



1994

"Blessed Spot" Along the Perkiomen: An Historical Analysis of Mill Grove

Rebecca Anne Hunt
University of Pennsylvania

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**“Blessed Spot” Along the Perkiomen;
An Historical Analysis of Mill Grove**

Rebecca Anne Hunt

A THESIS

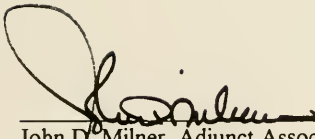
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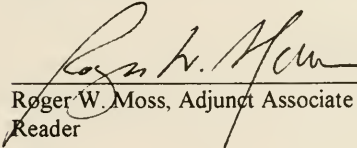
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Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

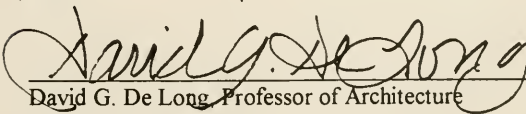
1994



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INTRODUCTION

Mill Grove, a National Historic Landmark on a picturesque hillside in Audubon, Pennsylvania, was the first American home of John James Audubon (1785-1851), the renowned naturalist and artist. In 1762, James Morgan, a wealthy landowner, built the two and one half-story main house, nettled in the side of a hill overlooking the estate. This house was constructed of native field stone, plastered on the interior, with a center hall plan and four rooms on each floor, numerous corner fireplaces, and a gable roof. Morgan expanded the house in 1765 by a two-story stone wing containing a large kitchen on the first floor and three rooms on the second floor. The 232-year history of Mill Grove is also distinguished by such notable owners as John Penn (1729-1795), the last provincial Governor of Pennsylvania, and the Wetherill Family. Furthermore, the property was a prominent bustling industrial site with a grist mill and adjoining saw mill, lead mines, and copper mines. These resources, in combination with the surviving vernacular Georgian house and Federal barn made the property one of the most valuable estates in the township throughout its history.

Audubon described Mill Grove as "a blessed spot," and it was on this site overlooking the Perkiomen Creek where he lived between 1804 and 1806 and developed the fundamental methods of depicting wildlife that would make him famous. One of these techniques was an armature in which he inserted wires into his dead specimens to pose them in life-like positions so he could study and portray their

natural beauty. In a cave by the creek, Audubon also performed the first experiments in bird-banding with the flycatchers that he called "pewees." The period that Audubon spent at Mill Grove was brief (1804-1806) but he later recalled that this sojourn of a carefree existence when he met his wife, Lucy Bakewell, and spent most of his days studying wildlife was one of the happiest times of his life.

The Mill Grove farmhouse is currently the focal point of a 175-acre Audubon wildlife sanctuary, purchased by Montgomery County in 1951, 100 years after Audubon's death, and currently administered by the Montgomery County Department of History and Cultural Arts. This was the first house acquired by Montgomery County for such a purpose. The existing appearance of the house includes the original plan and reflects numerous improvements from the 1820s and 1890s as well as the 1950s alterations undertaken by the County to create an Audubon Shrine. The 1950s restoration was guided by architect G. Edwin Brumbaugh, landscape architect Thomas W. Sears, and artist George M. Harding. The site currently attracts people from all over the world to view its extensive and valuable collection of Audubon art, including a complete set of the "Elephant Folio."¹

This thesis aims to untangle the architectural, social, and cultural history of the Mill Grove estate by reexamining its evolution from the eighteenth century to the present. This analysis is based on an analysis of archival documents, preliminary architectural investigations of the main house, oral histories, and previously written histories of the site. The architectural evidence discovered during these investigations

¹ The "Elephant Folio" is an extremely valuable five volume set of 435 life-size, hand-colored prints from Audubon's "Birds of America." The term "elephant" refers to the large size of the prints.

as well as information from other untapped sources have contributed to an increased knowledge of the property and a new understanding of its past. Furthermore, the numerous enigmas and conflicting accounts that became evident during this analysis are explained and, when existing knowledge permitted, rectified.

This thesis, thus, seeks to clarify the overall chronology and provide a more comprehensive account of the history of Mill Grove. The timing of this narrative is important because only a few earlier occupants survive, and the inclusion of their experiences and memories is invaluable to an understanding of the site. Furthermore, Mill Grove is currently undergoing re-interpretation for which this document hopefully will be a helpful tool.

CHAPTER I.

Early Development (1699 - 1771)

Undeveloped Land

The early history of the land that would eventually be developed and named Mill Grove includes four land transfers before there is any record of structures on the property. The Mill Grove tract was initially part of an area northwest of Philadelphia owned by William Penn, the first proprietor and governor of Pennsylvania, that he named "The Manor of Gilberts" after his mother's family.² These sixty thousand acres³ encompassed the land on the east side of the Schuylkill River in the present townships of Upper Providence and Lower Providence and part of the land in Perkiomen and Worcester Townships (figure 1).⁴ On August 11-12, 1699, 5,000 acres of this fertile and picturesque land adjoining the Schuylkill River and the Perkiomen Creek were granted to The Pennsylvania Land Company of London, or, as it was most commonly called, The London Company (figure 2).⁵ According to the Patent, this English capitalist company was composed of Tobias Collett (citizen and haberdasher of London), Michael Fussell (mercator citizen of London), Daniel Zuare

² Theodore W. Bean, ed., *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, vol.2 (Philadelphia: Everts and Peck, 1884), p.1044.

³ W.H. Reed, "Audubon," *Historical Sketches of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 4 (1910): 174 [hereafter cited as Reed, "Audubon," 1910].

⁴ Bean, vol.2, p.1044.

⁵ Exemplification of Patents Book No.6, p.99 &c., Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

(watchmaker of London), and Henry Goldney (linen draper of London).⁶

In 1722, The London Company sold a 203 acre tract to Edward Farmer (also recorded as Farmar and Harmar).⁷ This tract was partially bound by the Perkiomen Creek and a 500 acre tract owned by Henry Pawling, one of the earliest settlers in the area.⁸ The Farmer family descended from Ireland and were one of the earliest and most extensive land holders in the nearby community of Whitemarsh, Pennsylvania.⁹ Edward Farmer was a notable colonial figure and was both a Justice of the Peace and a Justice of the Court.¹⁰ Since he was retired and living in Whitemarsh four years prior to his purchase of this 203 acre tract, it appears to have been an investment for him.¹¹

Farmer's 203 acre tract -- in combination with several contiguous lots -- were named Providence Township in 1729.¹² This area was known for its fertile soil and

⁶ Exemplification of Patents Book No.6, p.99 &c., Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

⁷ Philadelphia Deed Book H No.5, p.108 &c, Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

⁸ Reed, "Reminiscences of Audubon," 1910, p.174. Farmer sold this 500 acre tract to Henry Pawling on September 15, 1719; the transaction for which is in an unregistered deed (Thomas Clinton McGimsey, "Untangling the History of the Pawling/Wetherill House at Walnut Hill Estate," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1992, p.133.

⁹ Karen E. Lee, "A History of Fatland and Mill Grove," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 19 (Spring 1974): 128. Whitemarsh is located northwest of the city of Philadelphia, and it is today part of Montgomery County.

¹⁰ Lee, p.128.

¹¹ Edward Farmer is listed as a "Gentleman of Whitemarsh" in a 1718 deed (Philadelphia Deed Book H No.6, p.155 &c, Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the term "Gentleman" referred to a man who no longer worked for a living.

¹² Bean, vol.2, p.1048. Providence Township was commonly called New Providence Township although the former was the official name.

productivity at an early date,¹³ and by the 1730s initial development of homes in Providence Township was underway. This growth is evident by the 74 land owners and tenants who were recorded in the township in 1734.¹⁴ By 1741, the number of taxables had dramatically increased to 146.¹⁵

On December 4, 1738, Edward Farmer granted 100 acres of his 203 acre tract to Thomas Morgan (c.1679-1746) for 81 Pounds.¹⁶ Thomas Morgan, a Welsh farmer, lived in Providence since 1734 or earlier.¹⁷ Thomas Morgan and his wife Jennet (c.1699-1762) had the following children: Thomas Jr., recorded as an innkeeper in Providence Township in 1768; Mordecai, a Lieutenant in the Revolutionary War; James, "conspicuous in the early affairs of Providence Township;" and a daughter, Elizabeth.¹⁸ On May 29, 1746 Thomas and Jennet Morgan granted the 100 acre tract of land to their son James.¹⁹

James Morgan (d.1809) married Elinor Pawling, and they had five children: James Jr., Enoch, Mordecai, Abel, and Rachel.²⁰ James Morgan is also notable as

¹³ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.173.

¹⁴ Bean, vol.2, p.1049.

¹⁵ Bean, vol.2, p.1049.

¹⁶ Philadelphia Deed Book H No.5, p.113 &c., Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

¹⁷ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.176.

¹⁸ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.176.

¹⁹ Philadelphia Deed Book H No.5, p.116 &c, Philadelphia Register of Deeds, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. James Morgan also inherited the family estate at this time. James Vaux purchased this family estate in 1772 and enlarged and remodeled the old Morgan Family house in 1774 (Lee, pp.128-129).

²⁰ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.177. For more information about James Morgan, Jr., and Abel Morgan, see p.182 of this article.

an extensive land owner in Providence Township who eventually possessed 1,000 acres containing various farms that were described as "among the most improved and fertile of the locality."²¹ He also was responsible for the construction of the Mill Grove Mills, miller's house, and the main house that would later become famous for its association with John James Audubon.

Construction of the Mills

Sometime between May 29, 1746, and April 10, 1761, James Morgan, with the assistance of Rowland Evans (1728-1789), constructed the mills, from which the property derives its name. The 1761 date pertains to a citation, referenced in a 1776 deed that was "made or mentioned to be made," where James and Elinor Morgan sold "one full moiety or half part of...two water corn or grist mills under one roof with two pairs of stones and a saw mill" to Rowland Evans of Gwynedd Township.²² The first official document mentioning these structures is a 1771 deed which provides the same description of the structures and clearly states that the mills are located on a five acre and sixty-two perches parcel of land which were contained in James Morgan's 100 acre tract purchased from his father in 1746 (figure 3).²³

Other than the legal description, little is known about the appearance mills in

²¹ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.178.

²² The reference to this transaction is in a 1776 deed in Philadelphia Deed Book D. No.1, p.103 &c., Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A 1761 deed for this transaction has not been found. The 1776 reference insinuates that it was not officially recorded or registered.

²³ Philadelphia Deed Book I No.1, p.501 &c., Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

this period. One local historian, Edward W. Hocker, narrowed the construction date of the mills to circa 1760.²⁴ It appears that it was common to have both a grist mill and a saw mill; the majority of the other estates in the area with mills had both types.²⁵

Like most mills, the Mill Grove Mills became an important factor in the "sustenance, comfort, and development of the neighborhood."²⁶ In Colonial times the settlers lived on the abundant wildlife, fish, and livestock, but flour was said to be a fundamental element of their existence.²⁷ Furthermore, it was "to prepare grain to bread the people and feed the animals was one of the most indispensable wants of a newly settled people."²⁸ These factors, in combination with the high value placed on shaped timber produced by the saw mill as more and more families settled in the area and erected buildings, must have resulted in Mill Grove becoming quite an active economic and social center with the mills busy helping local farmers process their corn and grain and shape their lumber. There was also a ford in the Perkiomen Creek just below the mills that drew people to the site. This ford was noted as an extremely dangerous one, however, and it was abandoned by the mid-nineteenth

²⁴ Joseph Shrawder, "Along the Perkiomen in the Former Gilberts Manor," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 20 (Fall 1975) 1: 79. Shrawder quotes Hocker in his discussion of the construction of the mills.

²⁵ Providence Tax Assessment Records, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²⁶ W.H. Reed, "Audubon," *Historical Sketches of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 3 (1905): 261 [hereafter cited as Reed, "Audubon," 1905].

²⁷ Shrawder, p.68.

²⁸ Bean, vol.1, p.105.

century.²⁹

Dating the Construction of the First House on the Estate

All previously written history of the main house and discussions of its date stones identify its having been built between 1762 - 1765. Similarly, such histories date the construction of the miller's house to the same period as the mill, circa 1760, and, thus, prior to the mansion.³⁰ These dates seem plausible until two sources are examined: physical evidence of the mansion³¹ and early deeds in which structures are first mentioned on the property. One of the problems that has arisen as a result of preliminary architectural investigations of the mansion is that there is evidence in the basement that suggests the presence of an earlier, smaller house in the same location. The evidence for this earlier structure is an irregular and bulging surface on the west side of the north-south center foundation wall which implies that this side of the wall was once a perimeter foundation wall and faced with soil. The area of the north foundation wall aligning with this center wall has an irregular jog and the masonry is broken as if it was altered. Furthermore, the fireplace supports in the east

²⁹ Norris, "Mill Grove Farm Once Included Land on Both Sides of the Perkiomen," Scrapbook B-10, p.298, Mill Grove Files, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

³⁰ Francis H. Herrick, for example, in *Audubon the Naturalist*, states that the miller's house antedates the mansion. He adds that the miller's house was built and first occupied by James Morgan (Francis H. Herrick, *Audubon the Naturalist: A History of His Life and Time*, vol.1 (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1917), p.104).

³¹ Architectural investigations are not possible for the miller's house because it has been demolished. Since there are no known illustrations of the miller's house in the eighteenth century, the appearance of this house is only discussed in reference to nineteenth-century images, and it is to these discussions in Chapters IV. and V. that the reader should turn to for such information.

half of the house are distinctly different from those in the west half which insinuates different construction campaigns. These details suggest that there was originally a hall-and-parlor house in the area occupying the east half of the 1762 center-hall plan house (figures 4 and 5). A hall-and-parlor house is a common house form in the Delaware Valley region during the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century. Such a house type consists of two adjoining rooms; one called the hall which usually contains the stairs and cooking fireplace and the other called the parlor which functions as a combination parlor and best bedroom. Other than these details mentioned in the basement, no evidence for a hall-and-parlor plan house has been identified on the upper floors. This lack of additional evidence implies that either the foundation for the smaller house was laid and then expanded before the upper floors were constructed or the smaller house was a frame structure which was taken down or destroyed by fire prior to building the larger square house.

The other problematic issue involving the construction dates for the mansion and the miller's house is that other histories of the site note that both houses existed by 1762 and the deeds only include one house at that time. The earliest legal description that includes a house on the property is the same 1761 deed in which the mills are first mentioned. Unlike the description of the mills, however, the lot on which the house is located is not specified. The house that is referenced in the 1761 deed could be either the miller's house or the early hall-and-parlor house. The next deed, however, is dated 1771 which is after the construction of the large center-hall mansion in 1762-65, but this deed includes the same description of buildings as the

1761 deed which only mentions one house. The same description with only one house also occurs in the subsequent two deeds, dated 1776 and 1784. There is one difference in the language, however, the 1784 deed is the first to refer to the estate as a plantation. This description reads, "All that messuage or tenement two water corn or grist mills under one roof with two pair of stones and saw mill plantation."³² A 1777 lease also contains a description that refers to the estate as a plantation, and it also lists more than one house. The description of the property in this lease reads, "that certain messuage, plantation & tract...together with the two water grist mill, and a saw mill, mill dams and races thereon...barns, stables houses, out houses, arable land and meadows..."³³ Thus, there is clearly a discrepancy in establishing the construction date and identity of the first house on the estate, but with the existing evidence, there appears to be no current solution to this mystery. The earliest concrete evidence for the presence of both structures is an 1812 advertisement for the sale of the property that lists both a "large stone dwelling house" and a "Miller's House" among the numerous assets of the estate. Since the mansion as a center-hall plan house is the primary focal point of the estate, this discussion must leave the confusion of the earlier or lesser houses to future investigation and turn to the appearance and significance of the mansion constructed between 1762 - 1765 that would eventually become famous for its association with John James Audubon.

³² Philadelphia County Deed Book D No.16, p.166 &c, Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

³³ Lease of John Penn's estate in Providence Township to Rowland Evans, April 1, 1777, transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, pp.198-199. See Chapter II. for more details about this lease.

Rowland Evans and his family are said to have moved immediately from Gwynedd Township to settle in a house on the estate and to manage the mills after purchasing one-half interest in the accompanying property in 1761.³⁴ The location of James Morgan's residence at this time is not known.

Construction of the Mansion

The eighteenth-century Georgian vernacular mansion that survives today as the revered first home in America of John James Audubon was constructed in two stages; the main block in 1762 and the kitchen wing in 1765. The construction dates of the house are based primarily on the date stones. The datestone in the east gable-end is marked 1762 to indicate the construction date of the main block.³⁵ The datestone in the kitchen addition was incorrectly changed to "June 1765" during repairs in the early twentieth century when the initials "J.M." were misinterpreted to read "June" (figure 6).³⁶ A third datestone, located in the west gable-end of the main block, has the Masonic square and compass indicating James Morgan's association with the

³⁴ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.180. The miller's house is said to antedate the main house (Herrick, vol.1, p.104). H. Windslow Fegley, in this article, "Among the Older Mills in Eastern Pennsylvania," *The Pennsylvania German Society* 20 (October 1928): 33, says that Augustin Prevost, who owned the property from 1786 to 1789, was the original owner of the miller's house, but there is no other documentation to support this idea.

³⁵ This is now plaster but Herrick (1917) describes it as a marble slab (Herrick, vol.1 p.104.). W.H. Reed's 1910 article (pp.178-179) and Norris's newspaper article, "Curious Mill Grove Datestone Subject of Historical Inquiry" (30 October 1936, Scrapbook A-8 15, p.18, Mill Grove Files, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania) discuss the misinterpretation of the inscription when restoring the datestone in the early twentieth century.

³⁶ Herrick says that the "commemorative tablet" on the kitchen wing is marked "J.M." (Herrick, vol.1, p.104.) He also says that wing was built in 1763. Reed discusses this misinterpretation in "Audubon," 1910, p.179.

Masonic Lodge. The early Masonic records do not provide any additional information about James Morgan and the construction of this house.³⁷

Tradition holds that through his real estate investments, James Morgan's wealth increased significantly so that he was able to build a substantial stone house in 1762, and most histories of the house concur with these facts. Rowland Evans is also believed to have assisted with this construction because of his association with the construction of the mills and his residing on the property. This expansion is also related to another surge of development in the region, and provincial annals reveal that the year 1762 was one of an usually large amount of building activity.³⁸

There are no known illustrations of the original appearance of this house, but the surviving evidence suggests that it was square in plan and two and one half stories in height with a center hall and four rooms on the first and attic floors, a truncated center hall and five rooms on the second floor, and a gable roof. The twenty-inch thick walls were constructed of native field stone, pointed on the exterior and plastered on the interior. A plaster cove cornice with pent eaves surrounded the house at the roof line, and two large rubble stone interior chimneys protruded the roof at each gable-end. The original configuration of the windows and doors is not known although they are believed to have existed in the same locations that they occupy today. It is also not known which of the characteristic late eighteenth-century elements, such as a pent roof, door hood, ornamental surround, or piazza, existed

³⁷ Masonic Temple Library and Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

³⁸ Harold D. Eberlein and Cortland Van Dyke Hubbard, *Portrait of a Colonial City* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1939), p.356.

over the exterior doors.

The principal facade overlooking the Perkiomen Creek faced south and was distinguished from the other facades by having masonry laid in an ashlar pattern and a water table.³⁹ This facade was symmetrically arranged in five bays with nine windows and a central door (figure 7). The north elevation is believed to have been symmetrically fenestrated with two full-size windows on each floor and a small casement window in the stairwell (figure 8). The centrally located door in the north elevation has probably always been the most frequently used exterior door due to its close proximity to the driveway and outbuildings. The east and west gable-ends are believed to have been arranged with two windows on each of the upper floors, all vertically aligned. The door in the south end of the west elevation may have been the only exterior access door to the basement.

As noted earlier in this discussion, evidence in the basement suggests an earlier foundation in the east half of the house. The northwest quadrant is also problematic because it appears to have been excavated to full height at a later date, and it has an alcove in the northwest corner for which no use has been identified. The basement floor was probably unpaved, and the upper floors were finished with floorboards of pine and oak. The basement was divided by stone walls but the upper floors had plastered partitions. Straight-run open stringer stairs provided interior access to the basement from the first floor. The dog-leg stairs on the first and second

³⁹ This facade actually faces more southwest than south but the compass directions have been abbreviated to the basic directions in order to simplify the reference points and prevent an unnecessarily complex discussion.

floors occupied the north end of the respective center halls (figures 9 and 10). The east rooms and the southwest rooms on the first and second floors each had a corner fireplace adjacent to the east-west partitions. The northwest first floor room had a large cooking fireplace, and it served as the original kitchen. It is not known whether the northwest second floor room had a fireplace, which would not have been an uncommon circumstance in an American eighteenth-century house.⁴⁰The northeast second floor room is the only room that has retained its 1762 paneling on the fireplace wall (figures 11 and 12). The attic was partitioned into a center hall with four flanking rooms (figure 13). Casement windows in the hall partitions allowed the light from the gable-end windows to be carried into the hall. These attic rooms each had beaded peg boards. None of the original paint finishes have been determined although according to precedent, the exterior woodwork was most likely white if painted, and the window shutters, present at minimum on the first floor, were most likely a dark green.

In 1765, James Morgan built a two and one half-story, rubble stone kitchen wing on the west end of the house (figures 14 and 15).⁴¹ This gable-roofed addition built on grade with no basement was rectangular in plan and two and one half stories in height although built on a lower grade and of a reduced scale than the main block of the house. The two-bay north and south elevations of the kitchen addition were

⁴⁰ As late as the mid-nineteenth century, travel accounts note that it was common for American houses to lack fireplaces in second floor rooms, even though that was the primary means of heating the room.

⁴¹ All documentation pertaining to this addition dates it to 1765 except Herrick who uses 1763 as its construction date.

symmetrical with a first floor exterior door near the main house, a first floor window off-center to the west, and two second floor windows. On the north elevation, there was a bake-oven at the west end that was protected by a porch that extended across the elevation. The west gable-end had a large interior rubble stone chimney and a small window in the north half of the second and attic floors. These two-over-four sash windows in the west gable-end of the kitchen were similar to those in the attic of the main section of the house.

The kitchen wing was accessed from the northwest room of the 1762 house. The small passageway between the two sections had double rows of beaded peg boards attached to the walls. A small section of straight-run stairs lead down to the first floor of the kitchen wing which was very simply finished with a brick-floor and whitewashed or plastered walls. On the west wall of this kitchen there was a large centrally located cooking fireplace with built-in shelving between it and the northwest corner (figure 16). A small section of winder-stairs lead up to the second floor of the addition from the passageway between the two sections. It is not known whether the second floor, which was probably initially used as children's or servants' sleeping quarters, was partitioned or a large open space (figure 17). The ceiling joists on this floor were originally exposed, and the corresponding summer beam was ornamented with a large bead.⁴² In the northeast corner of the second floor, winder stairs lead up to the attic. These stairs also accessed a door in the second floor of the main house which was located in the northwest room.

⁴² Evidence of whitewash on these joists was viewed by the author when several attic floorboards were raised.

The Mill Grove mansion as constructed between 1762 and 1765 reflected the early developments of refined tastes after the mid-eighteenth century. Most settlers in the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century built simple homes for to provide shelter with little attention specific to embellishments. By the 1760s, in the decade preceding the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Americans were becoming more importance on their built surroundings. Saw mills and other accommodations that aided the builder were also more prevalent, and houses were more easily constructed to meet the demands of the growing communities. Largely due to this improved technology and readiness of materials, the colonists were able to focus some of their attention on creating more refined homes with some emphasis on newly defined ideas of comfort, even in a rural locality. These aspirations for improvements were also often linked to increased wealth and stature, such as that which was derived from the Mill Grove Mills and James Morgan's increased landholdings.

Similar House Types

There are several examples of houses constructed in the Delaware Valley during this period that are similar to the original configuration of the Mill Grove mansion. An examination of these houses also illustrates some possibilities for the original appearance of this mansion.⁴³ One such example is the house known as Washington's Headquarters in Valley Forge built in 1759 and located only three miles

⁴³ These illustrations of similar houses are twentieth-century photographs, but like those of Mill Grove mansion, the original plan and some extant details are evident.

from Mill Grove (figure 18).⁴⁴ This house provides an illustration of construction with the same local materials in a two-part plan with a subsidiary wing. The front facade of Washington's Headquarters exemplifies a likely appearance of the original windows and front door of Mill Grove mansion.

Another strikingly similar house, although it is executed in brick and with much grander details, is the William Corbit House built between 1772-74 in Odessa, Delaware (figures 19 and 20).⁴⁵ The main facade of this house and the first floor plan, complete with five-bay main block and an adjoining smaller scale kitchen wing, are particularly similar to Mill Grove Mansion. The Corbit House is even situated on a similar site on top of a hill overlooking an industrial enterprise along a creek, which in this case is a tannery. A wealth of documentation for the William Corbit House survives, including original building accounts, which could supply additional insight to the original construction and appearance of the Mill Grove mansion.

A third house that resembles Mill Grove mansion and provides some evidence for its original appearance is Warrenpoint built in 1756 in Warwick Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania (figures 21 and 22).⁴⁶ This house is similar in plan and materials, and it has retained a large amount of original elements. A view of the first floor stairs in the center hall reveals a possible appearance for such original

⁴⁴ Edward Pinkowski, *Washington's Officers Slept Here; Historic Homes of Valley Forge and Its Neighborhood* (Philadelphia: Sunshine Press, 1953), p.6.

⁴⁵ John A.H. Sweeney, *Grandeur on the Appoquinimink; The House of William Corbit at Odessa, DE* (University of Delaware Press, 1959), p.39.

⁴⁶ Eleanor Raymond, *Early domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania* (West Chester, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd, 1977) plates 40 and 41.

components in Mill Grove mansion (figure 23). Warrenpoint is noted for retaining some of the finest woodwork in Chester County, but perhaps some of the less ornate paneling and fireplace surrounds represent what could have been found at Mill Grove, even though the fireplaces in Warrenpoint are not corner fireplaces (figure 24). Finally, a detail of a door with a simple portico and flanking benches on a stone house in Lebanon County could provide an example of the original appearance of the portico around the north door of the Mill Grove mansion (figure 25).

