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1962

### The History of Bryn Mawr, 1683-1900

Barbara Alyce Farrow

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**The**  
**HISTORY OF BRYN MAWR**

**1683-1900**

**Barbara Alyce Farrow**

THE  
HISTORY OF BRYN MAWR  
1683 - 1900

Barbara Alyce Farrow

Foreword  
by  
Catherine Drinker Bowen

Published by  
A Committee of Residents  
and  
The Bryn Mawr Civic Association  
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

1962

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Westminster College

New Wilmington, Pennsylvania.

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To my grandmother, Mrs. Alice Coles Metzler, who inspired me many times when I was discouraged, and to the other members of my family who aided in obtaining information and proofreading, I dedicate this book.

Barbara Alyce Farrow

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## FOREWORD

As a Bryn Mawr resident myself, I am delighted to own Barbara Farrow's thorough and careful account of the beginnings and growth of our community. It is good to have such a history compiled by a local woman, Miss Farrow surely qualifies on that count; her grandfather, in the 1890's, had his home in the old railroad station over by the White Hall Hotel.

The author has explored our history from the Lenni Lenape Indians of Penn's Day and the "Welsh Barony," through the period when we were called Humphreyville, down to the coming of the railroad, the building of schools and stores and the college. It is pleasant to see the old names, Ellis and Rawle and Lloyd and the rest, and to read of their part in building of our community. One learns here many odd facts: Professor Woodrow Wilson named his house on Bryn Mawr College campus "The In Betweenery," because it was situated between the Deanery and the Greenery; the three balls on those old mile stones used to be known as Three Apple Dumplings; our early steam engines were called Fireflies, and the train crew wore high silk hats.

There is something in this history for everybody. Miss Farrow has done Bryn Mawr a service.

Catherine Drinker Bowen

## PREFACE

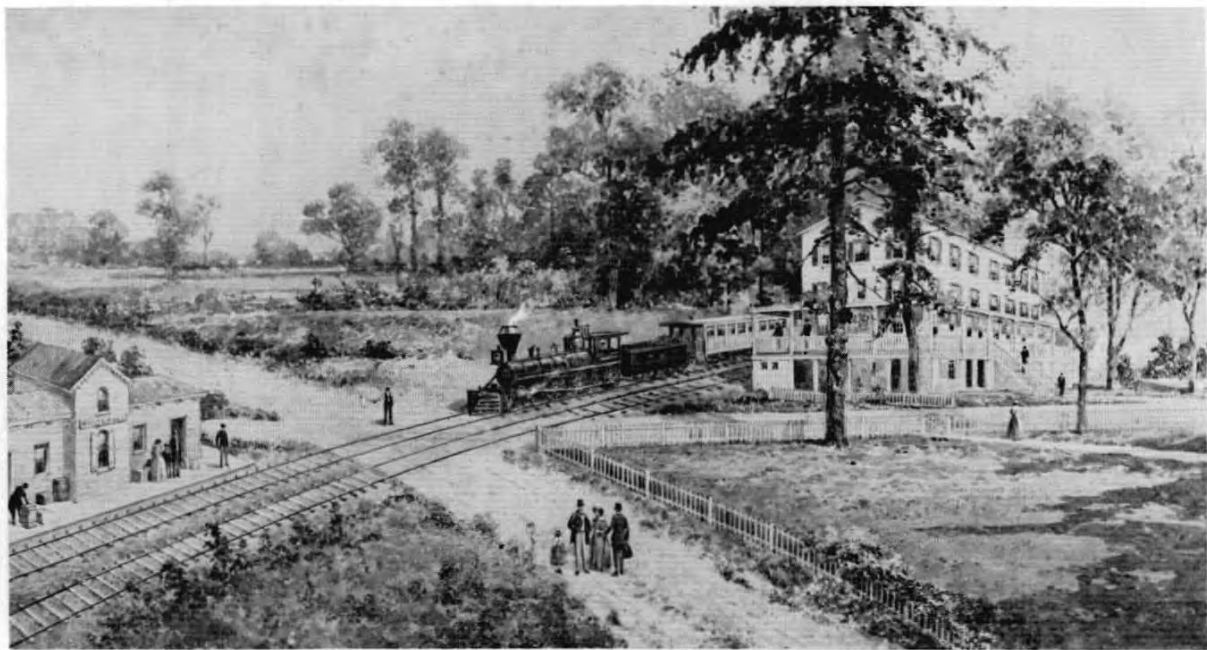
To every person, there is a certain place that he fondly refers to as his home town. For me, the little town of Bryn Mawr, or Humphreysville as it was called before 1869, has that sentimental connection.

For many years I have wandered its streets without realizing the historical significance of the town. It meant only one thing—home. When I decided to do my thesis on Bryn Mawr, I knew absolutely nothing about its history. Through my research, I have had a new world opened before me. Places that I never before knew existed have been revealed to me, and many common looking houses have turned out to be unmarked historical spots. The past traditions of Bryn Mawr and their importance are now indelibly etched in my mind, and I flatter myself in believing that this study has also proved interesting to my family and neighbors as they have listened to my discoveries or assisted in my effort to resurrect the earlier life of the town.

Most of the material for this thesis is from undated newspaper clippings found in the files at the Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr. An initial guide was supplied by the Bryn Mawr sections of Mr. Gordon Burlingame's fine Historical Sketch of Bryn Mawr and Vicinity. I have mainly catalogued and digested many articles written about Bryn Mawr and the Main Line to obtain a clear, all-round picture of the town. This has never been done before. I wish to thank the librarians at the Ludington Memorial Library, Villanova University Library, and Gladwyne Free Library for their help in this endeavor. I would also like to express thanks to Mrs. Dorothy Moorehouse, Mr. Michael Barone, Mr. and Mrs. George Vaux, Mr. James Rawle and the officers of the Bryn Mawr Civic Association who did so much to see that this work was published in book form.

Now, I would like to present you to my home town—Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.





Courtesy Whitehall

WHITE HALL HOTEL AND STATION

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

What is Bryn Mawr? It is a little town of approximately 5,000 people located nine miles west of Philadelphia on the Main Line. There are really no town boundaries because there is no town government. The area lying between Harriton and Roberts Roads and Buck Lane is considered to be Bryn Mawr. It is not only a post office because the Bryn Mawr Post Office also serves adjoining towns. It was formerly a telephone exchange, but even that has been altered. It is a stop on the Pennsylvania Railroad, but other towns north and south of Bryn Mawr use it also. The town lies in two counties—Montgomery and Delaware—and in three townships—Lower Merion, Haverford, and Radnor. The largest section is located in Lower Merion. Politically, there are two Lower Merion voting wards, East Bryn Mawr and West Bryn Mawr; one Radnor, the fifth; and one Haverford, the fifth.<sup>1</sup> On some outlying districts, the addresses are mixed up. One of my friends was formerly under a Bryn Mawr telephone exchange, got his mail from the Villanova Post Office, and his deed read West Conshohocken. Much additional evidence might be cited in illustrating the difficulties involved in defining the town limits.

From the very beginning, Bryn Mawr had a rich history. Many of its houses were among the earliest ones built in our colony. Through the town ran many of the early roads and railroads. With the railroad, we find that Bryn Mawr developed into one of the few inland summer resorts. It was the railroad which changed the town's name. As people of prestige moved from their homes in Philadelphia to Bryn Mawr, we find the town developing as an educational center. One of the world's

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1 "The Bryn Mawr Story," *The Magazine Main Line*, February 1951, p. 24.

greatest women's colleges was built on the north side of town, and there were two well-known private girls schools constructed.

The town is growing and developing every year. The population and assessed value of property have risen sharply in the past few years. She is a modern town, yet one with a culture of the older ages. Quiet and beautiful under her many shade trees, she stands a symbol of the past, yet a pattern of the present. This is Bryn Mawr.

## CHAPTER II

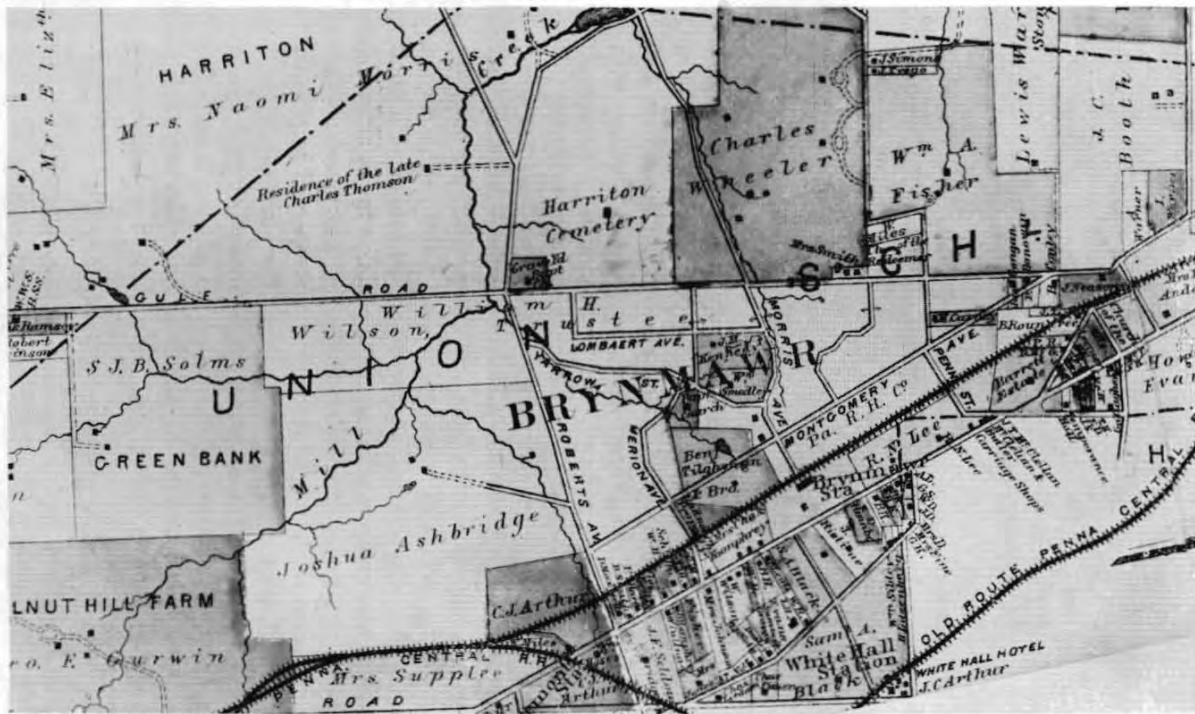
### GEOGRAPHY AND BACKGROUND

Looking back on the cradles of civilization, one finds that at least three elements were necessary for permanent settlement—(1) a favorable temperature conducive to colonization, (2) an adequate water supply, and (3) a soil favorable to cultivation. Like the early cradles of civilization, the region around the present town of Bryn Mawr had these three elements so important for birth and growth.

Bryn Mawr has an average temperature in January of 32 degrees and a 76 degree average temperature in July. With these moderate averages, this area can boast more than 200 frost-free days a year. The water supply is also adequate with the rainfall usually totaling 40 or more inches a year.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the moderate rainfall, there are a number of beautiful but not large springs which would be used to furnish water power. In fact, this section is so well watered that there was scarcely a large farm in the area that did not have one or more springs of sparkling drinking water. Through the area runs Mill Creek which also provided the section with good drinking water and power for mills. In addition to the abundant water supply, the surface of the region is rolling and consists of a rich loam soil, a belt of serpentine accompanied by steatite (soapstone), talc, dolomite, and many other minerals.<sup>2</sup>

At Bryn Mawr, there is located a wonder of geology—a queer patch of ancient gravel under the surface level. This gravel, which is found at elevations of from 325 to 450 feet above the Schuylkill River, has been studied extensively by

1. E. Gordon Alderfer, *The Montgomery County Story* (Narberth: Livingston Publishing Company, 1951), pp. 4-9.
2. William J. Buck, *History of Montgomery County Within the Schuylkill Valley* (Norristown: E. L. Acker, 1859), p. 28.



By permission, Lewis L. Amsterdam, Publisher,  
G. M. Hopkins Co. & Franklin Survey Co.

MAP FROM ATLAS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
G. M. HOPKINS & CO. 1871

Professor H. C. Lewis who named it "Bryn Mawr Gravel." It has been suggested that these deposits of gravel are the remains of an ancient ocean beach formation that erosion has worn away except at Bryn Mawr and nearby Chestnut Hill, in this immediate area. This gravel consists of rounded or sharp pebbles of quartzite or grains of sand cemented by iron in spots. Sometimes, the gravel is found covered with a brownish-black iron glaze which makes it very hard. Even today, this gravel can be seen in the railroad cut below the Bryn Mawr Pennsylvania Railroad station at an altitude of 430 feet. At this point, the gravel is ten feet thick and rests upon a foundation of decomposed schist rock. Professor Lewis claims that this curious formation belongs to the tertiary age or early Pleistocene and, therefore, is one of the oldest surface formations in our state of Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup>

The first inhabitants of the area around Bryn Mawr were a group of Indians who called themselves "Lenni Lenape" or the "original people" and "Waapanachki" or the "people from the east." This tall tribe with remarkable Roman features was called the Delaware by the early white settlers.<sup>4</sup> When the first colonists came, they found the Lenni Lenape living in the community life of the Stone Age period. Regarding the white men as their brothers at first, the Indians often shared their possessions with them. They had a high moral code and religion. Many of the Indians thought that the settlers were messengers of the Great Spirit that had been promised to them. The King of the Lenape Nation at this time was Tamanend, or Tammany as he was sometimes called. Since this tribe was very friendly, white settlement took place without bloodshed. In fact, several cases of intermarriage were mentioned in diaries of that time.<sup>5</sup>

Penn on his arrival was highly impressed with the friendliness of the Delawares. He described them very colorfully in a letter written to friends in England:

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3. Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1884), pp. 30-31.

4. Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

5. Alderfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-16.

In liberality they excel: nothing is too good for their friend; give them a fine gun, coat, or other thing, it may pass twenty hands before it sticks; light of heart, strong affections, but soon spent. The most merry creatures that live, feast, and dance perpetually; they never have much nor want much. Some kings have sold, others presented me with several parcels of land. . . . They care for little, because they want but little; and the reason is, a little contents them. . . . We sweat and toil to live, their pleasure feeds them; I mean their hunting, fishing, and fowling, and this table is spread everywhere.<sup>6</sup>

Penn was also greatly impressed with their intelligence and dealt with them in a manner which showed his respect. Although Penn had received Pennsylvania in a charter from Charles II, he still felt that the Indians, who were the true owners of the land, should receive compensation. This action gained the respect of the Indians for the white settlement and prevented the bloody massacres which sometimes swept over other colonies. On July 16, 1683, Penn bought from Secane and Idquoquehan all the land lying between the Schuylkill River at Manayunk and Chester Creek, and as far up the Schuylkill as Conshohocken Hill.<sup>7</sup> This land now includes in one section the site of the town of Bryn Mawr.

Proprietor Penn decided to sell part of his land in order to obtain money. Some of his most avid clients were among a group of Welshmen who desired to establish a "Welsh Barony." To make the offer more attractive, Penn verbally promised the Welsh that they would be allowed autonomy in the new land if they would purchase 40,000 acres in 5,000 acre lots. He promised them that they would be allowed to establish a self-governing "barony," a township where they would make and administer their own laws, speak their own language, and worship in their own way. They later discovered that parcels of acreage had been sold to speculators and settlers not of their own group which left many holes in their promised

6. Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

7. Charles H. Browning, *Welsh Settlement of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1912), p. 53.

"barony" of 40,000 continuous acres.<sup>8</sup> It was, many claim, a direct plan to split the Welsh and to keep their strength at a minimum. This policy of keeping the autocratic Welsh from combining was practiced even following the sale of the "Welsh Tract." In 1689, the Provincial Council in Philadelphia decided that the Welsh townships of Haverford and Radnor would be in Chester County, and the Welsh township of Merion would be in Philadelphia County. This action was vehemently denounced by the Welsh. Thus, the "Welsh Barony" never obtained a real existence except in a name.<sup>9</sup>

Because Penn had adopted the Dutch plan of "patroon concessions," his earliest intentions were to sell his acres in blocks of 5,000 acres. It was on one of these 5,000 acre plots of land that Bryn Mawr was built. In this way, he sold 30,000 acres of the "Welsh Tract" to seven companies—Company One headed by John ap Thomas of Llaithgwm, Merionethshire, and Dr. Edward Jones of Bala, Merionethshire, bought 5,000 acres; Company Two headed by Charles Lloyd and Margaret Davies (widow) of Dolobran, Montgomeryshire, bought 5,000 acres; Company Three headed by John Bevan of Treverigg of Glamorganshire bought 2,000 acres; Company Four headed by John ap John of Ruabon, Denbighshire, and Dr. Thomas Wynne of Caerwys, Flintshire, bought 5,000 acres; Company Five headed by Lewis ap David of Llandewy Velfry, Pembrokeshire, bought 3,000 acres; Company Six headed by Richard ap Thomas of Whitford Garne, Flintshire, bought 5,000 acres; and Company Seven headed by Richard Davies of Welshpool, Montgomeryshire, bought 5,000 acres. The above purchases of the so-called "Welsh Tract" were made from William Penn of Worminghurst in the county of Sussex on September 15, 1681, in the "CCCIII yeare of the Reigne of King Charles the Second over England." The deeds to the plots, which were recorded in Philadelphia and which were confirmed by Penn's land commissioner, were very vague and did not give the locations, the conditions, and restrictions under which Penn had made the sales. 100 pounds sterling

8. "The Bryn Mawr Story," *op. cit.*, p. 30.

9. Alderfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.



was paid for each tract of 5,000 acres located in one lot with the understanding that the proprietor could collect perpetually a quit-rent of one shilling for every hundred acres upon the first day of March. One-half of the land in the "Welsh Deeds" was laid out to the first purchasers in the townships of Merion, Radnor, and Haverford, and the balance was laid out in the townships of Goshen, NewTown, and Uwchlan.<sup>10</sup> It was in the first three townships formed—Merion, Radnor, and Haverford—that Bryn Mawr was located.

