



*Barclay Grounds  
Preservation Alliance*  
*“Geocaching”*  
*May 31, 2014*

**SaveThe  
Barclay  
Grounds.org**

**Barclay Grounds Preservation Alliance (BGPA)  
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**A Special Thank You to:**

- \*Our LL Bean Tour Guides
- \*Herr's
- \*Sam's Club
- \*Windles Water Works
- \*The Philadelphia Pretzel Factory
- \* Pete's Produce Farm
- \* Yori's Church Street Bakery

## Our Mission

The Barclay Grounds Preservation Alliance (BGPA) is a non-profit organization made up of all volunteers. Its mission is to preserve the beautiful, historic and ecologically important Barclay Grounds for the enjoyment of current residents and visitors to the Borough of West Chester—and for future generations.

The property was previously known as the Joshua Hartshorne Estate and is the only one of West Chester's 19<sup>th</sup> century estates that has not been subdivided and built on. The entire block (bordered by N. High St., W. Marshall St., W. Virginia Ave., and N. Church St.) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, which states that the “park-like grounds” are home to “one of the finest collections of specimen trees in West Chester.” Early in 2013 the southern part of the block was sub-divided and approved for residential building lots.

Residents of the Borough of West Chester and the surrounding region formed the BGPA to raise public awareness of this important site. A petition was launched which generated over 2,100 signatures calling on West Chester Borough Council to save the Barclay Grounds. As a result of this and the support of State Senator Andrew Dinniman, Mayor Carolyn Comitta, members of Borough Council and area preservation organizations, the developer agreed to sell the Barclay Grounds to the Borough for the appraised value of \$1.2 million.

BGPA was instrumental in persuading Borough Council to buy the land, and the BGPA raised the down payment of \$20,000, as well as \$7,500 to pay for grant writing services.



BGPA Treasurer, Kristin Gerling, delivers donations totaling \$20,000 to Borough Finance Director, Doug Kapp, which was used for the down payment to buy the Barclay Grounds. December 26, 2013

This is a unique partnership between a citizens group and its government, allowing the budget-constrained borough to preserve the Barclay Grounds, at *no cost to the borough taxpayers*. The borough has applied for county and state grants to pay the bulk of the price, and BGPA will raise the remaining funds.

## Barclay Grounds Tour

### **Stop #1: 415 N. Church St, Library**

The construction of this beautiful library in 1888 was the result of community support – a first in the borough at a time when commerce was booming and attention was often on money-making schemes. In fact, library “shelves” existed in local stores as early as 1815 and a library group was formed in 1872, but it wasn’t until the late 1800s that money was secured to hire the architect, T. Roney Williamson, a West Chester native who had returned to the borough in 1884. Legend has it that Williamson’s Quaker family discouraged him from more commercial pursuits in Philadelphia, and that he developed his personal Queen Ann style here, often using multiple materials in a single building. The library is comprised of locally-made brick and Avondale stone, with stucco and copper accents.

### **Stop #2: 320 N. Church St, Swedenborg House**

Note the datestone of this house: 1773. Historians believe that the foundation dates to 1760, when the house was owned by Samuel Hoopes one of the borough’s founding families. At that time, the house stood in the center of N. Church St. but was moved to its current location when the street was extended north from E. Chestnut street around 1855.

For decades, the structure was known as the “Old Hoopes’ House” even when it was occupied by numerous owners including John Rutter, whose extensive nursery included the Barclay grounds. The house also occupied by the Chester County Art Association in the 1940s and later by the West Chester School Board when the massive “Auditorium” School stood a few steps away. Hoopes’ house was so large for its time, when the Orthodox Quakers parted ways with the more liberal Hicksites, they met at the east end of the house after 1828. They remained until 1830 but not before they beat a path through the fruit groves later dubbed “Orthodox Lane.”

In the 1770s, the house was occupied by John Hannum, a Revolutionary War hero who is credited for moving the county seat from Chester, Pa. to “Turk’s Head” (as West Chester was once known. )

It was also the home of T. Roney Williamson, who lived here briefly when he oversaw the construction of the library.

### **Stop #3: 318 N. Church St, West Chester’s first public school**

As you can tell from the separate “Boys” and “Girls” entrances , this building was a former high school. Once one of five public schools in the borough, including a high school next door (now a parking lot), it was the only public school that was adapted instead of razed. It was built in 1917 on the site of the borough’s first public school (1866), using many of the same bricks. When the high school was built next door, it became known as the Biddle Street (elementary) School. Another school, built across the street by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was known as the Auditorium School mainly because of its 1000 seat theater. It was demolished sometime after the West Chester Area School District formed in the early 1950s.

### **Stop #4: 206 N. Church St, Quaker School & Synagogue**

This is the last surviving structure of the former Orthodox Friends community, or “Quaker Block,” in the Borough. A small datestone indicates its former use as a library and school. Early photographs show a spacious side yard (later the site of the Borough’s first and only synagogue) and a similarly hooded-style roof above the school entrance.

A 1980 architectural history describes the structure has having an unusual serpentine stone foundation and evidence of a former carriage house and shop at the rear of the building.

Just the across the alley (now senior housing), the Quakers built a two-story meeting designed to be easily converted into a twin residence. In 1844, they built a massive serpentine stone meeting house (with separate entrances and sections for females and male worshipers on what is now Lot 10.

Across the street, please, note:

House with no entrance: Once a part of a large estate that stood on the outskirts of West Chester, 22 W. Chestnut street (its former address) is now surrounded by 1950s buildings. Its roof detailing is the only evidence of its size and scope. The residence was built in 1852 by the British- born botanist, William Darlington (and a

a member of the Quaker meeting across the street). As an amateur botanist, Darlington established a natural history society in West Chester in 1826 and published several works on botany and natural history, including what many consider to be the first record of native flowering plants, *Flora Cestricea* (1837). Darlington (1782-1863) also served in Congress and was the first president of the West Chester Railroad, chartered in 1831. A 1980 historic survey describes the building as one of the few pre-1860 mansions in the northeast quadrant.

