  
6. R.H. Johnson residence

Thomas Mellon Rogers

1889  
6. George P. Fallon dwelling, store (Wayne Business Block)
7. School

undated  
8. St. Martin’s Church Rectory, Belrose Lane

= Residential Development Including Runnymede, Lansdowne, and Windermere Avenues. This area, developed by the Fallon brothers, contains many homes confirmed to have been designed by Culver & Rogers and others that may have been, though an attribution is unconfirmed as yet.
Culver & Rogers in Wayne

One of the only large centrally-located properties in Wayne that was not purchased by J. Henry Askin or Drexel & Childs was the Siter farm, later owned by John M. Kennedy, Jr. The holdout was short-lived, however, and in 1885 the Wayne Land Company was formed to purchase those 83 acres, with Christopher Fallon as the company’s president. Fallon and his brother, George, would primarily develop the portion of this land northeast of Conestoga Road, leaving the other half for Christopher Fallon, Jr. to develop a generation later. The brothers hired Culver & Rogers to design the cottages on Runnymede and Lansdowne Avenues (the Fallon family had previously owned an estate called “Runnymede,” located in Lansdowne, Delaware County), as well as four homes on Windermere Avenue and possibly a few on the portion of West Wayne Avenue that was part of their property. The Queen Anne exuberance of their houses was a contrast to Wendell & Smith’s more staid, mass-produced housing elsewhere in Wayne. The Fallons (and Culver & Rogers) also contributed public buildings to the Drexel & Childs land, with a public school and large retail complex consisting of seven stores with apartments above. This so-called “business block” might be their most interesting commission in Wayne, its detailed and unusual architecture making it one of the most picturesque buildings of the town’s early history.

Hotel

Culver & Rogers had experience designing hotels, with significant commissions in Wynburne and Langhorne. A reference claims a “3 story” hotel was designed by the firm for Wayne in 1886. It seems possible that this refers to an expansion of the Bellevue Hotel, the massive Queen Anne-style structure that stood on the current AT&T tower site, but the reference doesn’t seem to connect. It describes “a fine three-story hotel at Wayne, Delaware County, Pa., to run in connection with the Bingham house of this city; it will be of brick and contain forty rooms, the building throughout will be in the best style.” Assuming it was ever built, this most likely refers to a large boarding house-type establishment similar to the “Wesley Hotel” on North Wayne Avenue.

Episcopal Chapel

Culver & Rogers was credited with designing a frame church in Wayne, described in October 1886 “to be used as a chapel for the Episcopal church.” This presumably refers to a predecessor of St. Mary’s Protestant Episcopal Church. A structure predating the 1889 stone Wilson Brothers & Co. edifice that survives to this day is shown on the same site in earlier maps, though no images are known to exist.

Residence – Mrs. Martha Brown

The namesake of “Martha Brown’s Woods” had a large property along Lancaster Avenue east of Wayne. Though no photographs of the residence exist in the Radnor Historical Society archives, it is vividly described in an account from the Philadelphia Real Estate Record & Builders’ Guide:

“It will be a low, rambling cottage, with much stone work, the roof to be broken with gables and dormer windows. Another feature will be the wide porches with stone pillars. The window sills will be deep, and the casements glazed with small diamond panes. The interior finish will be of antique oak on the first floor and other hardwoods in the other stories; all of the ceilings will be low and the floor joists will show in the library and dining room. Fire-places with cabinet mantels, a sun gallery, thorough heating and lighting appliances and all other conveniences will be introduced. The cost is to be about $6000. A stable of rustic design, circular in form and covered with shingles will be built on the rear of the lot. The same lady will also build a handsome stable at Radnor for a house recently built at that place by her.”