Departure of the Morgans

Shortly after expanding the house, James Morgan relinquished his interest in the milling industry for the iron industry and moved to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where he became an iron master and partner in the Durham Iron Furnace.⁴⁷ After re-establishing himself and his family in Bucks County, James's wife Elinor died. By 1771, James married his second wife, Sarah Heilman, the daughter of Mathew Heilman, a German Palatine of Durham, PA.⁴⁸ James and Sarah Morgan had one child, a daughter named Tacey, who later married a Baptist minister, the Reverend James McLaughlin.⁴⁹

In a deed dated April 20, 1771, Morgan and his second wife Sarah sold the remaining moiety of the five acre and sixty-two perch mill property to Rowland Evans

⁴⁷ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.180.

⁴⁸ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.182. Elinor Pawling Morgan must have died and James Morgan must have remarried by 1771 because the deed from that year list James Morgan's second wife Sarah.

⁴⁹ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.182..

and another adjoining tract containing the main house and 28 acres and 23 perches.⁵⁰ The following year, Morgan sold Fatland Farm (one of the plantations listed in the 1771 advertisement) to James Vaux on June 18th.⁵¹

Morgan did not sell all of his Providence Township property in the early 1770s. One large estate that he retained was purchased by his son, James, Jr., in 1793, who, subsequently, sold it in 1795 to John Shannon, the well-known merchant in honor of whom the town of Shannonville was named.⁵²

Tavern Theory

Most historical accounts of Mill Grove mention that the kitchen wing was used as a tavern in the 1760s and 1770s. These accounts can be traced to a pair of early twentieth-century articles written by W.H. Reed that appeared in *Historical Sketches*, a publication of the Historical Society of Montgomery County. In these articles, Reed based the idea that the kitchen wing was used as a tavern on two references: an advertisement that appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on February 28, 1771, and Elizabeth Drinker's Journal entry for August 22 and 23, 1771. Later historians have written articles that expand Reed's theory and state that these demands on the Morgan's to provide shelter for those using the mills or attempting to cross the

⁵⁰ Philadelphia Deed Book I No.9, p.501 &c., Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In this deed, Morgan is listed as an iron master and resident of Durham Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Evans' name is listed as Rowland Evans, Esquire.

⁵¹ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.181.

⁵² Reed, "Audubon," 1910, pp.181-182.

dangerous ford nearby may have prompted the Morgans to use the 1765 kitchen wing as a tavern, with the kitchen serving as the "tap room" and the rooms upstairs rented for lodging.⁵³

In the February 28, 1771, advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, James Morgan announced a public sale scheduled for March 4, 1771, of a 300 acre plantation on the Schuylkill River known as Fatland farm and a 250 acre plantation on the Perkiomen Creek and "on a public road, in a suitable place for public business, as it is an old licensed house."⁵⁴ The quoting of this article has led to the supposition that the kitchen wing of the Mill Grove mansion was used as a tavern, but there is no clearly documented proof that the 250 acre estate discussed in the advertisement was not another of Morgan's large land-holdings in the area.⁵⁵ Furthermore, later in the article Reed states that it was not likely that this inn was linked to Mill Grove since the advertisement indicates that the inn was "situate on a public road," which is not the location of Mill Grove mansion unless Mill Road, which was not a primary artery, was counted.⁵⁶

Reed then contradicts himself by quoting the following extract from Elizabeth

⁵³ The kitchen wing is often referred to as the tavern. Specific reference to the tavern is made in Karen E. Lee's article, "A History of Fatland and Mill Grove," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 19 (Spring 1974) 2: 139-140. The Wetherills also refer to this wing as the tavern.

⁵⁴ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, pp.180-181.

⁵⁵ W.H. Reed also states in his 1910 "Audubon" article that James Morgan's brother, Thomas, lived on the property and in the 1769 Tax Assessment Records is listed as "Innholder, 380 acres of land, 7 horses, 10 cattle, etc." (p.191.). Reed, however, does not supply the citation for the fact that Thomas Morgan lived at Mill Grove.

⁵⁶ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.191.

Drinker's journal to indicate the possibility that Rowland Evans conducted the house as an inn:

Aug. 22. 1771. left home [in Philadelphia] after dinner fifth Day...stop'd at [Roben] Hoods -- waited there half an hour for Robt. and Hannah Stevenson, who accompanys us on our tour to Lancaster &c. baited at the Nags Head 12 Mile from Philada. came to Rowland Evanss before 7 o'clock...sup'd lodg'd and Breakfasted at REs road 23 long miles this Day.

Aug. 23. went after breakfast from REs his Son Cadr. with us. by way of a guide -- foarded Schuylkill. then went to Yallow Spring...⁵⁷

There is another reference to Rowland Evans' house in this journal for 1778 that Reed did not mention:

6 ... We came all together to James Vauxs with JV himself who came over to invite us, cross'd the large Bridge over Schuylkill, just by his house -- drank tea and lodg'd there, Rowd. Evans and Wife, came to see us in the Evening -- Isel. Morris and the Lads, went to lodge with 'em, as they live near -- We found the roads very bad to day.⁵⁸

Reed appears mistakingly to have applied ideas about modern travel methods to those in the colonial period when travelers did not necessarily stay at inns but rather they frequently stayed in private houses. Most times, these visits were pre-arranged with the owners of the houses, who were either friends of the traveler or among the same social circle, and such hospitality was graciously exchanged. Elizabeth Drinker and Rowland Evans would have been acquainted with each other

⁵⁷ Elaine Forman Crane, ed., *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, vol.1 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), p.166. This entry is transcribed with some alterations and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.192.

⁵⁸ Crane, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, p.297.

because they were both members of prominent Philadelphia Quaker families. This relationship is even illustrated in the 1778 entry which mentions what appears to have been a social visit paid by the Evanses to Elizabeth Drinker. Furthermore, there is another 1778 entry in Drinker's journal that provides some insight into this earlier mode of traveling:

7 left James Vauxs after Breakfast, chang'd one of our Horses for C. Logans, found the roads exceeding bad, some of us frequently in & out, din'd at a kind Friends nam'd Randel Mellon, left his House at about 3 o'clock, and went on through deep rutts and mudd, to Robt. Valintines, where we drank tea and lodg'd, our Friends are very kind to us, making Fires in our Bed Rooms, which is comfortable, as we are but weakly, and the Season rather early for Traveling...⁵⁹

A third component that should be examined regarding the tavern theory, and one that was not addressed by others, is architectural precedent. It has already been explained that the kitchen wing was a common addition in the progression of architectural development of a house, and, therefore, the reason for building this wing, even shortly following the main building, requires no more explanation. Furthermore, two examples were provided for houses with similar configurations.

Initial examination of several common characteristics of taverns known to have existed in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century reveals several similarities to Mill Grove mansion and other farmhouses, such as stone construction, two stories in height, attic windows in the gable-ends, almost square in plan, sometimes with an ell in the rear, and a porch across the front facade (which may or may not have existed

⁵⁹ Crane, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, p.297.

at Mill Grove mansion).⁶⁰ Two significant characteristics of inns and taverns that do not apply to this house, however, are two doors on the primary facade, one leading to a parlor and the other to the bar room, and location along the side of a prominently traveled road. The latter two factors place more weight on disproving the tavern theory, but the other characteristics of such public buildings make it impossible to entirely disregard this idea.

With this evaluation and renewed understanding of the history of the house, the tavern theory appears less feasible and should be mentioned but not promoted in the forefront of the history any longer. Reed is not entirely at fault, however, because he even questioned the tavern idea in his 1910 article; but other historians must not have read past him mentioning such a use.⁶¹ Even more importantly, these other historians did not examine the suppositions for the tavern use nor pursue additional supportive or non-supportive information. Finally, Reed's overall contribution to the history of Mill Grove should not be discredited; his research identified many extremely valuable aspects such as primary documents and information about the Morgans, Rowland Evans, and the Revolutionary War years.

The early period was important in the history of Mill Grove because that is when the first structures were erected. During this period, the name of the estate was also established and derived from the Mill Grove Mills. Furthermore, it is the

⁶⁰ Elise Lathrop, *Early American Inns and Taverns* (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1926), p.142.

⁶¹ See the bibliography the numerous authors who wrote accounts after Reed.

milling industry that is believed to have attracted such a prominent person as Governor John Penn, the owner during most of the next period.

CHAPTER II.

Revolutionary War Period (1771 - 1789)

Rowland Evans

It is not known for certain in what capacity Rowland Evans (1728-1789) had been associated with the property since the construction of the mills circa 1760, but in 1771 only a few years before America would be engulfed in the Revolutionary War, he gained full ownership. Rowland Evans was the son of John and Eleanor Evans of Gwynedd, Pennsylvania. He married Susanna Foulke, a member of another prominent Gwynedd Quaker family, and they had two sons. Like his brother Dr. Cadwalder Evans (1716-1773), Rowland Evans was a prominent and well-known citizen of the Philadelphia area in the second half of the eighteenth century. He held numerous public offices including Justice of the Peace (1749, 1752, 1757, and 1761); member of the Provincial Assembly for Philadelphia County from 1761 through 1771 except for the year 1764; Commissioner of the General Loan Office of Pennsylvania (a position that he held from his appointment on September 14, 1785 to his death); and he was a member of the American Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge (which merged with the American Philosophical Society in 1776).⁶²

The second series of tax assessment records for Providence Township, made for the year 1774, list Rowland Evans with a grist mill, saw mill, 250 acres, 7 horses,

⁶² All of this information about Rowland Evans is from Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.192 except that about his wife and sons which is from Crane, *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, vol.3, p.2146. Reed quotes an historical sketch of Rowland Evans written by Howard M. Jenkins which Reed cites as being from the Historical Collections of Gwynedd.

horses, and 7 cattle, the total of which is assessed at 63.12.0 Pounds. Of the 235 estates listed in Providence Township for 1774, only 29 have 200 acres or more. The only two estates that are more valuable than Rowland Evans' are Thomas Reese's 219 acre estate assessed at 84.3.4 Pounds and Henry Pawling, Esquire's 390 acre estate assessed at 69.8.0 Pounds. Furthermore, there is only one other estate with 200 acres or more that also has a mill -- the 200 estate of Elijah Davis with a saw mill with an assessment of 22.1.04 Pounds, which is considerably less than Rowland Evans' estate.⁶³

John Penn's Acquisition

On November 16, 1776, two months after his role as Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania ended with the Provincial Assembly's last meeting, John Penn (1729-1795) purchased Mill Grove from Rowland Evans.⁶⁴ John Penn was Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties for two terms from October 1763 to spring 1771 and August 1773 to September 1776 (figure 26).⁶⁵ For the majority of years after this office until his death on February 9, 1795, Penn resided in Pennsylvania.⁶⁶

⁶³ 1774 Tax Assessment Records for Providence Township, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

⁶⁴ Philadelphia Deed Book D. No. 1, p. 103, Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and John W. Raimo, *Biographical Directory of American Colonial and Revolutionary Governors 1607-1789* (Westport: Cutler Books, 1980), p. 337.

⁶⁵ Raimo, p. 337.

⁶⁶ Raimo, p. 337.

It appears the Penn purchased Mill Grove farm and mills as an investment to secure some of his money during the Revolutionary War. Since Penn had other residences including Lansdowne, the grand country villa he built in 1773 along the west bank of the Schuylkill River, he probably did not purchase Mill Grove with plans to use it as a residence (figure 27).⁶⁷ In the negotiations fifteen days prior to the purchase, Edmund Physick, John Penn's agent, noted that neither he nor the Governor, as he was still called, "new nothing of the land..nor of its improvements."⁶⁸ At the settlement, Rowland Evans signed the following agreement:

Whereas I have sold and conveyed to the Honorable John Penn, Esq., two certain tracts of land, situate in the Township of New Providence, in Philadelphia County, wherein are situated a Saw Mill, and Grist Mill. Now in consideration of the Purchase Money paid me for the said Estate, I do hereby promise and agree to and with the said John Penn Esq., that I will at my own and proper Cost and Expense repair and put into good, firm & sufficient tenantable Condition the said Saw Mill and that part of the Grist Mill which does the Country Work.⁶⁹

This conclusion about Penn using the property as an outlet where he could secure his wealth during the Revolution is further substantiated by his selling the estate on May

⁶⁷ Howard M. Jenkins, *The Family of William Penn Founder of Pennsylvania Ancestry and Descendants* (Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1899), p.190. In addition to Lansdowne, John Penn had two successive city houses where he lived from the 1770s until his death in 1795. Lansdowne was demolished in 1854 (Roger W. Moss, *The American Country House* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1990), p,81).

⁶⁸ Notes by Edmund Physick Regarding the purchase of Mill Grove by John Penn, transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.194.

⁶⁹ December 22, 1776 agreement signed by Rowland Evans, transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.198.

22, 1784, just eight months after the War officially ended with the Treaty of Paris.⁷⁰

Although Rowland Evans had relinquished his ownership of the estate to John Penn, he leased the estate beginning on April 1, 1777 and remained on the property as a tenant during Penn's ownership.⁷¹ This lease includes the following information:

...Pay the full quantity or measure of four hundred bushels of good sound and merchantable wheat, on the first day of April, which will be in the Year of Our Lord Seventeen Hundred and Seventy Eight...That certain messuage, plantation & tract containing about two hundred eighty-four acres of land, situate in the said Township of Providence, and on which the said Rowland Evans now lives, together with the two water grist mill, and a saw mill, mill dams and races thereon...barns, stables, houses, out houses, arable land and meadows...And it is agreed that the said Rowland Evans may sow this season wheat and rye those two fields, commonly called the Schuylkill Field and Porter Field, containing about forty-six acres...And...said Rowland Evans will well and truly pay to John Penn, Esq. the rent reserved as aforesaid in good clean merchantable wheat in the mills aforesaid, or in the wheat store house on the premises...Said Rowland Evans shall not commit any voluntary waste in the woodland and timber, he shall cut no wood for fire that is fit and proper for rails, scantling, or other repairs to the premises...⁷²

This lease exemplifies how crops were often used by farmers like money. It also reveals that Mill Grove was an agricultural as well as an industrial site; it consisted of significant arable land on which wheat and rye were grown in addition to the

⁷⁰ Philadelphia Deed Book D No.16, p.166 &c., Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

⁷¹ Undated, unsigned letter from Rowland Evans, transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.189.

⁷² Lease of John Penn's estate in Providence Township to Rowland Evans, April 1, 1777, transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, pp.198-199.

processing capacity of the mills.

Effects of the Revolutionary War

Mill Grove was adversely effected by the Revolutionary War not only because of the turbulent times, but because of its close proximity to the Valley Forge encampment, just a few miles away on the other side of the Schuylkill River. During the Valley Forge Encampment, the adjoining estate of Valentine Saylor became the military center of Providence Township; his barn was used as a hospital and military supplies were stored in his attic.⁷³ Furthermore, at this time, the Mill Grove mills were one of six mills on the lower six miles of the Perkiomen Creek,⁷⁴ and the folklore of the area holds that the Mill Grove mill "ground more grain for Washington's army than any other mill in the neighborhood."⁷⁵ The Mill Road and ford were also used during this period to transport supplies from the west side of the Perkiomen Creek to the encampment.⁷⁶ Rowland Evans was a member of Captain Arnold Francis's company of Providence Township's militia but during the period between 1777 to 1778 when the armies were in the area he was frequently absent from muster duty because he had to attend to Mill Grove and the damage wrought by

⁷³ J.G. Francis, "Audubon's Holdings West of the Perkiomen," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 5 (October 1946) 3: 174.

⁷⁴ Shrawder, p.80.

⁷⁵ John T. Faris, *Old Roads Out of Philadelphia*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1917), p.199.

⁷⁶ Herbert Johnson Wetherill, "Memorandum on Mill Grove," Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

the armies.⁷⁷

It is an established fact that the armies marauded and took needed supplies from homes within their path. In an effort to curtail such conduct, guards were posted at many houses in the Valley Forge area but they evidently were not posted at Mill Grove or else their presence was not helpful. Evans later recalled that,

When I first took this place, it was with view of doing merchant work with ye mills, as the exportation was then open, but as the trade was stopt immediately after my time commenced I have no merchant work at all since April 1777, so that the Mill which used to be a valuable part of the estate has been scarce any advantage at all to me, having nothing but country custom which was always small by reasons of the number of mills in ye neighborhood, and is now much smaller since the British Soldiers tore the bolting cloth.⁷⁸

The American Army was in Montgomery County between September 19, 1777, and June 20, 1778. On September 21, 1777, General George Washington arrived at Fatland Ford, the farm adjoining Mill Grove, where he observed the movements of the British troops on the other side of the Schuylkill River.

Washington realized that the river was too high for the British to cross so he dined with James Vaux, paid his respects to Vaux's neighbor Rowland Evans, and then, moved on to Trappe where a large body of the American army was camping. Early the next morning, according to the Captain John Montrosers' journal, General Howe and "the Light Infantry and Grenadier passed over the Schuylkill at Fatland Ford without a single shot and took post." The next day the entire British army that had

⁷⁷ Reed, "Audubon," 1905, p.260.

⁷⁸ Undated, unsigned letter from Rowland Evans, transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.189.

been camped at Valley Forge crossed the Schuylkill River at Fatland Ford by 10 a.m. Captain Montroser recorded that, "after the principal body had got on the north [east] side of the Schuylkill about one mile the army halted to dry themselves and rest." This information locates the British army in the direct vicinity of Mill Grove. After resting, the British marched on to camp in Norristown (spelled Norrington). During this departure from the Valley Forge area the British Army stole supplies and damaged property on many estates, including that of James Vaux, Rowland Evans (Mill Grove), the Morgans, Valentine Saylor, Major John Edwards, Captain Arnold Francis, and Colonel Archibald Thompson.⁷⁹

Rowland Evans corresponded with John Penn's agent, Edmund Physick, and described the damage incurred at Mill Grove during the turbulent times of the Revolution. These letters also reveal information about the farming and milling enterprises on the estate.⁸⁰ In an unsigned and undated letter from Rowland Evans to Edmund Physick, Evans describes the damage wrought on Mill Grove in September, 1777, during the movement of the British Army. Evans states, "The British Army passed by the place and took about Three Hundred Bushels of Oats, Trampled and ruined Five or Six acres of Buckwheat, beside potatoes, apples, etc., for which I never received any compensation. They likewise tore the bolting cloths in such a manner, that the Mill has grown much out of repute on account of the bad

⁷⁹ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, pp.185-186. For most of this information, Reed quoted from the journal of Captain John Montroser, an engineer in the British Army.

⁸⁰ These letters are preserved in the Manuscript Collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They are also transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon" 1910, pp.188-190.

work she does."⁸¹ Evans also suffered from rampages of the American Army. Near the end of 1777, Evans told Edmund Physick that the American army took almost 400 bushels of wheat and enough of his hay supply that he had to move his cattle to Berks County.⁸² It has been suggested that Washington took this 400 bushels of wheat, after having it made into flour on the torn bolting clothes, for a Christmas present for his troops who were camping at Valley Forge for the winter.⁸³ The following year, Evans complained to Physick that in May and June, the American Army's horses ruined his twenty-acre "wheat meadow" and forced him to purchase grain and hay at a "most exorbitant price."⁸⁴

A month before his term of rent expired, Rowland Evans wrote Edward Physick on March 2, 1778, to tell him that he did not desire to continue as proprietor of Mill Grove, and that he was unable to pay his yearly rent because scavengers from both armies had taken almost 600 bushels of grain.⁸⁵ In this letter, Evans outlines the damaged condition of the estate:

⁸¹ Undated, unsigned letter from Rowland Evans to Edmund Physick, transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.189.

⁸² Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.189. The Reverend J.G. Francis substantiates that Evans had to move his cattle northwest to Berks County because the British were located to the northeast, southeast, and southwest (J.G. Francis, "Providence's Part in Provisioning the Camp at Valley Forge," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 1 [April 1939] 6: 263).

⁸³ Francis, "Providence's Part in Provisioning the Camp at Valley Forge," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 1 (April 1939) 6: 261.

⁸⁴ Undated, unsigned letter from Rowland Evans, transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.189.

⁸⁵ Rowland Evans to Edmund Physick, March 2, 1778, Penn - Physick Manuscripts, Vol.2, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. Also transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.187.

...a great part of the fences along the Creek having been carried away by the fresh [freshet] in the fall which was the highest known for a great many years past; Two of the bolting cloths having been torn by the British Soldiers when the Army went by, and some fences burnt by them; The times rendering the Mill of very little value as there is nothing to be done with it except barely the Grist for the adjoining farmers which produces very little more than pays the man who attends it, and as it will be very material that some person should at least take care of the Mill dam and its appendages which must otherwise go greatly to ruin...⁸⁶

Evans states in regard to making the needed repairs to the property that "as anything I shall have to do with it, (being at a distance), must occasion Inconvenience to me!" which suggests that he is not living on the property at that time.⁸⁷

Evans does not mention the saw mill in any of this correspondence. It is said, however, that this saw mill "undoubtedly ...shaped much of the dresser lumber used by General Sullivan in the building of the bridge" across the Schuylkill at Valley Forge in early winter, 1778.⁸⁸ This bridge, called Sullivan's Bridge, was erected for the convenience of the American Army during the Valley Forge Encampment, and it was used almost exclusively by them at that time.⁸⁹

In a letter dated March 30, 1778, Rowland Evans writes Edmund Physick about having re-considered to remain proprietor of Mill Grove for another year and provides more details about the condition of the property:

⁸⁶ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.187.

⁸⁷ Rowland Evans to Edmund Physick, March 2, 1778, Penn - Physick Manuscripts, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. Also transcribed and reprinted in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.187.

⁸⁸ W.H. Reed, "Sullivan's Bridge Marker," *Historical Sketches of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 4 (1910): 34 and 36.

⁸⁹ Reed, "Sullivan's Bridge Marker," pp.34 and 36. This bridge no longer exists.

...The meadow fences are very much gone with the fresh [freshets] as I told thee in my last letter and likewise great part of the division fence between the meadow and fields. The season is now grown late and unfavorable for cutting timber for lasting...Workmen are very hard to be got and their wages extravagantly high, so that repairing of fences will be very difficult and expensive...When we likewise consider the uncertainty of their standing, as many fences have been and probably will be burnt by the armies...⁹⁰

The 1780 Effective Supply Tax listed "Penn's Estate" under "Proland Evans" with a 12,000 Pound assessment which was the third most valuable property in Providence Township at that time. Of the 319 total estates listed for that year, the average estate had an assessed value between 1,000 and 5,000 Pounds.⁹¹

On April 6, 1781, Rowland Evans wrote another letter to Edmund Physick about renewing his lease and paying 300 bushels of wheat and the property taxes from April 1, 1781 to April 1, 1782.⁹² Rowland Evans's card in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* for June 30, 1784, reveals that he resided in Providence Township until this time and then moved to a house on the east side of Fourth Street, in the block below Race Street, in the City of Philadelphia.⁹³ It is not known for certain whether Rowland Evans remained at Mill Grove through the remainder of Penn's ownership until 1784 because in the Township taxes between 1781 and 1783, John Spohn (also

⁹⁰ Rowland Evans to Edward Physick, March 30, 1778, Penn - Physick Manuscripts, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. Also transcribed and printed in W.H. Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.188.

⁹¹ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

⁹² Rowland Evans to Edmund Physick, April 6, 1781, transcribed and printed in Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.190.

⁹³ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.192.

spelled Spoon), a farmer, is listed as proprietor of Penn's estate.⁹⁴ Also in 1784, Philadelphia County was subdivided and the new county, Montgomery, contained Providence Township and Mill Grove. Around this time, the nearby village, now called Audubon, was established and the Inn known as "Jack's Tavern" opened.⁹⁵

Rowland Evans died on August 8, 1789, and was buried in the Quaker burial ground in Philadelphia.⁹⁶ His obituary in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* on August 19, 1789, mentions his accomplishments before and after the war and commends his political terms "of which he filled with great ability, dignity and applause."⁹⁷

Morris and Prevost Ownerships

After John Penn, the next owner was Samuel C. Morris, a merchant from Philadelphia, who purchased the property in 1784⁹⁸ but never lived there.⁹⁹ Two

⁹⁴ Reed, in his 1910 article, "Audubon," (p.199) stated that Evans remained at Mill Grove for the entire eight years but the source for this information is not specified. The Tax Assessment Records also reveal that of the 300 entries listed on the 1782 Effective Supply Tax for Providence Township, Penn's estate was one of the largest and the most valuable in the area. Of the 295 properties listed on the 1783 Federal Tax for Providence Township, Penn's landholdings of 515 acres were the largest in the township (Providence Township Tax Assessment Records, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania).

⁹⁵ Reed, "Audubon," 1905, 263.

⁹⁶ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, pp.192-193.

⁹⁷ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.193. Reeds quotes directly from Jenkins who, in turn, quotes from the newspaper account.

⁹⁸ Philadelphia Deed Book D No.16, p.166 &c., Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There is not much information about Mill Grove during Samuel Morris's ownership. He does not even appear in the tax assessment records for this period. The tax assessment record list David Schrack as a proprietor for "Penn's estate" but this is believed to be different property owned by Penn for two reasons: Penn had already sold Mill Grove the Morris a year earlier and David Schrack is listed as proprietor for a 700 acre property entitled Penn's estate at the same time Augustine Prevost is listed for what clearly appears to be Mill Grove (Providence Township Tax Assessment Records, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania).

years later Morris sold Mill Grove to Augustin Prevost, Esquire, who owned the property between 1786 and 1789.¹⁰⁰ Prevost was a retired Swiss mercenary officer in the British Army.¹⁰¹ Prevost lived at Mill Grove and had a tenant, William Thomas, who farmed the land.¹⁰²

The Tax Assessment Records for this period list Augustine Prevost as a miller and farmer who owns the most valuable estate in the township as well as a grist mill and a saw mill. John Penn evidently still owned property in the township because his 700 acre estate under the proprietorship of David Schrack was the largest estate and had the highest total assessment value in the township; however, Penn's estate was assessed at three Pounds per acre while Prevost's was assessed at approximately four and a half Pounds per acre. There are also other estates with more acreage than Prevost's but they are not as valuable. The complete list of items and assessment for Prevost's estate on the 1786 Tax Assessment Record was 265 acres and dwelling: 1,200; 5 horses: 50; 4 cows: 16; 16 oz. plate: 6; 1 grist mill: 400; 1 saw mill: 100; 2 servants: 24; and occupation: 104. The 1787 Tax Assessment Records only differ from the 1786 by the reduction of one horse and one servant and graduated

⁹⁹ Norris, "Mill Grove Farm Once Included Land on Both Sides of the Perkiomen," 5 October 1951, Scrapbook B-10, Mill Grove Files, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

¹⁰⁰ Montgomery County Deed Book No.4, p.288 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania. Prevost also owned the Peter Le Gaux mansion, another significant Montgomery County residence, located in Spring Mill. Prevost sold the farm to Le Gaux in 1786, and it became famous for Le Gaux's attempt at creating a large vineyard (Norris, "Mill Grove Farm Once Included Land on Both Sides of the Perkiomen," 5 October 1951 newspaper clipping in Scrapbook B-10, Mill Grove Files, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania).