### **Stop #5: 120 N. Church St, Market House**

Note the alley here. This section of Prescott Alley was once a major service road to an early railroad station that once stood at the corner of E. Chestnut and N. Matlack (later the Agway property). The railroad cars were drawn by horses and inspired local businessmen to build a market house here. This nicely restored building was built around 1870 and was unusually elaborate in its time with its arched windows and heavy roof brackets set in pairs. It is one of the few Romanesque Revival examples in the borough. Its no-costs-spared style was probably the result of competition from the nearby Market House on Market street (now demolished). The Church street market was owned and operated by a stock company but it was short lived and within a few years, it became a stable.

### **Stop #6: 327 W. Gay St, Pippin's & Enos Smedley Houses**

At a time when this neighborhood was largely an Italian American neighborhood, two acclaimed African-American residents -- Horace Pippin and Bayard Rustin – lived here. Pippin lived at 327 W. Gay with his wife from the 1920s until his death in 1946, at the age of 58. Rustin, best known as the organizer of the 1963 “I Have A Dream” March on Washington, lived across the street, at 315 W. Gay. As early as 1941, critics cited both Pippin’s wooden-panel paintings and his canvas works, typically created with ordinary house paint and bed ticking, as an example of the “make-do” attitude of a self-taught artist who once explained that he saw “pictures” in his head.

Albert C. Barnes, founder of the Barnes Foundation, described Pippin as an artist who “expresses himself in his own language” while carrying on the artistic traditions of the “great artists.” Although Pippin would later study art at the foundation, critics continued to describe him as an uneducated, “naïve” artist in the American folk-art tradition. In fact, before he was “discovered” by Barnes in the late 1930s, Pippin sold many of his local scenes, informally, much like a fruit vendor, by propping them against a chair in front of his home. Less than a decade later, a “choice Pippin”, as one paper reported in 1944 reported, could command a price of more than \$1,000. From 1831 to 1855, the neighborhood consisted of a single row of homes (#332-340 W. Gay) occupied by Smedley’s Pottery, the oldest industry in West Chester. Enos Smedley, who learned the trade as a 17-year-old apprentice, purchased the property here partly because of a nearby clay pit along New Street. However, he later had to rely on kaolin pits in Delaware and Philadelphia. Both the clay and the finished porcelain wares were transported by several teams of wagoners through Prescott Alley to a horse-drawn street railroad on E. Gay Street. The pottery was interrupted by the Civil War – literally. After Smedley retired in 1855, it was taken over by a Irish man named James Donnelly (or Donley). He was recruited by Henry “Col” Gus into the 97th Regiment and later died in action in Green Plaines, Virginia.

### **Stop #7: Pear Alley**

Before the Hartshone mansion (now the Barclay) was built, the Barclay grounds were part of a vast fruit nursery owned by John Rutter. Rutter’s name is not well known today, but at one point, the pear he developed was considered superior and won more prizes than the "Bartlett" pear familiar to us today. The nearby Pear Alley takes its name from the alleys of pear trees that once stood there. Remarkably, the Rutter pear was one of at least 23 different varieties of fruits and other trees grown in and around the Barclay grounds, including almonds. Interestingly, Rutter’s story may be the best example of a 19th-century career change. A former attorney, Rutter was said to have entered the nursery trade

mulberry trees favored by the worms used in silk production. He eventually abandoned that for fruit trees and became one of the nation's foremost experts on pear and peach trees. In fact, his seminal study on the diseases of peaches is still used today. Until his book was published, farmers in the state were unable to grow good peaches in Pennsylvania's humid conditions.

#### **Stop #8: 100 W. Virginia Ave, Four Sisters**

The houses along this lovely street were long ago dubbed the "Four Sisters" in tribute to their distinctive look and the fact that they were built by the same architect, using the now rare serpentine stone. Most date to the late 1880s, when a quarry in West Chester was being mined to build "Old Main" at West Chester University, once the nation's largest load-bearing serpentine structure. Built on the former Rutter's nurseries, the Four Sisters were considered marvels of their time, partly because the Philadelphia-based architect Addison Hutton designed their placement with spacious lawns in mind. Other homes along Church street borrowed the "setback" concept so that trees and landscaping could be enjoyed.

Ironically, in the days when Rutter's nurseries occupied most of the neighborhood, one of the borough's few 19th century African-American real estate developers, Abram Dobson, owned six lots on the northeast corner of N. Church St. and Virginia Ave.. The first lot to be sold was the corner lot, at 100 Virginia. This lovely eccentric house was designed by T. Roney Williamson, architect of the West Chester library and Court house annex. In fact, the house was said to be his first commission and the first structure where he experimented with the use of many materials: stone, brick, frame and metal. It was built for Stephen P. Darlington, the son of William Darlington, whose former home is also on the tour. It was said that the son was responsible for extending Church street to Virginia. The house later became famous as the home of the 19th century author and historian, W. Wilmer MacElree. Note that the house is unusual in that it was excavated into a hill with full-length basement windows. It also had a stable.

#### **Stop #9: 516 Scott's Alley**

John Rutter lived at what is now the Swedenborg House when he sold part of his property to Joshua Hartshorne in 1866. However, most of the carriage houses along Scott Alley date to 1890, decades after N. Church Street was expanded north from E. Chestnut Street.

Much like early service alleys in Philadelphia, many of the carriage houses (including #516) are large enough to accommodate buggies, horses, hay/fodder and the Stable Manager's residence. Note the beautiful examples of adaptive reuse here. Mainly because of the rare intact examples found here, carriage houses were cited as important historic resources in the Borough's 2001 comprehensive plan.

## East End Tour

### Stop #1: 428 N. Church, Rothrock /Swedenborg Foundation

Architectural historians have described this massive house as one of the few examples of an Antebellum, early Gothic-style house in West Chester. It dates to 1859, with a library addition on the north side built in 1883. Legend has it that when this house was built in 1859, its owner, Addison May, a retired lawyer and widower, was mocked because it was deemed too large for a man without a family. However, he redeemed himself by being a major supporter of the West Chester Public Library, which he helped to build.