The Fallon Development

About a year before Wendell & Smith began their revolutionary development in North Wayne, brothers George and Christopher Fallon began construction of their own subdivision on the old Siter farm. While the house designs of the Price brothers for Drexel & Childs property were
ahead of their time in both design and mass-production potential, Culver & Rogers’ homes for the Fallons were more typical of the era’s Queen Anne aesthetic. Some of these designs repeated, and some echoed the firm’s concurrent work at Wynburne for developer Charles N. Thorpe. In massing and detail, the designers did not hold back, favoring octagonal turrets, exuberant shingle patterns, and unusual window shapes. Two similar turreted homes were built side-by-side on Lansdowne Avenue, exhibiting the most extreme Culver & Rogers features, including a multi-paned window, the shape of which resembles a curling ribbon floating on the wind.
Above: A Fallon brothers home on the east side of Lansdowne Avenue, pictured when new. It would have been a fairly typical home of its time if not for the high roof peak with half-round window.

Right: The home of Dr. Elmer on the corner of South Wayne and Runnymede Avenues. It is shown here prior to being demolished in 1965 for a municipal parking lot and the township’s relocated war memorial. (Photo for RHS by J.C. Massey)

The Fallon brothers’ land extended as far north as West Wayne Avenue, where several of their plots adjoined Wendell & Smith’s so-called “Medium Cottages.” The Fallons built a series of houses resembling Wendell & Smith’s, which may have utilized Culver & Rogers designs.

Many of the homes along Lansdowne Avenue have remained in good states of preservation, though changes in zoning have meant less original fabric has been retained on Runnymede. Some Fallon development houses were lost to larger developments and improvements, including that of Dr. Elmer (the Radnor Township War Memorial is found on the site today). Many survivors have been converted into apartments and modified heavily, though most remain single family homes.

Perhaps the most notable homes that Culver & Rogers
designed for the Fallons were a group of four along the 100-block of Windermere Avenue. Despite being interesting in design and prominent in position, extraordinarily little visual evidence has been archived about these homes. On the eastern end of the block, the John Rose residence was built with many characteristic Culver & Rogers features. This home was shown in a rare color plate in the Builder & Decorator magazine in October 1887, noting each paint color that was to be used on the exterior. Although the rendering shows a round ogee (or bell-shaped) tower roof, a conical roof was built instead.

Next to the Rose house was a residence first owned by J.H. Jeffers, of which virtually nothing is known. The only clues to its design can be found in the backgrounds of early photographs (including the one above, at extreme right), which only seem to reveal a massive hipped roof extending far above other homes. For now, this structure remains a great mystery.

The Dallett home, 104 Windermere, came next on the block. Generally rectangular in profile, it featured an undersized tower with ogee roof. It is documented only in a Dallett family photograph (above).

The westernmost home on the block was first owned by C.P. Wood. Likely one of the era’s most prominent and recognizable residences, among its features were a massive porte-cochère and third floor balcony.

The entire 100-block of Windermere was wiped out in the apartment boom of the mid-20th century. Windermere Court took up the eastern half of the block (the Rose property and an adjoining empty lot) in the early 1930s, and two more large apartment houses replaced the Wood and Jeffers homes a few decades later. School district tennis courts replaced the Dallett residence. The only physical evidence that these homes ever existed is a stone wall along the western edge of the Wayne House apartments, once belonging to the Wood property, still topped with an original iron fence. This single element has beaten the odds to survive decades of demolition and redevelopment, yet it exists largely unnoticed.

Boiler House, Dwelling, Stable – Richard H. Johnson

R.H. Johnson & Co. was one of Wayne’s earliest businesses. Located on Conestoga Road near West Wayne Avenue, R.H. Johnson provided
various contracting services, from stonework to road paving. Culver & Rogers’ contributions to the company’s campus are not described, though the “dwelling” may refer to a small Queen Anne house that still stands near the former Johnson quarry at 234 Conestoga Road.

Alhambra House for Theo. Gugert

Gugert’s residence (not a Culver & Rogers design) was located on the corner of Bellevue and West Lancaster Avenues. Historic maps show several outbuildings on the property, one of which could pertain to this reference. The term “Alhambra” refers to Moorish design influences.

R.H. Johnson Residence

A project begun by Culver & Rogers and completed during the brief existence of the firm Constable Brothers & T. Mellon Rogers, Johnson’s residence was an unusual dwelling on the southeast corner of Bloomingdale and West Wayne Avenues. This house, designed and built in 1888-89, featured a cylindrical stone tower facing the corner and a porte-cochère facing West Wayne Avenue. Close inspection of the tower shows downspouts in the shape of decorative dragon heads.