For two and a half years nobody knew the boundaries of the "Welsh Tract" because of the vague deeds. After much urging by the settlers of this area, Penn sent the following warrant to his Surveyor General Thomas Holmes:

Whereas divers considerable persons among ye Welsh Friends have requested me yt all ye Lands Purchased of me by theos of North Wales and South Wales, together with ye adjacent counties to ym as Herefordshire, Shorpsshire, and Shelshire, about fourty thousand acres, may be lay'd out contiguously as one Barony, alledging yt ye number allready come and suddenly to come, are such as will be capable of planting ye same much within ye proportion allowed by ye custom of ye country, and so not lye in large useless vacancies.

And because I am inclined and determined to agree and favour ym wth any reasonable conveniency and privilege;—I do hereby charge thee and strictly require thee to lay out ye sd tract of land in as uniform a manner as conveniently may be, upon ye west side of Skoolkill river, running three miles upon ye same, and two miles backward, and then extend ye parallel with ye river six miles, and to run westwardly so far as this ye sd quantity of land be compleately surveyed unto ym.

Given at Pennsbury, ye 13th 1 mo, 1684.<sup>11</sup>

Upon receiving instructions dated February 4, 1684, the Surveyor General Holmes' deputy, David Powell, laid out the tract in the 5,000 acre townships as directed by the proprietor.

10. Browning, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-35.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

When the results were finally made known, they were found in the following minutes of the Commissioners' meeting which was held in the Council Room of Philadelphia on May 25, 1687:

Beginning at the Skoolkill (at the Falls) thence running West (by) South West, on the City liberties, 2256 Perches (a little over seven miles, along Township, or City Line Road) to Darby Creek.

Thence following up the several courses thereof, (i.e. Darby Creek) to New Town, 988 Perches (a little over three miles), to a corner post by Crumb Creek.

Thence down the several courses thereof (Crum Creek) 460 Perches, (not quite a mile and a half).

Thence West (and by South,) by a line of Trees, 2080 Perches (six miles and a half.)

Thence North (by) North West, by a line of Trees 1920 Perches (six miles).

Thence East, (and by North,) by a line of Trees, 3040 Perches (nine and a half miles).

Thence East and by South 1120 Perches (three and a half miles).

Thence South (and by) South East 256 Perches (about a mile and a quarter).

Thence East (and by) North East 640 Perches (not quite a mile and a half).

Thence South (and by) South East 1204 Perches (a fraction over three and a half miles).

Thence East (and by) North East 668 Perches (a little over two miles) to the Skoolkill.

Thence down the several courses thereof (the Schuylkill River) to the Place of beginning.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the  $62\frac{1}{2}$  square mile tract known as the "Welsh Tract" came into being. Upon this land the beginnings of Bryn Mawr would soon appear.

The land in the tract was mainly sold to middle class Quaker farmers. On January 13, 1684, (the same day as the Penn Warrant for the surveying of the "Welsh Tract") Edward

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12. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

Pritchard received a patent of land in two tracts from Penn himself. The first tract was for 1,200 acres which bordered the land of Rees Radrah. The second tract, upon which most of the present town stands, was for 1,250 acres which bordered the land of John Humphrey. This latter tract was sold in fee to John Eckley who further split the estate. On March 1, 1685, he sold 100 acres to Launcelot Lloyd. This tract joined the Rowland Ellis land on the east-northeast and the John Humphrey land on the south-southwest. Lloyd in turn sold his land on May 20, 1691, to Philip Price. When Eckley died, he willed the balance of the land to his wife Sarah. On June 15, 1692, Mrs. Eckley deeded 300 acres located next to the land of Ellis Hugh to Rees Thomas. Pritchard, who still maintained part of the original tract, also sold 325 acres to Rees Thomas on November 25, 1701. Many of the previously mentioned lands stayed with the original families until they were bought by the Pennsylvania Railroad in the 1860's.<sup>13</sup>

Although the geographic outline was completed, the true foundation for the settlement of Bryn Mawr was slow in developing, and the area really was not settled until the construction of "Bryn Mawr" by Rowland Ellis and the formation of the "Harriton" estate by the Harrison family.

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13. *Ibid.*, p. 481.

## CHAPTER III

### "BRYN MAWR" AND "HARRITON"

The first stage of town development occurred in the late 1680's. On looking at Holmes' Map of 1718, one finds that in the area which the present town now covers were two tracts marked "Rowland Ellis" and "Thomas Ellis."

Who were Rowland Ellis and Thomas Ellis? Not much is known about Thomas, but Rowland has made an important contribution to the town's history. Rowland Ellis was considered a great scholar by his contemporaries and was a preacher for the Society of Friends. It was even rumored that he was a descendant of King Henry III!<sup>1</sup> He was born in 1649 at "Bryn Mawr" near the town of Dolgelly in Merionethshire, Wales, and in 1686 he arrived in the "Welsh Tract" from Wales to start his plantation.<sup>2</sup>

As mentioned above, Rowland Ellis was a scholar and served as an interpreter and translator for the Welsh in their relations with the English. He was well-known in the colony for his translation of Ellis Pugh's "Annerch ir Cymri" from the Welsh language into English. He called his book "A Salutations to the Britains, to call them from many things to the one thing needful for the saving of their souls, especially to the poor unarmed Tradesmen, Plowmen, Shepherds, those that are of a low degree like myself. This is in order to direct you to know God and Christ, the only wise God, which is life eternal and to learn of Him, that you may become wiser than your teachers."<sup>3</sup> To say the least, this must have been a very

1. Dora Harvey Develin, *Historic Lower Merion and Blockley* (Philadelphia: George H. Buchanan Company, 1927), p. 76.
2. Thomas Allen Glenn, *Merion in the Welsh Tract* (Norristown: Printed for the subscribers, 1896), p. 205.
3. Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 353.



S. Fisher Corlies, about 1875

BRYN MAWR 1704  
RENAMED HARRITON 1719

literal translation! In addition to his translating and preaching, Mr. Ellis was a politician. In 1700 he represented the "Welsh Tract," or at least Merion, in the Assembly.

The Ellis's put up a temporary house until they began to build the substantial stone mansion which remains today. Even without the comfort of his Welsh home, Mr. Ellis was very well pleased with his very new homeland. In a letter written to his son-in-law the Reverend Richard Johnston in 1691, he described the area thusly:

I like it very well; we had a very cold winter, such another people here cannot remember, hard frost & deep snow, which continued untill ye beginning of this month; we bore it I think as well as most; we had an indifferent good house; very good and large chimney; we made fire night and day. Our house lies under ye Cold N.W. wind & just to the South sun, in a very warm bottom near a stream of very good water. We have cleared about this run abt 10 or 12 Acres for meadowland, very good soil, black mould moist over. I do think for ye most part, if not all ye river will soon overflow it, which runs through it, it being set thick of (thorn) bryars & small Scrubs; a man or horse could not ride through it. We hope to mow ye next harvest store of hay; we have as much more such ground for meadow, when we may have to enclose it. Few or none among our countrymen have the like conveniency of meadowland. We have about 6 acres of wheat sown in good order, & an accer & half of ye last summer fallow for Barley. We now begin to clear in order for to sow Oats. . . . if we can between this & the beginning of May, & about 6 accers, & for Indian corn as much as we can. We are about to enclose with rail fence by ye latter end of spring above 40 acres. Our Accers of land is 40 Perch in length & 4 in breadth. Our Perch is 16 feet & half, an accer of land containing about 76 Roods at least. Ye Rood which is ye measure of land with you near Dolgelley is 6 yards square, by this thee mayest compute measures together. We have a good soil under a very rough coat; many things sown being

good increase. Ye country grass is very rough & course in hand as most things by nature, but as it be Naturalized, we hope it will prove better; yt wh is good for Winter fodder. Our land generally is dry, and some places strong; some places very level, but our here away, little rising grounds, few hills, fine springs & running streams of as good water as any I saw; good stately Oaks, several sorts of Poplars & great many kinds of trees, also black & white Walnut, Cipresse, Pine & Cedar in some places grow plentiful. They begin now to build the houses with stone, & many with brick, which may be made in any place here. There is Limestone within, 3 little miles to my house. English hay does very kindly especially white honey suckle (Dutch clover?) where yt take root it mightily increases, & kills all wild roots (as they say) where it so takes. Ye red clover does well. There are but few of the natives now. Not 1 to 10 as was formerly. As many as there is, are very quiet.<sup>4</sup>

In 1704, Rowland Ellis built a substantial stone mansion which he called "Bryn Mawr" or "Great Hill" after his home in Wales.<sup>5</sup> Because there were no wagon roads, Ellis had to use panniers and horses to transport the sand, stone, and other materials that were used. The house was a two story structure with quaint dormer windows which overlooked the estate.<sup>6</sup> Built of native gray field stone, its construction in lines and general aspect shows all the little, characteristic peculiarities of Welsh architecture. One architectural historian suggested that the Welsh spoke in Georgian style with a Welsh accent.<sup>7</sup> Like most colonial houses, the structure has a high-pitched roof which creates a garret lighted by three front dormer windows and two dormer windows in the rear. The front building is about 37 feet in length and 22 feet in width. In the rear

4. Glenn, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-227.

5. Develin, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

6. John T. Faris, *Old Roads Out of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1917), p. 148.

7. Harold Donaldson Eberlein and Horace Matthew Lippincott, *The Colonial Homes of Philadelphia and Its Neighborhood* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1912), p. 167.

is an addition—22 feet by 19 feet—which allows the end rooms of the front building to be lighted by rear windows. From the air, the ground plan resembles the letter T.

There are quite a few peculiarities in the construction. For one example, the front door does not open into an entry way but directly into a large room which the Ellis's used as a sitting-room. A smaller adjoining room was used as the parlor. The staircase is strangely located in the back part of the house and can be reached by using a side entrance beyond which is the dining room. The kitchen is a shed-like affair in the rear. On the second floor, the rooms are divided into sleeping chambers. Extra sleeping accommodations were provided for in the garret. The first floor rooms were originally wainscoted in the ceilings with panels being formed between the projecting beams. Later the wainscoting was removed, and the ceiling was plastered. However, the original beams were not covered and may still be seen today. In later years a one story addition joining one side of the main building and a section of the back building was built. This extra section provided the family with additional living space and probably served as an extra room for entertaining visitors.<sup>8</sup>

In 1708, Ellis mortgaged 300 acres of his holdings to Rees Thomas and William Lewis subject to a payment of 180 pounds to Jane Ellis should she obtain the age of 21 years or be married; and in 1719, 698 acres of the land were sold to Richard Harrison of Herring Creek, Maryland.<sup>9</sup> Richard Harrison was a tobacco planter and a big slave owner. In 1717, he had married Hannah Norris, the second daughter of Isaac Norris and the granddaughter of Deputy Governor Thomas Lloyd who also served as a minister in the Society of Friends. The newly-weds returned to Herring Creek, Maryland. Within a short time, Hannah Harrison was homesick for Philadelphia. Since Richard had promised his bride that they would move back to Philadelphia if she found life unsatisfactory

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8. Thompson Westcott, *The Historic Mansions and Buildings of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1877), p. 463.

9. Original deeds in possession of Mr. George Vaux, Bryn Mawr.



in Maryland, he bought "Bryn Mawr" and planned to move his activities to that location.<sup>10</sup>

The trip from his former home was quite eventful for the new owner of "Bryn Mawr" or "Harriton" as it was now called. The sailing ship which was carrying the household goods and slaves was attacked by river pirates, and the goods were stolen. The slaves were then forced to find their new home by an overland route. Later, according to tradition these same slaves attempted to murder the Harrison family so that they could return to their former home in Maryland. Poison was put in the morning's hot chocolate. While grace was being said, there was a knock on the door. As one member of the family was rising to answer the door, a cup of the hot chocolate was spilled. The family cat lapped up the spilled beverage and died. The frightened slaves then confessed their guilt and several were severely punished.<sup>11</sup>

The rough roads around their new home caused the Harrisons much trouble. Because the road to the meeting house was so bad, Harrison built a crude structure 21 feet by 29½ feet which served as the family's own house of worship. In the adjoining plot, 90 feet by 45 feet, the family burying ground was built.<sup>12</sup> As a tobacco planter, Harrison was interested in getting his product to the Philadelphia market. This created a problem because of the steep hills and the fact that Gulph Road was not suited for wagons even if wagons could have been obtained. To solve this problem, he used an old southern method of getting it to market. The tobacco was packed in great casks. Through the center of each barrel a pole was placed to serve as an axle. To the ends of the axle, poles which served as shafts were attached. The horses then rolled and bumped the casks to the Philadelphia markets.<sup>13</sup>

When Richard Harrison died in 1747, his daughter Hannah took over control of "Harriton." Bryn Mawr gained its most

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10. Glenn, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

11. Faris, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

12. W. H. Watt, "Harriton House," Historic Homes File. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

13. Faris, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

famous Colonial resident when Hannah Harrison married Charles Thomson in 1774. Thomson, a friend of Benjamin Franklin, had served as Secretary of the Stamp Act Congress of 1765 and was Secretary of the Congress for its first fourteen years of existence. It is said that he kept the certificate of election and presented it to George Washington on his election as President of the United States.<sup>14</sup> Another person, one Deborah Logan who lived near the State House in Philadelphia, declared that it was Charles Thomson who first read the "Declaration of Independence" in public. Although the two previously mentioned incidents are not guaranteed to be accurate, many other qualities of leadership and of his importance have been discovered. It is known that during the Revolutionary War he headed the colonial equivalent of the F. B. I.<sup>15</sup> John Adams, the first Vice-President of our country, referred to Thomson as the "Sam Adams of Philadelphia."<sup>16</sup> Even the Indians respected his outstanding work and gave him the name "Weagh-con-lan-mo-end" or "the man who tells the truth."<sup>17</sup>

After the Revolutionary War, Thomson retired to "Harriton." In his leisure time he planned to write a history of the Revolutionary War but decided instead to make the first English translation of the Bible to be done in America. Using the dining room as his library, he worked for nine years, and in 1808 the translation was published. Although the work was highly praised, there were very few buyers for the volume.<sup>18</sup>

Because a married woman under colonial Pennsylvania law could not will property, Charles and Hannah Thomson in 1798 joined in deeds which conveyed the property to the descendants of Robert McClenachan, subject to life interests reserved by Charles and Hannah for themselves. Under this arrangement the 698 acres comprising the Harriton plantation went

14. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

15. John M. Nugent, "Harriton and Charles Thomson," *The Main Line Times*, Bryn Mawr File No. 2. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pa.)

16. Eberlein and Lippincott, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

17. Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 457.

18. Alderfer, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

to Charles McClenachan's daughter Naomi, the granddaughter of Robert.<sup>19</sup> Naomi, who later married Levi Morris, was a small child at the time, and obtained her share only after many disputes. She later built a more modern house for her own use and "Harriton" became a tenant house.<sup>20</sup>

After Thomson's death, he was interred in the "Harriton" family burying ground located in the woods near the present Lower Merion Baptist Church Cemetery. Upon the enclosing stone wall is a tablet which mentions that the remains of Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress, were once interred at that place. It is believed that when Laurel Hill Cemetery near Philadelphia was opened, Charles Thomson's nephew and other admirers removed the remains under the cover of night to the new cemetery. To accomplish this feat, they had to cross the private property of the Morris family. Being Friends, the Morrises followed the doctrine of non-resistance and never demanded that the body be returned. A later owner of "Harriton," Mr. George Vaux, doubts that the intruders found the right body.<sup>21</sup> Even today, it is not known whether the body is at Laurel Hill or at the "Harriton" burying ground.

Although "Harriton"—located on a small lane which turns off Roberts Road—is considered to be the first Bryn Mawr House, it was not around this edifice that the town grew. Instead the town formed around the nucleus of a little settlement called Humphreysville which was located on the Lancaster Pike or Lancaster Avenue, and "Harriton" is located on the outskirts of the present town.

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19. Deed of Trust Charles Thomson and Wife to George M. Potts. (Deed in possession of Mr. George Vaux, Bryn Mawr.)

20. Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 463.

21. Develin, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

## CHAPTER IV

### HUMPHREYSVILLE

A town often obtains its name from its location or from an influential family that resides there.

Even though the name "Bryn Mawr" had been used for the plantation of Rowland Ellis, the town which grew up in the area of present day Bryn Mawr was named Humphreysville or Humphreyville in honor of the Humphreys. The family name "Humphrey" or "Humphreys" had been commonly referred to as "Humffrey" in Wales.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the settlers who came over from Wales were related. The emigrant John Humphrey, upon whose tract of land the town grew, was the uncle of Thomas and Rowland Ellis who were mentioned in Chapter III. John Humphrey's tract included the land where Bryn Mawr College and Baldwin School stand at the present time.<sup>2</sup>

In the Welsh section, there were several branches of the Humphrey family because of various relatives who had migrated to the area. The Bryn Mawr Humphreys were descended from Benjamin Humphrey, the son of Samuel Humphrey of Wales, while the Haverford branch of the family traced its ancestry to Daniel Humphrey, the elder brother of Benjamin and spelled their name with an "s" (Humphreys). Though related, two different towns developed around these families.<sup>3</sup>

Benjamin and his uncle, John Humphrey, both held tracts of land adjoining the "Bryn Mawr" plantation. Since John died without children, 212 acres of his land were deeded to Benjamin.<sup>4</sup> Later, Benjamin received another grant of land at the

1. Glenn, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

2. Develin, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

3. Glenn, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

4. Browning, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151, 153.



Courtesy Mrs. Walter Farrow

THE OLD STORE 1831 NOW THE CONESTOGA MILL

death of his relative, Thomas John Thomas. This large tract of several hundred acres stretched to the east of his previous holdings and included the land in the general area of the present day Montgomery Avenue and Haverford Station. The Humphrey tract, which was owned by various branches of the family, increased until it covered approximately 1,900 acres of land. This area now comprises the present towns of Bryn Mawr, North Haverford, North Ardmore, the Mill Creek section, and the land north of Wynnewood.<sup>5</sup>

Benjamin Humphrey, who had emigrated in 1683, was widely known in the colony because of his hospitality and helpfulness. He made his home in the town until his death on November 4, 1737.<sup>6</sup> For his residence, he built a fine colonial dwelling near the present day grounds of Bryn Mawr College. In this residence, the Humphrey family resided for many years.<sup>7</sup> Later in the middle 1800's, other members of the Humphrey family built two houses on the north side of the Lancaster Pike. The land for these houses ran back to the Pennsylvania Railroad property and was used mainly for grazing the family's cows. On Montgomery Avenue (the first street north of the Pennsylvania Railroad tract) Charles Humphreys and his wife ran the Humphrey Board House during the latter part of the nineteenth century. This same house is still being used today as a boarding house and is known as the Montgomery Inn.<sup>8</sup> The most famous of the Humphrey houses was the one located at the present address of 845 Lancaster Avenue. It has previously been mentioned as one of those built on the north side of the Lancaster Pike. Built in the late 1840's, this dwelling has become known as the "Milestone House" because the 9th milestone for the Lancaster Pike is located on the property. Today one can still see the tablet (now moved to grounds of Ludington Public Library) which reads "9 M. to P.," but the old house which

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5. Glenn, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-242.

6. Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

7. "Bryn Mawr Story," *op. cit.*, p. 31.

8. Mrs. Hugh Abernethy, personal memoirs, Bryn Mawr File No. 1. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

was located in the heart of the thriving business section was torn down in 1955 to be replaced by three new stores.<sup>9</sup>

Around the Humphrey family, the little town developed and became known as Humphreysville or Humphreyville. By 1858, the town was a thriving center among the western suburbs of Philadelphia. According to Buck, Humphreysville in that year contained twenty-one houses, a two story public schoolhouse and quite a few beautiful private homes. Many of the houses were elegant residences with large, shady lawns and colorful flower plots. These lovely houses were country seats of retired Philadelphians and many who were still active in that city's business world. The influx of the city residents had begun. Many people preferred the quiet and slow life of the little town to the noise and bustle of Philadelphia city life. From 1858 on, the growth of the suburbs proceeded at a steadily increasing rate.<sup>10</sup>

Although the Humphrey family was the most important of the colonial families, there was another family that deserves recognition—the Lloyds who were another of the first families to reside in the town. Robert Lloyd, the older brother, came to Pennsylvania from Wales in 1683. He lived in Merion (another town in the eastern end of the "Welsh Tract") with his friend, Robert Owen, from 1691 to 1697. On September 5, 1698, Robert Lloyd purchased 409 acres of land located north of the Rowland Ellis plantation from William Howell, Edward Jones, John Roberts, Griffith Owen, and Daniel Humphrey.<sup>11</sup> The land that he bought had been originally part of the Richard Davies' grant made by the proprietor, William Penn, himself. In December of 1701, Lloyd had 259½ acres of this plot surveyed and laid out.<sup>12</sup>

Thomas Lloyd, the younger of the Lloyd brothers, held in December of 1701, either 150 or 154½ acres (the amount has been cited vaguely) which had been part of the Thomas Ellis

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9. "Milestone House Is Being Razed," *The Main Line Times*, Historic Houses File.

10. Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

11. Glenn, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

12. Browning, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

estate and lay to the north of "Bryn Mawr." On February 10, 1709, he received 154 acres of land from his brother Robert on payment of £40.<sup>13</sup> This tract of land was bounded by other tracts owned by David Llewellyn, Robert Lloyd, Rowland Ellis, John Williams, and Morris Llewellyn. Thomas Lloyd was a very active yeoman farmer and hated slavery. In 1737, a complaint was made to the Society of Friends' Monthly Meeting by Richard Harrison. Apparently Thomas Lloyd and his wife, Elizabeth Edward Lloyd, were interfering with the "Harrington" slaves and were trying to get them to leave their master. The Monthly Meeting then appointed a committee to investigate the problem. As a result, the Lloyds made an apology, and the Harrisons accepted it.<sup>14</sup>

Although the Lloyd family was very prominent in Bryn Mawr history, the impression made by the Humphrey family was so great that the town was named Humphreysville in their honor. This name was to last until the 1860's when the Pennsylvania Railroad turned the town into a summer resort. Aided by a system of excellent roads and a good railroad, the town became a mecca for travelers and a social center for the Philadelphia elite. The next chapter will take up the subject of the major roads which played an important part in the growth of the town.

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13. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

14. Glenn, *op. cit.*, p. 378.





Courtesy George Vaux

MERRION SQUARE STAGE AT GULPH ROAD FORD

## CHAPTER V

### ROADS

Much of the history of any community can be told through tracing its roads, and this point is even more applicable to Bryn Mawr than to most towns. It was a crossroads. Through it or near it ran the Lancaster Pike, the Old Lancaster Road, the Old Gulph Road, and many others.

Of the many well-known roads that run through the town, the present day Old Lancaster Road—not to be confused with the later Lancaster Pike—is one of the oldest and probably one of the most historical in the United States. Running across hills and around numerous curves, the road stretched from Lancaster to a ferry on the Schuylkill River which led directly to the heart of Philadelphia. This was a main link from the frontier to the civilized area.<sup>1</sup> The Old Lancaster Road was laid out by 1687 and followed an Indian foot trail to avoid streams. It was opened as a public road in 1741.<sup>2</sup> Later, the road became known as the Conestoga Road because it was widely used by the Lancaster-made Conestoga wagons which in turn took their name from the fact that the horses used to pull them were bred in the Conestoga valley.<sup>3</sup> Two other names, the "Blockley and Merion Turnpike" and the "Plank Road" were also used for this road in later years.<sup>4</sup> In 1767 the road was resurveyed and improved.<sup>5</sup>

1. Develin, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

2. "The Main Line," *The Main Line Times*, October 18, 1951, Main Line Series Folder. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

3. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 36.

4. Develin, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

5. John M. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches No. 2," *The Main Line Times*, Bryn Mawr File No. 2.

Among American roads, few are more famous than the Old Lancaster Road. Much of the military history of the Revolutionary War took place near its roadbed. September 15, 1777, brought the beginning of the exodus from Philadelphia when the Continental Army swiftly marched down its route to their new headquarters at Paoli. Three days later, on September 18th, the Continental Congress "adjourned" to Lancaster by aid of horses and stage coaches to escape the invading British. All of the precious documents of the new country were transported to Lancaster under the care of Abraham Clark, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. It is interesting to note that the illustrious Congressmen followed the trail of Lieutenant James McMichael's regiment which was to be annihilated in the Paoli Massacre a few days later. The first British use of the road was on December 11, 1777, when General Cornwallis marched out to attack General Potter only to be defeated. In 1781 and 1793, General "Mad Anthony" Wayne traversed the route while on his way to two assignments. The first time was on his march to York in preparation for combat in Georgia and the latter one when he was going to quell Indian riots in the Northwest Territory. In suburban Philadelphia history, his actions were honored by naming a small town four miles west of Bryn Mawr "Wayne."<sup>6</sup> During the Revolutionary War, one of the strangest sights ever witnessed took place on the Old Lancaster Road. Early in 1778, the "Ladies' Association" under the direction of Mrs. Joseph Reed sent eight big Conestoga wagons with women drivers to carry clothes to the struggling patriot soldiers at Valley Forge.<sup>7</sup> During the 1790's when Philadelphia was the nation's capital, many delegations of Indians were seen on the road as they came down to visit the "Great Father." Traffic continued to increase and became the heaviest during the late 1820's just prior to the building of the Columbia Railroad.<sup>8</sup> Although traffic became lighter after the construction of the

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6. Develin, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

8. "The Old Conestoga Road," *The Magazine Main Line*, December 1950, pp. 34-35.

railroad, great activity resumed during the Civil War. Probably the most pathetic occurrence followed the Battle of Gettysburg when the escaped slaves fled down the road in hay wagons to find freedom in Philadelphia.<sup>9</sup>

Gulph Road which is now known as Old Gulph Road was constructed about the same time as the Old Lancaster Road. Following an old Indian trail, the road received its name because it passed through a natural ravine at one place. At first it had been opened as "Road to John Robert's Mill." Since the word "gulph" signified a deep cut, chasm, or abyss, the early settlers chose this name for the road. As early as 1684 the term "Gulph Road" was found on deeds. Although the spelling of the name was modernized to "Gulf" in the nineteenth century, the old form has returned and is used presently.<sup>10</sup> Old Gulph Road which shoots off the Old Lancaster Road was personally laid out by William Penn. Later milestones which are still standing were erected and upon each stone was carved a design of three balls that had been copied from the Penn Coat of Arms. To the early travelers, the three balls were known as the "Three Apple Dumplings."<sup>11</sup> The section past Bryn Mawr was laid out in 1713 and continued to the Gulph Mills. This road was very twisting because it had to be built along boundaries of farms when the farmers refused to allow construction on their land. Although its tortuous curves kept the road from becoming an important overland route to the West, the road is presently a well-traveled highway—Pennsylvania Route 23.<sup>12</sup> Along its course, Old Gulph Road passed a section called the Black Rocks which subsequently has had a road named after it. The supposition is that the Black Rocks was a site of an Indian graveyard. For passers-by the fantastic, strange, weird black rock formation overrun with wild vegetation offered—as it still does—a striking picture.<sup>13</sup> Old Gulph Road, like the other roads in this district,

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9. Develin, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

10. "Street Names," Roads File. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

11. Develin, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

12. Alderfer, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

13. Develin, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

was the scene of historical happenings. On June 18, 1778, a Mr. Roberts galloped along it from Philadelphia to Valley Forge to tell George Washington that the British had evacuated the city. Upon receiving this news, a detachment of Light Horse from Valley Forge under Captain Allan McLane made a swift trip on the same road to occupy Philadelphia.<sup>14</sup>

The first Lancaster Road, a highway from Philadelphia to Lancaster, was built in 1741. About 1770 a new Lancaster Road was built south of the original one which then became known as Montgomery Avenue. This road was greatly improved in 1792 as a toll road and became the first turnpike in Pennsylvania, and the first road to be made with the new macadam process. With such a distinguished gentleman as David Rittenhouse on the board of managers, the road was developed into the best highway in the country and became quite instrumental in the westward movement.<sup>15</sup> The initiative for the improvement of the road must be credited to the Federalist Governor, General Thomas Mifflin, who advocated internal improvements. Following the high point of the ridge, the road had adequate drainage.<sup>16</sup> As usual, the route had been a trail of the wandering Indians and Welsh and was no wider than a trail through the woods. Finally it developed into a rough road leading from clearing to clearing with improvements of logs and planks. This route was so well endowed by nature for transportation purposes that when the Pennsylvania Railroad was built, the surveying engineers laid the tracks in a close parallel to the turnpike as they built the section of track known as the "Main Line."<sup>17</sup> In 1792, a stock company, the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike Company, was formed to build the road. With the stock selling reasonably at \$30. a share, it was soon oversubscribed.<sup>18</sup> Written

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14. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

15. Alderfer, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

16. Thomas Stone March, *A History of Pennsylvania* (New York: American Book Company, 1915), p. 218.

17. Sidney George Fisher, *The Making of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1896), p. 207.

18. Faris, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

on sheepskin, the stock certificates earned a dividend of 6%.<sup>19</sup> At the end of the improvement, the turnpike reached 62 miles in length with a total cost of \$465,000 or \$7,500 per mile.<sup>20</sup> After the Civil War, the Lancaster Avenue Improvement Company was organized by A. J. Cassatt and associates to buy and operate the Lancaster Pike from Philadelphia to Paoli. For \$8,000 the turnpike then became a private enterprise and did not become a public road until 1917.<sup>21</sup> Like the previously mentioned routes, many historical incidents occurred on this road. In 1791, the troops marched west to halt the Whiskey Rebellion, and during the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, straggling recruits marched toward Philadelphia to join regiments.<sup>22</sup>

The stage coaches, directly and indirectly, gave employment and support to many people in the town. There were many jobs open to the residents of the town such as: proprietors of inns, drivers, groomsmen, inn-keepers, smiths, coach-makers, and toll collectors.<sup>23</sup> The first stage line from Philadelphia to Lancaster was started in April 1785, by Frederick Doersh and Adam Weaver. With twice weekly round trips, Lancaster and Philadelphia became more closely united. Each passenger was allowed fourteen pounds of luggage when he paid the fare of twenty shillings. Following the Old Lancaster Road, this route was the first regularly scheduled stage. In 1820, the first mail stage route was inaugurated between the two towns with an extension to Pittsburgh. Eight years later, the Post Office Department formed another mail route which was to use the Gulph Road. By the 1830's, two mail routes were linking Philadelphia and Lancaster.<sup>24</sup>

Although the most important roads have already been discussed, there are numerous small and less well-known roads in Bryn Mawr whose colorful histories should not be overlooked.

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19. J. M. Carmody (Administrator), *Pennsylvania Cavalcade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1942), p. 324.

20. Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

21. "Lancaster Turnpike Was Freed in 1917," Roads File.

22. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

23. Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-132.

Another of the earliest roads was County Line Road. In 1696, a court ordered that a road should be laid out from David Meredith's plantation to Haverford Meeting house. This was a forerunner of County Line Road and today is a section of Haverford Road.<sup>25</sup> In 1751, the Court of General Sessions of Philadelphia County ordered a 50 foot road to be built for public use between Delaware and Montgomery Counties on the Radnor and Lower Merion line. When Montgomery became a separate county in 1784 and Delaware in 1789, County Line Road still formed part of the boundary. Another road, Mon Dela Avenue, received its name because the county line runs through the town. Located two blocks west of Bryn Mawr Avenue, the road started on the line separating Montgomery and Delaware Counties; its name was a combination of the names of both counties.

Many of the roads in Bryn Mawr were named for houses or places. Wyndon Avenue which runs from Airdale Road to Merion Avenue was named for the Theodore N. Ely estate. The first section of the street—east of Roberts Road—was opened for public use in 1887, but the section west of that road was not opened to the public until 1934. Although early atlases refer to the road as Wyndom and Windon, the correct spelling should have been Wyndham to coincide with the name of the Ely estate. Spring Mill Road which, in the course of its wanderings, passed through Bryn Mawr was laid out and named in colonial times. Its name was derived from the fact that it led to a great spring across the Schuylkill River at the town of Miquon. This spring was so good that in 1787 Benjamin Franklin suggested that the water be piped to Philadelphia for domestic use.

When the Pennsylvania Railroad built the Bryn Mawr cut-off in 1869-70, it abandoned the route that had run through the White Hall section. The old roadbed was then graded and transformed into a public road which became known as Railroad Avenue after 1872.<sup>26</sup> Near the present day

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25. Notes from Mr. Gordon Burlingame.

26. "How the Name Originated," Roads File.

Bryn Mawr Hospital, Railroad Avenue now joins Haverford Road at the site of the former White Hall Hotel which will be discussed in a following chapter. Named after the neighboring town of Haverford which it also traversed, it was one of the first plank roads. Although it provided a bumpy ride, the planks were a great help in muddy weather.<sup>27</sup> Like Wyndon, many roads were named after houses. In the 1850's one John Supplee owned a 100 acre farm along Spring Mill Road which was originally part of the "Harriton" estate. This farm was known as "Eagle Farm"; thus, when the tract was subdivided in the 1900's, a road, Eagle Farm Road, was named in honor of the first estate. Likewise, Harriton Road was named after the estate upon which it crossed.<sup>28</sup> In the 1870's a flourishing boarding house, known as the Summit Grove Boarding House, existed. The drive which led to the residence has since been developed into a road (made public in 1906) between Bryn Mawr Avenue, Old Lancaster Road, and Lancaster Avenue. Of course, it was quite certain that one of the main roads would be named in honor of the town. Thus, when the southern route from the center of town was built, it was subsequently named Bryn Mawr Avenue.<sup>29</sup>

Other roads in the town were named for famous personalities. Ellis Road was named for the early settlers—the Ellis family. One of the earliest public roads (1735) was Roberts Road which ran from Old Lancaster Road to Gulph Road and was named for John Roberts who owned a near-by mill. Likewise Kennedy Lane which today leads off from Wyndon Avenue was named for John M. Kennedy an important stockholder of the Pennsylvania Railroad and a former resident of the Wyndon mansion. Fishers Road which became a public road in 1846 was named thusly because it ran along one side of the 81 acre farm of William A. Fisher. Running from Old Gulph Road to Pennswood Road which was named in honor of Penn, this road runs through a large residential section. Another northbound road which runs from Lancaster Avenue to

27. J. W. Townsend, *The Old "Main Line"* (n.p., 1922), p. 60.

28. "How the Name Originated," Roads File.

29. "Street Names," Roads File.



Spring Mill Road—Morris Avenue—was named in honor of Levi Morris because its route skirted the eastern boundary of the 594 acre estate owned by him. Laid out in 1876, this road also ran through the "Harriton" estate. In the center of the present town the large estate of the Misses Hawkins which stretched from Lancaster Avenue to County Line Road and from Roberts Road almost to Warner Avenue was bought by H. M. Albertson in the early 1890's. This land was subsequently cut up into small building lots, and two avenues—Rees Avenue and Thomas Avenue—were plotted. They were named in honor of Rees Thomas who had been a leader in the Welsh Settlement. Thomas Avenue was made a public road in 1899 and Rees Avenue in 1904.<sup>30</sup>

Good roads are essential for suburban growth. At the end of the nineteenth century, most of the roads in Bryn Mawr had been constructed. Mr. Alexander J. Cassatt, Vice-President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, served a term as the Lower Merion Township Supervisor of Roads,<sup>31</sup> and was responsible for road improvement and the able road system that we know today. Before Mr. Cassatt's term as supervisor, the streets were covered with a coarse gravel. Mr. Cassatt, an avid four-in-hand driver, was constantly irked by the poor roads. To improve the situation, he took the job of Township Road Supervisor and began a slow but sure improvement of the road conditions. Mr. Cassatt began to use macadamized roadbeds which lasted until the automotive age.<sup>32</sup> Even today, the roads in and around Bryn Mawr are much better than roads in other localities.