¹⁰¹ Alice Ford, *John James Audubon* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p.18.

¹⁰² Ford, pp.18-19.

assessment values totaling 1,750 Pounds. The common figures in the 1788 and 1789 Tax Assessment Record are 200 acres and a dwelling: 1060; 5 horses: 50; and 7 cows: 28. In addition, the 1788 Tax Assessment Record includes 1 grist mill: 400; 1 saw mill: 100; 2 servants: 20; and an occupation tax of 92. On the 1789 Tax Assessment Records the grist mill is assessed at an additional 50 pounds, the occupation is an additional 30, and the saw mill and servants are not listed.¹⁰³

On March 28, 1789, Augustine Prevost and Susannah, his wife, sold Mill Grove to Captain Jean Audubon, the father of the famous ornithologist and artist, for 2,300 Pounds in gold and silver.¹⁰⁴ The 1789 acquisition by Captain Jean Audubon began the transition into the era of French propriety. In this next phase, not only would Mill Grove become associated with one of America's famous men, John James Audubon, but its second industry, mining, would be developed.

¹⁰³ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

¹⁰⁴ Montgomery County Deed Book No.4, p.288 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

CHAPTER III.

French Propriety (1789 - 1813)

Captain Audubon's Purchase

On March 28, 1789, Captain Jean Audubon (1744-1818) purchased a 113 1/2 acre tract on the east side of the Perkiomen Creek containing the Mill Grove estate buildings and a 117 3/4 acre tract of land on the west side of the creek from Prevost for 2,300 English Pounds, in gold and silver, as a business investment (figure 28).¹⁰⁵ John James Audubon described his father's purchase of Mill Grove: "during a visit he payed to Pennsylvania when suffering of sunstroke, he purchased the beautiful farm of Mill Grove, on the Schuylkill and Perkiomen Streams."¹⁰⁶ It appears that Captain Audubon did not plan to keep the house on the east tract as his residence because on April 10, 1789, thirteen days later, Audubon secured a mortgage¹⁰⁷ with Augustine Prevost and leased Mill Grove to him for one year.¹⁰⁸ The property described in the lease included "the messuages, grist mills, saw mills,

¹⁰⁵ Montgomery County Deed Book No.4, p.288 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania. This thesis focuses on the property on the east side of the Perkiomen Creek with the structures, and, thus there is little mention of the landholdings on the west side. For a discussion of the tract on the west side see The Reverend J.G. Francis, "Audubon's Holdings West of the Perkiomen," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 5 (October 1946) 3: 153-178. See Herrick and Ford for more information about the life of Captain Jean Audubon.

¹⁰⁶ Maria R. Audubon, *Audubon and His Journals*, vol.1, unabridged and unaltered republication of the first addition published by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897 (New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1960), p.10.

¹⁰⁷ Mortgage Book No.1, No.235, pp.275-277, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania. In this document John Audubon is listed as "of the Island of St. Domingo, Gentleman, now being in the City of Philadelphia."

¹⁰⁸ Herrick, vol.1, p.105.

plantation and tract of land,...tools, implements, stock, and furniture of the mills and farm.¹⁰⁹ In the inventory included with the lease, some of these "tools, implements, stock, and furniture of the mills" included one windmill; one pair of scales, with weights of 56, 28, and 7 pound; "skreen;" four bolting cloths, two hoisting tubs, and one large screw and circle for raising the millstones.¹¹⁰ Prevost is said to have rented the land to farmers immediately and then traveled to England.¹¹¹ He renewed the lease the following year with the provision that Captain Audubon would keep the house in good repair.¹¹²

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, William Thomas, a Quaker farmer, held a five-year lease on Mill Grove, and he continued to farm the land. Audubon's agent, Miers Fisher, recorded that the estate at this time was in a "very suffering condition" because freshets had damaged fences, the dam, and the race. Fisher unsuccessfully tried to get Audubon to visit the estate but he did not tell him about its poor condition.¹¹³

During the ownership of Captain Jean Audubon in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first four years of the nineteenth century, Mill Grove remained the most valuable estate in Providence Township. The assessed worth of the grist mill and saw mill increased the value per acre but even without these

¹⁰⁹ Herrick, vol.1, p.105.

¹¹⁰ Herrick, vol.1, p.105.

¹¹¹ Ford, pp.20-21.

¹¹² Herrick, vol.1, p.106.

¹¹³ Ford, p.31.

industrial assets, the acres and dwelling was among the fourth most valuable in the township. Even with the exclusion of the mills, the only estate that was more valuable than Audubon's during the first few years of the nineteenth century was that of John Shannon, for whom the nearby town Shannonville was named.¹¹⁴ During the Audubon ownership the mills were of equal or less value than the other mills listed in the tax records, however, the other mills were on much smaller estates and much less valuable land.¹¹⁵ The 1805 Tax Assessment Records still list Audubon's (spelled Odebon's) Estate even though he sold a one half interest in it to Francis Dacosta at the end 1804.¹¹⁶ For 1805, with the exclusion of the grist mill (the saw mill is not listed for this year), Audubon's Estate has the same assessment as William Bakewell's 302 acre estate,¹¹⁷ Henry Pawling's 200 acre estate, John Pawling's 260 acre estate, and Robert Harper's 202 acre estate.¹¹⁸ Most of these estates were clustered in the same area as Mill Grove which indicates the valuable status of the property in that area at the time that John James Audubon traversed it.

¹¹⁴ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records, 1796-1805, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

¹¹⁵ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records, 1796-1805.

¹¹⁶ Montgomery County Deed Book No.20, p.264, Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

¹¹⁷ Fatland Ford drew attention in 1805 because of its threshing machine. In a January newspaper notice farmers were invited to come see "the greatest of all modern improvements in agriculture, the threshing machine" (Edward Hocker, "Montgomery County History," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 12 (Spring 1960) 2: 89.).

¹¹⁸ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records for 1805, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

John James Audubon's Youth and Arrival at Mill Grove

John James Audubon was the illegitimate son of Captain Audubon and Jeanne Rabine (d.1785), born on April 26, 1785 in Saint-Dominque (figure 29).¹¹⁹ Young Audubon was formally adopted by Captain Audubon on March 7, 1794, and raised by him and his wife, Anne Moynet Audubon (b.1730).¹²⁰ In 1803, Captain Audubon arranged to send his adopted son, then eighteen years old, to America to avoid recruiters, learn English, and obtain management and farming skills.¹²¹

Audubon arrived in New York in the fall of 1803.¹²² He immediately removed to the boarding house of two Quaker ladies in Norristown, Pennsylvania, where he recovered from a fever that was spreading through New York.¹²³ After spending two weeks regaining his health, Audubon was escorted by John Audubon, Sr.'s, agent in Pennsylvania, Miers Fisher (1748-1819), to the Fisher Family house in Philadelphia. Two weeks later, Miers Fisher drove Audubon to Norristown where he had arranged for him to board with Morris Jones, a storekeeper, and be tutored in

¹¹⁹ Ford, p.14. Some people theorize John James Audubon was the lost Dauphin of France, son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and heir to the throne who was adopted by Jean Audubon for safety and to see that he was taken out of France. This thesis is limited to a discussion of Audubon in his relationship to Mill Grove, and therefore, a resolution of the controversial issue of his lineage is not within the parameters of this investigation. For the Dauphin theory, see Alice Jaynes Tyler, *I, Who Should Command All* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1937). For the Jeanne Rabine case and more information about Audubon's entire life, see Alice Ford, *John James Audubon* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964) and Francis Hobart Herrick, *Audubon the Naturalist* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1917).

¹²⁰ Ford, p.29.

¹²¹ Ford, p.37.

¹²² Ford, p.37.

¹²³ Ford, p.41. Ford notes that secondary sources mistakenly referred to Norristown as Morrystown, a town in New Jersey.

English by the Reverend John Jones.¹²⁴

Shortly after returning to Norristown, Audubon moved to Mill Grove. The precise date that Audubon reached Mill Grove has not been determined and, there are three different accounts that try to establish this arrival. The account presented by Alice Ford in 1964 is that Audubon "wasted no time in walking out to the plantation," only five miles away from Norristown.¹²⁵ She then recounts that "Audubon soon forsook his duties in Norristown for Mill Grove. By late autumn he was boarding with the Thomas family," who lived in the small cottage on the property.¹²⁶

The earlier account presented by Francis Herrick in 1917, unlike Ford's, is carefully documented as to where the information was obtained. Herrick states that Audubon reached Mill Grove in the spring of 1804.¹²⁷ This date was based partially on the statement by Audubon, writing in 1820, that "shortly after" he arrived at Mill Grove, the Bakewells settled at Fatland Ford. Herrick then notes that according to G.W. Bakewell, the Bakewell Family historian, they moved to Fatland Ford in the Spring, 1804. At the same time, Herrick states that, according to W.H. Wetherill, the owner of Mill Grove at the time of Herrick's research, the Bakewells occupied Fatland Ford in January, 1804.¹²⁸ Even after Herrick's careful

¹²⁴ Ford, p.42.

¹²⁵ Ford, p.42.

¹²⁶ Ford, p.42.

¹²⁷ Herrick, vol.1, p.101.

¹²⁸ Herrick, vol.1, pp.98-99. William Herbert Wetherill was knowledgeable about the history of Fatland Farm because his family owned and occupied that estate for many decades.

documentation, the reader is tempted to question his sources because after providing an 1804 date in the text, he included Audubon's arrival at Mill Grove under the year 1803 in his outline of the chronology of Audubon's life.¹²⁹

The third account of Audubon's arrival at Mill Grove is provided by Audubon in his *Ornithological Biography* (and pointed out by Herrick) in his account of the pewee, which states that he was at Mill Grove before April 10th, when "the ground was still partially covered with snow, and the air retained the piercing chill of winter."¹³⁰ Herrick warns the reader that "too much weight, however, should not be attached to such references of a biographical character in Audubon's own writings" because of numerous discrepancies between Audubon's recollections and dated documents.¹³¹

All of these accounts have flaws and, thus, the precise date that Audubon arrived at Mill Grove remains an enigma until additional sources are found to provide more information.¹³² For now, the history can only justify a period ranging from as early as fall, 1803 to as late as spring, 1804, the latter of which is at least confirmed by all three accounts.

At Mill Grove, Audubon was under the care of the tenants Mr. and Mrs.

¹²⁹ Herrick, vol.1, p.xxv.

¹³⁰ Herrick, vol.1, p.99 quoted from John James Audubon, *Ornithological Biography* Vol.2 (Edinburgh, 1831-39), p.124.

¹³¹ Herrick, vol.1, p.99.

¹³² The notably large collection of Audubon Manuscripts at the American Philosophical Society was consulted by the author but none of the letters dated to the first decade of the nineteenth century when Audubon was associated with Mill Grove; the letters covered the period between 1821 to 1845 but not even the year 1824, when Audubon briefly returned to Mill Grove.

William Thomas and Francois Dacosta, initially living in Philadelphia, whom Captain Audubon had sent to Pennsylvania in the early summer of 1803 to act as overseer of Mill Grove.¹³³ Young Audubon was given an allowance that he described as "my not receiving more than enough money per quarter than was considered sufficient for the expenditure of a young gentleman."¹³⁴

Audubon's Experience at Mill Grove

Audubon, in describing his admiration and experiences at Mill Grove to his sons over fifteen years later, recalled,

Mill Grove was ever to me a blessed spot; in my daily walks I thought I perceived the traces left by my father as I looked on the even fences round the fields, or on the regular manner with which avenue of trees, as well as the orchards, had been planted by his hand. The mill was also a source of joy to me, and in the cave which you too remember, where the Pewees were wont to build, I never failed to find quietude and delight. Hunting, fishing, drawing, and music occupied my every moment; cares I knew not, and cared naught about them. I purchased excellent and beautiful horses, visited all such neighbors as I found congenial spirits, and was as happy as happy could be.¹³⁵

Audubon included another account of his fondness for the time spent at Mill Grove in the "Introductory Address" to his *Ornithological Biography* where he noted,

In Pennsylvania, a beautiful State, almost central on the line of our Atlantic shore, my father, in his desire of proving my friend through life, gave me what Americans call a beautiful 'plantation,' refreshed during the summer heats by the waters of

¹³³ Ford, p.37.

¹³⁴ Maria R. Audubon, vol.2, p.17.

¹³⁵ Maria R. Audubon, vol.1, p.17.

the Schuylkil River, and traversed by a creek named Perkioming. Its fine woodlands, its extensive fields, its hills crowned with evergreens, offered many subjects to my pencil. It was there that I commenced my simple and agreeable studies, with as little concern about the future as if the world had been made for me. My rambles invariably commenced at break of day; and to return wet with dew, and bearing a feathered prize, was, and ever will be, the highest enjoyment for which I have been fitted.¹³⁶

While sketching birds at Mill Grove, Audubon developed the fundamental techniques that would eventually make him a renowned artist (figures 30-33 illustrate some of his early works at Mill Grove and some of his later more mature works published in his *Birds of America*, 1827-30). Henry W. Kratz, in reference to the appearance of this terrain during Audubon's time, said, "It would seem that nothing more was needed to inspire love for the beautiful in nature."¹³⁷ These techniques developed out of Audubon's realizations while at Mill Grove that the best way to represent nature was by depicting its life and movement, and in order to accomplish this likeness, Audubon developed a method of wiring his dead specimens in life-like positions so he could study and copy their every detail. In his journal, Audubon wrote about the grand discovery of these ideas:

One day, while watching the habits of a pair of pewees at Mill Grove, I looked so intently at their graceful attitudes that a thought struck my mind like a flash of light, that nothing, after all, could ever answer my enthusiastic desires to represent

¹³⁶ Audubon, *Ornithological Biography*, p.ix.

¹³⁷ Henry W. Kratz, "Audubon and His Achievements," *Historical Sketches of the Historical Society of Montgomery County 3* (1905): 237.

nature, except to copy her in her own way, alive and moving!¹³⁸

After struggling in trying to achieve this thought by sketching his dead specimens, he began to develop a solution:

A second thought came to my assistance; by means of threads I raised or lowered a head, wing, or tail, and by fastening the threads securely, I had something like life before me; yet much was wanting. When I saw the living birds, I felt the blood rush to my temples, and almost in despair spent about a month without drawing, but in deep thought, and daily in the company of the feathered inhabitants of dear Mill Grove.¹³⁹

Audubon struggled with this dissatisfaction until he came up with a better solution early one morning. He describes this realization,

...long before day, one morning, I leaped out of bed fully persuaded that I had obtained my object. I ordered a horse to be saddled, mounted, and went off at a gallop towards the little village of Norristown, distant five miles. When I arrived there not a door was open, for it was not yet daylight. Therefore I went to the river, took a bath, and returning to the town, entered the first opened shop, inquired for wire of different sizes, bought some, leaped on my steed, and was soon again at Mill Grove...I was off to the creek, and shot the first Kingfisher I met. I picked the bird up, carried it home by the bill, sent for the miller, and bade him bring me a piece of board of soft wood. When he returned he found me filing sharp points to some pieces of wire, and I proceeded to show him what I meant to do. I pierced the body of the fishing bird and fixed it on the body. Another wire passed above his upper mandible held the head in a pretty fair attitude. Smaller ones fixed the feet according to my notions and even common pins came to my assistance. The last wire proved a delightful elevation to the bird's tail, and at last -- there stood before me the real

¹³⁸ Maria R. Audubon, p.523. Edward Graham clarifies that these birds that Audubon called pewees are eastern phoebes (Edward W. Graham, "Mill Grove -- Home of John James Audubon," reprinted from *Brandywine Magazine* [May 1991]).

¹³⁹ Maria R. Audubon, vol.2, pp.523-524.

kingfisher.¹⁴⁰

Another one of Audubon's accomplishments at Mill Grove was the first experiments in bird-banding. In April, 1804, in a cave in the bank of the Perkiomen Creek, Audubon attached silver threads to the legs of some young pewees. The following spring, he sighted two of these birds up the creek from the cave and was satisfied to prove that birds migrate back to the region of their birth. In the early twentieth century, the Bird Banding Society was formed to employ this technique based on Audubon's study and to study migration patterns of American birds.¹⁴¹

Audubon's Character While Living at Mill Grove

There are no known paintings or drawings of Audubon when he was living at Mill Grove, but numerous descriptions provide a vivid portrait of the uninhibited young man. Audubon "painted' quite a gallant picture of himself. In his journal, he provides the following description:

I was what in plain terms may be called extremely extravagant. I had not vices, it is true, neither had I any high aims. I was ever fond of shooting, fishing, and riding on horseback; the raising of fowls of every sort was one of my hobbies, and to reach the maximum of my desires in those different things filled every one of my thoughts. I was ridiculously fond of dress. To have seen me going shooting in black satin small clothes, or breeches, with silk stockings, and the finest ruffled shirt Philadelphia could afford, was as I now realize, an absurd spectacle, but it was one of my many foibles, and I shall not conceal it. I purchased the best horses in the country, and rode well, and felt proud of it; my guns and fishing-tackle were

¹⁴⁰ Maria R. Audubon, vol.2, pp.524-525.

¹⁴¹ Herrick, vol.1, p.107.

equally good, always expensive and richly ornamented, often with silver. Indeed, though in America, I cut as many foolish pranks as a young dandy in Bond Street or Piccadilly.

I was extremely fond of music, dancing, and drawing; in all I had been well instructed, and not an opportunity was lost to confirm by propensities in those accomplishments. I was, like most young men, filled with the love of amusement, and not a ball, a skating-match, a house or riding party took place without me. Withall, and fortunately for me, I was not addicted to gambling; cards I disliked, and I had no other evil practices. I was, besides, temperate to an intemperate degree. I lived, until the day of my union with your mother, on milk, fruits, and vegetables, with the addition of game and fish at times, but never had I swallowed a single glass of wine or spirits until the day of my wedding. The result has been my uncommon, indeed iron, constitution. This was my constant mode of life ever since my earliest recollection, and while in France it was extremely annoying to all those round me. Indeed, so much did it influence me that I never went to dinners, merely because when so situated my peculiarities in my choice of food occasioned comment, and also because often not a single dish was to my taste or fancy, and I could eat nothing from the sumptuous tables before me. Pies, puddings, eggs, milk, or cream was all I cared for in the way of food, and many a time have I robbed my tenant's wife, Mrs. Thomas, of the cream intended to make butter for the Philadelphia market. All this time I was as fair and rosy as a girl, though as strong, indeed stronger than most young men, and as active as a buck.¹⁴²

Audubon had numerous acquaintances in the elite circle of society in the area because of his obvious stature. He also must have met many of the local inhabitants on his wanderings through the countryside. Two "old friends of Mill Grove" that he became reacquainted with later in life are the Messieurs Davy, a father and son, with whom Audubon dined on May 3, 1827.¹⁴³

A description by his neighbor, David Pawling, in January 1805 confirms

¹⁴² Maria R. Audubon, vol.1, pp.26-27.

¹⁴³ Maria R. Audubon, vol.1, p.246.

Audubon's stature, uninhibited manner, and athletic grace. Pawling wrote,

Today I saw the swiftest skater I ever beheld; backwards and forwards he went like the wind, even leaping over large air-holes fifteen or more feet across, and continuing to skate without an instant's delay. I was told he was a young Frenchman, and this evening I met him at a ball, where I found his dancing exceeded his skating; all the ladies wished him as partner; moreover, a handsomer man I never saw, his eyes alone command attention; his name, Audubon, is strange to me.¹⁴⁴

William Gifford Bakewell, one of William Bakewell's sons, noted some additional admirable qualities possessed by Audubon which included,

training dogs with great perfection, of which art his famous dog, Zephyr, was a wonderful example. He was an admirable marksman, an expert swimmer, a clever rider, possessed of great activity, prodigious strength, and was notable for the elegance of his figure and the beauty of his features, and he aided nature by a careful attendance to his dress. Besides other accomplishments he was musical, a good fencer, danced well, and had some acquaintance with legerdemain tricks, worked in hair, and could plait willow baskets.¹⁴⁵

Audubon and His Neighbors the Bakewells

At first Audubon showed no interest in the adjoining Fatland Ford Farm of the William Bakewell family, where he would eventually meet and marry the oldest daughter, because of his prejudice against the English due to the political turmoil between France and England. William Bakewell (d.1821) called on Audubon at Mill Grove, and when he was told that Audubon was out traversing the woods for birds,

¹⁴⁴ Maria R. Audubon, vol.1, p.75.

¹⁴⁵ Transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, p.112.

Bakewell left his card and extended an invitation for Audubon to join him in hunting one day. Audubon did not acknowledge the call because of his prejudice against Englishmen. He noted that Mr. and Mrs. Thomas tried to dissuade him of these thoughts to no avail because, as he said, "English was English with me, my poor childish mind was settled on that, and as I wished to know none of the race the call remained unacknowledged."¹⁴⁶ Audubon eventually befriended the Bakewells after he met Mr. Bakewell while out hunting grouse in autumn, 1804.¹⁴⁷ Audubon and the Bakewells exchanged neighborly hospitality, and four years later, he joined his family with theirs by marrying Lucy Bakewell (figure 34). Captain Audubon originally asked Dacosta to oppose the marriage of his son and Lucy Bakewell until he acquired more information about the Bakewell family to give his consent.¹⁴⁸ Dacosta's treatment of Young Audubon regarding this issue caused great conflicts between them, and Audubon grew to passionately dislike Dacosta, not knowing that Dacosta was following Captain Audubon's orders.

The first time Audubon visited the Bakewell's house, he met his future wife Lucy, while waiting for Mr. Bakewell to return.¹⁴⁹ The romantic tales of Audubon and Lucy Bakewell's love for each other say that they were together when at all possible. Audubon also became good friends with Lucy's brother William, and the

¹⁴⁶ Maria R. Audubon, vol.1, p.17.

¹⁴⁷ Herrick, vol.1, p.109.

¹⁴⁸ Jean Audubon to Francis Dacosta, Nantes, 1804-5, translated and transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, pp.117-118. Herrick credits Monsieur Lavigne for copies of the Audubon-Dacosta correspondence.

¹⁴⁹ Herrick, vol.1, p.109.

two boys wandered the hillsides together.¹⁵⁰

One day, Audubon invited the Bakewells to Mill Grove to partake in the skating on the frozen Perkiomen which was a popular activity in the neighborhood. Audubon described the preparations and dinner served to the Bakewells during this visit, "My own landlady bestirred herself to the utmost in the procuring of as many pheasants and partridges as her group of sons could entrap, and now under my own roof was seen the whole of the Bakewell family, seated round the table which has never ceased to be one of simplicity and hospitality."¹⁵¹

From early December 1804 to several weeks after Christmas, Audubon lived with the Bakewells at Fatland Farm because he had become very sick from an abscess, and they were able to take care of him while he was confined to bed. His health and spirit were also hindered by his worries about the his father's ill health and the news that Dacosta was planning to move from Philadelphia and occupy Mill Grove mansion by spring.¹⁵²

DaCosta and the Lead Mine

The precise date of the discovery of lead deposits on the Mill Grove property is not firmly established. It was commonly expected for those who purchased land in

¹⁵⁰ Faris, p.194.

¹⁵¹ Maria R. Audubon, vol.1, p.19.

¹⁵² Ford, p.54.

Pennsylvania to find mineral deposits on their property.¹⁵³ There is also the story that the mines of Mill Grove, also known as "Mill Grove Mines Farm," were famous in Revolutionary times and that tradition says that "many a winged bullet that laid a Red-coat low in the War of Independence was a messenger from Mill Grove."¹⁵⁴ The mines were rediscovered when Thomas showed Audubon the lead-ore deposits, which he said were discovered by Mr. Gilpin in 1791.¹⁵⁵ Audubon conveyed this news to his father.

Captain Audubon sent two Frenchmen, Francis Dacosta and Monsieur Colmesnil, to Mill Grove to manage the lead mines. It appears that this was Dacosta's second trip to Mill Grove and that he actually preceded young Audubon in his associations with Mill Grove. Dacosta evidently paid rent or made an investment in the farm on May 24, 1803.¹⁵⁶

Francis Dacosta became owner of Mill Grove Estate through purchasing half parts on December 15, 1804, and September 15, 1806.¹⁵⁷ It appears that Dacosta's

¹⁵³ Norris, "How Stephen Girard Invested \$500 in a Perkiomen Lead Mine," unidentified newspaper article (probably the *Times Herald*), March 1964, Scrapbook, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

¹⁵⁴ Herrick, vol.1, p.103.

¹⁵⁵ Herrick, vol.1, p.113.

¹⁵⁶ Herrick, vol.1, p.113.