Above: R.H. Johnson’s residence exhibited many unusual shapes and material choices to make one of the most unique homes in Wayne. Like many of the prominently placed large homes of its era, it was demolished in the 20th century for a larger housing complex.

Business Block

Though mostly a residential firm, Culver & Rogers were not unfamiliar with commercial structures. In 1888, they were credited with the design of a block of stores in Poughkeepsie, NY, and elsewhere on the Main Line their contributions to downtown Berwyn were among the town’s most recognizable Victorian-era structures.

Bookended with two conical towers, the business block consisted of seven architecturally distinct storefronts. With architectural flourishes ranging from Rogers’ famous Colonial Revival detailing to half-timbered gable peaks, the block featured a castle-like stone section as the central segment. Design details varied from shop to shop, with fan lights above doorways, carved pediments, and even a unique oval-shaped display window for one store. It was constructed of “very fine white granite recently discovered on the property of the Wayne Land Company.”

The center section was designed to be the most prominent in design and function. A front facade comprised completely of stone was punctuated with arched windows and front doorway, while the third
story contained an oriel window (a bay window that does not touch the ground). Above the third story, a stone feature with open arch extended almost an entire fourth story. The intended purpose of this stone storefront was as the home of the town’s new title & trust company, hence the fortress-like appearance that resembled Culver & Rogers’ bank design in Berwyn. Despite this intended use, the Wayne Title & Trust Company instead built a freestanding stone building on the southwest corner of Wayne and Lancaster Avenues in 1890 from a design by William L. Price. Instead of a bank, W.H. Welsh Hardware may have been the first occupant of the center storefront (as seen on the cover of this issue).

Though a stunning composition, the original appearance of the business block was not to last. Over the next century and more, the structure was modified one store at a time. The towered section on the east end was replaced in the 1920s by a simpler, brick-clad Harrison’s department store (now Wayne Sporting Goods) designed by MacKenzie & Wiley. The larger east end tower was replaced with another rectangular brick building around the same time, since topped with a third story for condominiums. Though some of the business block’s original shapes and gables have endured over the last 125 years, the center stone section (since painted white) is really the only façade that has endured mostly intact. While the large open stone arch that once capped the façade has been removed, the third story oriel window still overlooks the bustling center of Wayne just as it did in 1890.

Wayne Public School

The above image of the Wayne Public School, which was the first building to be used as Radnor High School, has been used for decades in local histories and school district publicity. The ogee dome and ornate details are signatures of Rogers’ aesthetic. The school was first described as:

“a large colonial school building ... a handsome house, 74 by 48 feet, with a tower 60 feet in height. A white stone will be used and the roof covered with cypress shingles. On the first floor there will be four class rooms and a large room in the tower. The basement is to be utilized as a play room. Steam heat is to be used, also electric lighting.”

The four classrooms were soon insufficient for Wayne’s growing population, and the first additions and alterations were made within just six years. The school stood until the 1920s, at which time it little resembled Rogers’ original design.
St. Martin’s Rectory, 365 Belrose Lane

Now a private residence, the old St. Martin’s rectory (pictured below) appears to be a fairly typical home of its era, though it may have had more design interest and ornamentation when first built.

Bibliography – Biographical Portion


In addition to these sources, this article would not have been possible without original copies of two remarkable publications: The Builder and Real Estate Advocate (also known as the Builder and Decorator) is archived at the Free Library of Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide is archived at the Athenæum of Philadelphia.