Although the roads played an important part in the development of the town, the main impetus did not occur until the railroads came. Under the guidance of the Pennsylvania Railroad the town was made into a summer resort and finally into a year-round town.

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30. "How the Name Originated," Roads File.

31. Alderfer, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

32. Townsend, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

## CHAPTER VI

### RAILROADS

Roads played an important part in the history of Bryn Mawr or Humphreysville as it was then called; however, the full potential was not shown until the Pennsylvania Railroad bought the land and subdivided it into plots for exclusive mansions.

As early as 1823 John Stevens secured a charter from the Pennsylvania Legislature to construct a railroad to Columbia, a small town located on the Susquehanna River. Unfortunately for him, he did not succeed in raising sufficient funds for the project, and the idea had to be abandoned. A new charter which repealed the former one was granted in 1826. But not until 1828 did construction work begin.<sup>1</sup> Following the roadbed of the Lancaster Turnpike, the main part of the work did not occur until 1829. By 1832 some sections of the track were completed, and a few cars were in operation. Two years later, the complete road was opened to Columbia. Bryn Mawr then became an important stop for fuel, water, and passengers.

The first railroad cars used were actually carts and wagons dragged by horse power. In fact, any vehicle which could run on rails served as a suitable passenger coach. With only one set of tracks, inevitably two vehicles often met face to face. Rather than relinquishing the right of way, the drivers often resorted to fisticuffs to determine which one would have to remove his coach from the tracks.<sup>2</sup>

The original railroad—from Philadelphia to Columbia—stretched a total length of 82 miles and cost the fabulous sum

1. Develin, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

2. March, *op. cit.*, p. 262.



BRYN MAWR STATION.

Courtesy Pennsylvania Railroad

## BRYN MAWR STATION

of \$3,983,302. At Columbia, it joined with the Pennsylvania Canal which enabled the travelers to continue on to Pittsburgh. Finally, in the middle 1800's, the track was extended to that city, and the total mileage was increased to 393 miles.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most famous engines, the "Black Hawk," went into service for the run to Columbia. The time of travel was quite reasonable—it took only eight and a half hours to go from Philadelphia to Lancaster which was a stop near Columbia.<sup>4</sup> This was a distance of approximately 60 miles.

Construction had been part of the state owned public works project, and upon its completion the operation was placed under the State Canal Commission. Cars were sometimes privately owned and were charged a certain fee for the privilege of using the road. The owners, in turn, carried paying passengers and freight to earn their money.<sup>5</sup>

When the Columbia Railroad bought its locomotives, the Baldwin Locomotive Company received the contract. By 1832, this company had made ten engines including the legendary "Ironsides" for the railroad. It was at this time that the Paoli Local was started, and today it is one of the most famous commuter trains in the country. Even though the passenger cars were now drawn by steam engines instead of horses, they still resembled the stagecoach in appearance.<sup>6</sup> Red in color, they were soon given the nick-name of "Fire-flies." With an average speed of four miles per hour, the train was able to negotiate seven per cent curves without derailment. The fear of being scalded in case the train should overturn and leave the tracks was so great that the engineers refused to have enclosed cabs. Winding its way through the countryside, the train must have painted a picture of confusion with passengers constantly beating smoldering clothes because of flying embers, and the train crew constantly stoking the engine in between stops for water and wood. The engines were used

3. Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

4. Develin, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

5. Alderfer, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

6. "Peeps into the Past," *The Main Line Times*, Transportation File. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

only on nice days because the method of sanding the tracks to stop had not yet been discovered. Thus on rainy days, the horse-drawn train appeared upon the scene once more. The nick-name "Main Line" which still exists was given to the railroad because the official title of the project was the "Main Line of the Public Works of the State of Pennsylvania." For the customers who used the railroad, the only suburban tickets were sold at Bryn Mawr or Humphreysville as it was called then.<sup>7</sup>

In 1857 the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, which had been chartered in 1846, bought the Columbia Railroad for \$7,500,000.<sup>8</sup> Even though the railroad in the 1860's was the main route to Philadelphia, it still did not cater to Commuters along the way. Each day there were six eastbound trains and an equal number of westbound ones. If the businessman happened to miss the 6 P.M. train, he had to wait for the "Emigrant" which left at midnight. This train was a through train for arriving foreigners and stopped at stations for which the passengers were booked.

The railroad travel of the early years was anything but pleasant. The coaches were lighted by oil lamps, and in cold weather, red hot coal stoves were placed at each end of the car to provide heat. Each car had its own brakeman who controlled it. Every car had a brake wheel very similar to the ones found on top of the present day freight cars.<sup>9</sup>

Although the trains stopped at Humphreysville for wood and water, the first depot was not built until 1859.<sup>10</sup> The Pennsylvania Railroad's annual report of 1860 noted the construction of a building 23 feet by 17 feet to be used as a passenger station, ticket office, and a telegraph office. This station was located near the White Hall Hotel and was known by that name. On its way to Illinois from Washington the Lincoln funeral train stopped here to put on ice and water. Lincoln is also supposed to have come through on his way to

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7. John M. Nugent, "The Old Columbia," *The Main Line Times*, Transportation File.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Townsend, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

10. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketch," No. 1.

Gettysburg. In the early 1890's this station was used as a residence and served as a home for my paternal grandfather. In 1893, the house was bought by the Bryn Mawr Hospital to be used as an isolation building for contagious diseases. Finally in 1929, it became the home of the hospital's Thrift Shop.<sup>11</sup> According to rumor, the Old White Hall station telegraph office once hired the young telegrapher, Andrew Carnegie, who later gained fame and fortune as a steel magnate.<sup>12</sup> Upon checking his biography, one discovers that he worked for a telegraph company, but no mention is made of him working at the White Hall telegraph office.

When the railroad in the late 1860's straightened the roadbed and eliminated the White Hall curve, a new station had to be built. In 1869, the present edifice was erected.<sup>13</sup> Although the new roadbed reduced the long White Hall detour, the builders ran into several problems. To lessen the steep grade from Haverford, they found it necessary to make a deep cut because of the high ground in the section of the proposed cut-off. Neighboring farmers declared that this cutting would cause heavy damages to their lands and filed claims against the railroad. The company decided that it would be cheaper to buy the adjoining farms and use them as a real estate adventure. They then bought nearly all the land between the present day Penn Street, Gulph Road, Roberts Road, and the present railroad tracks. This is the heart of residential Bryn Mawr today. This tract was then plotted out into building lots to be used as an exclusive residential section. One of the restrictions in the deeds of sale was a prohibition against all stores, manufactures, shops, livery stables, or "buildings for any offensive occupation." In addition the houses to be erected on Montgomery Avenue had to cost at least \$8,000 and those on other avenues were not to cost less than \$5,000. The company also stipulated that the houses had to be a certain fixed distance from the street. The strictness of these regulations were to govern all sales and were aimed at obtaining an

11. *The Main Line Times*, untitled clipping, Bryn Mawr File No. 1.

12. "Bryn Mawr Story," *op. cit.*, p. 33.

13. *The Main Line Times*, untitled clipping, Bryn Mawr File No. 1.

exclusive class of residents. To aid prospective clients, the railroad built a double house on the northwest corner of Morris Avenue and Montgomery Avenue so that the owners of lots could live there while their new houses were being built. This house was later known as the "Lancaster Inn" and in later years served as the first home for the Baldwin School for Girls.<sup>14</sup>

The Pennsylvania Railroad was responsible for building the town of Bryn Mawr and many of the other towns of the "Main Line." As the builder, the company also named them. The President John Edgar Thomson decided to change the name of Humphreysville to Bryn Mawr in honor of the old Rowland Ellis farm of the same name.<sup>15</sup> Originally only the railroad station was known by that name, but the few dwellings on the Lancaster Avenue which made up the former town also acquired the new name.<sup>16</sup> The railroad was very proud of the town that it had begun. The 1875 edition of its illustrated volume on the Main Line referred to Bryn Mawr thus:

This station might well be cited as a model of taste and beauty. Occupying a delightful position in the midst of a fertile and well-watered country, the railroad company saw its advantages and determined to improve them. Beautiful and comfortable station-houses were built, and these were followed by a superb hotel and other improvements.

Naturally, these conveniences attracted visitors and residents, and from a scattered hamlet the place is growing into the proportions of an elegant town. Villas and cottages are springing up with wonderful rapidity, and it is altogether within the range of probability that Bryn Mawr will, in a few years, be one of the largest, and certainly one of the most beautiful suburbs of Philadelphia.<sup>17</sup>

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14. Townsend, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

15. Joseph F. Tripician (Pennsylvania Railroad), letter to Mr. George Vaux.

16. Townsend, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

17. "Main Line Once Summer Vacationland," *The Main Line Times*, May 17, 1956, Main Line Series Folder.

This description of the town certainly sounds like a propaganda report rather than an informative booklet.

Since Bryn Mawr was helped by the railroad in its development, much of the life of the town centered about this organization. Bryn Mawr lay at the end of the suburban route; very few trains ran further west. Being a terminus, the station also had a turntable.<sup>18</sup> After a Haverford boy named Bloomer was killed while playing there, it was removed.<sup>19</sup> In the southeast corner of the Bryn Mawr station depot, the post office was located. Also at this spot an overhead wooden bridge was constructed so that pedestrians could cross over more easily from the north side of town to the south and vice-versa.<sup>20</sup> Upon this bridge, many families would stand to watch the train crews pass by in their high silk hats. Having no special uniform, these hats served as their badges of authority.

The roads and railroad made Bryn Mawr a popular place. To accommodate the many visitors, hotels, boarding houses, and other residences had to be built.

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18. Abernethy, *op cit.*

19. W. F. McNally, "Railroad Stations and the Bryn Mawr Accommodations," *The Main Line Times*, May 15, 1952, Transportation File.

20. "Peeps into the Past," *op. cit.*





Courtesy Radnor Historical Society

THE BUCK TAVERN

## CHAPTER VII

### TAVERNS, HOTELS, AND INNS

In the early days, the word "tavern" meant simply a respectable family hotel. The tavern of yesterday might be compared with the railroad lunch counters of today. The tavern keepers were the respected citizens of the town and often served in such responsible positions as postmaster, county squire, and captains of the military companies.<sup>1</sup>

Inns were numerous on the eastern end of the turnpike. Averaging one a mile, there were 62 located between Philadelphia and Lancaster. Of course, each inn's reputation varied. There was the old Blue Ball owned by Pressly Robinson. Known for the many quarrels and strange disappearances that took place between its four walls, the mystery was solved when workmen in 1877 dug up a number of uncoffined bodies from the old orchard. In a less riotous vein was the Paoli Inn, a place of distinction which entertained the most distinguished men of colonial America.<sup>2</sup>

The taverns served not only as dispensing places for food and shelter to the weary travelers but also furnished entertainment and served as social clubs for the inhabitants of the village. The townsmen gathered there to while away the hours, to patronize the bar, to meet neighbors, to hear the news, and to discuss the events of home and abroad. The tavern was the news collecting and the news dispensing center of the community. Local politicians used this building as a place for soap box speeches and as a polling place at election time. Many times magistrates used its rooms for courts, and auctioneers used its grounds as a selling place.<sup>3</sup>

1. Develin, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

2. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

Bryn Mawr, like the other colonial towns, had taverns which played an important part in her history. The most well-known of the early taverns was the Buck Inn located on an angle of land in Delaware County between the present towns of Ardmore and Bryn Mawr.<sup>4</sup> Built by Thomas Penn in 1735, the Miller family gained its possession in 1780. Finally, the inn was bought by Dennis Kelly in 1844. After the license was revoked, he gave it to his daughter Annie M. Martin who lived there until later in the century—about 1868.<sup>5</sup> The three gabled units gave it a distinctive appearance.<sup>6</sup>

As a wayside inn on a main traveled route, it had many famous guests. Probably the most distinguished was George Washington. After crossing the Schuylkill River in September of 1777, a portion of his army camped near the twenty-second milestone while the main section with General Washington camped at the Buck. While resting for a few hours, the commander wrote one of the most revealing communications ever transmitted between the future president and congress. This letter discussed the dismissal of General Sullivan.

Buck Tavern, Lancaster Road, September 15, 1777,  
3 p.m. . . .

Our situation at this time is critical and delicate, and nothing should be done to add to its embarrassment.

We are now most probably on the point of another battle, and to derange the army by withdrawing so many general officers from it may and must be attended with many disagreeable if not ruinous consequences. Such a proceeding, another time, might not produce any bad effect, but how can the army be possibly conducted with a prospect of success, if the general officers are taken off in the moment of battle?

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3. Wayland Fuller Dunaway, *History of Pennsylvania* (New York, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1935), p. 329.
  4. Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 346.
  5. "Brief Historical Sketch of Ye Olde Buck Tavern," *Historic Inns, Taverns, and Stores File*. (Located at Lundington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)
  6. Carmody, *Pennsylvania Cavalcade*, p. 439.

Congress may rely upon it, such a measure will not promote but injure the service. It is not my wish to prevent or delay a proper inquiry into General Sullivan's conduct a single instant, when the circumstances of the army will admit, but now they prohibit it, and, I think this suspense in his command also. The recall of General St. Clair obligated me to part with General Lincoln, whom I could but ill spare; so the whole charge of his division is now upon Gen'l Wagner, there being no other Brigadier in it but himself . . .

The main body of the British, from the best intelligence I have been able to get, lies near Dillworthtown, not far from the field of action, where they have been busily employed in burying their dead, which, from all accounts, amounted to a considerable number.

We are moving up this road to get between the British and Swede Ford, and to prevent them from turning our right flank, by crossing the Schuylkill river, which they seem to have a violent inclination to effect by all their movements. I would beg leave to recommend in the most earnest manner, that some board or committee be appointed, or some mode adopted for obtaining supplies of blankets for the troops. Many are now without them, and the season being cold, they will be injured in their health, and unfitted for service unless they are immediately provided with them.

Our supplies in this instance, as well as in any article of clothing, cannot be too great, as there are frequent losses not easily to be avoided.

I would also observe, that I think, in point of prudence and sound policy, every species of provisions should be removed from the city, except such as will be necessary to supply the present demands of the army I have been told there are considerable quantities in private hands, which should not be suffered to remain longer till they can be conveyed away.<sup>7</sup>

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7. Faris, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-132. Transcript in Washington, D. C.

Like many of the early inns, the old Buck Tavern was sometimes used as a courthouse. In 1758 Christopher Sauer, a printer, was brought to trial there. Sauer had started printing in 1739 the first German language newspaper in America—"Der Hoch Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht Schreiber, ober Summlung Wichtiger Nachrichten aus dem Natur and Kirchen Reich" or "The High Dutch Pennsylvania Historiographer or Collections of Important Intelligence from the Kingdom of Nature and the Church" which was shortened in 1744 to "Der Germantauer Zeitung." He had accused the Delaware Indians of being attached to the interests of the British government. As a result of the trial, Sauer was warned not to print anything against the king or government.<sup>8</sup>

The Buck Tavern served as a home for many important citizens. When the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church was first built, the church had no manse for the minister. Until the manse was completed, the Reverend William Hamilton Miller made his home there.<sup>9</sup>

The next big boarding house to be developed was White Hall Hotel which was situated on a triangle of land—fronting on old Haverford Road, with one side facing Cooperstown Road, and backing up to the old Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad. In the back yard was a water tower which was used to water the westbound trains. The large building was partially encircled by a porch and contained a hotel bar for the guests and a small butcher shop. In front were hitching posts to which the horses were tied. Business was brisk, and the owner-manager Arthur was forced to build an addition over the stable to accommodate eight to ten more rooms. There were no indoor sanitary arrangements, and the only water was in the pump in the back yard. Oil lamps and candles were the only means of lighting the building.

Built around 1830, the White Hall became a very popular

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8. "Buck Tavern at Haverford Was Scene of Freedom of the Press Inquiry in 1758," *The Main Line Times*, Historic Inns, Taverns, and Stores File.
  9. Lillie A. Ward, "Old Lady in Her 90's Shares Pleasant Recollections of Old Main Line with Present Generation," *The Main Line Chronicle*, November 24, 1953, p. 5.

summer resort. Six trains a day brought guests to enjoy the pleasant surroundings of a shady grove of trees which was used for recreation and sitting. Nearby was an ice cream parlor on Cooperstown Road, operated by Ellice Anderson, which was a favorite gathering place for the hotel guests.<sup>10</sup>

The legends connected with the White Hall Hotel were numerous, but probably the most interesting one concerned Abraham Lincoln. It is said that Lincoln on his way from Illinois to Washington for his first inauguration stayed there one night in order to escape a supposed assassination plot. The next day he went to Harrisburg and then to Washington. As this story is found only in this one reference, it will have to be considered a legend until more definite proof is obtained.<sup>11</sup>

When the tracks of the railroad were moved, business declined greatly. Yet as late as 1884, White Hall was still run by Mr. Issac W. Warner as a boarding house. Located one-half of a mile from the new Bryn Mawr station, it opened in May for the summer season. The price was \$12. a week, and quarters were available for 75 people. As an added attraction, Mr. Warner advertised that there was an annex building for servants, and stabling for fifty horses.<sup>12</sup> Following Mr. Warner, the next owner was a Mr. Castner who was the proprietor when the hotel was badly damaged by fire in May of 1888.<sup>13</sup> From this time on, the condition of the old hotel deteriorated; and for the last years before it was torn down, it was used as a rooming house for Negroes.<sup>14</sup>

Another of the many boarding houses was the Summit Grove which was opened during the 1870's in a grove of chestnuts south of Lancaster Avenue and west of the present day Bryn Mawr Avenue. With rents of \$12. to \$15. a week, it had accommodations for 85 guests. Its advertising played up the fact that home-grown fruits, vegetables, milk, chickens, and

10. Nugent, Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 13, *op. cit.*

11. "Bryn Mawr Story," *op. cit.*, p. 33.

12. "The Main Line in 1884 Was Vacation Land," *The Main Line Times*, Historic Inns, Taverns, and Stores File.

13. "Old White Hall Hotel and Rose and Crown Flourished in Old Bryn Mawr Days," Historic Inns, Taverns, and Stores File.