¹⁵⁷ Montgomery County Deed Book No.20, p.264 &c. (December 15, 1804, John Audubon, late of the City of Philadelphia, Gentleman at present at the City of Nantes in France and Anne Moynette his wife to Francis Dacosta) and No.22, p.397 &c. (September 15, 1806, John Audubon, the elder and Anne Moynette his wife, the first part acting by John Audubon the younger and Ferdinand Rozier their attorneys, and Claude Francis Rozier of the City of Nantes, the second part also acting by John Audubon and Ferdinand Rozier their attorneys, and John Audubon, the younger and Ferdinand Rozier, the third part, to Francis DaCosta), Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

lead mining business was well know and noted in Philadelphia and New York newspapers. A notice in the *New York Herald* on November 17, 1804, stated, "The lead mine discovered on Perkiomen creek, in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, the property of Francis Dacosta, has been lately opened, and attended with great success. The vein proves to be a regular one, and of long continuance...From the situation of this mine, its nearness to navigation and market, its very commanding height, its richness in metal, and the large scale it forms on; it is thought by judges to be one of the first discoveries yet made in the U.S."¹⁵⁸ A description of the lead mine in 1804 is also provided in Robert Sutcliffe's *Travels in Some Parts of North America, in 1804-5-6*. This English traveler stated,

In the plantation adjoining my relation's [Fatland Farm] we visited a lead mine on the banks of the Perkiomen which was then worked by a Frenchman. He invited us to go down into it, where at the depth of about twelve feet I saw a vein of lead ore eighteen inches in thickness, and as it is wrought at a very easy expense there was great probability of its being a very valuable acquisition. But these things, like many others of the world, have the stamp of great uncertainty upon them.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, p.114. Additional facts about the lead mine provided in this notice is as follows: "The vein proves to be a regular one, and of long continuance. Its course is N.N.E; its direction is nearly perpendicular, and its thickness from one foot to 15 inches. Two tons of that beautiful ore were raised in a few hours, and one ton more at least was left in the bottom on the pit, which is yet but nine feet deep...From the analysis made of 100 parts, it contains:

Oxyd of lead.....85
 Oxyd of iron.....1
 Sulphuric acid....13
 Water.....1

100

The lead being coupelled, has proved to contain 2 1/2 oz. fine silver to 100, which is nearly 3 dollars worth of that metal."

¹⁵⁹ 8th-mo., 12th 1804, transcribed in Reed, "Audubon," 1905, pp.267-268 Sutcliffe's travel journal was printed in Philadelphia in 1812.

In the correspondence between Captain Audubon and Dacosta, Captain Audubon advises Dacosta to "obtain associates" one of which should be Mr. Thomas because he is suspected to know a lot about the mine. In a letter from Captain Audubon to Dacosta from March, 1805, Captain Audubon says that if Dacosta does not successfully enlist associates for the lead mining business and he chooses to move into the main house to manage the affairs more directly himself, he should "make the most urgent repairs, above all at the principal house, before going there to live."¹⁶⁰ Mr. Thomas is still living in the main house at this time, but Captain Audubon insinuates that he will not be difficult when asked to leave as long as he has been rewarded for his services.¹⁶¹ A third important point that Captain Audubon makes in this letter regarding the complaints about the conduct of young Audubon and reminding of him of his duties to contribute the work of the estate, he reassures Dacosta that "it is known in Philadelphia that you have the same rights as I have, and that you are doing nothing but for our mutual advantage."¹⁶²

DaCosta continually requested funds from Captain Audubon to support the mining industry and when Audubon could not supply the needed amount, his friend and wealthy merchant of Nantes, Claude Francois Rozier (d.1807), invested 16,000 francs and took a mortgage of half the value of the estate.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Herrick, vol.1, p.118.

¹⁶¹ Herrick, vol.1, p.118.

¹⁶² Herrick, vol.1, pp.118-119. Herrick notes that when this letter was written, Young Audubon was on his way to his father's to complain about Dacosta.

¹⁶³ Herrick, vol.1, p.115. Augustin Prevost and Francis Dacosta also held part of this mortgage.

Audubon held little regard for Dacosta and described him very negatively. Audubon stated, "this fellow was intended to teach me mineralogy and mining engineering, but, in fact, knew nothing of either; besides which he was a covetous wretch, who did all he could to ruin by father, and indeed swindled both of us to a large amount...A greater scoundrel than Dacosta never probably existed, but peace be with his soul."¹⁶⁴ Audubon decided to expose these thoughts about Dacosta to his father in person. He asked Dacosta for money to sail to France and then left Mill Grove around January 12, 1805 and walked to New York, which took three days on snow-covered ground.¹⁶⁵ Audubon thought that Dacosta had given him a letter of credit to pay for the journey but when Audubon presented this letter to Mr. Kauman, a banker in New York city, he discovered that the letter had nothing to do with money but rather, it advised Kauman to have Audubon arrested and shipped to Canton. Audubon was outraged, but he was able to obtain money from Benjamin Bakewell, William Bakewell's brother, and sailed for Nantes, France, to speak with his father, now filled with more convictions against Dacosta.

Young Audubon and Rozier Partnership

While young Audubon was in France between spring, 1805¹⁶⁶ and April 12,

¹⁶⁴ Maria R. Audubon, vol.1, p.19.

¹⁶⁵ Herrick suggests these dates in a note accompanying the "Accounts of William Bakewell, of "Fatland Ford," as protege of his future son-in-law and as attorney or agent for Audubon & Rozier..., " Appendix I, Document 7, Vol.2, pp. 336-337.

¹⁶⁶ Herrick, vol.1, p.127.

1806,¹⁶⁷ Captain Audubon arranged a business partnership between his son and Ferdinand Rozier (1777-1864), the son of Claude Francois Rozier. Two documents were procured to outline the business of this partnership: Articles of Association established on March 23, 1806 and the Power of Attorney issued on April 4, 1806. The Articles of Association consisted of ten articles that outlined the partnership between Audubon and Ferdinand Rozier. Articles 2 and 4 contain the following specific information about their plans for Mill Grove:

Art. 2

Upon our arrival we will take possession of the farm of Mill-Grove, and we will call to account Mr. Dacosta, who has the power of attorney of Mr. Audubon, Senior. We shall take measures to improve the establishment, or make an investigation of the lead mine discovered, and before continuing the work already begun we will ascertain whether the expenditures made by Sr. Dacosta, have been, and can still be, advantageous to us...

Art. 4

The house above mentioned shall be an object separate from all business, in order that we may settle matters as completely as we desire. It is agreed that we shall add to the expenses of this exploitation, those necessary for life, and others of a common character, so long as it shall suit us to live and dwell together.¹⁶⁸

In the Power of Attorney, Lieutenant and Anne Moinet (also spelled Moynet and Moynett) Audubon and Claude Francois Rozier (d.1807) gave young Audubon and Ferdinand Rozier the authority to administer their half ownership of Mill Grove

¹⁶⁷ Herrick, vol.1, p.184.

¹⁶⁸ Articles of Association of John Audubon and Ferdinand Rozier, Nantes, March 23, 1806, translated and transcribed in Herrick, vol.2, Appendix I, Documents 9 and 9a, pp.344-349. (Original manuscript of Rozier's copy that Herrick examined was in the possession of Charles A. Rozier, St. Louis, Missouri.)

and its lead mine. This document also stated that the young men were to consult Miers Fisher, "merchant at Philadelphia" and "common friend and good counsellor," about the business matters of managing such an estate.¹⁶⁹

Audubon and Rozier reached New York on Tuesday, May 28, 1806,¹⁷⁰ paid a brief visit to Benjamin Bakewell, and then set out for Mill Grove.¹⁷¹ Audubon, thus, returned to Mill Grove at the beginning of summer, 1806 after being away for over a year.

Audubon and Rozier shortly found that they were unable to achieve the ambitious plans set forth in the Articles of Association due to conflicts between Audubon and Dacosta and a lack of success and knowledge in forming a lead mining company.¹⁷² Following the advice of Miers Fishers,¹⁷³ they sold their half share of the 113 1/2 acres of the estate containing the buildings and lead mine to Dacosta on September 15, 1806.¹⁷⁴ Young Audubon, then, removed to New York to work

¹⁶⁹ Power of Attorney issued by Jean Audubon, Anne Moinet Audubon, and Claude Francois Rozier to Jean Audubon and Ferdinand Rozier, April 3, 1806, translated and transcribed in Herrick, Appendix I, Document 10a, vol.2, pp.351-352. (Original manuscript of Ferdinand Rozier's copy that Herrick examined was in the possession of Tom J. Rozier.)

¹⁷⁰ Herrick, vol.1, p.134.

¹⁷¹ Herrick, vol.1, p.135.

¹⁷² Herrick, vol.1, p.148.

¹⁷³ Ferdinand Rozier to Claude Francois Rozier, Philadelphia, September 12, 1806, translated and transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, pp.149-159. (Original manuscript copy that Herrick examined was in the possession of Welton A. Rozier.)

¹⁷⁴ Montgomery County Deed Book No.22, p.397, Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania. It appears that Audubon and Rozier still held some ownership in Mill Grove because in two letters to Claude Francois Rozier Audubon discussed his hopes to sell Mill Grove. In the letter of May 6, 1807 Audubon stated, "We hope to sell Mill Grove, and we will credit you with a great part of the profit in colonial merchandise." In a July 19, 1807 letter Audubon said, "We hope to sell Mill

for Benjamin Bakewell in his wholesale importing business, where he remained employed from autumn 1806 to summer 1807.¹⁷⁵ During this period, Audubon is known to have only returned to Mill Grove once, in early April, 1807, during which time he also visited Lucy Bakewell at Fatland Ford and helped settle some business between Dacosta and Ferdinand Rozier.¹⁷⁶ Audubon resided in New York until at least August 22, 1807.¹⁷⁷ At this time, he and Rozier decided to try to establish a retail business in the Ohio Valley and Kentucky. With these plans confirmed, Audubon returned briefly to Mill Grove, united with Rozier who was working in Philadelphia, and the two young men left Mill Grove for Louisville Kentucky on August 31, 1807.¹⁷⁸

Audubon returned to Mill Grove in March, 1808.¹⁷⁹ A month later, on

Grove this autumn, which we shall do, however, only at a profit" (John James Audubon to Claude Francois Rozier, New York, May 6, 1807 and John James Audubon to Claude Francois Rozier, New York, July 19, 1807, translated and transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, pp. 161-162 and 165-166.). Furthermore, in 1813, Audubon recorded in his journal that he returned to Fatland Ford to obtain money from the sale of Mill Grove that William Bakewell had executed (Maria R. Audubon, *Audubon and His Journals*, vol.1, p.32). Herrick explains that these reference to ownership after September 15, 1807 pertain to a mortgage and bond that Dacosta gave to Lieutenant Audubon's agent (Herrick, vol.1, p.168).

¹⁷⁵ Herrick, vol.1, p.155.

¹⁷⁶ John James Audubon to Jean Audubon, New York, April 24, 1807, transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, pp.159-160. (Original copy that Herrick examined was in the possession of Dr. Louis Bureau, Director of the Museum of Natural History and Professor in the School of Medicine at Nantes, maternal great-grandson of Francois Rozier.)

¹⁷⁷ Herrick, vol.1, p.172.

¹⁷⁸ Ferdinand Rozier's Journal, selections transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, p.187. (Herrick notes that he examined a translated version of the journal in the possession of Welton A. Rozier. The original was said to have been mislaid or lost.)

¹⁷⁹ Herrick, vol.1, p.194.

April 5, 1808, he married Lucy Bakewell at Fatland Ford on April 5, 1808.¹⁸⁰ The marriage notice in the Norristown newspaper, *The Weekly Register*, for April 6, 1808 read, "Married on Tuesday the 5th inst. by the Rev. Wm. Latta, J. Audubon of Louisville to Lucy Bakewell, eldest daughter of Mr. Bakewell, of Fatland ford, in this county."¹⁸¹ The next morning the newlyweds left Pennsylvania for Louisville, Kentucky.

Appearance of Mill Grove During Audubon's Presence

Little is known about the appearance of the house during Audubon's association with the estate. The earliest illustrations of the property are two, almost identical paintings, attributed to Thomas Birch, that depict Mill Grove approximately fifteen years after Audubon traversed the landscape.¹⁸²

The 1798 United States Direct Tax, known as the "Window Pane Tax" often provides important facts about the names of the owners and occupants and the dimensions, construction materials, number of stories, number of windows, and number of panes per window which is helpful in determining the original appearance and plan. Sometimes this tax proves inaccurate, however, and that is what appears to be the case with the Mill Grove mansion. In this tax list for Providence Township,

¹⁸⁰ Some sources (such as Maria R. Audubon, vol.1, p.28 and Herrick, vol.1, p.194) give a marriage date of April 8, 1808 which appears convincingly incorrect in light of the marriage notice in the newspaper.

¹⁸¹ Judith A.H. Meier, *Advertisements and Notices of Interest From Norristown, Pennsylvania Newspapers 1799-1821*, vol.1 (Apollo, PA: Closson Press, 1987), p.50.

¹⁸² See Chapter IV. for a discussion and illustrations of these paintings.

there is no listing for Audubon but there is a William Thomas listed as the owner and occupant of a 40 by 30 feet two-story stone house with 12 windows with 15 panes, a 20 by 15 feet one-story stone kitchen, and a 12 by 15 feet stone spring house. This house does not appear to be the Mill Grove mansion which measures approximately 33 1/2 by 44 1/2 feet with 19 windows on the first and second floors (8 on first floor and 11 on second floor) and 4 gable-end windows and possibly two dormers in the attic.

Robert Sutcliffe provides some support for the presence of a porch on the house because he described porches as a standard component of houses in this area. He noted that "these piazzas [as porches were called in the nineteenth century] are commonly six feet wide with boarded floors."¹⁸³ Sutcliffe was very taken by the beauty of the area for which is provides the following description from the Bakewell Estate adjoining Mill Grove: "As far as the eye can command one wide spreading forest is seen, interspersed with plantations or farms, and sheets of water, which have a little the appearance of lawns and fish ponds, much as are seen about the ancient seats of our nobility; but on a scale exceeding all comparison".¹⁸⁴ He also distinguishes the area as "the pleasantest part of Pennsylvania."¹⁸⁵

In a letter from Captain Audubon to Dacosta on June 22, 1805, Captain Audubon refers to repairs to the house that Dacosta has apparently outlined in an

¹⁸³ 6th-month 8th, 1806. Transcribed in Reed, "Audubon," 1905, pp.269-270.

¹⁸⁴ 8th-month 13th 1804. Transcribed in Reed, "Audubon," 1905, p.268.

¹⁸⁵ 6th-month 8th, 1806. Transcribed in Reed, "Audubon," 1905. p.269.

April 23rd letter. The repairs evidently need to be made to the roof for Audubon states, "You speak of repairs to the house, and it needs a complete cover; would it not be better for me to send some slate from here? This would perhaps be less expensive, and well nigh everlasting. Should you consider it advisable I will send you some at once."¹⁸⁶ This is the only known reference to original roofing materials. It presents the idea that the house had a slate roof, however, since wood shingles were much more commonly used in that area at that time, Captain Audubon's suggestion might relate to what was the preferred material in France.

A description of the interior of the house in 1806, during the second period of Audubon's residence at the estate, is preserved by Lucy Bakewell's younger brother, William Gifford Bakewell, who visited Mill Grove that summer. William Bakewell, Jr. wrote:

Audubon took me into his house where he and his companion, Rozier, resided, with Mrs. Thomas, for an attendant. On entering his [attic] room, I was astonished and delighted to find that it was turned into a museum. The walls were festooned with all kinds of birds' eggs, carefully blown out and strung on a thread. The chimney-piece was covered with stuffed squirrels, and raccoons, and opossums; and the shelves around were likewise crowded with specimens, among which were fishes, frogs, snakes, lizards, and other reptiles. Besides these stuffed varieties, many paintings were arrayed on the walls, chiefly of birds.¹⁸⁷

It is said that Audubon did a lot of his work near the east window in the southeast

¹⁸⁶ Jean Audubon to Francis Dacosta, Nantes, June 22, 1805, translated and transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, p.122. This letter also refers to a mortgage that Audubon gave to Augustin Prevost in 1789 that others such as Dacosta took part in as well.

¹⁸⁷ Transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, p.112.

attic room where he could look out in the direction of Fatland Farm and Valley Forge. In the early twentieth century, marks from Audubon's taxidermy work could still be seen on this window sill, which was formed at the saw mill on the property,¹⁸⁸ and there were blood stains on the floor.¹⁸⁹

Developments at Mill Grove After Audubon's Departure

Dacosta issued an advertisement in the *Weekly Register* on February 25, 1807, that the property was available to be rented. The article stated the following:

To be rented and possession given on the first of April next - Mill grove Farm and Mills, on Perkiomen creek, near Schuylkill, containing 113 acres, whereof about fifty are arable and meadow land, a saw-mill and a grist-mill, with two pair of stones, in good repair. For terms apply to Francis Da Costa, 155 South Second-street, Philadelphia.¹⁹⁰

According to the Tax Assessment Records, the property value decreased in 1807, and the Bakewell, John Pawling, and Henry Pawling, Esquire estates were more valuable.¹⁹¹ It appears that these statistics could relate to difficulties with the lead mine business.

The following year, Francis Dacosta, "proprietor of the Mill Grove Lead

¹⁸⁸ Faris, p.191.

¹⁸⁹ Christopher Parker, interview by author, May 22, 1993, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

¹⁹⁰ Judith A.H. Meier, *Advertisements and Notices of Interest From Norristown Pennsylvania Newspapers 1799-1821*, vol.1 (Apollo, PA: Closson Press, 1987), p.42.

¹⁹¹ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records for 1807, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

Mines, Mill, farm and improvements"¹⁹² conveyed the property to William Poyntell and Robert E. Hobart in trust and formed a joint stock association to operate the Lead Mine tract.¹⁹³ Dacosta enlisted the support of many frenchmen who had fled France during the French Revolution and had now become successful businessmen in Philadelphia. The stock association was divided into 32 shares of \$500 each:¹⁹⁴

Francis DaCosta	8 shares
Robert E. Hobart	2 shares
Stephen Guere	2 shares
William Hammond	2 shares
Frederich H. Wollasten	2 shares
John Palmer	2 shares
William Poyntell	2 shares
J.G. Wachsmuth	1 share
Louis Clapier	1 share
Cl. Cerland	1 share
Richard Gernon	1 share
John Bion Vital Garesches & Frederich Ravesies	1 share
John M. Soullier	1 share
Peter Fournier Rostain	1 share
James S. Duvall	1 share
N.P. Hobart	1 share
Stephen Girard	1 share
James M. Benoist	1 share
Francis Bremit	1 share

¹⁹² Mortgage Book No.9, p.459 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

¹⁹³ Montgomery County Deed Book No.25, p.226 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

¹⁹⁴ Mortgage Book No.9, p.459 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania. Norris provides some information about these share holders: Ravesies, Soullier, Wachsmuth, Duval, and Clapier were leading Philadelphia merchants; Duval and Clapier had large estates in Germantown and now have streets named after them; Robert E. Hobart was elected to the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives; and Nathaniel P. Hobart was a lawyer in Berks and Montgomery Counties and served a term as Auditor General of Pennsylvania (Norris, "How Stephen Girard Invested \$500 in a Perkiomen Lead Mine," March 1964, Northwood Scrapbook, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania).

At this time the lead drift was described as extending 56 feet and the mine shaft was 80 feet deep with a tunnel at the bottom that connected with the Perkiomen Creek and facilitated water drainage in the shaft.¹⁹⁵ William Bakewell noted in an April 10, 1810 letter to Audubon and Rozier that "they have got a considerable quantity of ore out of the mine, some lead & some copper but I do not hear of any being yet sold."¹⁹⁶

By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, Mill Grove was distinctly the most valuable estate in the Township.¹⁹⁷ The lead mining company failed, however, and Dacosta et al. sold the estate to Frederick Beates on July 6, 1811.¹⁹⁸ On February 5, 1813 Frederick Beates sold Mill Grove to Samuel Wetherill, Jr.¹⁹⁹ By this time the property value had fluctuated again, and it sold for \$7,000 which was less than half the value placed on it in 1806.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ Edward W. Hocker, "Montgomery County History," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 12 (Spring, 1960) 2: 96.

¹⁹⁶ William Bakewell to Audubon & Rozier, Fatland Ford, April 10, 1810, transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, p.199.

¹⁹⁷ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records for 1811 and 1812, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

¹⁹⁸ Montgomery County Deed Book No. 28, p.638 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

¹⁹⁹ Montgomery County Deed Book No.28, p.645 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²⁰⁰ Herrick, vol.1, p.169.

CHAPTER IV.

Refinement and Industry (1813-1892)

Wetherill Acquisition

On February 5, 1813, Samuel Wetherill, Jr., purchased Mill Grove for its lead deposits because the War of 1812 had interrupted the importation of pig lead that he needed for his paint works in Philadelphia. Samuel Wetherill, Jr., and his father (1736-1816) produced white lead in 1790 which was the first manufactured in the United States.²⁰¹

Mill Grove was the first estate in the area purchased by the Wetherills, who eventually dominated so much of the land in the curve of the Schuylkill River at the junction with the Perkiomen Creek that the locality was called Wetherill's Corner. Samuel Wetherill, Jr., may have heard about Mill Grove from an 1812 advertisement in *Poulson's Daily American Advertiser* which offered it for sale at a public auction. The advertisement commences with the headline "Valuable Property" and lists lead and copper mines and five structures on the property which included a "large stone Dwelling House and Barn, Miller's House, Saw Mill, and Stone Grist Mill." This notice reveals important information about the grist mill such as dimensions (forty-five feet long by thirty-six feet wide) and two water wheels.²⁰² The tax Assessment

²⁰¹ *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol.20, p.23.

²⁰² "Valuable Property" Advertisement, *Poulson's Daily American Advertiser*, 7 March 1812, facsimile in Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA. An original copy is held at the Library Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Records confirm that when Samuel Wetherill purchased Mill Grove, it was the most valuable estate in Providence Township.²⁰³ Initially, his taxable property at Mill Grove consisted of 113 acres, a dwelling house, a grist mill, a saw mill, 2 horses, and 2 cows.²⁰⁴ Throughout the eighteen-teens, he maintained an average of 4 horses, 3 cattle, and occasionally up to 2 dogs.²⁰⁵

Thomas Birch Paintings

The earliest known illustration of Mill Grove are two almost identical oil paintings by Thomas Birch (1779-1851) from the 1820s. Thomas Birch was the son of William Russell Birch (1755-1834), the famous artist of miniatures in enamel and Philadelphia views. Thomas Birch lived in the Philadelphia area for most of his life, and he became well known for his landscape and marine paintings.²⁰⁶

These Birch paintings present an extremely valuable view of Mill Grove and its numerous structures, but their provenance is controversial. The root of the controversy lies in the presence of three paintings of virtually the same view looking up the hill towards the mansion from the west bank of the Perkiomen Creek. Two of these works are oil paintings which are claimed to date to the 1820s and be of the

²⁰³ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records for 1813, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²⁰⁴ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records for 1813.

²⁰⁵ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records for 1813 - 1820, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²⁰⁶ *Thomas Birch 1779-1851 Paintings and Drawings*, a catalog for an exhibit at the Philadelphia Maritime Museum, March 16 to May 1, 1966, facsimile in Mill Grove Files, Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

hand of Thomas Birch, although they are undated and unsigned. The third painting is a watercolor by Charles Wetherill in 1835. Since the watercolor was clearly copied from the Birch view, logic would suggest that one of the Birch paintings is a copy because it is questionable why he would have produced two such similar works. One theory about this similarity and the fact that one is on wood and the other on canvas, is that one painting was a study. Both of these theories have yet to be proven, thus, for now, all that is known is that both oil paintings are attributed to Birch by their respective owners.

One of the oil paintings accredited to Birch is currently in the possession of the New York Historical Society. This oil-on-wood-panel painting, measuring 16 1/4 by 24 1/2 inches was purchased by the New York Historical Society in 1946 from The Old Print Shop in New York City (figure 35). The second painting accredited to Thomas Birch is oil on canvas, measuring 17 1/4 by 24 1/2 inches (figure 36). This painting has remained in the Wetherill family for many years and is currently in the possession of Christopher Parker, Anne Parker Wetherill's son, and Herbert Johnson Wetherill's grandson. Other than the material on which they are painted, the only notable differences between these two oil paintings is the presence of a fisherman in the New York Historical Society's painting and a different handling of the chimney smoke and clouds in both works. The watercolor by Charles Wetherill, Samuel Wetherill's grandson, is said to date to 1835 (figure 37).²⁰⁷ This watercolor differs

²⁰⁷ This watercolor is also reproduced as a postcard (issued by Act of Congress in 1898) and illustrated in Herrick's book *Audubon, The Naturalist* and Reed's 1910 article entitled "Audubon" in the publication of the Historical Society of Montgomery County. Reed mistakenly uses an 1818 date for this painting which would make it pre-date the Birch paintings.

from the Birch painting by not including the trellis structure connecting the mills and the mine (perhaps because it was removed by that time) and, again, a different depiction of the chimney smoke and sky.

In addition to illustrating the creek and woodland surrounding the terraced landscape of Mill Grove, these paintings provide the earliest illustrations of the structures on the property. The image of the mansion on the hill overlooking a landscape dominated by man-made elements which exploit nature, both above and below ground, is quite impressive. Birch created a peaceful overtone to this industrial site, however, with the group of uninhibited cattle, fisherman, and boatman in the foreground.

The view of the mansion in Birch's paintings, although shown in the background with little detail, is believed to represent an appearance similar to its original configuration (figure 38). This concept is based on the fact that there are no known records specifying major improvements in the interim period between its 1762-65 construction other than the references in the early 1800s to needed roof repairs.²⁰⁸ This suggestion that there were few changes in the sixty years since its construction would normally seem odd but it is substantiated by the fact that the house had absentee owners and was occupied by tenants for the majority of this period, neither of which would have been likely to instigate major improvements. Some details rendered by Birch include ramps or platforms to the main door and side door on the northwest gable-end, a prominent white cornice on the main house which

²⁰⁸ Jean Audubon to Francis Dacosta, Nantes, June 22, 1805, translated and transcribed in Herrick, vol.1, p.122.

probably refers to the plaster cove cornice that survives today, and the smoke house extension on the west end of the kitchen wing. Birch does not provide any evidence for architectural details over the main doorway.

The stone barn illustrated in the Birch paintings on the east side of the mansion is believed to have been constructed by 1812 (figure 38).²⁰⁹ The paintings show that in the 1820s the barn was square in plan with a hipped roof and cupola. This type of barn is called a "double decker barn" because it has three levels, instead of the usual two, due to being constructed into the side of a steep hill. This type of Pennsylvania barn is one of the lesser common types, and, when combined with a hipped roof like the Mill Grove barn, represents a rare form.