In recent years, the house received a National Historic Register designation as the former home of Joseph Rothrock, known as the father of American forestry in Pennsylvania. Rothrock was Addison May's son-in-law. As you proceed down Church Street, notice the numerous Arts and Crafts houses in the area including 410 N. Church (Find the owner's initials on the porch). The house was built in 1881 by Jerome Gray, the state librarian who retired to the borough and served on the borough council.

Also look down Lafayette Street and notice the row of sycamore trees. These are rare survivors of a farm lane that cut through this region of fruit tree nurseries and tall shade trees.

### Stop #2: 120 N. High St, CCHS/Warner Theatre

Chester County Historical Society "Horticultural hall" (CCHS) is where Fredrick Douglas recruited black soldiers, also the second National Women's Convention was held in the mid 1800s.

Armory: The West Chester National Guard Armory building was built in 1916 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It housed the National Guard's Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry and 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, which traces its lineage directly to Benjamin Franklin, who formed the unit in 1747 to protect the Colonies in the French and Indian War. This unit of soldiers has represented the United States in nearly every war since and is the most decorated unit of our armed forces. The Warner Hotel takes its name from the former Warner Bros. movie theater that was the largest theater of its kind in southeastern PA when it opened in the fall of 1930. Its twin, in



Erie, PA., was preserved thanks to local activism. The theater is important to Civil Rights historians. Bayard Rustin, organizer of the 1963 "I Have A Dream" march, was arrested here as a teenager when he refused to sit in the "colored" section. A biography notes it was the first of 25 arrests he would log in a lifetime.

**Note on Gay Street:** Spence Café, now called the social Lounge: In the oyster bar days when former slaves from the South and black entrepreneurs dominated West Chester's uptown, a black man named James Spence was so successful he expanded his three story brick restaurant to the building you see today. The family patriarch, Henry Spence, established the oyster house with the help of his wife, Amanda, in 1850, and it continued through the remainder of the 1800s under the direction of his sons, James and Henry.

Around 1896, James went solo and eased out of the difficult oyster bar trade to focus on "light lunches and full dinners" at his "old reliable stand." Known then as "Spence's Central Cafe & Restaurant," the establishment featured "attentive waiters, with long experience," and "pleasing and comfortable Ladies rooms on the first floor." In 1906, with the plan of going into the hotel business, Spence expanded into the lot next door and added a fashionable façade to the entire structure. The new hotel featured balconies and French doors, and was described as "one of the finest business places in the borough." Spence's ambition, however, was quickly thwarted when he became enmeshed in a long court battle that resulted in the laws about "open" containers we have today. According to newspaper accounts, Spence secured the best "Democrat" attorney, "Colonel" A.M. Holding, and in front of an "anxious crowd" of African-Americans, declared "All I ask is fair treatment." Like Charles H. Burns, whose former oyster bar still stands near what is Kildare's, Spence faced trumped-up charges, but despite going to the state Supreme Court, eventually lost his business and his fortune.

### **Stop #3: 212 E. Market St, The Star Social Club**

The Star Social Club, founded in 1896, has been described as one of the oldest black chartered organizations in the state, but the site also offers a mini history in the way Black organizations and com-

As with many early clubs, its founding members first met in private homes and rented rooms. The Star Social, however, had a particularly long period without a permanent home. It wasn't until 1946 that the cornerstone – amid a grand ceremony, complete with men in top hats – was laid in this building once known as "McCormick's Hall" after the Irish owner who rented it out to farmers for agricultural events. Before the Star Social Club occupied the site, the building was known as the Royal Palace and served as the entertainment center for the black community. One floor of the club featured a roller skating rink and basketball court, but mostly the place was a hot spot for late night entertainment. Owner Harry "Hap's" Spriggs, a consummate entrepreneur whose business ventures often involved his 17 children, bought the building in the early 1940s, partly to establish a community center beyond his successful Royal Luncheonette across the street. It was under Spriggs' management that the Royal Palace became the place for all generations, and drew an entertainment roster that ranged from local tenor singers to big-name singers such as Count Basie, B.B. King, Fats Waller and Duke Ellington. The singer Ray Charles reportedly came to visit, but it was Sunday, and the Blue Laws were in effect, thus barring him from any entertainment.

### **Stop #4: 230 E Market St, Former Railroad Station**

Many historians today consider the razing of the former Market Street railroad station, in June of 1968, to be a major architectural loss to the borough. Its elaborate brickwork and tall Palladian windows, complete with protective eaves that jutted out from walls, gave the station a massive presence along Market Street. Despite a major fire in 1885, the station, built in 1867 (the same year that the Hartshorne Estate was built) remained relatively unchanged from 1885 to 1968. The improvements after the fire included the installation of new gas lamps and air vents as well as galvanized screens in the waiting rooms. Major improvements to the station, which one reporter described as being "fitted up in a grand style," included steam heat and the addition of a third floor. An inscription was set above the main door that read: West Chester & Philadelphia RR Depot Via Media. The passenger shelter was also equipped with new electric lights in 1886.

At its peak in the 1920s, the depot handled about 6,000 passengers a day, but by the time it closed in 1965, ridership had declined to a weekly average of 320 people, mainly because of poor service and poor management of the line, according to railroad historians. Today the site has been partly preserved by the West Chester Railroad Heritage Association, an all-volunteer, non-profit corporation that operates a tourist railroad here.

#### **Stop #5: 143 E. Miner St, Bayard Rustin's Birthplace**

This is the birthplace of Bayard Rustin, who last fall was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama. Compared to other parts of East Miner street, this stretch was once considered a desirable place to live in the 19th century. For one thing, the houses were made of brick (not flimsy frame) and the area was also just above the flood plain of the Goose Creek.

However, the sights and sounds of industry were not very far away. In addition to the massive Hoopes' Spokes Works, the Borough's gas works occupied both the northeast and southeast corners of South Matlack and East Miner (now part of a park). Beginning in 1852 until it closed in the 1960s, the land was occupied by a very Oz-like brick building with a network of metal supports and tall chimneys spewing black smoke.