14. Abernethy, *op. cit.*

butter were served at meals. The Summit Grove was also very proud of the several copper bathtubs that it possessed. During the 1870's the boarding house was owned by Isaac H. Evans.<sup>15</sup> In the 1880's the proprietors were the Misses A. and L. Whiteman. According to the resort guide issued by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1884, the rates used under Mr. Evans were still in effect. Approximately one-third of a mile from the station, the owners would send a carriage to the station for guests if they requested it. Like most other local hotels, the season opened May first when the weather was favorable enough for the guests to enjoy the pleasant surroundings in the grove and on the large lawns.<sup>16</sup> The grounds were quite extensive, and when the hotel, a frame building, was torn down, a winding street which was called Summit Grove Avenue was constructed to preserve its memory.<sup>17</sup>

Of the many hotels and boarding houses in Bryn Mawr, the one that aided most in its development was the Bryn Mawr Hotel which was built by the Pennsylvania Railroad. This building made Bryn Mawr a socially prominent spot and many of its guests became permanent residents. In fact, the guest list read like the "Who's Who" of Philadelphia.<sup>18</sup> The hotel soon became a favorite resort for men who could not leave their businesses for more than the conventional two weeks in the summer. The hotel was packed to capacity all summer long in its early years; however, later in the century, the business failed because of the lack of guests in July and August.<sup>19</sup>

The first wing of this huge edifice was built in 1871, the second wing in 1873, and the third wing in 1876. The hotel was built especially for Centennial visitors and was of mam-

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15. "Bryn Mawr as Resort Was Mecca," *The Main Line Times* (May 1952), Bryn Mawr File No. 2.

16. "The Main Line in 1884 Was Vacation Land," *op. cit.*

17. Townsend, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

18. "Bryn Mawr Sketches," No. 3, *op. cit.*

19. Townsend, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

20. *The Main Line Chronicle*, no title, Historic Inns, Taverns, and Early Stores File.

moth size—350 rooms for 250 guests and was four floors high.<sup>20</sup> The facilities offered were outstanding which probably accounts for the high social class of the residents. For the convenience of the guests, suites and single rooms had been constructed.<sup>21</sup> The hotel boasted the first elevator on the Line, a pool room, bowling alleys, and first quality mattresses. Located on a 25½ acre plot of land with terraced gardens, it was only two minutes walking distance from the station. The four story structure was built of stone and had a mansard roof. It was run under the management of the Keystone Hotel Company and under the personal supervision of Mr. P. S. Attick. The season did not open until May 31st, which was later than most of the other boarding houses.

The surroundings of the hotel for the first few years had been rather dismal. In front were two large unsightly ice ponds which in dry weather turned into mud ponds. These lakes were fed by a small stream which today has been diverted into a culvert. The first years found the area almost treeless until the Pennsylvania Railroad planted some maple trees. As the surroundings became more beautiful, the rooms were almost always filled because of the pleasant surroundings, gas lights, and bathtubs. One of the outstanding features was that the Bryn Mawr Hotel could boast at least one bathroom to each floor, and no more than 50 people would have to use this bathroom.<sup>22</sup>

This splendor was destroyed by a disastrous fire which broke out in October 11, 1887, at 6:30 A.M. The fire, which started in a defective flue on the fourth floor, was discovered by employees. The 40 residents were warned and fled to safety. Brave waiters tried to fight the fire with water from the rooftop water tank; but they were forced to flee, and most of the building was destroyed by the time Philadelphia fire engines arrived by railroad gondola car. Haverford College students helped to save some of the furniture, but many on-lookers felt that they wrecked more than they saved.<sup>23</sup>

22. Townsend, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

21. "The Main Line in 1884 Was Vacation Land," *op. cit.*

23. *The Main Line Chronicle*, *op. cit.*



After the fire, a new hotel was erected on the site by a neighborhood syndicate. Designed by Allan Evans, the new building cost the promoters half a million dollars. Half of this amount was obtained by sale of stock and half through sale of bonds. The stock never paid a cent of dividend, and when the bonds finally came due, the group could not pay the interest. The mortgage was foreclosed and with this, the hotel stopped operations.<sup>24</sup> The failure of the Bryn Mawr Hotel can be laid to the fact that Bryn Mawr was no longer considered a summer resort and patrons went elsewhere for their vacations. Later the building was bought by the Baldwin School for Girls and is still being used as a private school today.

The previously mentioned hotels and boarding houses were probably the most important in Bryn Mawr, but it would be unfair to overlook the smaller ones because they too played an important part in Bryn Mawr's history.

The first recorded license for a tavern was granted to Peter Evans in 1765 and was located on the site of the present day Conestoga Mill bordering on Old Lancaster, Roberts, and County Line Roads. Its name, the Rose and Crown, was taken from Oliver Cromwell's coat-of-arms which displayed a red rose superimposed on a crown. When a Dutchman, Jacob Wynkoop, and his wife bought the tavern in 1773, they changed the name to the Seven Stars and hung out a sign picturing the Big Dipper. During the Revolutionary War, most inns were boarded up to prevent soldiers from entering, and in 1778, the Seven Stars went out of business.<sup>25</sup>

Another early inn, the Green Tree, was located on the southeast corner of Old Gulph Road and Spring Mill Road. It is not exactly certain when this structure was built. When the building was worked on recently, a Chinese coin dated 1742 was found in the foundations. It is definitely known that the inn was erected before 1777 because one of Washington's men left a flintlock there which was passed down for 120 years to the various owners. Thus, the building date was between

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24. Townsend, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

25. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 2, *op. cit.*

1742 and 1777. The Green Tree especially catered to drovers—the men who drove cattle and sheep to market in Philadelphia. In 1856 the structure was rebuilt by the owner Ellis Ramsey. The next owner was Charles Preston who operated the inn from 1878 to 1892 when he sold the tavern to Thomas Davis. The Green Tree with its seventeen bedrooms and large ballroom was for many years the meeting place for the Lower Merion Society for the Detection and Prosecution of Horse Thieves and the Recovery of Stolen Animals.<sup>26</sup>

Another colorful tavern about which very little is known is the Red Rose Tavern. A certain Frederick Phillips who had a brother known as the Duke De Moro inherited a colonial farmhouse and made an exclusive tavern out of it. The inn got its name from the fact that bunches of red roses were grown especially for the table decorations. Guests were served by attendants in red and white uniforms. This plush tavern, which got the nick-name of the "Diamond Horseshoe Tavern," was located off Gulph Road and west of Spring Mill Road. Even though the tavern failed financially, Frederick Phillips and his brother the Duke De Moro are remembered because of the Mt. Moro Road which was constructed near the tavern.<sup>27</sup>

During the era of the summer resort hotels, many small boarding houses developed. One of these was the one known as The Pines, owned by Mrs. Mary A. Binder. Located just fifteen minutes walking distance from the station, it offered its guests extensive lawns, shady groves, tennis courts, fruits, milk, and good spring water. The season usually opened on May first, and Mrs. Binder almost always had a houseful of twenty-five guests. The rates were quite moderate and ranged between \$8. and \$10. a week. Another inn, the Farm House, owned by a Mr. William Schalliole, was located approximately a mile and a half from the railroad station. This inn opened on June first and could cater to twenty people who had paid

26. "Chinese Coin Helped Fix Date of Green Tree Inn," *The Main Line Chronicle*, Historic Inns, Taverns, and Early Stores File.

27. "Dilettante Duke De Moro Invested in Local Lands," *Historic Inns, Taverns, and Early Stores File*.

\$8. a week. The smallest of the three inns was the Castner House owned by Mr. Z. D. Sissler. It was later called "Maison Jaune," then Bryn Mawr Polo Club. It still stands on County Line Road near Bryn Mawr Hospital. Situated one-quarter of a mile from the station, this boarding house could accommodate seventeen guests.<sup>28</sup>

The early taverns, inns, and hotels helped to play an important part in making Philadelphians conscious of the beauty and the pleasant atmosphere of the little town. From the interested people who visited the town as guests came the bulk of the population who chose to remain in Bryn Mawr permanently.

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28. "The Main Line in 1884 Was Vacation Land," *op. cit.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### DEVELOPMENT OF BRYN MAWR

As already mentioned, before the late 1860's the town had been called Humphreysville in honor of the Humphrey family. Joseph Lesley, secretary of the Pennsylvania Railroad, was appointed a committee of one to choose less rustic names for the stations along the railroad line. He went back and chose the name Bryn Mawr which had been the name of the Rowland Ellis residence. According to W. Hasell Wilson, he named the town rather than Mr. Lesley. Of Welsh dialect, this name is variously pronounced Brine Mower, Brin Mower, Brin Mahr, and Brin More. The Welsh pronounced it Brin More. Thus, in 1869, the town was formally renamed.<sup>1</sup>

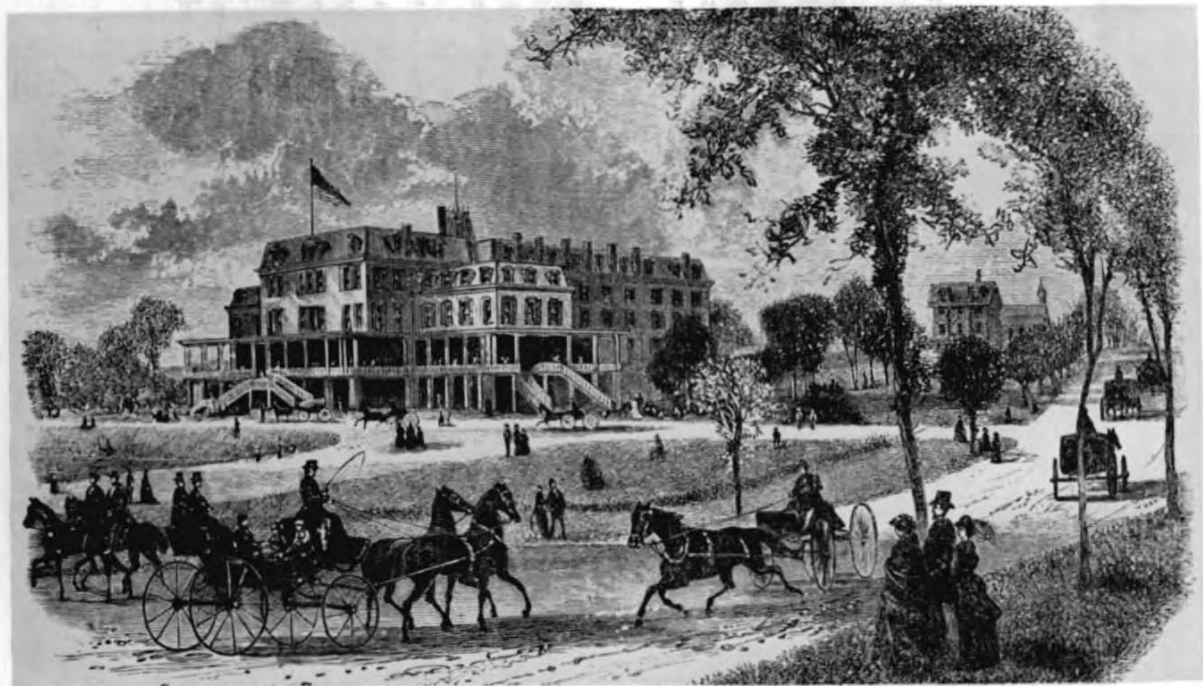
By 1884, Bryn Mawr had developed as the most populous place in Lower Merion Township. Approximately 300 houses had been built within a radius of a mile from the station. The older portion was located on the Lancaster Pike, and the surrounding area was a scattered collection of country seats. Montgomery Avenue and Lancaster Pike were the two most important streets, and between them ran the Pennsylvania Railroad. The railroad service had increased tremendously with the rise of the summer resort business. In 1884, there were twenty-seven trains going east and twenty-three going west daily between the hours of six A.M. and midnight. Thus, one finds that the little town of Bryn Mawr had really grown. To understand the growth of the town, one must go back and look at the early residents and industries.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 1, *op. cit.*

W. Hasell Wilson "Reminiscences of a Railroad Engineer" 1895.

2. Bean, *op. cit.*, pp. 924-925.



Courtesy Pennsylvania Railroad

**BRYN MAWR HOTEL**

Immediately following the building of "Harriton," other homes were constructed. It is believed that the next oldest house in Bryn Mawr was the Cornog log house which was built at the corner of the present day County Line Road and Mon Dela Avenue.<sup>3</sup> About the same time as the latter building was being erected, a little settlement was being laid out at the junction of Haverford and Darby Roads. Although these roads were laid out in 1687, a smithy and cooperage were not started until 1704, and it was around these little industries that the settlement developed. The cooper's house was the most prominent and was constructed of native rock such as Wissahickon mica schist, Bryn Mawr gravel, gneiss, granite, black rock, and sandstone. Its main feature was a huge stone fireplace.<sup>4</sup>

On Darby Road near Ithan Creek is located "Backacres" which is believed to be over 200 years old. Its structure—hand hewn beams, pegged roof rafters and cellar timbers, ancient flooring, forged hardware, kitchen fireplace more than nine feet wide surmounted by a massive hand hewn timber over a foot square—shows the colonial design. The one object that has definitely been traced to a specific time period is the antique crane used in the fireplace. The crane is definitely of the 1720 period. During the Revolutionary War a British officer was discovered hiding here and was hung on a tree at the west end of the house. At another time, the patriot leader Captain Benjamin Brooke and his troop were almost captured here by the British. Recently two Revolutionary sabers were found under the floor boards to give further evidence that "Backacres" was a local headquarters during many Revolutionary events.<sup>5</sup>

In 1750 the original Sheaff farmhouse was built on Highland Lane on land later owned by the adjacent Drexel estate, "Wootton." In 1809 a wing was added by the owner P. H.

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3. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 22, *op. cit.*

4. "Landmarks of the Main Line," Historic Houses File and Lower Merion Township Schools File No. 4.

5. "Backacres Ghosts," *The Main Line Times*, Historic Houses File.

Sheaff, and the barn on the property was added in 1830.<sup>6</sup> William and Rees Thomas in 1769 built a house just north of Montgomery Avenue. Soon after the house was built, it was sold to Peter Pechin who lived there for many years with his four daughters. Later, one of the daughters married Joshua Ashbridge whose name was given to the farmhouse which is still today called "Rosemont" or the "Ashbridge House." The estate originally had 200 acres, but part of it was given in 1860 to the Pennsylvania Railroad upon which the Rosemont station was to be built. The house was constructed of field stones with walls a foot and a half thick. There were key-stones over the windows, and the front entrance was a double dutch door. Owned by the Thomas family until 1850, it was again taken over by the Ashbridge family. When the last of the family died, the home became a community center.<sup>7</sup>

One of the pre-Revolutionary War houses was "Gough-acres," located at Sproul and Clyde Roads, which was built in 1770. At the turn of the twentieth century, Perry Litzenberg sold the farmhouse to B. F. Clyde, the steamship magnate.<sup>8</sup> Another of the pre-Revolutionary houses was the house on the Red Rose Farm. The central part was built before the war, and one wing was added in 1789. Owned by John Yocum in the late 1700's, it was the home of the late J. Kearsley Mitchell.<sup>9</sup>

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the Brooke House was built at Clyde Road and Ithan Avenue. The first wing was constructed in 1790 while the second wing bears the datestone "JCB 1830." The initials JCB stood for Jesse and Catharine Brooke who lived in the house until 1839. Brooke House, which was once known as "Gwenda," remained in the Brooke family until 1870.<sup>10</sup> On the other side of town, at the

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6. "Landmarks of the Main Line," *op. cit.*

7. Untitled clipping, Historic Houses File.

8. "Landmarks of Lower Merion and Vicinity," *The Main Line Times*, Historic Houses File.

9. "Red Rose Farm Dating from Before Revolution," *The Main Line Times*, Historic Houses File.

10. "Landmarks of the Main Line," *op. cit.*

present day location of 764 Mt. Pleasant Road, the house at Spring Brook Farm was constructed in 1795. The next year the spring house was erected. This property was recently the residence of retired Brigadier General Brenton G. Wallace.<sup>11</sup>

Another house built around this time was "Wyndham" constructed by Patience Morgan in 1796. Formerly owned by Theodore N. Ely, the Chief of Motive Power of the Pennsylvania Railroad, this house was eventually acquired by Bryn Mawr College. The old "Wyndham" stable, which is now used as a residence by Miss Gertrude Ely, was built in 1775 by Thomas and Patience Morgan.<sup>12</sup>

As the town grew, most of the houses were built on two streets—Lancaster Avenue and Montgomery Avenue. If one would come up Lancaster Avenue from Haverford, the first extensive estate was that of Robert N. Lee who owned property on both sides of the pike from Penn Street to Lee Avenue which was named for him. Two present day streets, San Marino Avenue and Dayton Road, were covered by this tract. Farther up the street was the Viney and Leasocko house (the site of the present day Philadelphia Suburban Water Company offices, and Wolf's Bakery and Ice Cream Parlor was on the next lot (the site of the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company). The adjoining plot of land was owned by a Mrs. Elliott. In the 1880's, only the Clifton House was standing. Later Elliott Avenue was cut through this tract and connected Old Lancaster Road with Lancaster Avenue.<sup>13</sup> It was also on Lancaster Avenue that the Humphreys' Homestead which was mentioned in a previous chapter was located. The first city resident of the new Bryn Mawr was Charles Wheeler who rented this house while his new house was being built on Gulph Road. While living there, the Wheeler's oldest son, Charles, was born thus becoming the first child born in the new Bryn Mawr. The Wheelers became an important family in Bryn Mawr especially when Andrew Wheeler, the brother of Charles, also built his

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11. "Local Landmarks" No. 48, Historic Houses File.

12. "Landmarks of the Main Line," *op. cit.*

13. Abernethy, *op. cit.*



house on Gulph Road. After the Wheelers moved to their new home, the Humphrey house was bought by John M. Kennedy who in turn sold it to Theodore N. Ely of the Pennsylvania Railroad. This stately old mansion was torn down recently.