The Birch paintings show that west of the mansion and extending down the hill towards the creek and mill, there were at least four buildings. The building closest to the house has a chimney with smoke coming out of it which could represent an outbuilding such as a wash house or smoke house, or it could be a small tenant house. The large building with the tall smoke stack is the smelting works that Samuel Wetherill, Jr., erected on the property with hopes of processing the ore at the site. This building, for which there are no other known illustrations, appears to have been three stories in height with a one-story gable-roofed annex.

²⁰⁹ A definitive date for the construction of this barn has not been identified. This 1812 date is based on the March 7, 1812 advertisement in *Poulson's Daily American Advertiser* which includes "a large stone dwelling house and barn" in its description of the property and the architectural character of the barn. Another reference to the construction date of a barn on the property is provided by Karen Lee, in her article "A History of Fatland and Mill Grove," in which she states that the barn was constructed in 1820 (Lee, p.146.). She obtained this date from a folder issued by the Commissioners of Montgomery County entitled, "Mill Grove," located at the Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

Birch showed the location and configuration of the mills at the base of the hill, linked to the lead mines, located beyond the mansion, with a trellis used to transport water to the mines. This trellis has been an unidentified component in the Birch paintings for years, but judging from the presence of a similar structure in a view of another mining operation that occurred nearby at mid-century, it is clearly related to mining activity (figure 46). The precise role of the mills during this period is not known since most efforts appear to have focused on the lead industry. It is said, however, that Wetherill reconstructed and modernized the mill and rebuilt the dam in 1813²¹⁰ because he used the power generated by the mill's water wheel in the mining operations.²¹¹ These ideas explain why the mining trellis was connected to the mills. Another point regarding the mills in Birch's paintings is that they provide the only known illustration of the saw mill annex, which was demolished by the end of the century.

The miller's house and a small stable are evident in the Birch paintings. These structures appear to have been built at the base of the hillside, near the mills. Similar to the mansion, the miller's house is located in the background and, thus, painted with few details. Some components that are discernible, however, include two floors with a gable roof, two chimneys, and two doors and six windows on the primary four-bay facade. This house is distinctly painted white as opposed to the soft browns of the other stone buildings which indicates that it was probably stuccoed.

²¹⁰ Reed, "Audubon," 1905, p.260.

²¹¹ Reed, "Audubon," 1910, p.223.

The small stable north of the miller's house appears to be a frame structure, painted gray.

Substantial Improvements

In the 1820s, Samuel Wetherill, Jr., made substantial improvements to the mills and mines. He is also believed to have instigated significant alterations to refine the mansion at Mill Grove at this time. These improvements are associated with Samuel Wetherill, Jr.'s, increased wealth, which was partially enhanced by the success of the lead mines.

In 1820, over 100 tons of lead ore were extracted from the mine by miners who had immigrated from England.²¹² John Price Wetherill read a paper at the Academy of Natural Sciences in 1826 that described the lead business and provided the following facts:

The 160 feet deep shaft accessed three drifts at 70, 115, and 120 feet below the shaft.

At the end of the drifts there was an air shaft.

The top drift was 192 feet long and the other two were slightly shorter.

All three drifts were approximately 72 inches high and 42 inches wide.

The ore yielded 75% lead with traces of silver.

He also described the lead mines and the mining production: "Several rich veins were met which yielded the ore in considerable abundance. By way of illustration it may be remarked that four men were employed for 458 days, during which time the lead they obtained, after being cleaned, washed and ready for the furnace, weighed

²¹² Hocker, p.96.

1140 hundred-weight."²¹³ Because the ore was difficult to smelt economically, the lead mines were abandoned sometime between 1826 and 1848.²¹⁴

Samuel Wetherill, Jr., nearly tripled his landholdings in 1823 when he increased them from 113 acres to 316 acres.²¹⁵ By 1826, Samuel Wetherill, Jr., had purchased two additional estates; one house on an approximately 225-acre lot believed to be Fatland Ford and another on a approximately 150-acre lot believed to be Walnut Hill. These acquisitions increased his total land-holdings to 691 developed acres.²¹⁶

Samuel Wetherill, Jr., also invested money in the milling industry at Mill Grove, and he had the mill and dam rebuilt in 1825, which was the second time that he instigated such work since purchasing the property in 1813.²¹⁷ It is said that most of the workmen lived on the property during the period they were employed to make these improvements, and Mrs. Wetherill supplied them with buckwheat pancakes which they greatly appreciated.²¹⁸

²¹³ Hocker, p.96.

²¹⁴ Hocker, p.96. Norris says that the lead mine was mined with a "fair degree of success" until 1826 (Norris, "How Stephen Girard Invested \$500 in a Perkiomen Lead Mine," March 1964, Northwood Scrapbook, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania).

²¹⁵ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records for 1823, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²¹⁶ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records for 1826, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²¹⁷ Joseph Shrawder, "Along the Perkiomen in the Former Gilbert's Manor," *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County* 20 (Fall 1875) 1: 81. The first time Wetherill made improvements to the mills was in 1813 when he used the water wheel to generate power for his mining operations (Reed, "Audubon," 1905, p.260).

²¹⁸ Shrawder, p.81, quoting from Edward Hocker.

The late 1820s and the 1830s was a period marked by a widespread interest in domestic improvements, and, thus with his increased wealth, Samuel Wetherill, Jr., would most likely have wanted to improve his house according to the new tastes and technology. Most of the existing window frames, sash, and shutters; interior and exterior woodwork; and appearance of the corner fireplaces, complete with coal grates, stylistically date to this period (figures 39-42). Although there are no known documents which confirm that Samuel Wetherill, Jr. instigated these changes to the Mill Grove mansion, the attribution can be justified by the style of the details which date to that period and the fact that Samuel Wetherill, Jr., was making substantial improvements to most of his buildings at that time.²¹⁹

Samuel Wetherill, Jr., died on Tuesday February 19, 1829 at Fatland Ford at the age of forty-nine.²²⁰ His last will and testament reveals that he was living in a house in Philadelphia at the end of his life and that his land-holdings also included the Fatland Ford, which he referred to as the "Bakewell Farm."²²¹ Rachel Price Wetherill (1766-1844), his wife, inherited these two estates, and his other estates in Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties were divided into five equal parts and chosen

²¹⁹ An example of improvements on other properties is provided by Samuel Wetherill, Jr.'s, actions with the nearby Walnut Hill estate which he purchased in 1826 and immediately began to improve it by construction a large barn in the same year (Thomas Clinton McGimsey, "Untangling the History of the Pawling/Wetherill House at Walnut Hill Estate, Pawling Road, Lower Providence Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1992).

²²⁰ Judith A.H. Meier, *Advertisements and Notices of Interest From Norristown, Pennsylvania Newspapers 1839-1843*, Vol.5 (Apollo, PA: Closson Press, 1992), p.6. Transcribed from the *Norristown Herald & Weekly Advertiser*, 27 February 1839. This notice says that he died at his residence in Lower Providence; this residence is believed to be Fatland Ford judging from its prominence in his will.

²²¹ Montgomery County Will Book No.9, p.366 &c., No.113 of 1829, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

by his children according to seniority.²²² By 1833, Mill Grove was legally conveyed to Samuel Wetherill, Jr.'s, son, Samuel Price Wetherill (1790-1839).²²³

Union Church

Between 1829 and 1832, Rachel Wetherill administered the construction of Union Church on part of the Mill Grove property (figures 43 and 44).²²⁴

This building was erected primarily for the Free Quakers, an Episcopalian group founded by Samuel Wetherill, Sr., for those Friends who did not support the traditional Quaker belief in pacifism during the Revolutionary War. The Sunday School for this congregation was initially held in the kitchen wing of the Mill Grove mansion in 1829.²²⁵ The majority of the children who attended this Sunday School were the sons and daughters of the miners. John U. Francis is said to have hauled the stones used to build the church.²²⁶ Initially, Methodists, Brethren, and Episcopalians held services in Union Church but Rachel Wetherill eventually banned all sects other than Episcopalians because she was bothered by the large crowds that

²²² Montgomery County Will Book No.9, p.366 &c., No.113 of 1829, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²²³ Montgomery County Deed Book A.M. No.39, p.176 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²²⁴ *Union Church* (Philadelphia: William F. Fell Company, printers, 1913), p.4. The cornerstone was laid on September 13, 1830 and the church was completed and open in the summer, 1832 (Lee, p.146.). For more information about the history of this church, see Lee, p.146.

²²⁵ Lee, p.146.

²²⁶ Francis, p.177.

the other groups were drawing to the church.²²⁷

Samuel Price Wetherill's Inheritance

Samuel Price Wetherill obtained legal ownership of Mill Grove on March 19, 1833.²²⁸ Between 1834 and 1837, the Tax Assessment Records for his 172-acre estate included horses and cattle but neither the grist mill nor the saw mill were listed. Charles Wetherill, Samuel Price Wetherill's son, managed the property for his father. Charles Wetherill is credited for making some changes to the mill in 1835 because the building had a datestone marked "C.W. 1835."²²⁹ In the same year, Charles Wetherill made the watercolor painting of Mill Grove after the earlier Birch paintings. In the second series of taxes for 1837, the grist mill is listed again with the taxables of the estate, however, the saw mill is no longer included which could indicate that it no longer existed.

Six years after acquiring Mill Grove, Samuel Price Wetherill died on February 22, 1839, and his wife Martha Wikoff Wetherill (d.1840) inherited the estate.²³⁰ Records of the Settlement of the Estate of Samuel Price Wetherill from 1839 to 1843 indicate that his family moved from Mill Grove to the Philadelphia by November 9,

²²⁷ Francis, p.177.

²²⁸ Montgomery County Deed Book A.M. No.39, p.176 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²²⁹ Herbert J. Wetherill, "Memoranda on Mill Grove Dam On the Perkioming Creek Montgomery County, PA," undated, Wetherill - Parker Family Files, Private Collection.

²³⁰ Montgomery County Will Book No.14, p.176 &c, No.74 of 1837, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

1839.²³¹ This move appears to have occurred in two trips because there is also a listing for moving "from Mill Grove to the City" on October 7, 1839.²³² A total of \$1671.78 Mill Grove stock was sold by March 12, 1839 but the records indicate that the Martha Wetherill continued to live at Mill Grove as well as a city house because expenses are listed for the both properties.²³³ These records also indicate that wheat was being processed in the Mill.²³⁴

A March 19, 1844, inventory of the Estate of Samuel Price Wetherill provides more information about his surroundings and use of the Mill Grove mansion. The inventory of his city estate includes a "scene of Millgrove" in the parlor.²³⁵ On the last page of this detailed, room-by-room inventory, there is a sparse list of the furniture at Mill Grove.

This list, valued at \$25 of the \$1652 total value of the estate furnishings, includes the following:

²³¹ File #7387, p.1768, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania. In a list of expenses for November 9, 1839 there is a listing for \$34.00 for "moving from Mill Grove to the City."

²³² Orphans Court File #20756, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²³³ Samuel P. Wetherill Estate File #7387, p.1767, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²³⁴ Samuel P. Wetherill Estate File #7387, p.1767, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²³⁵ Inventory of the Personal Estate of Samuel P. Wetherill, deceased, Filed February 18, 1845, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

13	Chairs	In Office:	
1	Mahogany sofa	1	Stove
1	Kitchen table	1	Large desk
1	Card table mahogany	1	Small desk
2	Portraits	2	Wooden chairs
6	Pictures	1	Wooden bookcase
2	Girandoles	-	Books &c.
3	Blinds		
1	Mahogany secretary		
1	Mahogany sideboard		
-	Matting		
4	Small looking glasses		
5	Bedsteads cherry & wooden		
1	Mahogany cradle		
1	Sheet iron		
-	Stoves		

Trustees and Cousins

Martha Wetherill died on March 13, 1840. A month prior to her demise, on February 12, 1840, she conveyed Mill Grove to the Reverend William Suddards and Charlotte W. Wetherill in trust.²³⁶ The Reverend Suddards became rector of St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley in 1847 and was later, rector of Grace Church in Philadelphia.²³⁷

By September 29, 1840, Mill Grove Farm was rented by Mr. Waltz for \$300, Mill Grove Cottage was rented for \$25 a year to an unidentified party, the mill was rented for one year to Mr. W.W. Cloward for \$600, and wheat and rye were

²³⁶ Montgomery County Deed Book G.S. No.11, pp.356 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²³⁷ Lee, pp.146-147.

harvested.²³⁸ The following year, Mill Grove Farm was rented for \$350, the Mill Grove Cottage continued to be rented, and Mr. Cloward rented the mill.²³⁹ In 1842, the farm and cottage continued to be rented for \$350 and \$30, respectively, and the Mill Grove mansion was listed as renting for \$75.²⁴⁰ In 1843, the Mill Grove Cottage and farm were rented, and "Stephens" is listed as having rented the mill for half a year.²⁴¹ Some repairs were made to the mill by Mr. Cloward according to a \$212.19 line item for September 6, 1843.²⁴² There is another listing for \$67.66 3/6 repairs to the Mill for October 27th, but there is no name attached to this listing.²⁴³ On November 16, 1843, the account book included a listing for advertising Mill Grove but this notice has not been located.²⁴⁴

Throughout the next four decades, Mill Grove was held in trust by the Wetherill family. Some of the numerous trustees included the Reverend William

²³⁸ Samuel P. Wetherill Estate File #7387, p.1746, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²³⁹ Samuel P. Wetherill Estate File # 7387, p.1748, April 24, 1841, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania. Two other houses listed are on Front Street and Lombard Street in Philadelphia.

²⁴⁰ Samuel P. Wetherill Estate File #7387, p.1750, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania. The renters are not identified.

²⁴¹ Samuel P. Wetherill Estate File #7387, p.1752, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²⁴² Sameul P. Wetherill Estate File #7387, p.1751, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania. On January 31, 1843 (p.1757), there is a listing for T. Morgan regarding a \$23.73 lumber bill for the mill, but it is not known precisely what this refers to.

²⁴³ Samuel P. Wetherill Estate File #7387, p.1759, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²⁴⁴ Samuel P. Wetherill Estate File, p.1760, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

Suddards, Charlotte W. Wetherill, John Price Wetherill, George H. Wikoff, Samuel Wetherill, Charles and Emily M. Foster,²⁴⁵ Israel and Amanda Wood, Eliza Jane Reed, and William A. Reed.²⁴⁶

Mill Grove Mills Purchased by Dr. William Wetherill

Prior to 1863, Dr. William Wetherill, owner and resident of Fatland Ford, purchased the Mill Grove mills, dam, miller's cottage, and approximately 60 acres.²⁴⁷ This transaction separated the mill industry from the main house and barn. Dr. Wetherill invested \$10,000 in improvements to the mill. He told his children that it was the most secure investment he could make for their future welfare with the timely philosophy that farmers always grow grain and need a place to process it.²⁴⁸ Dr. Wetherill was not hesitant with making major improvements. He tore down his house at Fatland Ford to its foundations and rebuilt it (circa 1845) as the grand columnated house that stands today (figure 45).²⁴⁹ Most historical accounts of Audubon or the Bakewells falsely use a photograph of this house in this circa 1845

²⁴⁵ Daughter of Samuel Price Wetherill.

²⁴⁶ These name appeared in consecutive order on the following Montgomery County Deed Books: G.S., No.11, pp.356 &c.; No.230, pp.500 &c.; No.229, pp.446 &c.; and No.238, pp.149 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania, and the Montgomery Court of Common Pleas, No.121 of 1891, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²⁴⁷ Herbert J. Wetherill, "Memoranda on Mill Grove Dam On the Perkioming Creek Montgomery County, PA," undated, Wetherill - Parker Family Files, Private Collection.

²⁴⁸ Herbert J. Wetherill, "Memoranda on Mill Grove Dam On the Perkioming Creek Montgomery County, PA."

²⁴⁹ Eberlein, p.196.

appearance to illustrate the early nineteenth-century house of the Bakewells.

The history of the mill in the last quarter of the nineteenth century includes an article in the *Norristown Herald* on November 10, 1875, records, "Wetherill's Mill on the Perkiomen was entered by thieves and 1800 pounds [the equivalent of ten barrels] of flour taken"²⁵⁰ Colonel John Macomb Wetherill owned the mill property and leased the mills from circa 1876 to his death.²⁵¹ John Fox rented and operated the mill circa 1895. He used it to grind grain and mix paint; the red paint on many of the barns in the neighborhood is said have been mixed by Fox.²⁵² In 1898, Daniel Brunner was living and the miller's cottage and running the mill occasionally.²⁵³

Mining Companies

In 1841, the value of the 139-acre lot and house at Mill Grove more than doubled although the value of the grist mill remained the same.²⁵⁴ This factor could relate to the discovery of copper ore nearby. The history of this era of the mining industry is just as inconsistent as it was in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

²⁵⁰ Shrawder, p.80.

²⁵¹ Herbert J. Wetherill, "Memoranda On Mill Grove Dam On the Perkioming Creek Montgomery County, PA."

²⁵² Herbert J. Wetherill, "Memoranda On Mill Grove Dam On the Perkioming Creek Montgomery County, PA."

²⁵³ Herbert J. Wetherill, "Memoranda On Mill Grove Dam On the Perkioming Creek Montgomery County, PA."

²⁵⁴ Providence Township Tax Assessment Records for 1841, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

The Ecton Consolidated Mining Company was active at the Mill Grove mines for a "considerable period"²⁵⁵ before the Perkiomen Mining Company was organized in 1848 and established mining activities north of Egypt Road.²⁵⁶ In 1851 these two companies merged under the name of the Perkiomen Consolidated Mining Company (figure 46).²⁵⁷ George Cadwalader was president of this company, and Samuel Wilcox was secretary.²⁵⁸ The directors were Charles Macalester, David Longenecker, Samuel F. Tracy, and Horatio Allen.²⁵⁹

Approximately 200 Cornish men worked these mines, and they built houses on Egypt Road and comprised a large population of the village of Shannonville.²⁶⁰ During this period when the lead and copper mines were in full operation, the village prospered.²⁶¹ The Perkiomen Consolidated Mining Company officially closed in 1854 but several miners continued to operate the mines on a co-operative plan until 1858.²⁶²

In 1863 a new venture was established under the name of the Perkiomen

²⁵⁵ Herrick, vol. 1, p.169, footnote 25.

²⁵⁶ Hocker, p.96.

²⁵⁷ Hocker, p.96.

²⁵⁸ Hocker, p.97.

²⁵⁹ Hocker, p.97.

²⁶⁰ Hocker, p.96.

²⁶¹ Reed, "Audubon," 1905, p.264.

²⁶² Hocker, p.97. A photograph caption in the *Public Ledger* for December 10, 1935 states that the copper mine was worked until 1860. This photograph illustrates the remains of the boiler and engine house. Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA.

Mining Company, but it did not remain in business for very long.²⁶³ In 1901 the Ecton mine was re-opened for a brief period, and for several months approximately 30 men worked the mine and extracted lead and zinc ores.²⁶⁴

After this last surge in mining and the decreased demands on the old-fashioned mill, the industrial component that once dominated Mill Grove came to an end. With these resources diminished, Mill Grove entered a new phase of its history which was filled with both repose and merriment as new generations of Wetherills escaped to their retreat in the country.

²⁶³ Hocker, p.97.

²⁶⁴ Hocker, p.97.

CHAPTER V.

Historic Retreat in the Country (1892 - 1951)

William Henry Wetherill's Purchase

On June 18, 1892, William Henry Wetherill (1838-1927), eighth child of Dr. William Wetherill, purchased Mill Grove at a Sheriff's Sale (figures 47 and 48).²⁶⁵ An advertisement of the time stated that the property of William A. and Eliza Jane Reed was to be sold a Public Sale on Wednesday, June 8, 1892, at 1 o'clock p.m., at the Sheriff's Office in the Court House in Norristown.²⁶⁶ This advertisement contained a description of the 63-acre and 67 perches estate which included such improvements as the house, seven outbuildings, and a cave. This description also provided dimensions for the house, kitchen addition, and stone barn with attached stone stable.²⁶⁷ The following is a list of these buildings and there accompanying descriptions:

Stone dwelling house -	2 1/2 stories 50 feet 6 inches by 34 feet 4 rooms, hall and stairway on 1st floor 5 rooms, hall and stairway on 2nd floor 4 rooms, hall on third floor cellar under the house
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²⁶⁵ Montgomery County Sheriff Deed Book No.2, pp.87 &c., Montgomery County Court House, Norristown, Pennsylvania. Unless otherwise noted, the information presented in this chapter has been obtained from Anne Wetherill Parker (the granddaughter of William H. Wetherill and the daughter of Herbert J. Wetherill) and her son Christopher Parker who were jointly interviewed by the author on May 22, 1993, Gwynedd, Pennsylvania.

²⁶⁶ 1892 "Sheriff's Sale" Notice, Wetherill-Parker Private Collection. Copy attached in Appendix.

²⁶⁷ It is doubtful that this cave is Audubon's cave.

House annexed -	2 1/2 stories 26 feet by 23 feet back porch stone smoke house attached 1 room on 1st 3 rooms on 2nd 1 room on 3rd floor
Ice House -	
Spring house -	
Stone barn -	50 feet 6 inches by 51 feet corn crib straw loft granary
Stone stable attached -	2 story 23 feet by 50 feet stabling for 16 horses
Wagon house -	
Chicken house -	
Pig sty -	
Well and pump at barn -	
Other necessary outbuildings -	

Some information about the landscape that is provided by the advertisement is "orchard, stream of water on premises, [and] fruit and shade trees."²⁶⁸

There is a sketch of a house accompanying this description but it is believed to be representative of the type of house rather than a precise depiction; a porch, dormers, two chimneys, and a kitchen wing are illustrated but the house in the drawing is only three-bays instead of five and the kitchen wing is illustrated as if attached to the rear of the building instead of abutting the west gable-end wall. A note attached to the facsimile of this advertisement states that the porch illustrated was removed by William Wetherill, however, the accuracy of this statement is questionable because it is applied to a misrepresentation of so many known

²⁶⁸ 1892 "Sheriff's Sale" Notice, Wetherill-Parker Private Collection.

characteristics of the house.

William Wetherill and his family resided in Philadelphia at 3734 Walnut Street, and Mill Grove served as their weekend and summer house. The Fosters, who owned the property in the 1870s,²⁶⁹ were the last family to use Mill Grove as their primary residence. The 1900 census records identify William Wetherill's family as consisting of his wife Elizabeth P. (b. May 1842); five sons (Henry E., Herbert J., Abel P., Webster K., and Francis M.) ranging in age from twenty-nine to seventeen years; one servant from Pennsylvania; and two Irish servants.²⁷⁰ There was a sixth son but he died at a young age. In 1918, the family moved to 420 Allens Lane, Chestnut Hill, a division of Philadelphia located northwest of center city.

It is said that William Wetherill spent a lot of time at his office at the family paint works and was more than happy to send his wife and six sons off to Mill Grove for the weekend. He was also generous in lending the house to any of the relatives who wanted to use it. The majority of times that William Wetherill made the trip to Mill Grove, it was for the purpose of examining the accounts and paying the wages to the caretakers and servants. His routine for this trip was to take a morning train to the Protectory (now St. Gabriel's Hall) where his coachman would meet him with the "station wagon" (a boxy carriage pulled by a pair of horses) and take him to the estate (figure 49). He would then examine the accounts and pay the wages. If all went well, after a dinner at the farmer's house, he would be on his way back in town, not

²⁶⁹ William H. Wetherill, "Abstract of Title," Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

²⁷⁰ 1900 Federal Census Records, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, National Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

even spending the night at Mill Grove.

William Wetherill also compassionately used Mill Grove as the retiring place for workers from the paint works that became terminally ill from lead poisoning. These people became unable to work but instead of firing them, William Wetherill employed them as his coachmen and footmen at Mill Grove until their demise.²⁷¹

Establishing the Association with Audubon

William Wetherill took much interest in the association of his estate with John James Audubon. He made many alterations to the main house, but it is said that he preserved all components of the house that he was aware were linked to Audubon.²⁷² Wetherill decorated the walls of the house with Audubon photographs and engravings and welcomed all "Audubon Pilgrims."²⁷³ The house was, thus, a long-established Audubon shrine when Montgomery County purchased it with similar intentions in 1951.

William Wetherill also helped establish three United States postal cards of the estate, which were authorized by an Act of Congress on May 29, 1898 (figures 37, 50, and 51).²⁷⁴ Even more significant however, William Wetherill played a key role in changing the name of the nearby town of Shannonville to Audubon on October

²⁷¹ Christopher Parker, interview by author, January 31, 1993, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

²⁷² Maria R. Audubon, p.41.

²⁷³ Eberlein, *Colonial Homes of Philadelphia*, p.202.

²⁷⁴ Edward Graham, "Mill Grove -- Home of John James Audubon," originally printed in *Brandywine Magazine*, reprinted by Montgomery County, May, 1991, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Pennsylvania.

7, 1895.²⁷⁵ On October 7, 1903, an anniversary of this renaming, the autumn meeting of the Historical Society of Montgomery County was held at Mill Grove. At this meeting, the Honorable Henry W. Kratz gave a lecture about "Audubon and His Achievements," the paper for which was published in the Society's *Historical Sketches* two years later.

William Wetherill thought he had located Audubon's cave and had a path made to its entrance. This cave, located 75 feet above Mine creek and 25 feet from the top of the hill was found to be an old mine drift, and, thus, not Audubon's cave. The famous cave was a natural formation believed to have been located at the mouth of Mine Run which was destroyed when the water level was raised after the dam was rebuilt in the early nineteenth century.²⁷⁶

Colonial Revival Improvements

With the help of his architect son, Herbert Johnson Wetherill, William Wetherill made numerous changes to the main house at Mill Grove shortly after purchasing the estate and in the early twentieth century.²⁷⁷ Anne Parker (1905-) recalls the attribution of many of these changes, but she confessed that she was "more interested in going on a hay ride than what was going on in the house." This thought expresses how the Wetherill's enjoyed the estate mostly for its picturesque

²⁷⁵ Reed, "Audubon," 1905, p.263.

²⁷⁶ D.L. Crater, "John James Audubon," *Historical Sketches* 2 (1900): 142-143.

²⁷⁷ Parker and Parker interview, May 22, 1993.

surroundings, just as Audubon had done one hundred years ago. Anne Parker is the daughter and wife of architects, however, so she was certainly aware of the her architectural surroundings.