Bibliography – Architectural Survey Portion


Hotel – Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide, v. 1, n. 43, p. 528 (11/1/1886)

Frame church (chapel of Episcopal Church) – Builder and Real Estate Advocate, v. 4, n. 2, p. 8 (10/1886)


Two frame and stone houses – Builder and Decorator, v. 4, n. 12 (8/1887)

Residence & Stable – Martha M. Brown – Builder and Decorator, v. 5, n. 4 (12/1887); Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide, v. 2, n. 49, p. 589 (12/12/1887); specified as a “remodeling” Builder and Decorator, v. 6, No. 3 (5/1888)


Stable – John B. Saxon – Builder and Decorator, v. 6, No. 6 (8/1888); Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide, v. 3, n. 37, p. 440 (9/17/1888)


Stable – Thomas S. Wood – Builder and Decorator, v. 6, No. 6 (8/1888); Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide, v. 3, n. 37, p. 440 (9/17/1888)


Four cottages for George P. Fallon – Builder and Decorator, v. 7, No. 3 (11/1888)

Alhambra House for Theo. Gugert – Builder and Decorator, v. 7, n. 9 (1/1889)

R. H. Johnson residence – Builder, Decorator and Wood-Worker (1888, 6/1889)

George P. Fallon dwelling, store (Wayne Business Block) – Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide, v. 4, n. 9, p. 103 (3/6/1889)


Ronald J. Kule, author of Chef Tell: The Biography of America’s Pioneer TV Showman Chef  
Tuesday, January 14, at the Winsor Room, Radnor Memorial Library  
Video of this program is found at www.radnorhistory.org  
“Chef Tell,” Friedman Paul Erhardt, trained in several hotels and restaurants in Europe before moving to the United States when he was 28 years old. The showman chef pleased the palates of those who patronized his restaurants in Wayne and in Chestnut Hill, to name two. Chef Tell won two Emmy Awards as well as the hearts of TV viewers for his instructional cooking segments that aired from 1976 to 1986. RHS and the Library were cosponsors of this event.

Clarissa Dillon: “Now, About that Stone...”  
Tuesday, February 11, at the Finley House  
Video of this program is found at www.radnorhistory.org  
Did George Washington lead his troops along Conestoga Road in Garrett Hill? The commemorative stone says he did on 15 September, 1777. Was Washington on his way to Valley Forge after the Battle of Brandywine? These questions and others were discussed by Clarissa Dillon, a retired Radnor teacher (Ithan, 1969-1993) who is known for her demonstrations of colonial domestic processes. She received her PhD from Bryn Mawr College in 1986 and has been involved in living history since 1975.

Michael Shaw: Railroads of King of Prussia  
Tuesday, March 4, at the Winsor Room, Radnor Memorial Library  
Video of this program is found at www.radnorhistory.org  
As King of Prussia celebrates its 300th year of existence, there is a strong movement to bring back passenger rail service to King of Prussia in order to serve business and residential communities. A new book, The Railroads Of King of Prussia, PA: The Past Leads To The Future, looks at the rich 175 year history of the railroads in King of Prussia, and how the renewed demand for passenger rail service is a microcosm of King of Prussia as it has traveled the path from a rural town to a business dominated suburb of Philadelphia. The author of this book, Michael Shaw, spoke to these topics. This event was sponsored by RHS, the Radnor Memorial Library, and the King of Prussia Historical Society.

Antique Appraisal Event  
Sunday, April 6, at the Wayne Senior Center  
Appraisals of attendees’ antiques were conducted by Gordon Converse, a local antique expert who provided opinions of the history of the treasures, what they are worth, and how to care for them.

Annual Dinner at Mill Grove  
Tuesday, May 6  
The RHS Annual Dinner was held at the Audubon Center at Mill Grove, the historic first U.S. home of John James Audubon. The museum features a combination of art, nature, and history, including Audubon’s major work, Birds of America. The land surrounding the museum is a wildlife sanctuary with five miles of trails. Guests had the
opportunity to enjoy a guided tour, visit the historic barn, and have hors d’oeuvres with beverages prior to dinner catered by Jeffrey Miller in the Pavilion. Guest speakers for the evening included Jean Bochnowski, Center Director, and Steven Saffier, Director of the Audubon At Home Program and Bird Town. This event was cosponsored by RHS and the Radnor Conservancy.

Finley House 50th Anniversary Celebration
Sunday, September 14, at the Finley House

In 1964, the Society received the Finley House, the oldest home in North Wayne, from a longtime supporter whose family owned it for nearly 80 years. Since then, the house has been used as the Society’s headquarters and museum. To celebrate the Golden Anniversary of our ownership of the Finley House, RHS threw a party which included tours of the house, antique lawn games, a visit from the Radnor Fire Company’s antique fire engine, and an illustrated presentation on the

129 year history of the North Wayne Protective Association. Many friends and neighbors joined us to kick off our next 50 years at the Finley House!