The second most important residential section was located along Montgomery Avenue which was just north of Lancaster Avenue. Grand houses were built along this street which the Pennsylvania Railroad was developing. Going west from Haverford on Montgomery Avenue, the first property was located on the corner of Penn Street and Montgomery Avenue and was owned by Mr. Goff.<sup>14</sup> The next important property was "Weimercroft," the cut stone house of William H. Weimer, on the corner of Morris Road and Montgomery Avenue. This building is now part of Harcum Junior College.<sup>15</sup> Across the street was the Addison Hutton house. Hutton, a Quaker architect, was responsible for the style of many old Main Line homes. Later, this residence was bought by Samuel Rea, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and is now owned by Harcum Junior College.

Next to the Hutton house on Morris Avenue was a frame house built by Dr. Savery who had the whole Bryn Mawr practice and was considered to be a good old-fashioned family physician. Later, Dr. Walter Chrystie took over the house and the practice.<sup>16</sup> On the north side of the avenue, just a little west of Morris Avenue, was located the Tilghman estate which extended over grounds now covered by the Shipley School. The Tilghman mansion was one of the first houses to be furnished with a gas machine in the cellar. One cold night when the gas seemed sluggish, the handy man lit a candle to accelerate the flow, and the house blew up. The ruins were then used by tramps who wanted shelter. For many years the Tilghman land was the only holding along the railroad which was not owned by the company. Finally in the late 1870's the property was sold to E. Y. Townsend who had owned a house

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14. Townsend, *op cit.*, pp. 77-78.

15. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 24, *op. cit.*

16. Townsend, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

on Merion Avenue. The latter gentleman sold the portion south of Montgomery Avenue to the railroad and thereby enabled them to widen the cut to provide for much needed additional freight tracks.<sup>17</sup>

The next important group of houses on Montgomery Avenue was located at Merion Avenue. One of the houses constructed on this corner was built by George Allen. Another one was owned by Henry Whelen, Sr. Later, it was torn down, and the Marvin House was built. The big rosy red brick house with a white porte-cochere and white trimmings was later torn down, and the Mermont Plaza Apartments were built.<sup>18</sup>

Many fashionable country estates were constructed on the outskirts of the town. One of the largest was "Wootton" which was built on the Bryn Mawr Avenue farms formerly owned by Amos Lewis,<sup>19</sup> and the Sheaff family. "Wootton" was erected for George W. Childs, the Editor of the "Philadelphia Public Ledger" by John McArthur, architect of the Philadelphia City Hall. This estate was known for its beauty, and the Childs allowed the public to visit the "Welcome Hall" as the residence was called. Many distinguished guests such as General Grant, General Sherman, President Hayes, Mrs. Grover Cleveland, A. J. Drexel and other notables visited the Childs. Each guest planted a memorial tree for himself.<sup>20</sup> Across the street was a locomotive shaped house which was built by the Williams family of the Baldwin Locomotive Company of Philadelphia.<sup>21</sup> Nearby, was "Annasdale" the beautiful old house built by Dr. Edward Peace whose step-daughter Charlette Parker married James Rawle. In 1873, the Rawle family, which is very important in Bryn Mawr society, built a house called "Castlefinn" near the Peace residence.<sup>22</sup>

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17. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

19. Browning, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

20. Townsend, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Another big estate, "Fox Hill," was the 240 acre tract owned by Rudolph Ellis. This great stone mansion with its big high chimneys and red tiled roof was built in 1881.<sup>23</sup> Closer to the town on Bryn Mawr Avenue was the estate owned by the Lindsey family which covered the land from the White Hall Hotel to the Humphreysville settlement on the Lancaster Pike. Miss Lindsey married Samuel Black, the Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad, then the young couple built a large home not far from the station which is now used as the Bryn Mawr Memorial Community House.<sup>24</sup>

The above sketches have pointed out the most important families in the early days, but Bryn Mawr was not entirely a residential town; it came to have many small businesses along Lancaster Avenue which were developed between 1869 and 1900. The only other store which was located away from this street was the General Store. This building had been constructed before the Columbia Railroad was erected. Built with old mortar in the limestone walls and split cypress shingles, it was situated on a triangle of land that was bounded by County Line Road and Old Lancaster Road. The General Store was first run by Thomas T. Crosely and his wife. In 1869, the control passed into the hands of William H. Ramsey and Thomas Mather. In 1896, the building was owned by Jesse D. Weaver and Milford B. Baldwin who ran "Baldwin's Store." Later it was bought by Lippincott and Eadie and became a grocery and feed store.<sup>25</sup> The upstairs loft was also a community gathering place. Prize fights and minstrel shows were presented there. In fact, the Bryn Mawr fight fans had the chance to see Jack Johnson fight there before he became World Champion. The building is today the Conestoga Mill Restaurant.<sup>26</sup>

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23. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 14, *op. cit.*

24. Townsend, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.

25. W. H. Watt, "Conestoga Mill," *The Main Line Times*, Historic Mills and Quarries File. (Located at the Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

26. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 20.

There were also many food stores in the town. These included the Ramsey store at the corner of Lancaster Avenue and Bryn Mawr Avenue (the site of the Bryn Mawr Trust Company) which sold both dry goods and food, Maxwell's Meat Store near Merion Avenue, the Evans' Grocery on the corner of Roberts Road, and John M. Driver's Grocery. These were the only grocery stores on the avenue.<sup>27</sup> The town also had quite a few ice cream parlors. Isaac Warner Arthur, the post master, had an ice cream parlor and bakery in addition to the Bryn Mawr Ice Company whose delivery route covered the Main Line from Overbrook to Berwyn.<sup>28</sup> Although I. Warner Arthur had the largest business, the first Main Line ice cream parlor was started by Isaac H. Evans in 1882. Ice cream was sold for ten cents a plate, and there was only one flavor. Gradually the ice cream business went into the drug stores. Moore's Drug Store which stood next to the recently demolished Bryn Mawr National Bank and Lou Adam's Drug Store which was a little farther west on Lancaster Avenue sold candy and ice cream in addition to their drugs.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, Bryn Mawr had many clothing and dry goods stores. At the corner of Summit Grove and Lancaster Avenues was a shoemaker's shop and the Jones' store where dry goods were sold.<sup>30</sup> General clothing could be bought in Charles Short's Bryn Mawr Clothing Store, while Ladies' and Gents' furnishings, toys, and confections were sold at Viney's which was located at Warner Avenue and the Lancaster Pike. Across the street was a store owned by M. A. Callahan which specialized in millinery goods, hats, bonnets, and caps.<sup>31</sup> For shoes and boots, there was the H. J. Harrison Store which stood on the pike between Merion and Roberts Road. Of all the early stores, the most lasting was the Philip Harrison haberdashery, a business that is still outstanding today. Started

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27. Abernethy, *op. cit.*

28. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 15, *op. cit.*

29. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 16, *op. cit.*

30. Abernethy, *op. cit.*

31. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 15, *op. cit.*

in 1891, the first site was the present day location of the Bryn Mawr theater.<sup>32</sup>

For those residents who were now building homes in the locality, there were many contractors who could do the job. John S. Garrigues had a surveyor's office at the site of the present Yerkes Surveying Company. For mason work and general contracting, Peter Hensey was available, while material for fences and roofs could be bought from Hillery M. Millikin, a painter and glazier, who had his shop at Montgomery Avenue and Gulph Road. Paperhanging was done efficiently and cheaply (ten cents a roll) by Levis S. Cline, while G. N. Schwemmer was the town's general upholsterer and interior decorator.<sup>33</sup> One can see that Bryn Mawr residents could have homes built and remodeled by local craftsmen.

For transportation other than trains, Bryn Mawr had many livery stables and carriage shops. Most of the stables were run by Irishmen. The most important stable owner was Pat Kerrigan who had his enterprise by the Pennsylvania Railroad, not too far from Lee Avenue and just east of the old "Home News" building. Another stable was operated by Mike Byrnes at the pike and Roberts Road, while a wheelwright shop, owned by P. Hart, was in operation on the pike just opposite Thomas Avenue.<sup>34</sup> At the close of the century, the leading Bryn Mawr vehicle dealer was J. T. McClellan who would build carriages to order. Like most modern auto dealers, he had a wide variety of used carriages which could suit any taste.<sup>35</sup> In 1887, one of the most unique companies in the world was established. This was the Derham Custom Body Company which specialized in carriage work and made one of the first closed cars. Its customers have included presidents, kings, shahs, and even a pope.<sup>36</sup>

The residents also had a local grist mill, the Morris Mill, to grind flour. Located on Old Gulph Road, about 500 feet

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32. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 23.

33. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 15, *op. cit.*

34. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 16, *op. cit.*

35. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 15, *op. cit.*

36. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 5.

south of Morris Avenue, the brick-chimneyed mill got its water power from Mill Creek. Also known as Harriton Mills and Pyle's Mill, the stream was dammed at Morris Avenue and formed Pyle's pond which was used by the Lower Merion Baptist Church for baptising and by the community as a whole for skating and bathing.<sup>37</sup>

Many other industries started. In 1888 the jewelry store of John Fish & Son was founded in the western part of the town. Ten years later, in 1898, the T. W. Hammonds & Brother Architectural Woodwork Mill was established. Both of these firms have prospered and are still part of the community.<sup>38</sup> During the late 1890's Connelly's Flower Shop was started.<sup>39</sup> About the same time, 1895, the C. E. Wilson Laundry Company Inc. at Summit Grove Avenue and Lancaster Avenue was established. Serving the Main Line from Philadelphia to Malvern and from the Schuylkill River to West Chester Pike, the plant had approximately 100 employees when it was sold in 1955.<sup>40</sup>

Every little town has its fuel depot and express depot, and Bryn Mawr was no exception. The Supplee Brothers & Company sold Lehigh and Susquehanna coal, building materials, feeds, seeds, and fertilizers at their property, located just east of Morris Avenue on the pike (near Skelton's). On the other side of the street, on the site of the present Ryan and Christie warehouse, was located a small frame building which housed the express office of James and William Pratt.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, one observes that Bryn Mawr by 1900 had many residents and many small businesses. With the growth of the town, one finds that the community developed a large number of churches that proved important in the lives of the residents of the town.

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37. "Landmarks of Lower Merion and Vicinity," *op. cit.*

38. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 15.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

41. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 15, *op. cit.*



Courtesy L. M. Baptist Church Archives

**LOWER MERION BAPTIST CHURCH**

## CHAPTER IX

### THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

The town as it grew acquired a number of churches toward the end of the nineteenth century. Today, there are seven churches in the town, and six of them—the Lower Merion Baptist Church, St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church, Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal), Our Mother of Good Counsel Church (Roman Catholic), Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church and the Bryn Mawr A.M.E. Church were started before 1900.

Although many of the earliest settlers were Quakers, many other settlers embraced other religions. Quite a few residents would gather in a little meetinghouse on the "Harriton" estate, then the residence of Charles Thomson, to hear visiting preachers deliver their sermons. The Reverend Thomas Fleeson was probably the most regular visitor, and it was he who introduced the group to Horatio Gates Jones who was to become the first minister of the church that was being formed.<sup>1</sup> From this early group, nineteen persons prepared and adopted the covenant for the Lower Merion Baptist Church under the leadership of Reverend Mr. Jones, the son of the parson of the Great Valley Baptist Church at Valley Forge. This covenant was accepted, and the group was admitted to the Philadelphia Baptist Association in October, 1808.

On one acre of land located at Old Gulph and Roberts Roads, which had been donated by Charles McClenachan with the concurrence of Charles Thomson, the first meeting house was constructed. The cornerstone was laid by Thomson, and the completed building was dedicated in 1810. At about

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1. Gavin Morton Walker, "Lower Merion Baptist Church," pamphlet printed by the church, 1933, pp. 1-5.



the same time, the Board of Trustees was set up. Such prominent names as Penn-Gaskell, Levering, Curwen, and Pechin could be found on the list. As the congregation grew, so did the church building. An addition was added in 1859, and the entire style of the building was changed in 1887. New doorways, floors, and pews were constructed, and they even had a gas machine for light. Gothic windows of stained glass replaced the plain glass ones. George W. Childs, the Editor and the owner of the "Philadelphia Public Ledger," dedicated one of the new windows to Charles Thomson for all of the work that he did in establishing the new church. On the altar was placed a copy of the Charles Thomson translation of the Bible. In the adjoining graveyard are interred the remains of several Revolutionary soldiers.

As the regular meeting house was located near the "Harriston" settlement, when the town began to develop along Lancaster Avenue, the church built a chapel there in 1874, for convenience of the village. This building was used mainly for educational and recreational activities, such as Bible School, youth meetings, social functions, dinners, and socials.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the original land, the church obtained many other properties by purchase. In 1833, the Lower Merion Baptist Church bought two acres of land from the trustees of Naomi Morris for \$300. Later, from Mrs. Naomi Morris they bought 3.9 acres of land in 1882 for \$3892. These two strips of land adjoined the original tract.

Land was also being sought for in order to build a parsonage. In 1869, two acres on North Merion Avenue and Yarrow Road were bought for \$1150., and two years later the parsonage was constructed there. Included with the building was a baptismal pool, but this was later not used because the new meeting house had its own pool. In 1885, the parsonage which had a mortgage of \$2,400 was sold for \$11,000. and a new parsonage and sexton's house adjoining the church were built the same year for \$7,698.57.<sup>3</sup> This house was the early

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2. The Main Line Times, October 21, 1948, p. 10.

3. Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

home of the Woodrow Wilson family during his days as professor at Bryn Mawr College.<sup>4</sup>

Christian Education for the children was very important to the members of the Lower Merion Baptist Church. In 1824, a class was set up once a month for catechism. Then a Bible School which met two times a month was established. By 1840 the attendance in the four different Bible Schools was 439 pupils and 52 teachers. In 1873, the church began to sponsor the Mission School at Merion Square (Gladwyne). With the growth of the Sunday School, a group of women who called themselves the Pastoral Aid Society was organized. Financially, they helped the early church a large amount by giving \$300. for an organ in 1888 and \$862.55 in 1889 to help defray rebuilding expenses.<sup>5</sup>

The church itself is surrounded by a neatly kept graveyard with gravel walks and trimmed shrubs. In this cemetery can be found such well-known names as Taylor, Johnson, Curwen, Righter, Matheys, Elliott, Owens, Lewis, Sheaff, and Penn-Gaskell (related to the Penn family) on the tombstones.<sup>6</sup> Unlike many graveyards, the Lower Merion Baptist Church Cemetery was well laid out and governed. The trustees in 1811 even made a ruling that the tombstones were to be placed horizontally eighteen inches above the ground, but this ruling caused too much trouble and was withdrawn in 1833. The cemetery is open to all people, and part of it is especially reserved for strangers and colored people.<sup>7</sup>

Being the oldest church in town, there were many ministers before 1900. The following men served the Lower Merion Baptist Church in the pulpit: Horatio Gates Jones 1808-1853; Levi Parmely 1854-1858; George W. Anderson 1858-1868; Clark B. Oakley 1869-1871; James Trickett 1872-1879; Henry Clay Applegarth 1879-1883; William Wiley 1883-1885; Ber-

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4. Dorothy Moorhouse, Letter to Colliers Encyclopedia, Bryn Mawr File No.1.

5. Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

6. Buck, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

7. Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

nard MacMackin 1885-1891; Isaac Walter Goodhue 1891-1896; Thomas Dunlap Douglas Clarke 1896-1899; and Daniel Gordon Stevens, Jr. 1899-1906.<sup>8</sup>

Some forty years after the formation of the Lower Merion Baptist Church, the Church of the Redeemer was established in 1851. Episcopalians in the vicinity first strongly thought of creating a church of their faith in 1851. On August 3rd a meeting was held in the Temperance Hall under the direction of Reverend Henry Hobart Brown of St. David's Church. Following the sermon, an organization meeting took place, and Frederick W. Porter, Jesse Gyer, Isaac Hazelhurst, John Hulme, Lewis Wister, David Morgan, James Morgan, Owen Jones, and Joseph K. Eyre were chosen as vestrymen. The meeting of August 9, 1851, resulted in the Reverend Mr. Brown's becoming chosen as rector of "St. Luke's parish" with a salary of \$300. a year. The man chosen as sexton was to receive \$30. per annum. On October 30, 1851, the church bought one and a quarter acres at Lancaster Avenue and Buck Lane for \$425. with a deduction of \$120. for cash. The group had subscriptions of \$1,600. of the \$2,000. that the church was supposed to cost. November 21, 1851, the cornerstone was laid by Pennsylvania Bishop Alonzo Potter, D.D. The church which seated 300 people had a tower and pews and was built at a total cost of \$2,800. The collapse of the tower led to a law suit with the contractor which the church lost.

On November 22, 1851, the vestry changed the church's name to the Church of the Redeemer. For four years, Reverend Henry Brown served the church. In 1856, Reverend George S. Rider accepted the call as the first full-time rector at a salary of \$1,000. a year. A rectory was rented for him at a cost of \$200. a year, but Mr. Rider left at the end of two months and was succeeded by Reverend Edward L. Lycett who served from 1856 to 1878. Finally, on September 2, 1857, the parish was declared free of debts and was consecrated.

The present site of the church at Gulph and Fishers Roads was bought September 10, 1860. The nine and a quarter acres

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

were obtained at \$150. an acre. By 1866, the church was indeed more prosperous. The rector was receiving a salary of \$1,500. by that time and also a horse and cow, while \$1700. worth of alterations were made to the old church in 1863. On March 20, 1872, a committee was appointed to lay out the plans for a new church and cemetery. In that year also a new rectory costing \$12,702 was completed.

With such heavy financial burdens, a fund raising group soon became necessary, and so the Church Extension Society was started in 1873. The cornerstone was finally laid November 8, 1879, by the Bishop of Nebraska, Right Reverend Harper Clarkson, D.D., and the first service was held on Easter Sunday in 1881. The church designed by Charles M. Burns, Jr. was supposed to cost \$18,500., but the final bill was \$23,996. On October 6, 1881, the church and yard were consecrated by Right Reverend William Bacon Stevens, D.D., Bishop of Pennsylvania.