One of the most dominant changes to the exterior made by William Wetherill was the addition of the porch across the south elevation (figures 52-54). The north elevation had only one dormer in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (figure 55). A photograph of this period illustrates how the kitchen porch was used as an extended kitchen space, complete with a stove (figures 56 and 57). By 1928, two dormers were added on the north slop of the main section (one on either side of the existing center dormer) to help ventilate the third floor where the boys slept (figure 58).

On the interior, William Wetherill installed a coal-fired hot-air furnace in the main section of the house which was still heated with coal in the fireplace grates. The coal chute for the basement coal bin was located under one of the library windows. He installed the ornate brackets in the first floor center hall to conceal the pipes extending to the second floor (figure 80).

William Wetherill also altered the northwest first floor room to create a smoking room, a popular type of room in the late nineteenth century (figure 59). This room was the most well-used room in the house, and as a result, the door leading to the smoking-room at the north end of the center hall was one of the most important doors. William Wetherill reduced the large cooking fireplace by creating a river stone surround with broken wine bottle necks inserted in the mortar to hold

cigars. This fireplace was capable of supporting a roaring fire which contributed to the popularity of the room over other rooms on the first floor that retained their small, refined fireplaces with coal grates. The walls of the smoking room were ornamented with guns, poison-tipped crossed spears, and a shield, and the ceiling joists were exposed. The guns were kept in a gun case that was originally the pair to the bookcase in the library. It was moved to the smoking-room and altered to serve this function by William Wetherill.

The most formal room on the first floor was the parlor, located in the southeast quadrant, which contained the piano. The northeast room was used as the library and an office. This room was adorned with one of Audubon's Elephant Folio prints above the mantle and a tall case clock near one of the doorways. The southwest room was the dining room, and it retained an old fireback. William Wetherill also installed the parquet flooring on the first floor of the main section.

The second floor rooms were known according to their paint finishes; the northeast room was gray, the southeast room was pink, the northwest room was yellow and also called the "maple room" because it was furnished with maple furniture, and the southwest room was blue. The southwest room was the master bedroom in the summer months. William Wetherill installed a door in the east wall of this room to create direct access to the center south room which was the only bathroom in the main section of the house. There was an enormous tub with a mahogany rail in this bathroom. Christopher Parker (1931-) emphasized its size and said that "if it wasn't seven feet long, it was eight feet." Another improvement

instigated by William Wetherill was the installation of sinks with hand-painted French bowls and marble tops in all of the four second floor bedrooms in the main section of the house (figure 60).

In the attic of the main section, the southwest room was notable as Audubon's dissecting room because the floorboards were stained with blood. In the 1920s, there was practically no furniture on this floor level except beds, including a sleigh bed and a brass bed.

During this last Wetherill era, the first floor of the kitchen wing continued to function as a kitchen, and the section of porch that wrapped around the west end of the main section was enclosed to function as a pantry with a dumb waiter connecting it and the kitchen. With this organization, the food was prepared in the kitchen, sent up in the dumb waiter to the pantry, and then serviced to the people in the adjoining dining-room. The Parkers laughingly remember how this system worked perfectly for two servants, but when there was only one servant, as there was for some time, she had to load the dumb waiter then run upstairs, pass through the smoking room and dining room before she could retrieve the food from the dumb waiter in the pantry, and then, re-enter the dining room to serve the meal. In addition to the dumb waiter, another mechanism installed by William Wetherill was an outside "non-freeze" toilet which he put in the room south of the smoke house. He also installed a "non-freeze" hydrant at the northwest corner of the kitchen porch.

There is a valuable record of the vegetation on the estate in the Spring of 1893 which includes May-apple trees (*Podophyllum peltatum*), violets, potentilla, trilliums

(both red and white), anemones in the woods, adder's-tongues " in the damp spots near the brook," Dutchmen's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), and hemlocks. Audubon illustrated many of these plants in his engravings of the regional birds.²⁷⁸

Numerous Other Structures

Aside from the main house, there was another house on the Mill Grove estate. This house, called the caretaker's house, was designed by Herbert Wetherill and the building of it was instigated by his father, William Wetherill (figure 61).²⁷⁹ Originally it had a large dining room with a nice view because part of the farmer and his wife's job was that the wife had to cook dinner for William Wetherill who would come down to the farmer's house for his meals. The last farmer to work the property was Frank Ivans. William Wetherill hired Ivans, as he was called, and Herbert Wetherill inherited him with Mill Grove. The farmer directly preceding Ivans was Mr. Zaun, and the Gardners preceded him.

The numerous outbuildings that were actively used by the Wetherills in this period included the barn and its many appendages which housed hay, carriages, sleighs, horses, cows, sheep, chicken, ducks, geese, and turkeys (figures 62 and 63); the wind mill house near the tennis courts on the terrace north of the house (figures 64 and 65); the wood shed and adjoining cold storage house (figure 66); the spring house; the ice house (figure 67); and the boat house. The wind mill was used to

²⁷⁸ Maria R. Audubon, *Audubon and His Journals*, p.42.

²⁷⁹ Parker and Parker interview, May 22, 1993.

pump water from the well below it. In addition to the livestock mentioned, peacocks were raised on the estate (figure 65).

Loss of the Mill and Miller's Cottage

The mill and miller's cottage remained as part of a separate property during this last Wetherill period (figures 68-72). The mill is said to have ceased operation circa 1900.²⁸⁰ The last of the six mills that existed on the lower Perkiomen during the Revolutionary War years stopped production as late as 1940.²⁸¹ By 1917, the dam was deteriorated and ineffective, and the 12-foot diameter, 15-foot wide, wood and iron wheel was inactive; the over 150-year mill industry at Mill Grove had ended forever.²⁸² The ford below the mill was abandoned by the early twentieth century because it was difficult to reach from the east side due to the steep slope of the creek bank, and on the west side there was a fence installed by the property owners.²⁸³ The mill tract was sold to the Suburban Water Company, and they demolished the mill and miller's cottage in 1929.²⁸⁴ The miller's house had stood vacant for a least a year prior to demolition.²⁸⁵ The loss of these two buildings is a great scare on

²⁸⁰ Shrawder, p.90.

²⁸¹ Shrawder, p.80.

²⁸² Herrick, vol.1, p.104.

²⁸³ Reed, "Audubon," 1905, p.249.

²⁸⁴ Herbert Johnson Wetherill, "Mill Grove Farm; First Home in America of John James Audubon," notes about the history of Mill Grove, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

²⁸⁵ Fegleuy, p.33.

Mill Grove because it was after the milling enterprises that the property acquired its name as early as the eighteenth century.

Anne Parker recalled a story about how her father's farmer Frank Ivans, more commonly called Ivans, purchase one of the old mill stones and presented it to Herbert Wetherill inquiring that he hoped Mr. Wetherill did not mind that he bought it, but he did not know what to do with it.²⁸⁶ After some thought, the stone was placed at the base of the exterior steps near the kitchen wing where it exists today.

Visit by President Roosevelt

On June 19, 1904, President and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt made a surprise visit to Mill Grove when they were nearby guests of Senator Philander Knox near Valley Forge. Herbert Wetherill recalled about the visit,

That week-end we were having a small house party and while watching a tennis match on the court by the wind mill, we were surprised to see quite a cavalcade coming down the drive, it drew up at the front door and out stepped President and Mrs. Roosevelt, Senator and Mrs. Knox, Senator Joe Cannon, generally known as 'Uncle Joe Cannon, [sic] and several others. After being greeted by my father they asked permission to walk about the grounds and through the house, afterwards many cigars were smoked and some 'spiritual' refreshment enjoyed. The President then expressed the desire to join the tennis match and was quite annoyed when Senator Knox told him that he should not get all heated up as he had other engagements that afternoon. The President was very friendly and genial all through the visit.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ Parker and Parker interview, May 22, 1993.

²⁸⁷ Herbert J. Wetherill to Mr. Wright, October 23, 1951, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

Herbert Johnson Wetherill's Inheritance

William Henry Wetherill conveyed the estate to the Provident Trust Company on January 25, 1927.²⁸⁸ His son, Herbert Johnson Wetherill (1873-1955), inherited the sixty-three acre tract on November 14, 1927.²⁸⁹ Like his father, Herbert Wetherill and his family used Mill Grove as a weekend and summer house. Herbert Wetherill and his family's permanent residence was in the Wetherill Family house in Chestnut Hill at 420 Allens Lane. Herbert Johnson and his wife Mary Roe Dunn Wetherill had two children; Anne and William Henry, II.²⁹⁰

Herbert Johnson Wetherill was an architect who was educated for a year and a half in the architecture Department at the University of Pennsylvania, from which institution he graduated in 1895.²⁹¹ He worked in the architectural firms of Cope & Stewardson, the Wilson Bros., Walter Smedley, and Boyden and Taylor. Then, in October, 1899, he opened his own office in Philadelphia in the Witherspoon Building.²⁹² The majority of the work in this office was alterations and additions to

²⁸⁸ Montgomery County Deed Book No.1014, pp.24 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²⁸⁹ Montgomery County Deed Book No.1041, pp.21 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania. There is also a description of Mill Grove Farm, after it was conveyed to Herbert Johnson Wetherill, on Provident Trust Company of Philadelphia stationary in the Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

²⁹⁰ 1920 Federal Census Records, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, National Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

²⁹¹ H.J. Wetherill Obituary, *Times Herald* (18 July 1955), Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

²⁹² Sandra L. Tatman and Roger W. Moss, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1985), pp.848-849.

residential buildings. The firm remained in business at least through 1921.²⁹³

Herbert Wetherill was also a veteran of the Spanish-American War and World War I.²⁹⁴ He suffered from cataracts, however, and due to impaired vision, he was forced to retire at the age of forty.²⁹⁵

More Improvements

Herbert Wetherill took out an insurance policy on Mill Grove Farm, as it was called then, with The Mutual Assurance Company in Philadelphia on June 21, 1928.²⁹⁶ The photograph attached to this policy illustrates the east and north elevations of the house and shows the two dormers that were added to flank the center dormer by this time (figure 58). All of the dormers have the dropped pendant ornamentation, and fish-scale shingle sheathing characteristic of the Victorian style in the second half of the nineteenth century. The attached floor plan records that the shed addition on the west end of the kitchen wing was an old smoke house that is used for storage and tools. Another significant fact listed on this policy is that, there was an old gas machine in the cellar that was no longer in use, and the gas pipes were removed from the house. Some additional notes about mechanical systems

²⁹³ Tatman, pp.848-849.

²⁹⁴ H.J. Wetherill Obituary, *Times Herald* (18 July 1955), Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

²⁹⁵ Christopher Parker, interview by author, January 31, 1993, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

²⁹⁶ The Mutual Assurance Company For Insuring Houses From Loss By Fire, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Policy No.10,478. This policy was cancelled on July 6, 1951. Another policy for \$5,000 at the Philadelphia Contributionship is noted on this policy but a file for that policy does not exist at the Contributionship. Copy attached in Appendix.

include the presence of a wood-cased dumb waiter between the kitchen wing and main floor, a coal range and oil stove (primed with gasoline) in the kitchen, a portable hot air heater, and the lack of a boiler.²⁹⁷ The house was inspected again on March 16, 1939 and October 9, 1947, to continue the policy. On the 1939 inspection, it was noted that a new gas range, using pyrofax gas, was installed in the kitchen.

During Herbert Johnson Wetherill's ownership, the kitchen wing was furnished with a table in the center of the room with a wrought-iron light fixture above, two chairs flanking the large fireplace, a bar with cabinets above and below to the north of the fireplace against the west wall, a sink and stove between the south window and door, and the heater in the closet below the stairs to the second floor.²⁹⁸ The kitchen floor was initially brick, and wood flooring was installed at a later date (figure 73). There was an ice box on the east end of the kitchen wing porch. Ice used to be cut on the Creek and then stored in the ice house packed in straw. This system would preserve ice until August. Two other old components pertaining to the kitchen wing of the house were the bake oven and smoke house on the west end. On the second floor of the kitchen wing, the second of two bathrooms in the house was located in addition to two bedrooms. This bathroom also had a bathtub; there were no showers in the house.

Herbert Wetherill made significant changes in the functionality of the house by

²⁹⁷ The Mutual Assurance Company For Insuring Houses From Loss By Fire, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Policy No.10,478. This policy refers to the kitchen wing as the basement in reference to the dumb waiter.

²⁹⁸ Christopher Parker, interview by author, January 31, 1993, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

adding electricity between 1927-29. He specifically did not electrify the old gas lantern on the south porch because a wren always nested in it (figure 74). The windmill was taken down, however, and an electric pump installed over the well. He also installed a new heating system in the kitchen wing. Even with these mechanical improvements, Herbert Wetherill insisted on retaining some old-fashioned novelties on his gentleman's farm. One such policy was that he would not allow a tractor on the property so all of the hay fields were worked by a pair of Belgian horses.²⁹⁹

Fond Memories

The Wetherill's recall many fond memories of their experiences at Mill Grove, their historic retreat in the country (figure 75). Many Wetherills and members of their extended families spent two-week retreats or weekends at Mill Grove. During World War II, many of the grandchildren often stayed on the estate with a maid.

In the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, the Wetherills gave "hundreds of large and jolly house parties" at Mill Grove.³⁰⁰ One notable party was the wedding of Anne Wetherill Parker in 1929. When the house parties were co-ed, the girls would sleep on the second floor of the main house and the boys would stay on the third. The door in the closet of the northwest second floor bedroom was called the "sneak," and it allowed access to the attic of the kitchen addition. This "sneak" became very important during these house

²⁹⁹ Christopher Parker, interview by author, January 31, 1993, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

³⁰⁰ Francis Macomb Wetherill, *Wetherill's Who's Who 762 A.D. to 1961 A.D.*, p.41, Genealogical Society Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

parties because the boys could use it to access the second of two bathrooms in the house which was located on the second floor of the kitchen wing.

Another component of the Wetherill's experiences at Mill Grove was their belief in "Lovers' Rock" located in the woods adjacent to the Perkiomen Creek. Tradition says that Audubon and Lucy Bakewell fell in love there, and the rock is said to have never failed to procure similar results for the Wetherills and their friends.³⁰¹ An unique characteristic of Mill Grove during the last era of Wetherill ownership was the numerous peacocks that roamed the estate. A story relates that "often when guests came to the farm, they would park their cars in the circle before the main house and sometimes while they were within, or off on a picnic, the peacocks would catch their reflections in the cars and reward the owner by pecking off the enamel."³⁰² General Knox purchased two of these peacocks for his Valley Forge estate, but he was continually dismayed because they flew back to Mill Grove on a weekly basis.³⁰³

For some time, Herbert Wetherill continued his father's tradition of welcoming Audubon enthusiasts into the house, but by 1936 he stopped such hospitality because he did not think that the visitors showed proper appreciation of his willingness to open his home to strangers.³⁰⁴ Two decades later, the tides would turn, and the use of

³⁰¹ Wetherill, *Wetherill's Who's Who 762 A.D. to 1961 A.D.*, p.42.

³⁰² Wetherill, *Wetherill's Who's Who 762 A.D. to 1961 A.D.*, p.42.

³⁰³ Wetherill, *Wetherill's Who's Who 762 A.D. to 1961 A.D.*, p.42.

³⁰⁴ Norris, 30 October 1936 newspaper article, Scrapbook, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

the building as a home would end and its primary occupants would be Audubon enthusiasts who would come from great distances to see Audubon's art and surroundings.

EPILOGUE

The Audubon Shrine and Wildlife Sanctuary (1951 - present)

In 1951, one hundred years after the death of John James Audubon, Herbert and Mary Wetherill sold Mill Grove to the County of Montgomery, State of Pennsylvania³⁰⁵ and donated various books, Indian relics, and left some old carriages in the barn.³⁰⁶ Norris D. Wright played a major role in instigating this purchase, and he escorted Frederick C. Peters, former President of the Board of Commissioners of Montgomery County, to Mill Grove and convinced him that the County should acquire the property.³⁰⁷ At the annual meeting of the Historical Society of Montgomery County, held on February 22, 1952, Donald A. Gallager, president of the Society, presented the Award of Merit certificate of the American Association of State and Local History to the three County Commissioners (Fred C. Peters, Foster C. Hillegass, and Raymond K. Mensch) for their contributions to local history through the purchase of Mill Grove and the production of a history of the County.³⁰⁸ Montgomery County subsequently purchased land on the west side of

³⁰⁵ Montgomery County Deed Book No.2192, pp.464 &c., Montgomery County Register of Deeds, Norristown, Pennsylvania. The precise date of this deed is July 2, 1951, and at that time the estate consisted of 95 acres. A copy of this deed is included in the Appendix.

³⁰⁶ N.D. Wright to Mr. Wetherill, October 15, 1951, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

³⁰⁷ "Harding Murals at Mill Grove are Dedicated" (10 November 1956), Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

³⁰⁸ Brumbaugh Papers, Downs Collection, Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

the Perkiomen Creek to preserve the view and provide picnic areas and land north of the house extending to Egypt Road (figure 76).³⁰⁹

The Montgomery County Commissioners launched efforts to transform the house into an Audubon Shrine and the landscape into a wildlife sanctuary. To guide them in this project, in the early 1950s, they enlisted the professional services of architect G. Edwin Brumbaugh, F.A.I.A., and landscape architect Thomas W. Sears. From the correspondence, it appears that initially Norris D. Wright directed the project, and then, Henry P. Friend, consulting engineer, took over.³¹⁰ Brumbaugh visited the house and analyzed its condition and historical appearance in the late summer, 1951. In a letter to Norris D. Wright, dated August 30, 1951, Brumbaugh recorded his "impressions" of the house and expressed that the exterior and interior were extensively remolded circa 1825 but several original details, such as doors, had survived on the second floor of the main section.³¹¹

The initial efforts in the restoration of Mill Grove included the preparation of a comprehensive plan by Brumbaugh and Sears, the proposal for which was signed by the Commissioners on December 11, 1951.³¹² Improving the bathroom facilities

³⁰⁹ Jean Barth Toll and Michael J. Schwager, editors, *Montgomery County; The Second Hundred Years* (Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies, 1983), p.396.

³¹⁰ Documents and correspondence recording this project are located at the Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, Pennsylvania and the Downs Collection, Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

³¹¹ G. Edwin Brumbaugh to Mr. N.D. Wright, August 30, 1951, Brumbaugh Files, Downs Collection, Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

³¹² Henry P. Friend to G. Edwin Brumbaugh, December 11, 1951, Brumbaugh Files, Box 41, Downs Collection, Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

and providing a parking lot were also part of the first phase of the project. By June 16, 1952, part of the house and several trails in the woods were open to visitors (figures 77-79).³¹³ The second phase of the project commenced in the spring of 1953 and included the preparation of architectural drawings by the firm of G. Edwin Brumbaugh of Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania to document the existing appearance of the house to provide the basis for drawings and specifications for a new heating system and other improvements.³¹⁴ A set of these drawings, which include all four floor plans and elevations on seven sheets and heating system sketches, are now deposited in the Downs Collection at the Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum Library in Wilmington, Delaware. Copies of undated, more simplistic drawings prepared by the County Engineer are contained in the Downs Collection as well as the Montgomery County Archives in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

A description of the Mill Grove mansion in Edwards Pinkowski's 1953 publication, *Washington's Officers Slept Here*, indicates the extensive amount of Audubon memorabilia and art in the Shrine during the early 1950s. This description mentions a portrait of Audubon in the center hall above a small lamp table (figure 80); several large framed prints from the "Elephant Edition" on either side of the hall; reception room and living room on south side of hall with some pictures of birds on the walls; oil painting of Audubon (age 48) by Henry Inman of Philadelphia in the

³¹³ Henry P. Friend to G. Edwin Brumbaugh, June 16, 1952, Brumbaugh Files, Box 41, Downs Collection, Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

³¹⁴ G. Edwin Brumbaugh to the Commissioners of Montgomery County, March 28, 1953, Brumbaugh Files, Box 41, Downs Collection, Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

living-room; portrait of Audubon (with his signature underneath) above the corner fireplace in the dining-room. This account also mentions joists in smoking-room have pegs and nail marks indicating ceiling was once plastered; smoking-room fireplace has bottles and specks of lead buried in the mortar by one of the Wetherill children; early sketch of Mill Grove on wall; and marble sinks and chimneys in each bedroom.³¹⁵ At this time the superintendent was Frank B. Williams and the caretaker was Leon E. Brasier.³¹⁶ This description reveals that minimal alterations had occurred since the Wetherill ownership.

In another project begun in 1955 the first floor framing was strengthened and the first floor floorboards replaced with random-width native red pine boards that were obtained from an old house.³¹⁷ By this time, additional plans for the interior presentation included the installation of murals depicting Audubon's travels and adventures and the placement of cases in the center of each room to display Audubon memorabilia.³¹⁸ George M. Harding of Wynnewood was subsequently hired by the County, and he painted the murals, designed the exhibition cases, and "was in charge of the art decorations" and restoration work.³¹⁹ Harding had obtained some

³¹⁵ Edward Pinkowski, *Washington's Officers Slept Here; Historic Homes of Valley Forge and Its Neighborhood* (Philadelphia: Sunshine Press, 1953), pp.194-196.

³¹⁶ Pinkowski, p.196.

³¹⁷ J. D'Arcy Northwood, "Audubon's First Home in America was Mill Grove," reprinted from *Nature Magazine* (Washington, D.C.: November, 1955), Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania. Some notes about the flooring are found in the Downs Collection at Winterthur and at the Montgomery County Archives.

³¹⁸ Northwood, "Audubon's First Home in America was Mill Grove."

³¹⁹ Northwood, "Audubon's First Home in America was Mill Grove."

education in architecture at Boston Tech but then focused his interest on fine arts and studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia with the famous illustrator, Howard Pyle.³²⁰ In addition to the murals at Mill Grove, some of Harding's most significant works include a 107-foot mural for the United States Government Building at the New York World's Fair, the Post Office Buildings in Washington and Philadelphia, the Municipal and Common Pleas courts in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Customs House, and the Chrysler Building in Detroit.³²¹ John Hanlen assisted Harding with the restoration and artwork.³²² Some of the alterations that are possibly attributable to Harding are the rebuilding of and closing of some of the fireplaces, installation of the wainscoting in the halls, closing the door from the first floor hall into the smoking room and the "sneek" from the second floor northwest room to the kitchen wing, installation of the paneled wall obtained from another house in the first floor of the kitchen wing, and removal of the marble sinks in the second floor bedrooms.

The murals were finished and formally dedicated on November 9, 1956, and all floors of the house were opened to the public the next day (figure 81).³²³ At this time the four rooms on the second floor had specific names and exhibits: the

³²⁰ "George M. Harding, Age 76, County's Mural Painter, Dies," *Norristown Times Herald* (27 March 1959), Scrapbook, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania [hereafter cited as Harding Obituary].

³²¹ Harding Obituary.

³²² Harding Obituary.

³²³ "Harding Murals, Decorations at Mill Grove Are Dedicated," *Norristown Times Herald* (10 November 1956), Scrapbook, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania [hereafter cited as "Harding Murals..."].

Audubon Room, the Rittenhouse Room, the Lucy Bakewell Room, and the Pennsylvania Dutch Room.³²⁴ The Pennsylvania Dutch Room contained a wooden canopy bed and decorations associated with the folklore art of the area.³²⁵ It appears that the curators were trying do more than associate the house with Audubon since during his era, the house was associated with Quakers and Frenchmen -- not Dutch. These rooms have been altered since 1956, and some of the murals have been covered to provide more wall space to hang Audubon's work.

Brumbaugh continued to play a role in the transformation of the house as late as 1959 when he submitted a "Report of Recommendations Concerning Visitor Reception Facilities at Mill Grove (John James Audubon House) Audubon, Montgomery County, Pa." Brumbaugh's "Report of Recommendations..." revealed that by that time efforts had focused on rehabilitating the barn to serve as a visitor center (figures 82-84).³²⁶ This project was not enacted, however, and the restoration efforts appear to have ended by the mid-1950s (figures 76 - 81).

Many individuals and organizations have made contributions to the Audubon art collection at Mill Grove which represents complete editions of all of Audubon's major works. In 1961, the estate of Mrs. Charles T. Church of New York gave a complete set of the *Birds of America*, also known as the "double-elephant folio,"

³²⁴ "Harding Murals..."

³²⁵ "Harding Murals..."

³²⁶ "Report of Recommendations Concerning Visitor Reception Facilities at Mill Grove (John James Audubon House) Audubon, Montgomery County, Pa.," prepared by G. Edwin Brumbaugh, F.A.I.A., Architect, March 16, 1959, Brumbaugh Files, Downs Collection, Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

which were 435 copperplate engravings hand-colored between 1826 and 1838 after Audubon's original life-size watercolors of birds.³²⁷ *The Eagle and the Lamb*, one of the large oil paintings that Audubon produced to raise money for the publication of elephant folio prints, also hangs in the house. Some of Audubon's furniture that was donated to the Shrine in 1962 included a dining room table and sideboard (gifts of Paul E. Downing) and a sofa and settee (gifts of Audubon's great-great-grandchildren).³²⁸

For its association with Audubon, Mill Grove was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1989.³²⁹ The site was also the location of the 300th Anniversary celebration of the Wetherill family in America for which 400 descendants of Christopher Wetherill attended in 1983.³³⁰

Today, Mill Grove is one of four historic sites administered by the Montgomery County Department of History and Cultural Arts which is managed by Howard Gross, Executive Director. J. D'Arcy Northwood was the first curator of the Audubon Shrine, and the second, and present curator, is Edward W. Graham. The

³²⁷ Edward W. Graham, "Mill Grove – Home of John James Audubon," reprinted from the *Brandywine Magazine* by Montgomery County Printing Department, 1991, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

³²⁸ "Audubon-Owned Furniture Donated to County Shrine," *Times Herald* (4 April 1962), Scrapbook, Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

³²⁹ Edward W. Graham, "Mill Grove – Home of John James Audubon."

³³⁰ "Wetherill family: A celebration of 300 years in U.S.," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (18 September 1983), reproduced in Mrs. William Francis's report, "Mill Grove -- Home of John James Audubon," Mill Grove Files, Mill Grove, Audubon, Pennsylvania.

house and 175-acre grounds are open to the public and attract visitors from all over the world.