One house important to African American history was only a short walk away from the gas works. The twin home at 143 East Miner St. could be described as Bayard Rustin's birthplace. It was where he lived as an infant with his teenage Mother, Florence, and his Grandparents, Janifer and Julia Rustin. They were living here when Rustin was born on March 17, 1912. According to Boyd's Directory, the entire family moved to 113 North New Street sometime between 1916 and 1917.

#### **Stop #6: 114 S. Walnut, First Black Presbyterian Church**

This church was built to house the Berman Baptist Church in 1872, but became part of the First Presbyterian Church after a committee led by Jessie Kelly, described as the church's first black member, purchased the building for \$3,500 in 1892. News accounts about weddings at the church seem to go hand-in-hand with the rise in the prosperity of African-Americans business owners. The celebrated wedding of William Hobbs, a young barber, to "Miss Ella Cain," daughter of a black oyster bar owner, notes that he had a "newly furnished" home at 122 S. Darlington, and that guests came from "Philadelphia, New York, and other places." The church's identity as an African-American church was perhaps underscored by an 1889 event, when a Liberian student from Lincoln University presented a bullwhip used by an African slave dealer, to James Spence's wife, Minerva.

In 1913 the church held an "Emancipation Celebration" with displays organized by John G. Gladman (who learned the barbering trade under Hobbs), to highlight inventions and achievements. The honorees included William H. Connors, principal of the Gay Street School, and Elisha Lomax, who had a 187-acre farm in Northbrook, then the largest black-owned farm in the county.

#### **Stop #7: 27 E. Miner St, Frame House pre-dating 1860**

Since the East End is known for its brick yards, it's not surprising that brick homes predominate here. One exception: just north of the intersection of South Walnut Street, number 27 is one of only ten frame houses that pre-date the 1860s in West Chester. It has been described by architectural historian Jane Dorchester as a rare survivor of a frame dwelling that was typical of this area from 1840 to 1859.



**Stop #8: 17 S. High St, Turk's Head Inn**

In the 1880s, this area was noted for its numerous business run by former slaves and black entrepreneurs, nearly all of whom were eventually forced out of businesses or encouraged to relocate to the East End. In the 1960s, the area underwent a dramatic change, with 1870s buildings razed and replaced by mock Colonial buildings. The loss of local landmarks included the borough's namesake tavern, the Turk's Head Hotel at High and Market Street. The Turks Head Hotel dated to 1769, but was razed to build a bank, as was the c.1852 Fame Firehouse (now the bank's parking lot). In the late 1800s, many of the black-owned businesses were clustered together. Some of the black-owned businesses included J.W. Brown's "Family Restaurant" at #40 E. Market St. This temperance establishment served "oysters, clams, crabs and shad" until midnight, but also "ice cream, pies, and cocoa" for the "jurors and court attendants" on their 1 p.m. dinner break.

At #22, James H. Bell, a former caterer, operated an oyster bar from around 1880 to 1883. It is not known why he went out of business since he expanded next door, to #20, and added a "special dining room for ladies," (who were normally discouraged from dining without their husbands).

In a building later replaced by an elegant printing plant (now Lamb McErlane law firm), John Gladman and his wife, Louisa, offered such practical services as barbering, ladies shampooing and clothes repair. They also lived in the building, along with their six children. In 1867, they also advertised that they could accommodate guests at the Turk's Head with "Hot and Cold Baths at all times."

Next door, at #32, another black entrepreneur, George H. Ganges offered hand-churned ice cream and treats for three generations. Ganges, who was credited for bringing the then novelty ice cream to the borough, grew his business by going door to door with a hand-cart.

**Stop #9: 206 N. Church St, Quaker School & Synagogue**

This is the last surviving structure of the former Orthodox Friends community, or "Quaker Block," in the borough. A small datestone indicates its former use as a library and school. Early photographs show a spacious side yard (later the site of the borough's first and only synagogue) and a similarly hooded-style roof above the school entrance.

A 1980 architectural history describes the structure as having an unusual serpentine stone foundation and evidence of a former carriage house and shop at the rear of the building.

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## Marshall Square Tour

### Stop #1: 102 Lafayette St, LaFayette Stone

Lafayette's stone on Lafayette street. Marquis de Lafayette was 19 years old when he served as a major-general under George Washington in the Battle of the Brandywine on Sept. 11, 1777. He had learned English on the ship over and was wounded on the battlefield. He returned to Chadds Ford in July of 1825 and was encouraged to visit West Chester by a large group of veterans. Lafayette even spent the night, in the Ziba Pyle home (now Penn's Table restaurant at Gay and Church) and took part in a militia parade that made borough history. Legend has it that the street/alley here was never developed because the residents of the nearby Quaker block opposed celebrating a spot commemorating Lafayette's review of the militia. In fact, the street on this side of High Street was known as Fayette Street until the 1920s when a family donated the marble marker.

### Stop #2: Hogue's Alley

This alley is one of the few alleys' in West Chester named for a local resident. Thomas Hogue, whose house is the first in the alley, was one of West Chester's best known 19th-century merchants. He was one of the first to devise "one-stop" shopping and to form an early version of a chamber of commerce. His store, a part hardware/grocery store, looks fairly small today (it is the former ice cream parlor across from Starbucks ) but it was the Wegman's of its time in terms of brand imaging.

Hogue spent a fortune when he purchased the foundation of an old saddlery shop (1814), acquired serpentine at a nearby quarry and built a Second Empire-style building. Until 1980, when a fire destroyed its "bonnet" –style Mansard roof, one could see a large glass window facing Gay Street that was a reminder of the days when the second story housed a 19th century photography studio. It is not known if the sign seen here is original but an early newspaper notice describes a sign "professionally painted" in 1880 that was 20 feet long.



### **Stop #3: 620 Matlack St, Elbow Lane**

Historians in the 1980s recommended this area to be part of a historic district, mainly because the neighborhood dates to 1929 - 1930 when local residents took up the Colonial Revival movement. The group of residents included Joseph Hergesheimer, an acclaimed novelist whose nearby home, Dower House, is the only one in West Chester remodeled by the famous Colonial Revival architect Richardson Brognard Okie.