Richard Rashke, Author, *Useful Enemies: John Demanchuk And America’s Open-Door Policy For Nazi War Criminals*

Tuesday, October 7, at the Winsor Room, Radnor Memorial Library

Richard Rashke is a lecturer, author of several non-fiction books, and featured contributor to the award-winning television series *Nazi Hunters*. *Useful Enemies* is a powerful, carefully documented book that sheds light on the infamous case of John Demanjuk. A produced screenwriter and playwright, Rashke’s work has appeared on network television and off-Broadway. His books *The Killing of Karen Silkwood* and *Escape From Sobibor* have been made into feature films. This event was cosponsored by RHS and the Library.

Pennsylvania Humanities Council (PHC) Presents: Nursing in a Civil War Hospital

Wednesday, October 22, at the Winsor Room, Radnor Memorial Library

This interactive lecture depicted life in field hospitals as seen through the eyes of Anna Morris Holstein, a nurse and a matron during the Civil War. Smadar Shtuhl, an expert in American history with particular research interests in American women, used Holstein’s viewpoint to demonstrate how gender and racial assumptions were compromised to answer the demands of a major conflict. While listening to excerpts from Holstein’s diary, the audience was introduced to society’s expectations of women in mid 19th-century America and to Holstein’s personal
struggles with male physicians. The audience also learned how whites like Holstein handled their racial attitudes towards black soldiers during this turbulent time. RHS and the Library cosponsored this event.

Charles E. Dagit Jr., Author, Louis I. Kahn—Architecture: Remembering the Man and Those Who Surrounded Him

Tuesday, October 28, at the Winsor Room, Radnor Memorial Library

Charles Dagit gave us a vivid, first-person account of one of the greatest chapters in architectural history, when, in the 1960s, Louis I. Kahn was building a new kind of modern architecture around the world and teaching his distinctive design philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. Dagit was an undergraduate at Penn, a member of Kahn’s famous one-year master’s studio, and an architect in the office of Aldo Giurgola. The architect/author taught at Temple University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Drexel University, and was awarded the American Institute of Architects’ Pennsylvania Medal of Distinction. This event was cosponsored by RHS and the Library.

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens and read by Bennett Hill

Sunday, December 28, at the Finley House

This is a traditional RHS event. Every other year, Bennett, a retired teacher and emeritus member of the RHS Board, reads an abridged version of this classic Christmas tale by the fire in the front parlor. Refreshments, including eggnog, were served at the interval.

Selected programs were filmed by our videographer, Tom Ellis.

View videos of many of these programs on our website: radnorhistory.org

Radnor Historical Society 2014 Report

Accessions & Acquisitions - 2014

Acquisitions

- Hardbound 1935 Radnor High School yearbook

Donations

George Aman
- Copy of 1992 historic asset inventory
- Radnor Library History by Roberta Winters
- Radnor Township Technical Memorandum #1, and other open space docs
- Three photographs of Radnor High School football team: 1906, 1908 (x2)
- 1988 Wayne Public Safety Association membership booklet
- Souvenir Album – Dedication of Masonic Hall, Wayne, 12/15/1915
- Wayne Building & Loan 40th Anniversary booklet, 1886-1926
- Three photos of party for Bud Harbestad, c. 1980

Judy Barber
- Iron boot repair form

Jane Beatty
- Book: “Wayne Presbyterian Church 1870-1970” (with update by Samuel Roberts)
Lynn Ellis
• Radnor High School “Radnor Proud” button
• Lewis Lane Lot #12 house plans
• Old teacher’s school bell
• 1991 Overbrook Farms tour booklet
• Railroad Mills snuff tin
• Four books
• Panhurst Farms, Wayne, PA pint milk bottle
• 1954 Monopoly game
• Cookbook: Recipes from L’Auberge 1967-1986
• Book: “More Than Knowledge” (First 40 years of Eastern College)
• Book: “Main Line Entertains” by the Saturday Club