The Montgomery County Department of History and Cultural Arts has recently recognized the need for improvements to Mill Grove, both to preserve the valuable Audubon art collection and the two substantial surviving buildings, the house and barn. They have initiated the preparation of a feasibility study to assess these buildings and evaluate the potential for upgrading them to meet today's standards for museum environments for art collections or to determine that a new structure should be built to house the Audubon art.

CONCLUSION

Mill Grove has become famous for its association with John James Audubon; but as this historical analysis reveals, the site has many additional significant facets to its history. This advocacy for a broader understanding of Mill Grove is not intended to belittle the importance of Audubon's association with the site; rather, to increase the appreciation for the type of surroundings he experienced as well as where his occupancy fits into the evolution of the site. Through this analysis, it is hoped that the property is recognized for both its association with significant people and its unique story from the milling and mining industry, through the era of the country retreat, to the transformation into an Audubon Shrine.

The perspective of this thesis has been that of an architectural analysis integrated with fundamental social and cultural components. This approach differs from previous accounts of the site which included information about the built environment more as a backdrop for the inhabitants rather than a primary focal point. The approach adopted for this document also differs from previous accounts because it synthesized information available through archival research and some architectural investigations of the house with an effort to understand the evolution of the site across three centuries.

This approach added new insight about the history of the house but it also identified controversies and unanswered questions. Some of the expanded understanding about Mill Grove pertains to the increased understanding of the

industry that dominated the site. It must be remembered that the site was not only named after the mills but it was the mills and mines that initially attracted most of the owners and occupants to the site. Another prominent contribution is the information presented about the Wetherill ownership and occupancy from 1813 to 1951 which was the longest association with one family and was also the period during which the alterations were made to the house that resulted in its existing appearance.

Additional commonalities throughout the history of Mill Grove that have been brought together in this document include the dominance of Quakers, absentee owners, and investment purchases.

Two of the controversial issues identified in this analysis pertain to such important information as the original appearance and use of the house and the precise time that Audubon came to Mill Grove. A resolution of these issues is beyond the scope of this document but it is hoped that future research will discover more information. Three additional areas of note that are also beyond the scope of this study are a comprehensive documentation of the historical evolution of the landscape, a study of the 1950s alterations as an example of an early County effort in preservation, and the impact of the industries at Mill Grove such as the influence on the Wetherill Paint Works. There is a substantial amount of documentation available on the 1950s work, both architectural and pertinent to landscaping, in the Montgomery County Archives and the Downs Collection of the Winterthur Museum. For information about the Wetherill Paint Works, a good starting point would be Miriam Hussey's *From Merchants to "Colour Men," Five Generations of Samuel*

Wetherill's White Lead Business published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1956 and her catalogue of the Wetherill Papers (1762 -1899) held at the University of Pennsylvania.

As this thesis demonstrates, historical accounts are not finite; as new information is discovered or becomes available, more issues arise. Properties such as Mill Grove also never cease to evolve and must be re-examined and documented along the way to continually preserve them for the future. The current restoration and re-interpretation efforts of the Montgomery County Department of History and Cultural Arts in combination with the information presented in this document should provide a substantial setting for an expanded appreciation of this "blessed spot" along the Perkiomen.

ILLUSTRATIONS

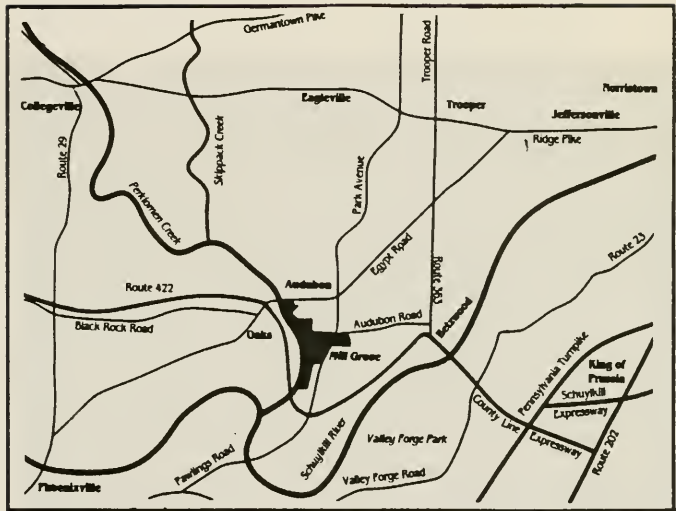


Figure 1. Location Map (Mill Grove Pamphlet).



Figure 2. The London Company's 5,000 acres, 1699. (Drawn by William Henry Wetherill in his Abstract of Title, Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA.)

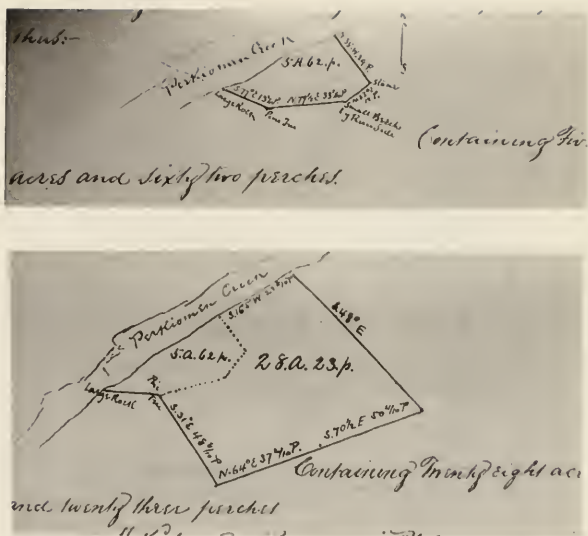
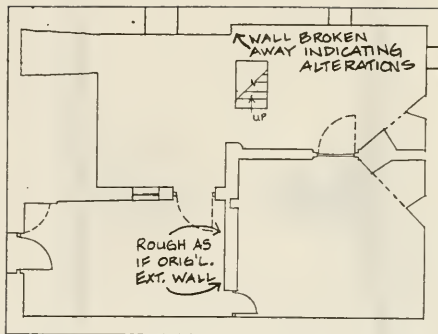


Figure 3. The Mill and House tracts conveyed to Rowland Evans, 1771. (Drawn by William Henry Wetherill in his Abstract of Title, Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



BASEMENT PLAN
SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"

Figure 4. Mill Grove Mansion, existing basement floor plan. (1993)



Figure 5. Letitia Street House, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, first floor plan.
(Morrison, *Early American Architecture*, 1987)



June
1765



July
1765

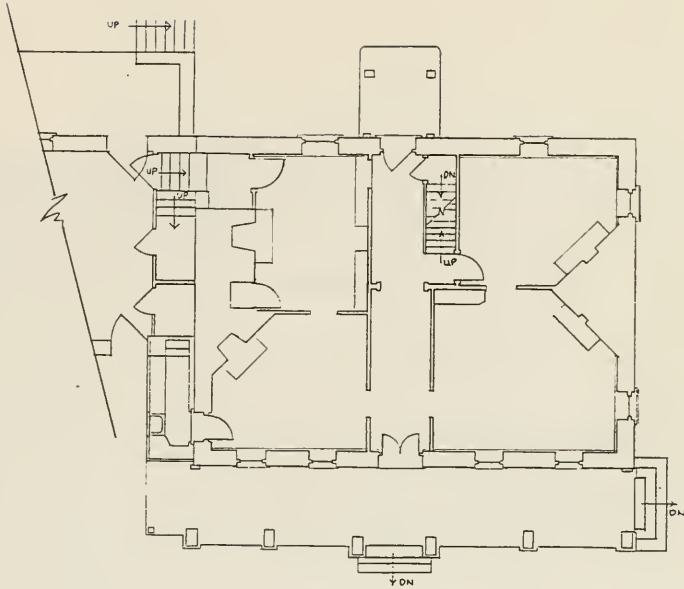
Figure 6. Drawing illustrating misinterpretation of 1765 datestone. (Reed, "Reminiscences of Audubon," 1910)



Figure 7. Mill Grove mansion, existing appearance of south and west elevations showing the addition of later details to the original plan. (1994)

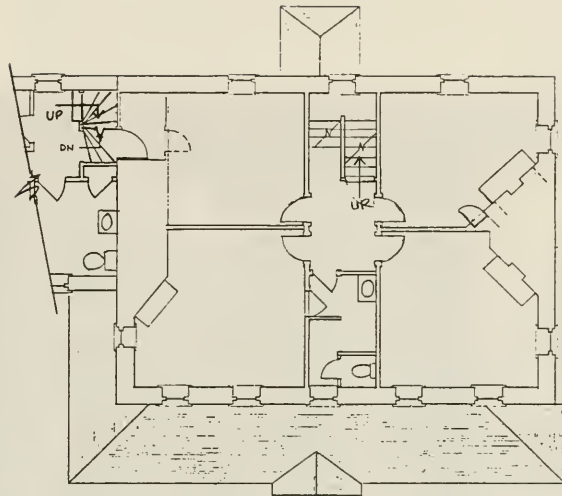


Figure 8. Mill Grove Mansion, existing appearance of north and east elevations. (1994)



⊗ FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"

Figure 9. Mill Grove Mansion, existing first floor plan of main section. (1993)



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'-0''$

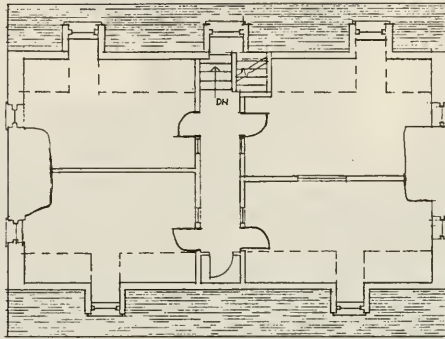
Figure 10. Mill Grove Mansion, existing second floor plan of main section. (1993)



Figure 11. Eighteenth-century fireplace wall paneling in second floor northeast room. (1993)



Figure 12. Detail of cabinet in second floor northeast room, fireplace wall paneling. (1993)



⊗ ATTIC PLAN
SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"

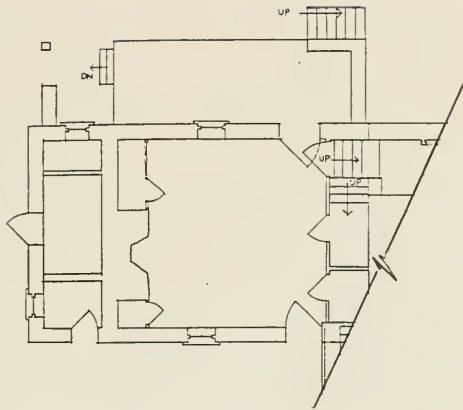
Figure 13. Mill Grove Mansion, existing attic plan of main section. (1994)



Figure 14. North elevation of Mill Grove mansion showing the kitchen wing attached at a significantly lower grade. (1994)

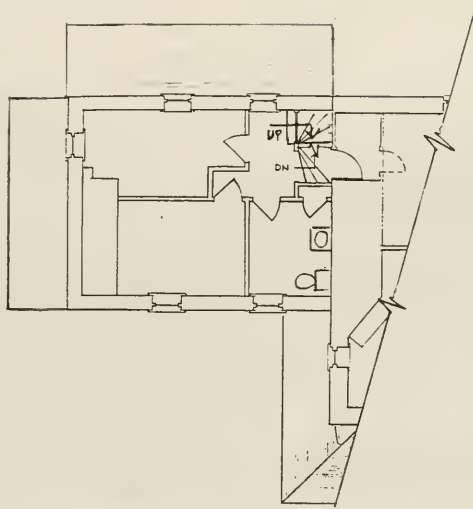


Figure 15. West elevation of kitchen wing showing "June 1765" datestone and the later smokehouse addition. (1994)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'-0''$

Figure 16. Mill Grove Mansion, existing first floor plan of kitchen wing. The fireplace was originally much larger, and it was used as a cooking fireplace. (1994)



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'-0''$

Figure 17. Mill Grove Mansion, existing second floor plan of kitchen wing. The stair configuration is original, but the location of the original partitions or lack thereof is not known. (1994)



Figure 18. Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge (1759), front facade. (Pinkowski, *Washington's Officers Slept Here*, 1917)



Figure 19. William Corbit House, Odessa, Delaware (1772-1774), front facade. (Sweeney, *Grandeur on the Appoquinimink; The House of William Corbit at Odessa, DE*, 1959)

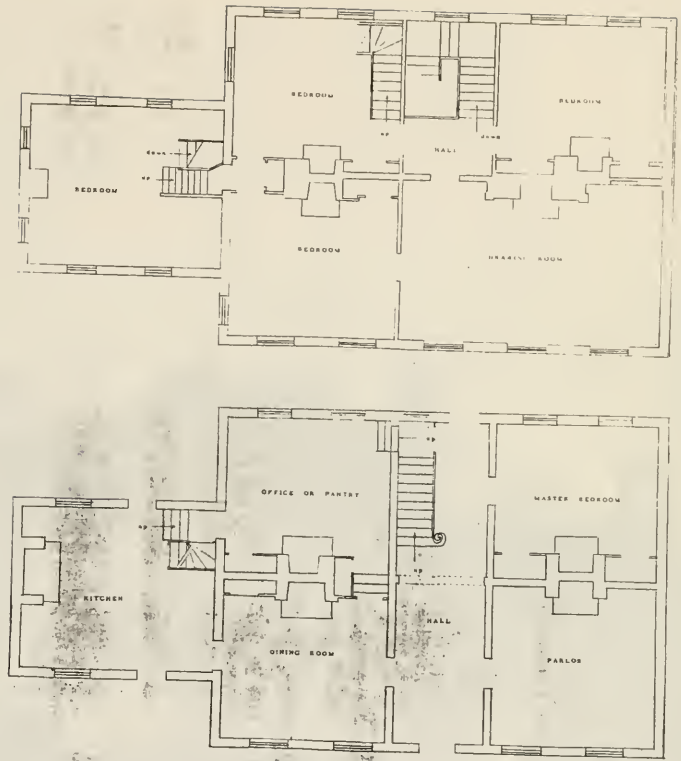


Figure 20. William Corbit House, Odessa, Delaware (1772-74), first and second floor plans. (Sweeney, *Grandeur on the Appoquinimink; The House of William Corbit at Odessa, DE*, 1959)



Figure 21. Warrenpoint, Warwick Township, Pennsylvania (1756), south facade. (Schiffer, *Survey of Chester County, PA, Architecture 17th, 18th & 19th Centuries*, 1976)

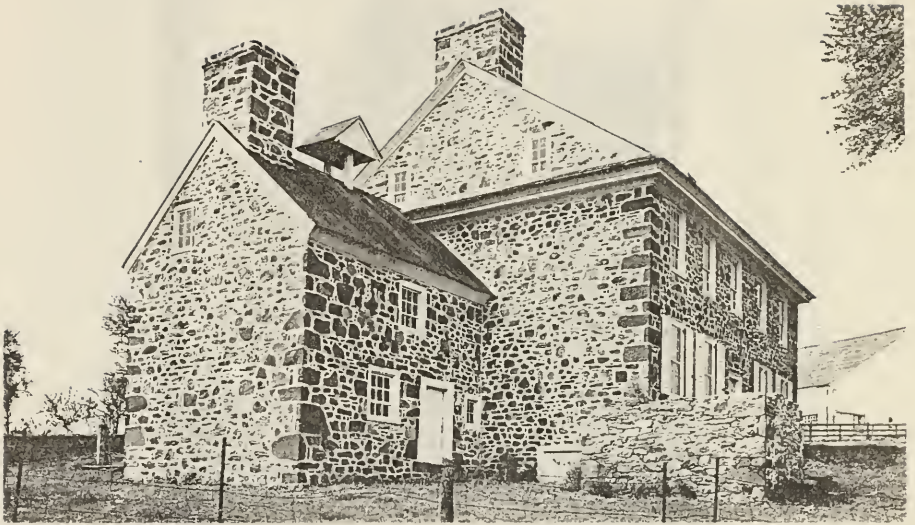


Figure 22. Warrenpoint, Warwick Township, Pennsylvania (1756), north and east elevations. (Schiffer, *Survey of Chester County, PA, Architecture 17th, 18th & 19th Centuries*, 1976)



Figure 23. Warrenpoint, Warwick Township, Pennsylvania (1756), main stairs on first floor. (Raymond, *Early Domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania*, 1977)



Figure 24. Warrenpoint, Warwick Township, Pennsylvania (1756), first floor room. (Raymond, *Early Domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania*, 1977)



Figure 25. House in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, portico with benches.
(Raymond, *Early Domestic Architecture of Pennsylvania*, 1977)



JOHN PENN.
Colonial Governor of Pa.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Penn". The signature is highly stylized with many loops and flourishes, particularly in the letters 'P' and 'n'.

Figure 26. Portrait of Governor John Penn (1729-1795), engraving. (Reproduced in Raimo, *Biographical Directory of American Colonial and Revolutionary Governors 1607-1789*, 1980)



Figure 27. Lansdowne (built 1773, demolished 1854), Governor John Penn's country villa along the Schuylkill River near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Engraving from William Birch's *Country Seats of...America* (Philadelphia, 1808). (Reproduced in Moss, *The American Country House*, 1990. An original copy of the book is in the possession of The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.)

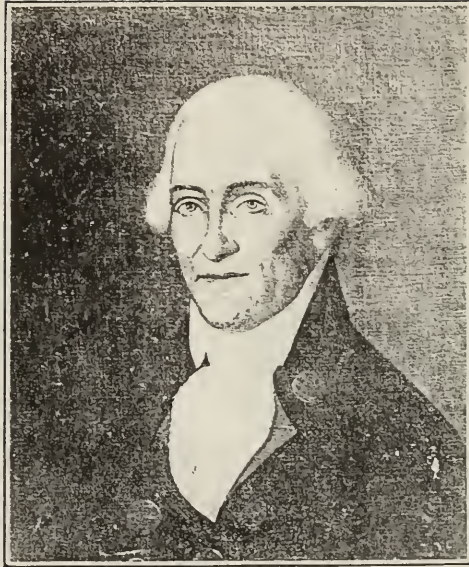


Figure 28. Portrait of Captain Jean Audubon (1744-1818), father of John James Audubon, oil painting by the American Artist Polk at Philadelphia circa 1789. (Reproduced in Herrick, *Audubon the Naturalist*, 1917. Original in the possession of Mrs. Morris Frank Tyler at the time of Herrick's publication.)



Figure 29. John James Audubon (1785-1851), oil self-portrait, 1823. (Reprinted in Ford, *John James Audubon*, 1964, from a Frick Art Reference Library photograph by Mrs. Harvey Breit.)



Figure 30. Whippoorwill, pencil and crayon on paper, "Mill Grove Pennsylvania the 21 of July, 1806, J.J.A." Believed to be the earliest extant signed and dated American drawing of a bird by Audubon. (Reprinted in Ford, *John James Audubon*, 1964. Original in the possession of Firestone Library, Princeton, New Jersey.)



Figure 31. False Fox Glove, pencil and crayon on Whatman paper watermarked 1801, "Mill Grove Pennsylvania the 15 of July, 1806, J.J.A." Believed to be the earliest extant signed and dated American work by Audubon. (Reprinted in Ford, *John James Audubon*, 1964. Original in a private collection.)



Figure 32. Belted Kingfisher by John James Audubon, 1830, Elephant Folio Volume I, plate 77 in *The Birds of America*, originally published by Audubon in 1827-30. (Reproduced from 1961 reprint of *The Birds of America*.)



Figure 33. Wood Pewee by John James Audubon, Elephant Folio Volume II, plate 115 in *The Birds of America*, originally published by Audubon in 1827-30. (Reproduced from 1961 reprint of *The Birds of America*.)



Figure 34. Lucy Bakewell Audubon. Miniature by Frederick Cruickshank, 1831.
(Reproduced from Herrick, original held by Susan Lewis Shaffer)



Figure 35. Mill Grove, oil on wood panel, attributed to Thomas Birch, 1820s.
(New York Historical Society.)



Figure 36. Mill Grove, oil on canvas, attributed to Thomas Birch, 1820s.
(Christopher Parker.)



Mill-Grove-Farm-on-the-Perkiomen-Creek (First Home in America of John James Audubon)
(From an old Painting in the possession of W. H. Wetherill)
AUDUBON, PA.

Figure 37. Mill Grove, watercolor by Charles Wetherill, 1835. (Reproduced in Herrick, *Audubon the Naturalist*, 1917.)



Figure 38. Detail of main house and barn in 1820s painting attributed to Thomas Birch and owned by Christopher Parker.



Figure 39. First floor window on south elevation of main section, illustrating an example of the type of window and shutters that were installed in the 1820s. (1994)



Figure 40. First floor window on south elevation of kitchen wing showing the type of window that was installed in the 1820s. (1994)



Figure 41. Interior view of north window in second floor northeast room illustrating an example of the type of windows that were installed in the 1820s. (1993.)



Figure 42. Corner fireplace in first floor southeast room illustrating the type of fireplace surround and coal grate added in the 1820s. (1993)



Figure 43. Rachel Price Wetherill (1766-1844), wife of Samuel Wetherill (d.1829) who administered the construction of Union Church on part of the Mill Grove Estate. (Reproduced in *Union Church*, 1913.)



UNION CHURCH

ERECTED BY

Rachel Wetherill

ON HER MILL GROVE FARM

A. D. 1829-1832

Figure 44. Union Church, constructed between 1829 and 1832 on part of the Mill Grove property. (Reproduced from *Union Church*, 1913)



Figure 45. Fatland Ford as rebuilt for Dr. William Wetherill sometimes attributed to the design of John Haviland. (Reproduced from Faris, *Old Roads Out of Philadelphia*, 1917.)

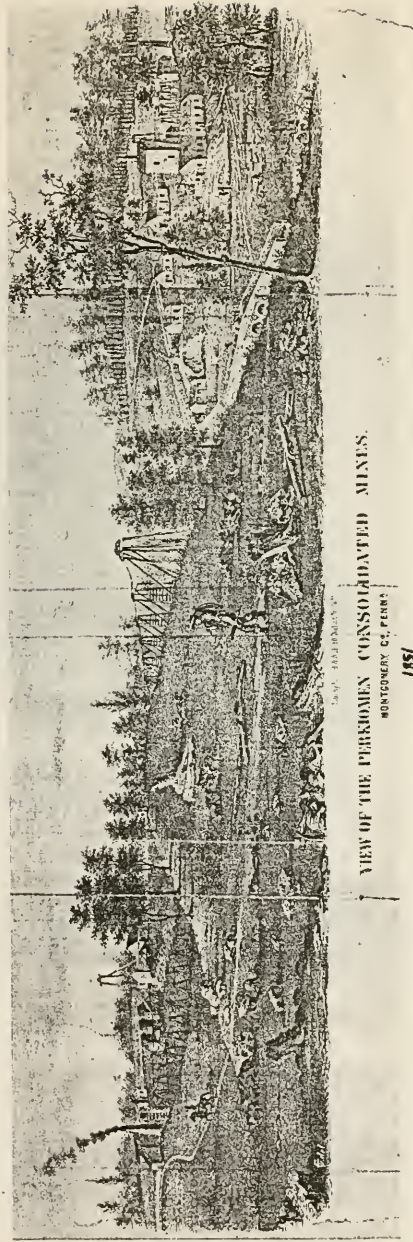


Figure 46. Perkiomen Consolidated Mines, engraving, showing the mining operation near Mill Grove and the trellis structure associated with the mining. (Historical Society of Montgomery County.)



Figure 48. Portrait of William Henry Wetherill (1838-1927). (Reproduced from *Union Church*)



Figure 49. William Wetherill's "station wagon" pulled by two horses named Brandy and Soda. William Wetherill and his granddaughter Anne [later Anne Parker] are standing in front of the vehicle. (Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 50. Post card issued in 1898 with the caption, "First Home in America of John J. Audubon, near Oaks, Pa." This photograph is taken from the same angle as the Thomas Birch and Charles Wetherill paintings and provides a valuable illustration of the changes that the property incurred since the 1820s and 1830s (see Chapter IV figures 35-37).



Figure 51. Postcard issued in 1898 with the caption, "Wetherill's Mill, on the Perkiomen, Near Oaks, Pa" (Mill Grove, Audubon, PA)



Figure 52. South and east elevations of the main house, believed to date to the 1890s showing the porch under construction. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA.)



Figure 53. South and east elevations of main house, view believed to date to the 1890s shortly after the porch was constructed. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA.)



Figure 54. Detail of east end of porch showing the Colonial Revival scroll bracket. (1994)



Figure 55. East and north elevations with dropped-pendant style central dormer, early twentieth century. (Reed, 1910)



Figure 56. North elevation showing kitchen porch with stove and rolled awning, believed to date to late nineteenth or early twentieth century. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



Figure 57. Detail of kitchen porch in figure 52. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



Figure 58. North elevation with three dropped-pendant style dormers, circa 1928.
(Mutual Assurance Company, Policy No.10,478, June 21, 1928.)