The houses at 620 N. Matlack and 125 E. Virginia are two of five area houses designed in the early 1930s by a now unknown architect named Henry Price. Price was a renegade in his time for his ideas on historic preservation. In fact, long after the Arts & Craft movement, Price continued to focus on craftsmanship. Many of the homes borrow from the Colonial Revival style but numerous windows, doors, mantels were recycled from dozens of late Federal structures that were razed to build the Ben Franklin Bridge in Philadelphia in 1929. Price was said to have thought in architectural "collections," designing one house on Elbow Lane to resemble an old farm house and another, an old barn (look for the gambrel roof). Note the outdoor stairway leading to the roof. One of the houses was adapted from a stable and briefly served as Price's residence.

### **Stop #4: 220 Ashbridge St, Penicillin House**

From 1933 to 1964, this Colonial Revival-style home was occupied by G. Raymond Rettew, a research chemist who discovered the way to mass produce penicillin after he met the West Chester owner of a major mushroom house (that still stands at E. Adams and E. Union Street). Rettew first experimented with mushroom spawn beginning in 1942, using a makeshift lab above his garage. Eventually, his factory relocated to N. Walnut and then E. Chestnut (now the parking garage) and became the world's largest producer in volume of penicillin.

### **Stop #5: Marshall Square Park**

Stop at the future site of the restored Marshall Square Park fountain. The Friends of the park are now raising funds to re-install a large cast-iron Victorian fountain. The fountain had been missing for more than 60 years when it was discovered a few years ago at a farm in Cheney and donated back to the park. The grandeur of the fountain, typical of a kind one would find in a city, is said to be reflective of the park's 19th-century status. It was known for its exotic trees and as a working man's retreat from the nearby industrial area that included the Sharples factory (now an apartment complex). Interestingly, the park, a former nursery and water reservoir, made legal history when it was created in 1878, the result of an ordinance that effectively had the borough take over the property by a form of eminent domain. It was named for Humphrey Marshall, a famous colonial botanist from Marshallton, PA. Monument: This 8 foot high bronze soldier honors the 97th Civil War regiment. This was one of Chester County's largest regiments, comprised of many West Chester natives who were recruited by a wealthy citizen named Henry "Col" R. Guss. It is assumed after the war that Guss was not well-liked by the mothers of the fallen. In addition to developing West Chester (as the owner of several brick and lumber yards), Guss came from a family of tavern keepers and later owned the Green Tree Tavern. Still in the park, 200 E. Biddle. The former Joshua Hoopes Boarding school for Boys, which operated from 1836 to 1862. (The house is surrounded by the wall, which dates to the 1920s). Note the front door, which once led to the main dining room. It was said that students were instructed to line up Oliver-Twist style, to receive their morning porridge. At one point, the school was said to have drawn wealthy students from South America. The Daily Local News, in fact, often wrote of their odd "Spanish" ways and how they often sent telegrams home from Guss's Green Tree Tavern. The house was built by Nathan Sharples.

**Stop #6: 125 E Washington, Buffalo Bill's House**

"Buffalo" Bill lived at 125 E. Washington, from 1883- 1885.

**Stop #7: 226 North High Street, Armory**

This is "Horticultural hall" (CCHS) where Fredrick Douglas recruited black soldiers. The first State Women's Convention was held here in 1852.

Armory: The West Chester National Guard Armory building was built in 1916 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It housed the National Guard's Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry and 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, which traces its lineage directly to Benjamin Franklin, who formed the unit in 1747 to protect the Colonies in the French and Indian War. This unit of soldiers has represented the United States in nearly every war since and is the most decorated unit of our armed forces.

This grand 10,900 square foot space with its barrel-vaulted ceiling offers the perfect venue for a theater and will be a lasting tribute to courage and sacrifices made by the men of the Bravo Company!

**Stop #8: 396 N Church St, West Chester's . first Public School**

As you can tell from the separate "Boys" and "Girls" entrances , this building was a former high school. Once one of five public schools in the borough, including a high school next door (now a parking lot), it was the only public school that was adapted instead of razed. It was built in 1917 on the site of the borough's first public school (1866), using many of the same bricks. When the high school was built next door, it became known as the Biddle Street (elementary) School. Another school, built across the street by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was known as the Auditorium School mainly because of its 1000 seat theater. It was demolished sometime after the West Chester Area School District formed in the early 1950s.