The whole building program had taken place under Reverend Edward S. Watson, D.D., who had followed the Reverend Mr. Lycett in 1878 as pastor. Reverend Mr. Watson had failing eyesight and twice asked to resign. The church gave him a curate to ease his work, but the third resignation was accepted in 1886 by a reluctant congregation. He was succeeded by Reverend James Haughton who served from 1887 to 1907. During the first year of Reverend Mr. Haughton's ministry, the new stone rectory costing \$10,500. was completed. Still, the church grew. In 1891, a \$4,590. choir room was added, and the next year a \$3,500. steam heating system was installed.<sup>9</sup>

The Episcopalians did not have the interest in Sunday Schools that the Baptists had. During the ministry of Reverend Mr. Lycett, Mr. John R. Whitney wanted to start a Sunday School, but Mr. Lycett opposed the idea. Whitney, with the aid of Lycett's three rebellious daughters, started one anyway. It was quite successful, and its influence in the Mill Creek area

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9. Ernest C. Earp, *The Church of the Redeemer, A Brief History of the Parish*, Published by the Vestry, 100th Anniversary, 1951.

led to the founding of St. Mary's Church in Ardmore. Although Mr. Lycett did not approve of Sunday Schools, he worked very hard in the home mission field. In 1859, he began Sunday afternoon services in Conshohocken which later led to the founding of the Calvary Church there.<sup>10</sup>

The Episcopalian Church was well established when the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church was being started. Previously, mention was made of the differences in opinion between Reverend Mr. Lycett and Mr. Whitney over the Sunday School. One day Mr. Lycett told Mr. Whitney that he "was no better than a Presbyterian." So Whitney sensibly concluded that he had better be a good Presbyterian than be a poor Episcopalian. He joined John Converse and others in starting a little church.<sup>11</sup>

In 1871 a few Presbyterians began to hold meetings in the homestead of Samuel Black, one of the future church's first trustees. The first formal service was held August 25, 1872, in the Temperance Hall which stood on the south side of Lancaster Avenue west of Buck Lane. Justus F. Seldonridge who was later to become one of the first elders arranged for Reverend Gerald F. Dale, a prominent missionary, to conduct the service. This was the same hall where John R. Whitney ran his Union Sunday School. On January 13, 1873, the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church was organized. Now they only needed official sanction.

At the insistence of Reverend Beriah Bishop Hotchkin, minister of the Marple Presbyterian Church, a meeting of the Presbytery of Chester was called for the purpose of organizing a Presbyterian church in Bryn Mawr. A special act of the synod had the church transferred from the Philadelphia North Presbytery to Chester Presbytery.

Finally, in May 1873, a lot on Montgomery Avenue was purchased from the Pennsylvania Railroad for \$2,500., and in March of 1874 a green-stone chapel was completed. Soon

10. "Reverend Mr. Lycett Opposed Sunday School for Bryn Mawr, His Daughters Dissented," Main Line Churches File. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

11. Townsend, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

the growing congregation launched a fund raising drive, and a new brown stone church was completed at a cost of \$26,879.57. October 3, 1886, saw the church dedicated and declared free of debt. This beautiful building had been designed by Addison Hutton who has been mentioned in a previous chapter. The congregation increased, and in 1894 an annex was added at the north side of the church to house the growing Sunday School. The present church was built and dedicated on May 6, 1928, while the wedding chapel was built in 1940 by the Pew family.<sup>12</sup>

The early church had many struggles, but it had many friends also. Two lots west of the church were given to it. A manse was finished in 1883 at a cost of \$10,118.15. Mr. John H. Converse generously donated a stable for the use of the church, and in 1911 the Converse House was built to be used as a manse.<sup>13</sup>

The Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church had only one minister before the turn of the century. He was the Reverend William Hamilton Miller who served the church from the time he was graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with honors in 1874 until his death in 1907. Unmarried, his family included his two sisters, the Misses Mary V. and Matilda C. Miller, and a niece, Miss Jessie I. Miller. Reverend Miller was outstanding in the missionary field. Two members of the church—Dr. William J. Wanless and Reverend George W. Fulton—were sent respectively to India and Japan in 1888. Thus, Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church became the first Presbyterian church to support directly its very own representative in the mission field.<sup>14</sup>

The Methodist movement started in a neighboring town almost a hundred years before it came to Bryn Mawr. The first Methodist church in the area met at the James Mansion House, located at Montrose Avenue and Old Lancaster Road. The result was the formation of a Prayer Meeting in 1778, and the outcome was the organization of class meeting in the same

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12. The Main Line Times, October 21, 1948, p. 38.

13. The Story of the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1948), pp. 15-18.

14. Ibid., pp. 28-50.

year. In 1780 George Gyger took over the leadership of the class meeting. This resulted in the founding of the Radnor Methodist Episcopal Church at "Methodist Hill" under the guidance of Bishops Asbury and Coke. When the railroad track was changed, and the town of Bryn Mawr proper was founded, the people wanted a more conveniently located church.

On August 24, 1876, a meeting presided over by Bishop Matthew Simpson was held at the home of Mrs. V. V. Crawford to start a new church. A committee of W. Henry Sutton, William A. Fisher, A. Crawford Anderson, Jacob Danley, and Dr. D. H. Bradley was formed to work on the idea. Finally on April 11, 1877, a building committee of Bradley, Sutton, Ambrose S. Cline, John H. Clemmans, and Isaac W. Anderson was appointed. Work started on August 28th, and the cornerstone was laid October 1, 1877, by Bishop Simpson who was assisted by Reverend George Cummings, the District Superintendent. Dedication was held June 29, 1879.

Not until 1883 did St. Luke's, which like the Church of the Redeemer at its inception, was named after the "beloved physician," come under its own control. The Reverend F. H. Moore was the first pastor who devoted himself solely to St. Luke's. The church continued to grow. In 1890, W. H. Joyce presented the church with a \$3,500. organ. In 1891, the parsonage was completed, and in 1894, a \$4,895. organ room was built.<sup>15</sup> The church was a fine one-story Gothic building with a steeple and stained glass windows.<sup>16</sup>

St. Luke's had been erected on a lot purchased from the Pennsylvania Railroad. Located at the corner of Penn Street and Montgomery Avenue, it measured 150 feet by 300 feet and cost \$2,500. \$1,000. of this amount was donated by the railroad. The church still stands on its first site.

The Methodists were also very active in the Sunday School movement. In 1878, W. H. Sutton began the Little Bethel

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15. 75th Anniversary of St. Luke's Methodist Church, printed by the church.

16. Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 925.

Sunday School in the Temperance Hall. This group was largely formed from the Union Sunday School that had been conducted by William A. Fisher since 1851. Through the years the Little Bethel group continued to grow, and by 1884, it had 70 pupils.<sup>17</sup>

Bryn Mawr has always had a small Negro population, and their needs required attention also. About the same time as St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church was being set up, the Bryn Mawr African Methodist Episcopal Church was beginning in 1878. The latter church had been started as a mission during that year in the private residence of John Hooper on Conestoga Road just west of Lippincott and Eadie's store. Hooper was a local minister who had an infidel wife and children who did not believe in Christ. Anytime he could get two or more people to join him, he would have a service. One day he was standing on his porch and saw George Barrett, a Negro, walking by. He stopped him and asked him if he was looking for a church. Barrett responded that there was no Negro church in the vicinity. Hooper replied that he would start one.

For two years they worked together until Hooper died in 1880. After looking for six months, Barrett persuaded the Reverend Mr. Boulton to come and serve. Unfortunately, Reverend Mr. Boulton died, and Barrett ran the church alone again for six months until Samuel Curtis came to help him. The meetings generally were held at Dusty Hall on Buck Road in Haverford which they rented for \$4. a month. Since the group was often unable to pay the rent, it was constantly moving. Often there was no minister, and Curtis and Barrett had to conduct the services. It was finally decided to buy a piece of land in the White Hall district for \$90. Instead the money had to be used for paying a preacher, and the land was lost.

The group then appealed to the Philadelphia Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church for a preacher. For awhile a presiding elder named Phelps was sent from Centerville, Maryland, to preside over the Bryn Mawr group. The

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17. *Ibid.*, p. 389.



first minister to be sent was J. B. Hill in 1888. In the absence of a parsonage and church, Hill and his wife with their seven or eight children moved from place to place.

To get their plot of land on Merion Avenue, Barrett, Curtis, and Alexander Murray of the Bethel Church in Philadelphia had to steal in under the cover of night to stake out their claim because they feared opposition from the white residents of the street. After getting the ground, Curtis told Miss Catherine Morris of Bryn Mawr, his employer, about it. Mrs. Levi Morris told the group to try to build the church, and she would help them to pay for it. Mrs. Morris, John B. Garrett, and Miss Mary R. Garrett, along with other white residents, gave \$4,000.

Built in 1889, the church was well-organized by the white residents who helped to build it. J. B. Garrett served as Treasurer of the Trustee Board for awhile, and other white citizens helped to set up different church groups.<sup>18</sup> With so much racial strife today, one is reassured to observe that the two groups have been able to work together to obtain a common goal for the betterment of both.

The last church to be established in the latter part of the nineteenth century was Our Mother of Good Counsel. Founded in July 26, 1885, the first masses were held in a small frame school house owned by Miss Lycett on Radnor Road. The church was mainly started to serve the Catholics who were visiting the hotels and the new residents. Father Coleman started by collecting funds from Catholics and non-Catholics alike. After getting the consent of the Archbishop of Philadelphia, Patrick John Ryan, a site on Montgomery Avenue just east of the present Montgomery Inn was purchased.

Ground was broken by Father Coleman on May 15, 1886, and the following July 4th a little frame chapel was dedicated. The altar linens and altar boy cassocks were donated to the church by Mrs. Thackara, the daughter of General Sherman of Civil War fame. In 1887, the new priest was Father James

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18. Brief History of Bryn Mawr A.M.E. Church, published by the church, Main Line Churches File.

J. Blake, O.S.A., a Prior at Villanova. Accompanied by Brother Edward, also of Villanova, he came down to hear confessions on Saturday afternoons and to say mass on Sundays.

When the land was purchased in 1886, a stipulation called for the construction of a permanent church within three years. The parish did not have the money in 1889, consequently arrangements were made with the Pennsylvania Railroad to exchange land. The church thus got its present site at Penn Street and Lancaster Avenue. The parish members planned to move the chapel to the new site, but they discovered that crossing the railroad was impossible because of overhead telegraph wires. A parishioner, Michael Gallagher, interested Mr. A. J. Cassatt, a director of the railroad, in having the wires cut and put under the bridge. On Easter Sunday, April 12, 1889, the first mass was held at the new site.

In September, 1889, a parochial school with 119 students was opened by the Sisters of Mercy of Merion in the basement. It, like the rest of the church, grew. Father William J. Morrison, O.S.A., became the first permanent rector in 1892. The following year, Father J. J. O'Brien, O.S.A., took over. Under his guidance, a rectory was built, and a new and larger church was planned. On July 5, 1896, the cornerstone was laid and blessed by Archbishop Ryan. The 1200 parishioners ran a fair to earn money to complete the building. The church was completed, opened, and blessed by Archbishop Marinelli on November 21, 1897. At the same time, the school was moved to the upper part of the old chapel.<sup>19</sup>

By 1900, Bryn Mawr had developed six thriving churches. Her churches had started education through their Sunday Schools and parochial schools, yet most of the education was left to the public and private schools.

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19. "Today Is 50th Birthday of Local Church," Main Line Churches File.



George Vaux, Jr., 1885

FIRST CLASS AT BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

## CHAPTER X

### EDUCATION

The motto of the Ardmore Junior High School, "Enter to learn, go forth to serve," suggests the importance that education plays in this community. The greater portion of Bryn Mawr is located in Lower Merion Township, and the students attend the township schools which are considered among the best in the country.

Public education has not always been given the public support that it receives today. Before the common school system was founded, the churches and communities erected schools through donations of money, material, and labor. One of the first schools to be built in the area was the C-20 Federal School which was built on Coopertown Road in 1797. Constructed of wood, the school had wood slab benches on three sides of the room facing the fireplace and school master's desk. The students paid tuition, and the rate was three cents a day or two dollars a quarter. Tuition at that time did not include books, slates, goose quills, etc. The C-20 Federal School was finally abandoned in 1872, and cannot be considered part of the Lower Merion School system because it was located in the Haverford Township section of Bryn Mawr. The first attempt to establish a school in Lower Merion occurred in 1830 when \$55. was paid for a lot located at Spring Mill and Mt. Pleasant Roads, and a small school house was constructed. In 1811, the original building was replaced by a larger stone building which served the community until 1916.<sup>1</sup>

The Pennsylvania State Legislature in 1834 enacted the state's first common school law, which was vigorously opposed

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1. "Landmarks of the Main Line," *op. cit.*

by 31 of the 32 Montgomery County school districts. Lower Merion, the only supporter, opened the first public schools in the county in November, 1835.<sup>2</sup> The first action had taken place on August 10, 1835, when it was recommended by proper authorities that \$2,675. be raised by a tax for the support of schools. This idea was approved by a vote of the citizens, and the school fund total rose to \$3,136.72. The school directors were organized, and the public schools were opened on November 16th. From the very beginning Lower Merion supplied her students with books, paper, and other school supplies. The school was opened almost twelve months a year with the courses based mainly on English.<sup>3</sup>

The Bryn Mawr area is covered by elementary schools, but all students of junior and senior high school age formerly went to the neighboring town of Ardmore for school. Now however some attend the new Harriton Senior High School which opened in 1958, built on part of the Harriton estate. An inquiry directed to the Lower Merion Township School District revealed that it is impossible to get any details of the history of the Bryn Mawr School because all records prior to 1909 were destroyed when the Ardmore Avenue School was burned. One fact that is known, however, is that in 1880 Bryn Mawr had a two-room school located on Lancaster Avenue. Each class was run individually, and every teacher could choose his own methods and textbooks. This school was enlarged and used until the early 1920's when the new school was constructed at Old Lancaster Road and Bryn Mawr Avenue.<sup>4</sup>

The name "Bryn Mawr" in recent years has become the symbol of the epitome of higher education because of the prominence of Bryn Mawr College. The college had been founded by Dr. Joseph W. Taylor of Burlington, New Jersey, in 1880 to establish "an institute for advanced learning for women to have equal advantages with men." In the beautiful

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2. Alderfer, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

3. Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

4. "Teachers Were Paid When Convenient," Lower Merion Township Schcls File No. 4. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

Gothic buildings, a high standard undergraduate school and a graduate school for women doing work in all branches was established.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Taylor, who died in 1880, left a handsome bequest of \$800,000. for the development of the 37 acres that he had previously bought for the purpose. The buildings for the new women's college were erected on the northern side of Bryn Mawr beside New Gulph Road. The construction was under the supervision of George W. Ott. By June, 1884, Taylor Hall, built of granite from Port Deposit, Maryland, was nearly finished. This hall, which is a classroom building, is 130 feet long, 60 feet wide, and has a square tower 130 feet in height. Merion Hall, a three floor dormitory which had been designed by Addison Hutton, is also built of granite.

Dr. James E. Rhoads, a Germantown physician, was elected president of the board in March, 1885, while Miss M. Carey Thomas of Baltimore was selected Dean of the faculty and professor of English. The standards of admission and instruction were set up to equal the best male colleges in the country. Dr. Taylor had been closely connected with Haverford College, and before his death had stated that he wanted Bryn Mawr to be the feminine counterpart of Haverford. In September of 1885, Bryn Mawr College, run by the Orthodox Friends, opened its doors to outstanding women.<sup>6</sup>

When the college started, it had 36 undergraduates and six graduates in the student body with a faculty of seventeen.<sup>7</sup> Among the first faculty members was a professor named Woodrow Wilson. With his wife, he lived in the In Betweenery (so named because it was located between the Deanery and the Greenery)<sup>8</sup> until his daughter was born, and then they moved into North Hall which served as the Baptist pastor's house.

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5. A. Margretta Archambault (Editor), **A Guide Book of Art, Architecture, and Historic Interests in Pennsylvania** (The John C. Winston Company: Philadelphia, 1924), p. 260.

6. Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 927.

7. "Bryn Mawr College Leads Women's Schools of Nation," Main Line Schools and Colleges File No. 1. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

While living in Bryn Mawr, Wilson attended the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church regularly. The future President of the United States did not like teaching women and left Bryn Mawr in 1888 to take a job at Wesleyan. This move was not appreciated by the college, because the Wilson contract still had a year to run.<sup>8</sup>

The first faculty contained many distinguished scholars. Among them were Charlotte Angus Scott (mathematician), Edward Washburn Hopkins (classical scholar and philologist), Edward H. Keiser (chemist), Jean Jacques Sturzinger (authority on Romance Languages), Paul Shorey (classical scholar), and Emily Gregory (botanist). Wilson was the only member without an advanced degree or teaching experience.<sup>9</sup>

From the beginning, the college agreed to attract students by academic standards rather than by an elaborate campus. In 1889, the Trustees set the precedent that they would buy only land that was actually needed. This idea has been followed, although recent acquisitions have brought the present total to 80 acres. However, these grounds are adorned with beautiful buildings. The campus site had been chosen because of its high altitude, convenience to the Pennsylvania Railroad, the good water supply, and the nearness to Haverford College which enabled both schools to share libraries and professors. Little by little, purchases of an acre or two at a time increased the campus to its present size from the original 37 acres.<sup>10</sup>

In 1894, Dean M. Carey Thomas became the second president. Miss Thomas was a staunch believer that civilized living was necessary to civilized thinking. Her work provided Bryn Mawr with a strong foundation, and even when Miss Thomas was Dean, the college made great strides under her guidance. In 1891 the Student Government was founded as the first such system in any college. Today, this group still makes the rules that govern the Bryn Mawr girls.<sup>11</sup>

8. Cornelia Meigs, "What Makes a College?" A History of Bryn Mawr, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1956) p. 42.

9. *The Main Line Chronicle*, January 5, 1956, p. 5.

10. "No Tax Free Scenery Is Sought by College," Main Line Schools and Colleges File No. 1.

11. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 18.

By 1896, the following buildings had been constructed or bought—Denbigh, Dalton, Taylor, Merion, Radnor, Pembroke, Yarrow, and Deanery, many have been added since the turn of the century.<sup>12</sup> Although the college is becoming more modern, there are many customs which still exist. Probably the most quaint is the night watchman with a "lantern" who meets the night trains to escort the student back to campus.<sup>13</sup>

To match the growth of private higher education, there were many private schools for girls set up in the town. The earliest was the Baldwin School, founded in 1888, by Miss Frances Baldwin. The first school was located on the north-west corner of Morris Avenue and Montgomery Avenue, but in 1896, the school moved to the old Bryn Mawr Hotel which is still used for dormitory rooms.<sup>14</sup> This boarding school was principally founded to train girls to become well-rounded, socially-aware individuals. Baldwin is non-sectarian, but the organization of school life is based on a deep belief in the daily practice of Christian principles. In fact, resident students are required to attend the church of their choice on Sunday.<sup>15</sup> Academically and socially Baldwin School is outstanding.

Six years later, 1894, another private boarding school was started by three Quaker sisters, the Misses Hannah, Elizabeth, and Katherine Shipley. Upon hearing about the Shipley School for Girls, Princeton University's President Woodrow Wilson sent the following letter to the Misses Shipley, "It interests me very much to learn of your plans for a school at Bryn Mawr. I wish for it, what I also expect, the utmost success." The Shipley School was intended primarily to be a preparatory school for Bryn Mawr College in whose shadow it was built. Bible and religion were stressed, and each girl continues to be

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12. A. H. Mueller, *Atlas of Lower Merion Township, Montgomery Co. Part of Delaware County, and Overbrook Farms, Philadelphia 1896* (Philadelphia: Mueller, 1896), Plate II.

13. "Meets Night Trains with Lighted Lamps," Main Line Schools and Colleges File No. 1.

14. "Baldwin School Founded in Bryn Mawr in 1888," Main Line Schools and Colleges File No. 3. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

15. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 10.



expected to attend the church of her choice and Sunday evening vesper services.<sup>16</sup>

The first class contained two students who wished to go to Bryn Mawr College. To aid in their preparation, the Misses Shipley kept in close touch with M. Carey Thomas to make sure that the girls got the proper instruction. The faculty was chosen from the highest ranking college graduates, and soon its academic reputation grew extensively.<sup>17</sup> The physical structure of the first school was one of the old Kennedy houses—an old wooden structure—which was later covered with brick. After awhile a larger house was built beside it.<sup>18</sup> Both Baldwin and Shipley Schools have prospered and today are widely known.

Besides the two well-known schools mentioned, several small schools disappeared from the scene some time ago. One of these was a small private school for girls, run by Mrs. Samuel Curwen, the former Mary F. Lycett. The school was located behind the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church.<sup>19</sup> Another school was the Kirk School for Girls which was started in 1899 by the Misses Sophia and Abby Kirk. Miss Sophia Kirk who had been a mistress at Merion Hall on the Bryn Mawr College campus set up the standards so as to prepare students to enter that college. The Kirk School finally closed in 1934.<sup>20</sup> Also prominent at one time was the Wright School on Roberts Road whose building now is the graduate school dormitory of Bryn Mawr College.

As Bryn Mawr grew in religion and education, she had to expand her public utilities and provide other services.

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16. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

17. "Shipley School Opened Doors in 1894 with Two Students," Main Line Schools and Colleges File No. 3.

18. Abernethy, *op. cit.*

19. Mrs. Maule, personal memoirs, Bryn Mawr File No. 1.

20. "Miss Sophia Kirk Dies in 96th Year," Main Line Personages File, (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

## CHAPTER XI

### TOWN DEVELOPMENT

Much time has been spent discussing the growth in religion and education in Bryn Mawr, yet many phases of town development still need to be covered. These would include utilities and town institutions like banks, post office, and hospital.

As early as 1850, the first telegraph line was established between Philadelphia and Lancaster. Bryn Mawr had its own telegraph office located in the White Hall station of the Columbia Railroad.<sup>1</sup>

The Bryn Mawr Brass Band which served the community for many years was organized at a meeting held in Mechanics Hall on June 1, 1869. Mr. H. L. Litzenberg was selected as secretary, and it is from his minutes that one can see the growth of this organization. The group wanted to get a good instructor, so the members hired a Mr. Harrie Frankenfield of Philadelphia at \$3. per night at their next weekly meeting on June 8. Finally, on June 22, they received the \$652.70 worth of instruments that they had bought. The rules for the organization were quite strict as the minutes of March 1, 1870, state:

No member shall be permitted to leave the ranks for the purpose of entering a Hotel or Drinking Saloon. Neither shall liquors of any kind be purchased or drunk in any such place. Nor shall any spirituous or Malt Liquors be drunk while with the Band on any occasion whatever. Any member violating this article shall be fined \$1. for the first offence, \$2. for the second offence, and dismissed for the third.

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1. Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 924.



Courtesy Chief Engineer's Office

FIRST BUILDING, BRYN MAWR HOSPITAL

The group prospered and played at affairs for all religious groups.<sup>2</sup>

In 1874, the Bryn Mawr Post Office began operating under Postmaster William H. C. Ramsey in a store at Lancaster and Bryn Mawr Avenues (the site of the present Bryn Mawr Trust Company). Later Grover Cleveland appointed Hugh Barratt postmaster, and he was succeeded by J. N. Marshall, the ticket agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad who moved the office to the railroad station. During McKinley's term, the office was moved to the Yerkes Building on Bryn Mawr Avenue when I. Warner Arthur was postmaster. After a few more moves, it was finally installed in the Federal Building on Bryn Mawr Avenue in 1923.<sup>3</sup>

The town's first newspaper "The Home News" was founded in 1877 by Frank Young, editor and publisher. During the same year, Frank Hower bought an interest in the paper. The following year, a Mr. Garrigues with Frank Hower purchased the interest of Mr. Young. In 1880, John Hocker bought half interest, and the following spring, Mr. Samuel A. Black bought Mr. Hower's share. "The Home News" during its existence was neutral and independent politically. It was purely a local newspaper and had as its objective the collection and publication of strictly home news and information useful to a suburban and rural population. It was published weekly.

Mr. Hower, after leaving "The Home News," established "The News" on July 1, 1881, and served as its editor and publisher. The four page paper had eight columns and was printed weekly on Friday. It, too, was independent in politics and devoted itself to local and general news and the encouragement of enterprise and thrift in Bryn Mawr.<sup>4</sup> The paper was first published in a small cottage on the site of the Bryn Mawr Hospital. Later, it moved to the old Temperance Hall at Buck

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2. "Bryn Mawr Brass Band Members Were Troubled with Rules Too," Bryn Mawr File No. 1.

3. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 16.

4. Bean, *op. cit.*, pp. 466-467.

Lane and Lancaster Avenue where it remained until the building burned down in 1902. The office was then moved to 739 Lancaster Avenue, and later to its present location at 36 Summit Grove Avenue. The paper is still being printed, but larger newspapers like "The Main Line Times" and "The Main Line Chronicle" are taking most of the newspaper business.<sup>5</sup>

About this same time, 1881, a group of Bryn Mawr young men started the "Protective Association" to stop the strike damage caused during the railroad strike of 1878. Led by John Converse, the group included Walter Bevan, John Townsend, Hugh Barratt, and Samuel Garrigues. To protect property, three or four policemen were hired to control the strikers. In neighboring Rosemont, a "Relief Association" was started by John B. Garrett, and a soup kitchen was opened for the deserving hungry. In 1888 the two organizations united and formed the "Bryn Mawr Citizens Association" which later grew and incorporated itself as the "Main Line Citizens Association."<sup>6</sup>

Bryn Mawr had until recently two banks—the Bryn Mawr National Bank and the Bryn Mawr Trust Company. The National Bank has been torn down, and its assets combined with the Trust Company. Both banks were first located in a stone building on the site of the present day Post Office. Just to the left of the center entrance was the National Bank and to the right was the Trust Company.<sup>7</sup> Later, they moved to new sites—the National Bank on the southwest corner of Bryn Mawr and Lancaster Avenues, and the Trust Company on the northwest corner of the same avenues. The Trust Company, which had been established in March of 1889, moved to its present location in 1928.<sup>8</sup>

Bryn Mawr in her early years had three practicing physicians—William C. Powell, G. P. Sargent, and William Savory.<sup>9</sup>

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5. Clipping, (no date or title), Bryn Mawr File No. 1.

6. Townsend, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

7. Abernethy, *op. cit.*

8. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 20.

9. Bean, *op. cit.*, pp. 677-678.

The most important of the three was Dr. Gorham Parsons Sargent. After serving as a medical cadet during the Civil War, he became assistant surgeon at the Satterlee Hospital in Philadelphia. He served as president of the Montgomery County Medical Society, and he was several times a delegate from that society to the State Medical Society and to the American Medical Association. One of his biggest jobs was running the Hospital of the Good Shepherd (for children) at Garrett Hill.<sup>10</sup> Bryn Mawr at this time could also boast of having a veterinarian. A veterinary surgeon, Dr. Charles T. Goenter, had his office in William Wilson's house.<sup>11</sup>

The doctor, who in later years, became the leader in the community was Dr. George S. Gerhard. A familiar sight with his horse and buggy, Dr. Gerhard often dreamed of a hospital as he operated on kitchen tables and in barns. The idea of a hospital was promoted by the doctor, Mrs. T. Wistar Brown, Mrs. Rudolph Ellis, Mrs. J. Randall Williams, and Mrs. James Rawle. In March of 1892, the hospital was incorporated, and the constitution and by-laws were filed. A board of directors and a women's board as the governing body were organized.

The first stone was laid August 13, 1892, and it was opened October 3, 1893. The first staff had Dr. Gerhard as head physician, Dr. Robert C. Gamble as assistant physician and Miss Hicks as head nurse.<sup>12</sup> The building was erected on the northwest corner of Haverford Road and Bryn Mawr Avenue. The main building was three stories high and had a basement. Made of local stone, the main building and southern wing were 80 feet long and 40 deep. The interior was of natural white pine and oil finish. There were two private rooms which had been furnished by Mrs. Bryon P. Moulton and Mrs. Edward Roberts. The first floor of the wing had a six-bed men's ward and the second floor, a ward for women. Four private wards had been furnished by prominent women—two by Mrs. Samuel Brown, one by Mrs. Warburton, and one by Mrs. Frank Patterson.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 665-666.

11. Nugent, "Bryn Mawr Sketches" No. 15, *op. cit.*

12. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 10.

At the top of the stairway leading from the first to the second floor was a doctors' and trustees' meeting room which had been furnished by Mrs. Theodore Leland Harrison. The basement had a receiving ward, kitchen, pantry, boiler room, laundry, and cold storage room. All floors were connected by an elevator and were heated by steam and lighted by electricity. The hospital cost about \$30,000. The hospital was very lucky in receiving donations of linens from the summer lady visitors at the Bryn Mawr Hotel and the ladies of the Church of the Redeemer. This building served as the hospital until 1929 when the present six story edifice was built; then it was turned into a home for student nurses.<sup>13</sup>

One thing that every town needs is good water. As the town grew, the need for a public water system became evident. Robert W. Lesley of Haverford, a former official of the American Pipe Manufacturing Company, is said to have heard a fellow Pennsylvania Railroad passenger complain about the poor water system. Mr. Lesley thought it would be good to have a public water company and interested his firm in the idea. The Bryn Mawr Water Company was incorporated and chartered to supply water in Lower Merion Township in 1892. Two artesian wells were sunk at the site of the present water company on Lancaster Avenue. The water was then pumped through the 30 miles of pipe by two pumping stations—one at Bryn Mawr and the other at City Line Avenue. Later, the Bryn Mawr Water Company merged with the North Springfield Water Company and became the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company.<sup>14</sup> By 1896, four inch water mains were serving Old Lancaster, Morris, and Yarrow Roads, a six inch main served Montgomery Avenue while the largest main, an eight inch one, served Lancaster Avenue.<sup>15</sup>

The Temperance Hall which has been mentioned several times was a two story stone building located on Lancaster

13. "Opening of Bryn Mawr Hospital in 1893," *The Main Line Chronicle*, January 19, 1956, Main Line Hospitals File. (Located at Ludington Memorial Library, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.)

14. *The Main Line Times*, October 21, 1948, p. 17.

15. Mueller, *op. cit.*, plate 10.

Avenue near Buck Road. It was used mainly for organization meetings such as the American Star Council, No. 53 of O.U.A.M., Bryn Mawr Division No. 10 of S. of T., Bryn Mawr Loan and Building Association, and the Bryn Mawr Brass Band. The Union Sunday School was also held in this building.<sup>16</sup>

Another favorite spot was the Reading Room located on the northeast corner of Lancaster and Bryn Mawr Avenues. It was a large house whose first floor was used for meetings. The Bryn Mawr W.C.T.U. was one of the main groups meeting there. The Reading Room served the community until the Ludington Memorial Library was built.

Bryn Mawr as part of Lower Merion Township takes advantage of township facilities. The trash and garbage are collected by township employees or subcontractors. The township police force, which was started in 1900, protects the lives and property of the Bryn Mawr citizens.<sup>17</sup> However, Bryn Mawr developed her own volunteer fire company, but this was not done until after the turn of the century—1903.<sup>18</sup>

As one can see, Bryn Mawr developed many institutions to strengthen the town's development. She has an excellent hospital, a home town newspaper, her own water and fire companies, a well-run post office, and a library. From the 1900's to the present, the growth of Bryn Mawr has been so rapid that a many volume set of books could be written on the subject.

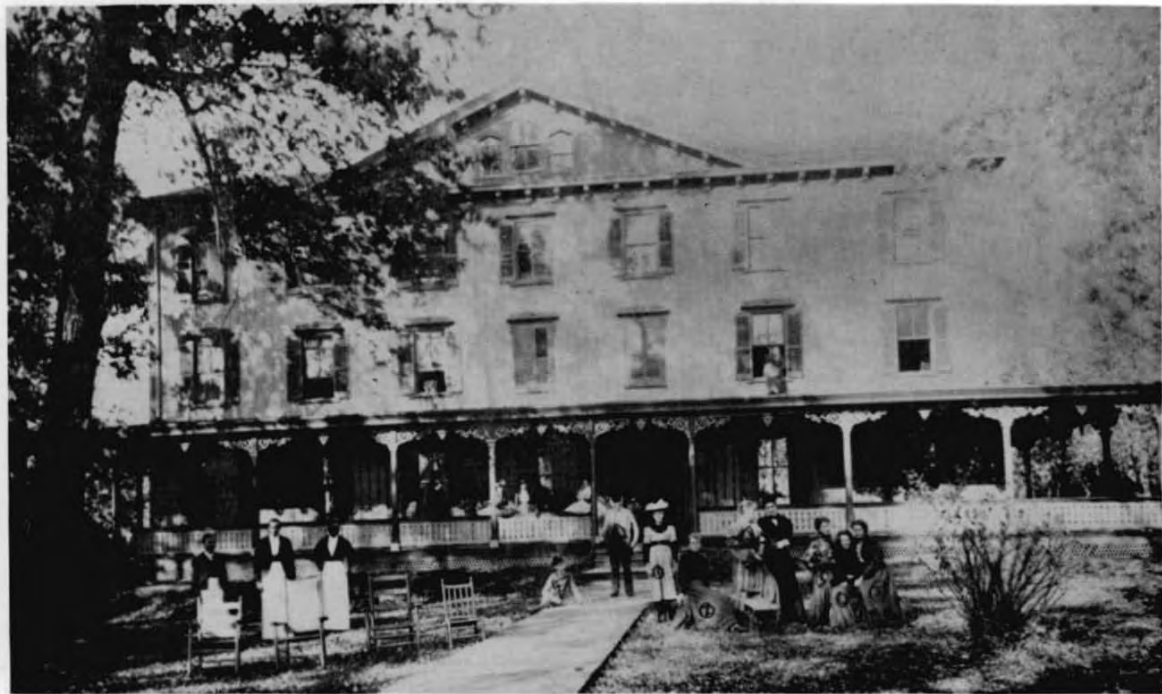
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16. Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 925.

17. "Rural Character of Force Made Over by Donaghy," *The Main Line Times*, March 31, 1949, Lower Merion Folder No. 3.

18. *Bryn Mawr Fire Company*, no date, Bryn Mawr File No. 1.





Courtesy Gordon M. Burlingame

SUMMIT GROVE BOARDING HOUSE

## CHAPTER XII

### CONCLUSION

The growth of a town can be a story of interest to many people. The trends in one may be like those of many others with mild variations. Although Bryn Mawr is the story of only one town, it sets a pattern that is typical for countless others.

In this story, one can see the importance of geography in determining the extent of colonization, the effect of early settlers on a town, the importance of good roads and railroads, the influence of the local inns, the appearance of churches and schools, and the development of the public utilities that are daily taken for granted.

Bryn Mawr clearly shows the effect that one powerful company can have on a community. Before the Pennsylvania Railroad bought land in the town, it was only a collection of houses and stores which would have developed very slowly. With the influence of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the place became a summer resort which later developed into a year round village. Many of the first settlers in Bryn Mawr had come as summer guests. Finding the town so pleasant they decided to make their permanent homes there. The town began to establish industries which continued to contribute toward its subsequent development.

Many people have always thought of railroad towns as being dirty, full of factories, and not very cultural. Looking at Bryn Mawr, one can see that this community is very different. The industries that developed were small and did not give the town the appearance of a factory city. The houses are reasonable in price, and the streets are tree-shaded and clean. One of the finest systems of public and private schools

has been established, and educationally, Bryn Mawr is well known.

One might attribute her high culture to the fact that the area was developed by the social elite of Philadelphia. Even though they were living in a rustic area, they demanded excellent schools and churches. Thus, one finds the present day Bryn Mawr the home of one of the world's best known women's colleges and two excellent preparatory schools for girls in addition to a junior college which was established in 1915.

The story of Bryn Mawr is a story of success and growth which is typical of countless other towns.

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