Figure 59. Smoking room fireplace installed by William Henry Wetherill, 1890s or early twentieth century. The wood lintel and mantel for the original large cooking fireplace opening is visible above the river stone surround. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)

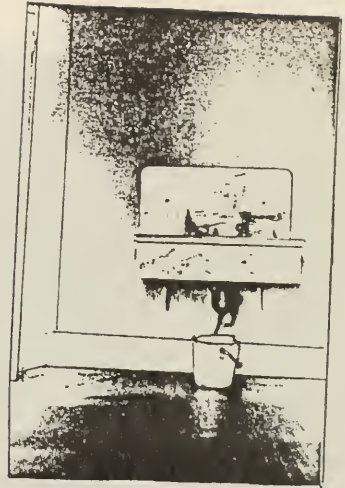
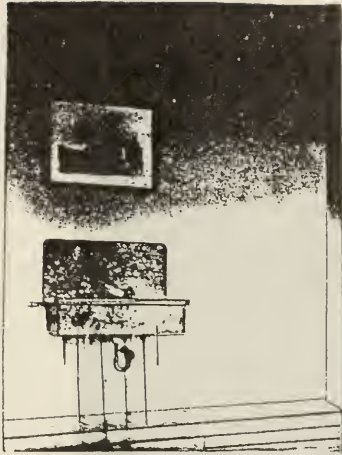


Figure 60. Photographs of two old marble sinks with painted porcelain bowls that William Wetherill installed in the second floor bathrooms of the main section. (Mrs. William Francis, "Mill Grove - Home of John James Audubon," Mill Grove, Audubon)



Figure 61. Caretaker's house designed by Herbert Johnson Wetherill. (Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 62. South and West elevations of the barn, first half of twentieth century.
(Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 63. View of barn and sheep shed, looking southwest, first half of twentieth century. (Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 64. Windmill on terrace behind main house, first half of the twentieth century. (Mrs. William Francis, "Mill Grove - Home of John James Audubon," Mill Grove, Audubon, PA)



Figure 65. Porch at base of windmill with a peacock in the foreground, first half of the twentieth century. (Mrs. William Francis, "Mill Grove - Home of John James Audubon," Mill Grove, Audubon, PA)



Figure 66. East side of wood shed and adjoining cold storage house, first half of the twentieth century. (Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 67. Ice house on east bank of the Perkiomen Creek, first half of the twentieth century. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



Figure 68. Earliest known close-up photograph of the Mill, north and east elevations, late nineteenth century. This is the only photograph that illustrates the mill without dormers on the north roof slope. (Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 69. Earliest known close-up photograph of the Miller's Cottage, early twentieth century. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



Figure 70. View of Mill Grove Estate from the west bank of the Perkiomen Creek, early twentieth century. This photograph is similar to the view shown in the 1898 postcard except that this illustration includes more of the south elevation of the mill. (Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 71. View of the west elevations of the mill and miller's cottage, early twentieth century. This view is similar to the one in the 1898 postcard except by this time, the attic-level opening in the west gable-end of the mill is squared instead of pointed and the miller's cottage has shutters on the second floor windows. (Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 72. Latest known view of mill prior to its demolition in 1929. This photograph reveals the deteriorated condition of the building. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



Figure 73. Mary and Herbert Wetherill relaxing in front of the fireplace in the kitchen wing. This photograph illustrates some attributes of the Colonial Revival movement, including the Betty lamps hanging from the mantel, copper kettle on the fireplace bracket, and the arm chairs located near the fire. (Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 74. Old gas lantern on front porch that Herbert Wetherill did not electrify because of the wren that nested in it. (1994)



Figure 75. William Henry Wetherill and a cow with Mill Grove mansion in the background. 1920s. (Wetherill-Parker Family Private Collection)



Figure 76. View from Mill Grove mansion, looking southwest across the Perkiomen Creek. (1994)



Figure 77. North and east elevations, circa 1952. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



Figure 78. North and west elevations, circa 1952. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



Figure 79. Aerial view, third quarter of the twentieth century. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



Figure 80. First floor center hall, looking north, showing the parquet floor and ornamental brackets installed by the Wetherills to conceal pipes, early circa 1950s. (Mill Grove Files, Audubon, PA)



Figure 81. Second floor room showing Harding murals and display cases. (1993).



Figure 82. Northwest elevation of Mill Grove barn. (1994)



Figure 83. South and west elevations of the Mill Grove barn. (1994).



Figure 84. South elevation of original portion of the unique "double-decker barn."
(1994)

APPENDIX

Note: *This Appendix includes copies of selected archival documents. Copies of deeds are not included because they are too difficult to read and reproduce at this paper size.*

Providence Township Tax Assessment Records, 1796-1805, Historical Society of Montgomery County, Norristown, PA. The records for Mill Grove are as follows:

1796 and 1797

William Thomas

3 horses	78
5 cows	55
mill	18
total	151

for Audubon's Estate

287 acres & dwelling	3250
1 grist mill	300
1 saw mill	150
total	3700

1798

William Thomas

4 horses	80
7 cows	70
mill	75
total	225

for Odebon's Estate

287 acres & dwelling	3250
grist mill	300
saw mill	150
total	3700

1799

William Thomas
(same as 1798)

for Odebon's Estate

275 acres & dwelling	3250
1 grist mill	400
1 saw mill	150
total	3800

1800 and 1801

William Thomas

3 horses	60
6 cows	60
mill	30
total	150

for Odebon's Estate

(same as 1799)

1802 (all property values are considerably higher)

William Thomas

4 horses	240
8 cows	130
farmer	40
total	410

for Odebon's Estate

250 acres & dwelling	9500
1 grist mill	2500
1 saw mill	250
total	12250

1803

William Thomas	
4 horses	240
9 cows	180
farmer	40
total	460

& for Odebon's Estate
(same as 1802)

1804

William Thomas	
4 horses	80
10 cattle	100
farmer	50
total	230

Odebon's Estate
(same as 1801 and 1802)

1805 (all property values are higher)

William Thomas	
4 horses	160
8 cattle	120
farmer	40
total	320

Odebon's Estate	
250 acres & dwelling	12500
1 grist mill	3000
[saw mill not listed]	
total	15500

"Valuable Property" Advertisement, *Poulson's Daily American Advertiser*, 7 March 1812, copy at Mill Grove, Audubon, PA and the Library Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

VALUABLE PROPERTY.

Farm, Grist and Saw Mills,
LEAD & COPPER MINES.

TO BE SOLD,

AT PUBLICK AUCTION,

At Seven o'clock in the evening, on Tuesday the
24th of March, at the Merchants' Coffee House,
in the City of Philadelphia,

MILLGROVE FARM,

SITUATE on the road to Pawling's bridge, five miles from Norristown, and twenty-two miles from Philadelphia, in Montgomery county, State of Pennsylvania. The Estate, consists of a large Stone Dwelling House and Barn, Millers House, Saw Mill, and Stone Grist Mill, about forty-five feet long, and thirty six wide; with two water wheels, and two pair of Stones, on the fine stream of Perkiomen, near Schuylkill, and containing (besides all the bed of the Creek, the water thereof, and so much of the shore on the other side, as shall be necessary for supporting and repairing the dam, with free ingress and egress therefrom) one hundred and thirteen acres and an half of Land, whereof about sixty are Woodland, and the remainder Meadow and Arable Land.

Likewise, a **LEAD and COPPER MINE**, on the same, lately opened, having yielded several tons of Ore, from veins of these two Valuable Minerals, adapted for regular mining works of importance, and of great value for any one who would undertake the continuance of the works. The situation is a very healthy one, and advantageous manufacturing of the Lead and Copper, as also for the Milling business, or any other manufactory, where a never failing stream of Water is wished for, and nearness to a Market desirable.

Sold by order of **SAMUEL PRICE and JOHN LARGE**, Assignees of Robert E. Hobart

march 7

1812

Be it Remembered

That I Samuel Wetherill of the County of Philadelphia in the State of Pennsylvania being of sound mind memory and understanding do hereby make my Last Will and Testament in manner following that is to say First I will that all my just Debts and Burial Expenses shall be fully paid and satisfied for which and other purposes hereinafter declared I do hereby nominate and appoint my sons Samuel P. Wetherill John P. Wetherill Charles Wetherill and William Wetherill

all Executors of this my Last Will and Testament I then give devise bequeath and assign my beloved wife Rachel — All my other household goods and household furniture Home Carriage and all other articles and things purchased and provided by me for Family Use of which I direct that no Inventory or Appraisement shall be made or taken. I then

I give and devise unto my said beloved wife the Meeuage in which I now reside and the Lot of Ground thereto belonging And also my Farm called the Bulwell Farms in Montgomery County together with the Appurtenances To Hold the said Meeuage and Lot of Ground and Farm unto her my said wife for and during all the Term of her natural Life Moreover I give and bequeath unto her my said wife

one annuity or yearly sum of Five thousand Dollars or any due here for Taxes Commissioning from the day of my decease to be paid to her quarterly out of the Income of the Residuary Estate hereinafter devised among my Children for and during all the term of her natural Life I then

direct and will that all the Property and Money my wife Rachel inherit from her Mother and Sister and which came to my Mother in respect of the amount thereof I direct my Executors to pay her out of my Estate for her Use absolutely within two years from and next after my

decease And all the Net residue and Remainder of all my Estate whatsoever and Whosoever I give devise and bequeath to my five Children namely the said Samuel P. Wetherill John P. Wetherill Charles Wetherill William Wetherill and Rebekah Wetherill To Hold to them their Heirs and Assigns in equal parts as Tenants in Common and not as Jointants, and I do hereby direct that each of my said sons Samuel P. Wetherill John P. Wetherill and Charles Wetherill shall be charged in the General Account of my Estate with the sum of Twenty five thousand Dollars which I have advanced to them

respectively and taken their separate Obligations for the same in full of which however I hereby direct that my Interest shall be charged to the day of my decease and that in the division of my Estate the same with Interest from the day of my death shall be considered as part of their respective Portions of my Estate And in my father's mind and will that as soon as the same can be conveniently done after my decease that all the residuary part of my

Real Estate situate in the City and County of Philadelphia and in the County of Montgomery be divided into five equal parts to be divided among and distributed among to be mutually and jointly

held and enjoyed by my said five Children and their Heirs and Assigns forever and I do hereby direct that the same shall be divided and distributed among and to be mutually and jointly

and five Children with the direction and approbation of my said
 by an Instrument of Writing under their respective Hands and Seals and
 after the Omission shall have been so made that my Children shall draw
 votes according to their demerits; of Age for their respective parts thereof
 in the presence of the Jurors having made such Omissions or a Majority of them
 of them and that the persons so to be appointed or a Majority of them
 do and shall immediately thereafter by an Instrument of Writing
 under their Hands and Seals to be duly executed and recorded allott an
 Assign to each of my Children his or her share and Assign respectively
 the Part and Share of my Estate which has fallen to her or his
 respectively as aforesaid And I do hereby direct that each of my said
 sons Daniel & William John & William and Charles Willmott shall
 have to each of my other Children such part of the aforesaid sum of
 Twenty five thousand Dollars with Interest thereon from the day of
 my decease as my other Children may be entitled to in order to make up
 their equal portions of my Estate respectively - And I do further direct
 that such of the share of my Estate which may be so allotted to each of
 my Children respectively shall be chargeable and chargeable with and
 apportioned part or sum of One thousand Dollars per Annum for
 the aforesaid Annuitie a yearly sum of Two thousand Dollars hereof
 my Deductions for Taxes to be recoverable in default of payment hereof
 all Costs and Charges by me and my Executors in the same manner
 as Rents or Arrears are made recoverable by Law Usage or Custom
 And it is my Mind and Will that whatever I have hereunto
 given to my said Wife is in lieu and full Satisfaction of her Dowry
 and Thirds of and in my Estate - And it is my further Will that
 neither of my said Executors shall be entitled to Claim any Commission
 hereon or Commission for their Services as Executors: Lastly I do hereby
 revoke all Wills and Testaments by me at any time herebefore made
 and published and declare this only to be and Contain my Last
 Will and Testament - In Witness whereof I the said Daniel
 Willmott have hereunto set my Hand and Seal the twenty fifth
 day of April in the Year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred
 and twenty nine

Signed sealed Published and
 Attested by the said Daniel
 Willmott for and for his Last Will
 and Testament in the presence of
 two who at his request and in his
 presence have hereunto subscribed
 their names as witnesses to the
 execution thereof

Daniel Willmott

Wm. G. Gorman (w. 22 9. 1829)
Wm. G. Gorman att. 25. 2. 1829
Richard Howland att. 25. 2. 1829

1734

I Samuel P. Wetherill of Montgomery in Lower Providence Township in the County of Montgomery in the State of Pennsylvania do hereby make my Last Will and Testament in manner following that is to say First I will that all my just Debts and Funeral Expenses sh^d be duly paid and satisfied And I do hereby give devise and bequeath all my Effects what soever and wheresoever with my dear wife Martha with power for her to dispose of the same in any way or any part thereof as she may see fit and proper and whatever part thereof may remain undisp^osed of by her at the time of her decease I give devise and bequeath the same unto my child or children who may be living at the time of her decease and the issue of such of them who may then be deceased their Heirs and Assigns in equal parts such issue taking each among themselves equally dividing such part and share only as their deceased Parent would have taken if living And I do hereby nominate and appoint my said dear wife Sole Executrix of this my Last Will and Testament do hereby pow^r strike all Wills and Testaments by me at any time made or made and published declaring this only to be and containing my Last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal the thirty first day of July in the Year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and thirty seven

Signed sealed Published &c.
In and by the said Testator
Samuel P. Wetherill for and
as his Last Will and Testament
in presence of

Samuel P. Wetherill

J. Shearer
Samuel C. Shearer

John P. Wetherill

William M. Lawrence
Witnessed, executed and
subscribed by Samuel P. Wetherill
at which he set to the above instrument
& witnesses is on the hand and line of
the said Samuel P. Wetherill

Inventory of the Personal Estate of Samuel P. Wetherill, deceased, filed February 18th 1845, Montgomery County Archives, Norristown, PA.

	Selling	1577
17 Table Spoons		
18 Dessert "		
5 Trays		
Scrap Saddles	800 per doz	72 1/2
Fork Knives	Retails	157
Better Stairs		
		11627
Furniture at Millers		
13 Chairs 1 Mahogany Sofa, 2 Tilted Chairs, 1 Hand		
Table Mahogany 2 Portraits, 6 Pictures, 2 Grand		
3 Blands, 1 Mahogany Secretary, 1 Mahogany Side		
board, Walling, 2 small looking Stakes, 8 Bedstead		
Chairs, 4 Woodens, 1 Mahogany Bedstead 1 Sheet Iron		
Stove: 2n Office 1 Stove 1 large Desk 1 small		
Desk 2 Wooden Chairs, 1 Wooden Book Case Port		
rs valuable at about		25
Recapitulation		
Furniture and Sells		11627
Sells in Millers		1152
		1152
Montgomery County Archives Norristown, PA		
<p>7387</p> <p>Inventory of the Personal Estate of Samuel P Wetherill deceased Filed Feb'y 18th 1845</p>	1726	<p>Thomas M. Wilson</p>

1892 Advertisement for the Sheriff's Sale, copy held by Wetherill-Parker Private Collection.

SHERIFF'S SALE

By virtue of a writ of *Levari Facias*, issued out of the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery county, Pa., and to me directed, will be sold at Public Sale,

ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 1892

At 1 o'clock p. m. at the Sheriff's Office, Court House, Borough of Norristown, Pa., the following described

REAL ESTATE:

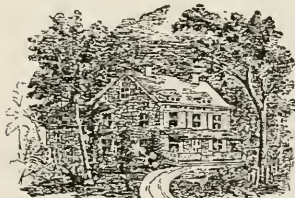
All that certain message, tenement, lot or tract of land

Situate in Lower Providence Township, Said County,

Bounded as follows: Beginning at a point on the southeast side of Perkiomen Creek at the distance of 12 and 4-10 perches north, 643-4 degrees east from the northeast corner of a grist mill belonging to the estate of Wm. Wetherill, deceased; thence south 11 degrees, east 68-10 perches to a point in the middle of the road leading to the said mill from Pawling's bridge; thence south 70 degrees 40 minutes, east 12 perches and 70-100, south 58 degrees and 50 minutes, east 21 perches and 52-100, south 76 degrees 20 minutes, east 24 and 6-100 perches, south 54 degrees and 50 minutes, east 15 perches and 52-100 of a perch, north 73 degrees 30 minutes, east 32 perches to a corner of Wm. Wetherill's estate; thence courses and distances to the Perkiomen Creek and along the creek south 128 perches to the place of beginning, containing 63 ACRES and 67 perches more or less. The above tract is situate 1-4 mile from Shannonville.

The improvements consist of a 2 1-2 story

STONE DWELLING HOUSE,



250 feet 6 inches by 34 feet, 4 rooms, hall and stairway on 1st floor, 5 rooms, hall and stairway on 2nd floor, 4 rooms, hall on third floor, cellar under the house, a 2 1-2 story house annexed 26 feet by 23 feet, back porch, stone smoke house attached, 1 room on the 1st, 3 rooms on 2d, and 1 room on 3rd floors, cave, ice house, spring house, stone barn 50 feet 6 inches by 51 feet, 2 story stone stable attached, 23 feet by 50 feet, wagon house, corn crib, straw loft, granary, stabling for 16 horses, chicken house, pig sty, well and pump at barn, orchard, stream of water on premises, fruit and shade trees, other necessary outbuildings.

Seized and taken in execution as the property of WM. A. REED and ELIZA JANE REED, and to be sold by

CLINTON RORER, Sheriff.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE, Norristown, Pa., May 14, 1892.

NATIONAL DEFENDER JOB PRINTING HOUSE, NORRISTOWN, PA.

THE MUTUAL ASSURANCE COMPANY
FOR INSURING HOUSES FROM LOSS BY FIRE

No. 240 S. Fourth Street, Philadelphia
 No. 140 ROAD, ABOUT 10 FEET WEST OF FRIDLINGS ROAD, ON PREMISES
 KNOWN AS MILL BRINE FARM, AUDUBON, LOWER MERIDEN TOWNSHIP, MONTECALM COUNTY,
 PENN.
 PAGE

LOCATION NORTH SIDE OF MILL ROAD, ABOUT 10 FEET WEST OF FRIDLINGS ROAD, ON PREMISES
 KNOWN AS MILL BRINE FARM, AUDUBON, LOWER MERIDEN TOWNSHIP, MONTECALM COUNTY,
 PENN.
 PAGE

Construction—Brick, stone, concrete, concrete block, stuccoed, rough cast, hollow tile, mill, frame,
 metal, good, fair, bad.
 Foundation—Wood, brick, stone, concrete, concrete block, stuccoed, rough cast, hollow tile, mill, frame,
 metal, good, fair, bad.
 Exterior—Painted, plaster, stuccoed, rough cast, hollow tile, mill, frame, metal, good, fair, bad.
 Interior—Plank, joist; metal, brick, arch, reinforced concrete, yellow pine, hardwood.
 Floors—Steel, protected, cast iron, reinforced concrete, wood. Girders—Steel, protected, wood. Beams
 —Steel, protected, wood.
 Walls—Open, cased, brick tower; doors at each landing, wood, hardwood, metal, covered, fair only,
 standard.
 Ceilings—Steam, electric, hydraulic, hand, open, cased—wood, metal, lath and plaster,—brick tower;
 automatic hatches—under side covered with tin; doors, wood, metal covered, fair only, standard.
 Stairs—Holes
 in ceiling—Steam, hot water, vapor, direct, indirect, hot air, stoves—oil, gas—rubber hose, iron pipe,
 none; on brick, metal, sand box, floor safe. Fuel oil system approved type name
 brand. Electrical, electric, gas, petroleum lamps, lanterns, gas, acetylene, none; open, cased, covered, swing-
 ing, hanging, by gas, coal oil.
 Windows—By gas, coal oil.
 Doors—Iron, wood—metal lined one side, both; door one side of wall, both, properly hung, latches
 secure, swinging, sliding, fair.
 Shutters—Rolling, steel, iron, wood—metal lined one side, both; properly hung, latches secure;
 in Windows—wire glass, in metal frames.
 Sills—Gas, steam, electric; power from outside.
 Pipes—In building, outside, under pavement, how far from wood; secure, none
 —Kept in cellar on earth, concrete, vault, metal cans, wood-lined, outside.
 Machine, gasoline, wood alcohol, rubber cement, turpentine, varnish, oils; acids, kept inside at night;
 outside; patent cans.
 Gate and Rabbit—Removed property, fair, neglected.
 Tanks—A double the add—Good, fair, bad.
 Capacity
 Stand Pipe
 Inset
 Vol. or Paid
 Capacity
 Engine Co.
 Steam connection
 UNPROTECTED
 General, private, inside, clock—stations
 UNPROTECTED
 Hydrant
 feet from risk.

Occupancy	Extinguishers	Public	Communications	Class	Duty	Inspected	By
B. KITCHEN (COAL RANGE $\frac{1}{2}$ OIL STOVE, LATTER IS FRAMED WITH BRASS LINE) PORTABLE HOT AIR HEATER (FASE WORK UNDER HEATH EVER SHAKESPEARE FROM HEATER SHOULD BE REMOVED) STORAGE, ETC. 10 GALLON CHEMICAL FIRE EXTINGUISHER IN WHEELS							
1—HALL, LIVING ROOMS, DINING ROOM, ETC.							
2—BED ROOMS $\frac{1}{2}$ BATH							
3—BED ROOMS, ETC.							
4—							
No. of Tenants							
ONE							
Co-insurance Clause							
NONE							
EXPOSURES							
OPEN							

IN OLD GAS MACHINE (WITH VALVE) STILL IN CELLAR. GAS PIPES HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM HOUSE.
 EXPLOSION IS KEPT IN PART CAR WITH SAFETY TOP. BARRIER OF OIL STOVE TOP FINISHED WITH A FEW DROPS OF IT. AFTER BARRIER BECAME HEATED THE MAIN SUPPLY OF GAS LINE IS NOT KEPT NEAR HOUSE.
 3/16/1934 NOTICE RECEIVED THAT A NEW GAS RANGE USING PYRIFAX GAS, HAS BEEN INSTALLED IN THE KITCHEN.
 Charles W. Wiley
 SURVEYOR.
 10/9/1947 On reinspection I found the house closed but from the outside there appears to be no change in the risk.
 Charles W. Wiley
 SURVEYOR.

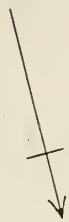
Surveyed
 Date
 11/20/1945

Mutual Assurance Company, Philadelphia, PA, Fire insurance policy for the barn,
 Policy No.10,479, active June 21, 1928 to July 6, 1951.

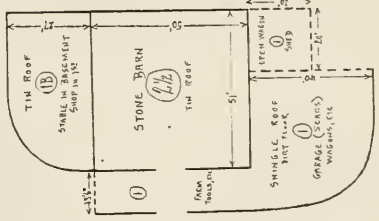
Photograph



Ground Plan



MILL ROAD
 SLOPES AWAY



SCALE 1" = 30'

Date Est. ABOUT \$40,000 @ 35

Policy No. 10,479

Memorandum of other insurance
 PHILA. CONTRIBUTIONSHIP

HERBERT J. WESTERHILL

Barn N. side of Mill Road about
 750' W. of faulting in Grove farm,
 premises known as Midvale farm,
 Audubon, Lower Freehold, Cape May
 Montgomery County, Penna.

AMOUNT \$1,750. @ 7.80% - \$136.50
 4/30/1936 Rate & deposit reduced
 & insurance continued, policy now
 reads: - \$1,750. @ 6% = \$105.00

Policy Renewed July 6, 1951

Received Policy June 21, 1928.

Edw. R. Deane
Per J. E. Deane

THE MUTUAL ASSURANCE COMPANY
FOR INSURING HOUSES FROM LOSS BY FIRE

No. 240 S. Fourth Street, Philadelphia
 150 NORTH SIDE OF MILL ROAD, ABOUT 150 FEET WEST OF PAULding's BARN IN TRENTONISES KIENNA NS
 150 MILL GROVE FARM, ROAD IN LOWER TRENTONISES TOWNSHIP, MONMOUTH COUNTY, TENN.
 POLICE PAGE

- Iron—Brick, stone, concrete, concrete block, stuccoed, rough cast, hollow tile, mill, frame, metal; gourd, fair, bad
- Good fair, bad
- Plastered Walls—Brick, stone coped, hollow tile, concrete, ~~DETACHED~~
- Metal, stone, brick—wood finish, wood—metal lined, cut at division wall.
- Flipped, flat, Gambrel, mansard; metal, slate, tiled, gravel, slag, asbestos, felt, shingle, tin, zinc-resistive.
- Open plaster, on laths, on wire, boards, paneled, plain, varnished, metal, terra cotta, fire-resistive.
- Wood lath and plaster; wire lath and plaster; plaster board, machine, hollow tile, brick, concrete blocks.
- Plank, joist; metal, brick-arch, reinforced concrete, yellow pine, hardwood, ~~DRY WOOD~~ SERIAL
- Steel, protected, cast iron, reinforced concrete, wood. *Chimney*—Steel, protected, wood. *Beams*
- Open, cased, brick tower; doors at each landing, wood, hardwood, metal, covered, fair only, standard.
- Steam, electric, hydraulic, hand, open, cased—wood, metal, lath and plaster,—brick tower; automatic latches—under side covered with tin, doors, wood, metal covered, fair only, standard; oilers.
- Steam, hot water, vapor, direct, indirect, hot air, stove—oil; gas—rubber, hose, iron pipe, galv; on brick, metal, sand box floor; safe. Fuel oil system approved type name.
- Electric, A. L.; petroleum lamps, lantern, gas, acetylene, none; open, caged, covered, swing-ing, fixed brackets, safe, dangerous.
- By gas, coal, oil.
- Iron—wood—metal lined one side, both, door one side of wall, both, property hung, latches secure, swinging, sliding, fair.
- Rolling—Rolling steel, iron, wood—metal lined one side, both; properly hung, latches secure; *Welding*—wire glass, in metal frames.
- Gas, steam, electric, power from outside.
- In building, outside, under pavement, how far from wood; secure.
- Kept in cellar on earth, concrete, vault, metal cans, wood—lined, outside.
- Inside, in building, wood alcohol, rubber cement, turpentine, varnish, oils; acids, kept inside at night; outside, in building, wood alcohol, rubber cement, turpentine, varnish, oils; acids, kept inside at night; *and* *Rack*—Removed properly, fair, neglected.
- Good, fair, bad.

Capacity _____ Stand Pipe _____ Hose _____
 _____ Engine Co. _____ Vol. or Paid

 _____ Steam connection _____
 _____ UNPROTECTED _____
 _____ feet from risk.

Stippled List, Shall Voiding	No. Copies	Engineers or Grantees	Paid	Communications	Class	Dirty	How with work Att'd to S. P.
------------------------------	------------	-----------------------	------	----------------	-------	-------	------------------------------

Occupancy

- B. HORSE ^{NO} CON STABLE
- 1— ^{NO} GRAN BINS ^{NO} STEVE. FARM TOOLS GARAGE (GONS) WAREHNS ETC. HAY MOW
- 2— HAY MOW
- 3—
- 4—

10/9/1927 On reinspection I could not find any one about so I did not go into the barn, but from the outside there appears to be no change in the risk.

Blair
 Surveyor

No. of Tenants

ONE

Confidence Clause

NONE

EXPOSURES

FRAME HEN HOUSE ABOUT 10 FEET

Blair
 Surveyor

Service Date
 4/29/1928

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