**Stop #10: 415 N. Church St, Library**

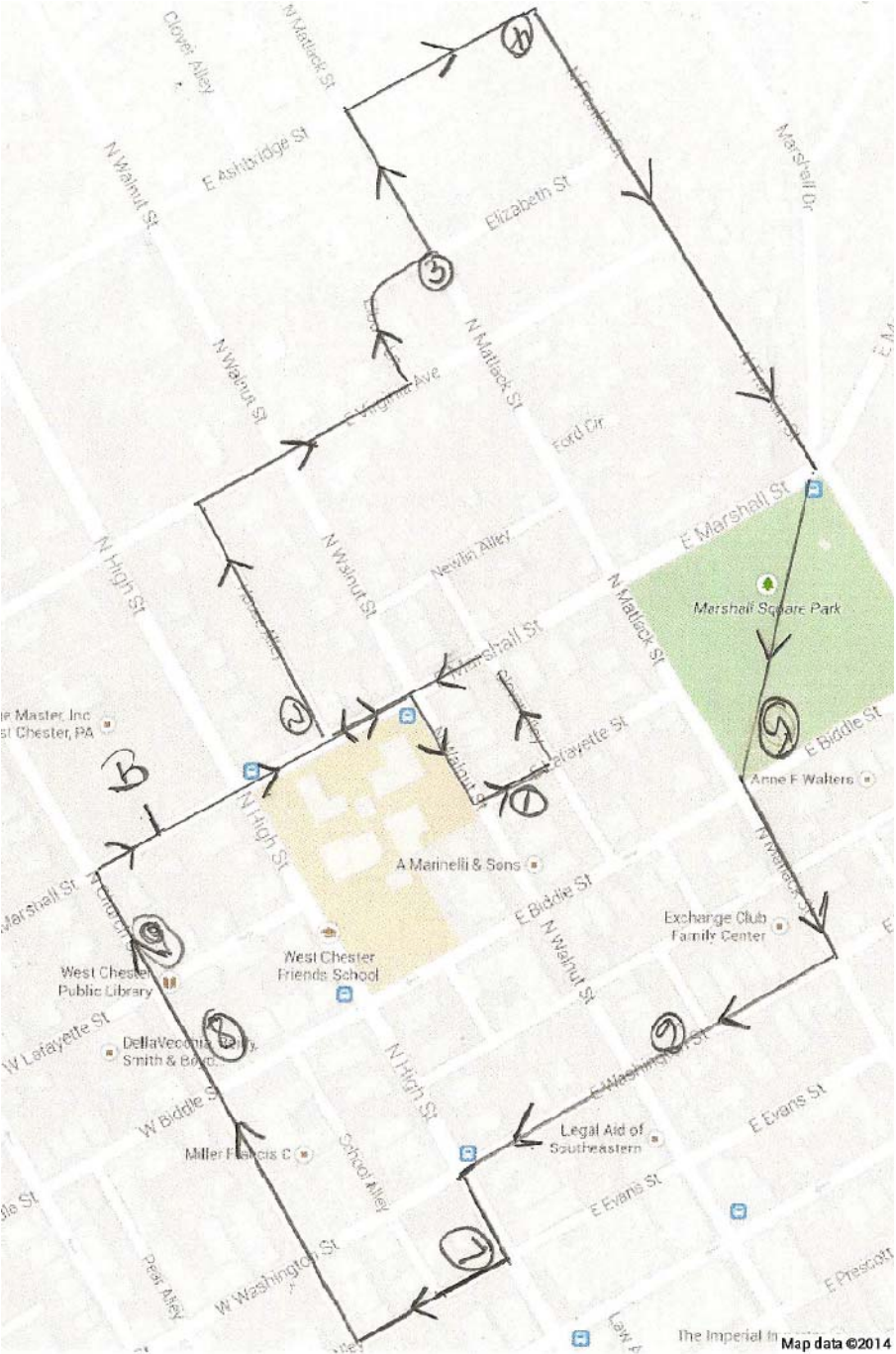
The construction of this beautiful library in 1888 was the result of community support – a first in the borough at a time when commerce was booming and attention was often on money-making schemes. In fact, library "shelves" existed in local stores as early as 1815 and a library group was formed in 1872, but it wasn't until the late 1800s that money was secured to hire the architect, T. Roney Williamson, a West Chester native who had returned to the borough in 1884. Legend has it that his Quaker family discouraged him from more commercial pursuits in Philadelphia, and that he developed his personal Queen Ann style here, often using multiple materials in a single building. The library is comprised of locally-made brick and Avondale stone, with stucco and copper accents.

# Uptown Tour

## Stop #1: 100 W. Virginia, Four Sisters

The houses along this lovely street were long ago dubbed the “Four Sisters” in tribute to their distinctive look and the fact that they were built by the same architect, using the now rare serpentine stone. Most date to the late 1880s, when a quarry in West Chester was being mined to build “Old Main” at West Chester University, once the nation’s largest load-bearing serpentine structure. Built on the former Rutter’s nurseries, the Four Sisters were considered marvels of their time, partly because the Philadelphia-based architect Addison Hutton designed their placement with spacious lawns in mind. While many of homeowners worked locally, several homes were occupied over the years by the borough’s first railroad commuters. Ironically, in the days when Rutter’s nurseries occupied most of the neighborhood, one of the borough’s few 19th century African-American real estate developers, Abram Dobson, owned six lots on the northeast corner of Church and Virginia.

The first lot to be sold was the corner lot, at 100 Virginia. This lovely eccentric house was designed by T. Roney Williamson, architect of the West Chester library and Court house annex. In fact, the house was said to be his first commission and the first structure where he experimented with the use of many materials: stone, brick, frame and metal. It was built for Stephen P. Darlington, the son of William Darlington, whose former home is also on the tour. It was said that the son was responsible for extending Church Street to Virginia. The house later became famous as the home of the 19th century author and historian, W. Wilmer MacElree. Note that the house is unusual in that it was excavated into a hill with full-length basement windows. It also had a stable.



**Stop #2: 516 Scott's Alley**

Rutter lived at what is now the Swedenborg House when he sold part of his property to Hartshorne in 1866. However, most of the carriage houses along Scott Alley date to 1890, decades after Church Street was expanded north from E. Chestnut Street.

Much like early service alleys in Philadelphia, many of the carriage houses including #516 are large enough to accommodate buggies, horses, hay/fodder and the stable manager's residence. Note the beautiful examples of adaptive reuse here. Mainly because of the rare intact examples found here, carriage houses were cited as important historic resources in the borough's 2001 comprehensive plan.

**Stop #3: Pear Alley**

Before the Barclay or Hartshorne mansion was built, the Barclay grounds were part of a vast fruit nursery owned by John Rutter. Rutter's name is not well known today, but at one point, the pear he developed was considered superior and won more prizes than the "Bartlett" pear familiar to us today. The nearby Pear Alley takes its name from the alleys of pear trees that once stood there. Remarkably, the Rutter pear was one of at least 23 different varieties of fruits and other trees grown in and around the Barclay grounds including almonds. Interestingly, Rutter's story may be the best example of a 19th-century career change. A former attorney, Rutter was said to have entered the nursery trade when he got caught up in the silkworm craze of 1836 and planted dozens of mulberry trees favored by the worms used in silk production. He eventually abandoned that for fruit trees and became one of the nation's foremost experts on pear and peach trees. In fact, his seminal study on the diseases of peaches is still used today. Until his book was published, farmers in the state were unable to grow good peaches in Pennsylvania's humid conditions.