Edward & Jean Grimes
• c. 1940 photograph of Radnor police force
• History of Battery A 107th Field Artillery
• Diary - 107th Battery A. Camp Dix
• Liberty War - 1917-18 - U.S.S. Louisiana Military Ball
• “France - Our Ally” - B. Van Vorst
• Four postcards from France
• Edward Grimes - Soap Box Derby
• Police badges and patches

Robert Grumbacher
• 2014 Devon Horse Show program
• Book: “Rediscovering Devon”

Phil Kovanick
• Book: “John Frost: A Quiet Mastery”

Bradley A. Lowry
• Book: “Radnor 1979” (photos of Radnor High School Class of 1979)

J. Michael Morrison
• Collection of Wayne Title & Trust Co. items

Susan Smith
• Wood pierced tin whale oil lantern
• Seven antique books

Mark Springer
• Various items relating to Allan C. Hale, Jr. automobile dealership, including letters, pamphlets, and other assorted documents
• Booklet: Wayne Masonic Lodge #581, 1890-1990
• Booklet: Wayne Masonic Lodge #581, 1890-1985

Mr. & Mrs. Charles White
• Large pewter serving plate
• Pewter water pitcher
• Pewter tea and coffee pot
• Brass candle stick and snuffer
• 16 pieces of clothing
• 1982 Rockwell plate

Bertram Wolfson
• 3 broadaxes (2 with handles)
• Boot buttoner with deer antler handle
• Wood hole borer for wooden pegs in beams
• 1904 PRR season tickets
• Banjotown U.S.A. 3rd Annual Block Party flyer, 6/6/1959

Don Wood
• 1949 sketch of store on the corner of N. Wayne and Lancaster Avenues
Radnor Historical Society 2014 Report

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Lower Merion Historical Society  
Marple Newtown Historical Society  
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Paoli Library  
Sharon Hill Historical Society  
Tinicum Township Historical Society  
Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society  
Tredyffrin Public Library  
Upper Darby Historical Society

Radnor Historical Society 2014 Report

Volunteers & Guides

House Guides

The following members of the Society have given their time and provided their knowledge of the Society’s collections to the public during the open periods of the Finley House on Tuesday and Saturday afternoons during the year:

Jennifer Beacom  
Charles Crawford  
John Dale  
Lynn Ellis  
Sam Etris  
Evie Giegerich  
Bennett Hill  
Steve Pendergast  
Cathy Siple  
Sally Spargo

Other Volunteers

Jennifer Beacom: Transcription  
Tom Ellis: Videotaping our programs  
Phil Graham: Membership & Publications  
Jane Meldrum: Library  
Steve Pendergast: Archives & Research  
Greg Prichard: Archives, Research & Internet  
Linda Sall: Archives
Two New Publications About Radnor History

AVAILABLE NOW AT THE FINLEY HOUSE OR BY MAIL

THE WAR OF THE REVOLUTION IN RADNOR (1777-1778)

A new 40-page booklet by local author F.J. Dallett on the fascinating story of Radnor's place in the American Revolution.

First written in 1976, this new edition has been updated with numerous illustrations, maps, and a color replica bank note officially signed by one of Philadelphia's most prominent residents, Samuel Miles.

Additional notes throughout the text explain the current locations and a brand new appendix sheds some additional light on that famous long march by the Continental Army along the Radnor stretch of what we now know as Conestoga Road.

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NORTH WAYNE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

A HISTORY

A new 84-page book about the NWPA and the development of North Wayne. Written using 129 years of NWPA records as reference, never before has a more comprehensive history of North Wayne been printed. In addition to narratives on the NWPA, the development of North Wayne, the old North Wayne fire house and other topics, this book contains over 100 images from the history of our neighborhood, many of which have never been published before.

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1. Quarter page (5" wide x 1.75" tall): $35
2. Half page (5" wide x 3.5" tall): $60
3. Full page (5" wide x 7.5" tall): $100

Business cards can be adapted for quarter page ads.

Ads will be due by March 1, 2016. Contact the editor at webmaster@radnorhistory.org for more information!