**Stop #4: 43 W Gay St, Former site of Star Social Club**

In the 19th century, this site contained two important African-American enterprises – the Star Social Club and in a cellar downstairs, John W. Brown's Oyster & Eating Saloon. Brown offered "cheap" meals at a time in 1870s when cellar eateries were monitored by strict ordinances and the difficult and seasonal oyster trade was generally reserved for black entrepreneurs. Brown purchased the business around 1873 from Fortune Fullerton, another black business owner who was said to have sparked the oyster trade in the borough, operating oyster bars near the court house and at the famous Mansion House at Church and Market streets. At one point, Brown advertised that ladies could enjoy a special "apartment" while men in the adjoining saloon could partake in "full hotel dinners" and "ale, beer, and cider." Although news items suggest that Brown was successful at this location, he later relocated to E. Market Street.

Although the Star Social Club at this location featured formal parlors and pool rooms, news items in the 1900s suggest that the club was not just another smoking den for card-and-pool-playing men. There were all-day outings at Deborah's Rock, a popular picnic spot along the Brandywine, as well as open-air dances and formal balls featuring "Prof. Jones' Orchestra." In the 1940s and 1950s, the club continued to have a taste for refinement, inviting guest lecturers to speak and holding afternoon teas.

### **Stop #5: 15 N. Church, Abolitionist Newspaper**

Yoris Bakery - Former Abolitionist newspaper: This elegantly restored building was built in 1833, the same year as the historic Lincoln building on nearby E. Market St. It was built to house the Odd Fellows Lodge but after only a year, it became the headquarters for West Chester's longest running newspaper, The Village Record (1822-1920). Charles Miner was perhaps its most influential publisher. A Connecticut native and son of a printer, Miner came to West Chester after serving in the U.S. House of Representatives. Within the year, in 1817, he purchased the newspaper and changed its name to The Village Record. Typical of the times, it was an one-man operation with Miner serving as its publisher, letterpress operator, business manager, and editor. Miner even sold stationery supplies and world globes. Still, the Record was hardly a small town operation: Miner saw his paper as a forum for his anti-slavery and political views and made a point of reaching a broad audience. A notice in 1827 boasted its subscribers in Georgia, Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. One of the paper's chief correspondents in the early years was Henry Clay, later a mentor to Abraham Lincoln.

### **Stop #6: 127 W. Miner, Ben Freeman's House**

Former Slave Ben Freeman's House: In the early 1870s, this neighborhood was scarcely populated and was filled with pockets of industry including a brickyard extending along Barnard Street. Note the trees along this section of Church Street. They were said to have been planted to serve as a shady promenade to a large public fairground near what is now West Chester University. On an 1873 map, two aspects stand out: a large brickyard and the borough's first public school. Sometime in 1830, Benjamin Freeman, a former slave born in Maryland, acquired land on the Sharples brick yards and build his house, probably using the bricks from the yard. He lived here with his wife, Jane Holmes, for nearly 50 years. One of only three known black Underground Railroad agents, Freeman was said to have won his freedom, at the age of 26, in part because of his skills as a driver, one who was capable of handling large teams of horses pulling heavy loads.

In West Chester, he was able to acquire his own hauling cart and was known for making a living with the help of his bull named Barney. Together with Abraham Shadd, a shoemaker, and John Gladman, a barber, Freeman helped form the Harmony School Association in 1838 – named for its goal of solidarity – and worked with the school district to build the first school for black children in 1844.

No images survive of the school, but on the 1873 map, it stood directly across the street from Freeman's house. In an 1855 account, it was described as being filled with “spiders, rats and mice” after a brief stint as Catholic school. It was torn down sometime after its abrupt closing, in 1856, by order of the school board.

### **Stop #7: 128 S. High, Abraham Doras Shadd's House**

Abraham Doras Shadd may be West Chester's most celebrated African-American Abolitionist, but his former home has no historical plaque and he is better known in southern Ontario, Canada, where he moved with his family sometime in 1855 and became the first black man to hold a public office.

A native of Wilmington, Del. Shadd called for an integration of blacks and whites, and felt, as his daughter Mary Ann did, that living separate but equal lives would only cause later fractions. His daughter went onto to establish an anti-slavery newspaper, *The Provincial Freeman* in 1853 in Canada, and is remembered today as the first black female writer and publisher in North America. In addition to working with Ben Freeman on the Underground Railroad, Shadd openly protested various slavery laws. In 1852, for instance, he traveled to the state capitol with John Gladman, a barber, and George Schreeves, the principal of the Harmony School, and tried to persuade Congress not to adopt a law barring the immigration of blacks from the South. Their letter to Congress – later reprinted in the abolitionist newspaper, *Pennsylvania Freeman* – stated that “inhuman laws” had already created an atmosphere of terror among the free black community. They were unable to travel freely, “visiting our friends,” they wrote, “without the liability of being heavily fined or sold into Slavery.”

In West Chester, Shadd made his fortune in a trade generally off limits to free black men: shoemaking. Throughout his time in West Chester, Shadd was able to support his wife and 13 children by operating a small shop behind his house. The family reportedly lived here sometime between 1833 and 1839, when they moved to a small farm near Westtown. However, judging from news notices, Shadd might have retained his shop. Borough tax records in 1848 indicate that his shop employed three men and one female, who made 600 pairs of boots and shoes valued at \$1,600.

#### **Stop #8: 226 North High Street, Armory**

The West Chester National Guard Armory building was built in 1916 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It housed the National Guard's Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry and 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, which traces its lineage directly to Benjamin Franklin, who formed the unit in 1747 to protect the Colonies in the French and Indian War. This unit of soldiers has represented the United States in nearly every war since and is the most decorated unit of our armed forces. This grand 10,900 square foot space with its barrel-vaulted ceiling offers the perfect venue for a theater and will be a lasting tribute to courage and sacrifices made by the men of the Bravo Company!

#### **Stop #9: 396 N. Church, First Public School**

Former Site of West Chester's first public school (Entrance 396 N. Church): As you can tell from the separate "Boys" and "Girls" entrances, this building was a former high school. Once one of five public schools in the borough, including a high school next door (now a parking lot), it was the only public school that was adapted instead of razed. It was built in 1917 on the site of the Borough's first public school (1866), using many of the same bricks. When the high school was built next door, it became known as the Biddle Street (elementary) School. Another school, built across the street by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was known as the Auditorium School mainly because of its 1,000 seat theater. It was demolished sometime after the West Chester area school district formed in the early 1950s.

#### **Stop #10: 411 N. Church St, Sinclair Lewis' House**

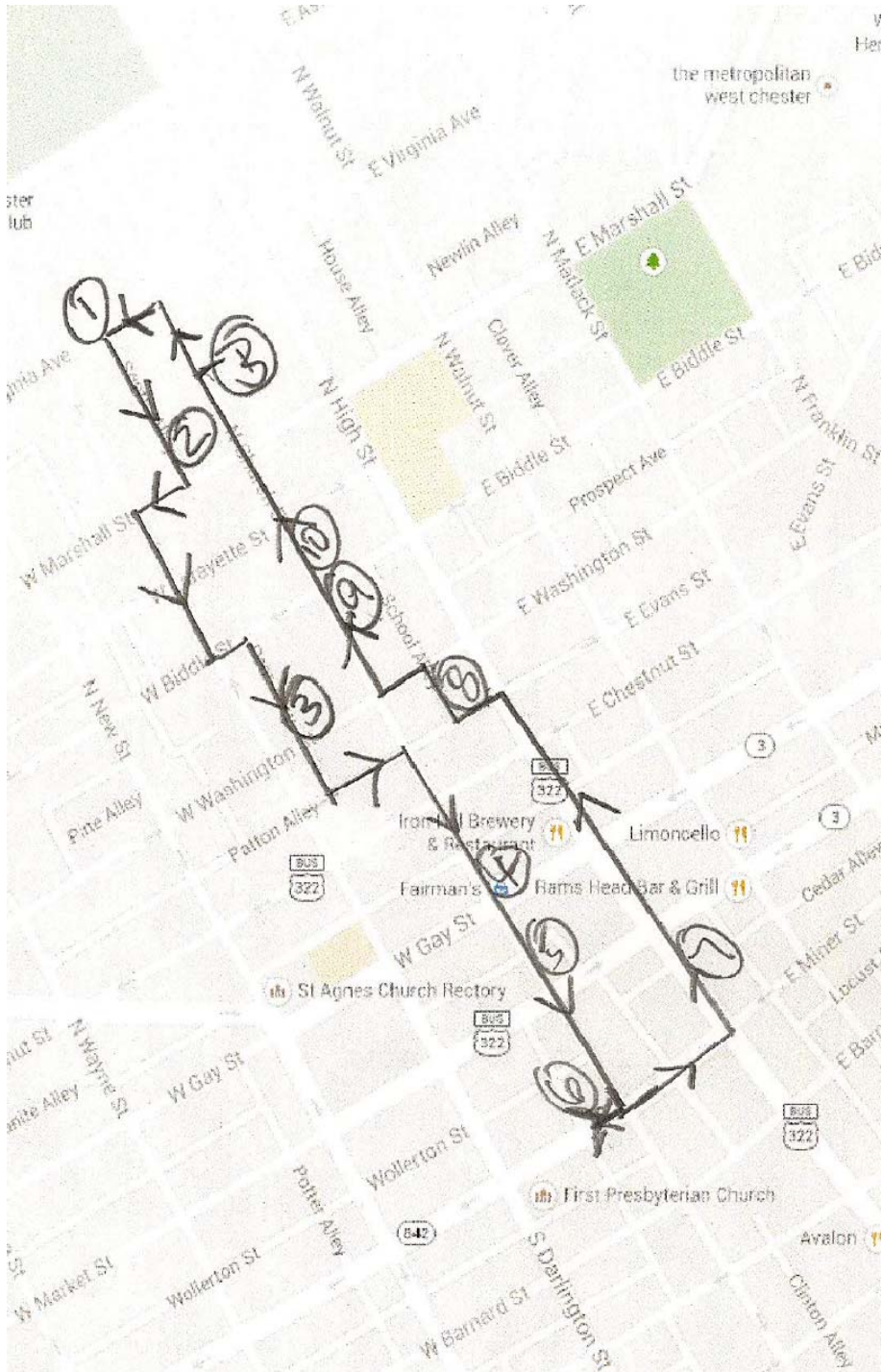
The late historian Paul Rodebaugh is credited for tracking the famous former occupant of this house: the novelist Sinclair Lewis. The story is also documented in the 2002 book, *Rebel From Main Street*.

According to Rodebaugh, Lewis rented this house at the suggestion of Joseph Hergesheimer, one of the most celebrated novelists of his day whose home, Dower House, overlooked the golf course north of High.

Typical of the roaring 1920s, Hergesheimer hosted numerous affairs at his home including "bathtub" gin parties. He typically invited guests from his travels to Hollywood such as Lillian Gish, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks but only a few guests have been documented. At least one party was attended by Scott Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda, who once traveled, in a single night, from Baltimore to West Chester and then Chadds Ford, where they saw the artist N.C. Wyeth.

Local tradition holds that Hergesheimer encouraged Lewis to find his material for his work in progress, the novel *Main Street* (1920). However, Lewis only stayed a few weeks, complaining that the town was too socially active for his tastes.





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## **Upcoming Events!**

### **July 13—Cycle for the Trees**

A fun day of cycling for people of all abilities: From 25 and 50 mile rides for cycling enthusiasts to a family fun ride through the Borough.

When: July 13th 2014, starting at 8:00 am (50 miles 8:00 am; 25 miles 8:30 am; Family Ride 9:00 am)

Where: Start and Finish are the Barclay Grounds in West Chester PA, at the corner of Marshall Street and Church Street

<http://www.savethebarclaygrounds.org/cycle-for-the-trees/>

### **Fall 2014—Art and Food in West Chester**

An art studio tour and culinary experience. The event will include an auction of wood carving art made from branches that fell from trees in the Barclay Grounds this winter. (exact date to be announced)

<http://www.savethebarclaygrounds.org>

