

***Mansion House Foundation  
at Radley Run  
Historic District  
Brandywine Meadow Farm's***

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***Self Guided  
Walking Tour  
with Mather's Family Album***

## ***Early Painter History***

Welcome to the Mansion House Foundation at Radley Run & Grounds. We invite you to take your time and enjoy all of the Painter and Mather history that abounds throughout our property.

The land was first purchased by William Penn from the English Crown. A 1,000 acre parcel of land was resold to the township's first settlers, John Collier and Samuel Painter in **1722**. The land we reside on was purchased by John Collier. When Collier died in **1747**, Samuel Painter Jr. acquired the western part of Collier's land to expand the Painter plantation northward. Samuel Jr. erected the small house (behind the mansion) for his paid indentured servants who worked the land. His second son, James built a 30x30 house (the beginnings of the mansion) in **1770**. James married his betrothed, Jane Carter in **1771**.

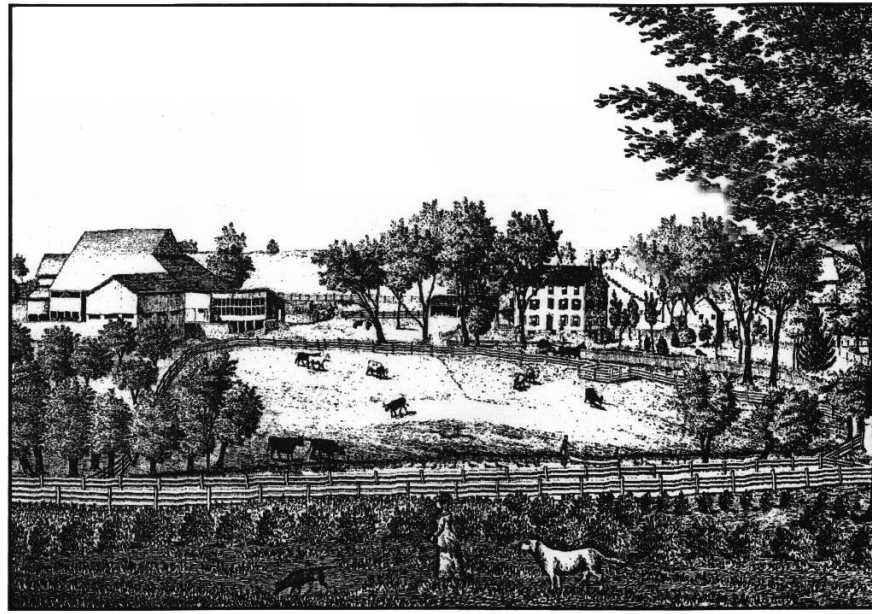
The Revolutionary War came through this quiet area for all to witness the largest Battle that was fought during the **Revolutionary War**. Jane's diaries quoted that the English soldiers drank the well dry and ate all food, including raw rising dough. See battle info page 21, .

On **September 11, 1777**, Gen. George Washington was determined to prevent the British from capturing the American seat of government in Philadelphia, so his troops took up position at Chadds Ford's Brandywine Creek crossing. Opposing Washington was General Sir William Howe and an army of 15,500 British Regulars and Hessian troops. Hidden by heavy fog, the British moved into position.

More troops fought at Brandywine than any other battle of the American Revolution. It was also the bloodiest and longest single-day battle of the war, with continuous fighting for 11 hours.

The Painters used this land as a working farm with wool fulling mill, woolen factory, tailoring, saw mills and various other businesses. The Spring/Lye house was their work house and office. The fulling mill was a busy place on Radley Run creek. The remains of this fulling mill can be seen on Charles Mather's overview photo of his property that was taken in 1927. This photo can be seen on page 19 of this booklet, along with close up view of the back of the enlarged Spring House for handling great quantities of wool fabric.

When James Painter died in **1822**, his grandson, James II, took over ownership of the farmhouse and in **1847** enlarged the house into three stories and added two more bays to make the



house five bays wide. (A bay is an opening in the wall.)

James II commissioned an artist to draw the above sketch of his property after construction was completed. Notice how large the barn is in this picture. This was a large productive farm.

Quakers did not believe in “owning another man.” The Painter’s paid indentured servants to help with their business. They did not believe in slavery and aided the **Underground Railroad** passengers to their next station in the middle of the night.

James’s property descended in **1874** to William and Minshall Painter who brought their dairy farm into a high prosperous state of cultivation to sell fresh produce and dairy products to a large market, including Philadelphia. The Painter family owned the land continuously for 150 years by the time it was sold in **1897**.

**Charles E. Mather** was Master of the Radnor Hunt for over 10 years when the Radnor’s Board voted to change the English fox hound pack to American stock, after many of their English pack died of disease. Mather did not approve of Radnor Hunt’s idea. Changing to American fox hounds would make a slower, shorter hunt because American hounds could not run as fast or as far as English fox hounds. Mather owned a pack of English fox hounds at his estate in Haverford and decided to start his own hunt elsewhere. Mr. Mather was a wealthy Philadelphia insurance broker, whose firm is still thriving today.



Charles E. Mather, Master of Radnor Hunt

**Charles E. Mather,  
Master of Brandywine Meadow Farm's Hunt**



THE RADNOR PACK OF ENGLISH HOUNDS, 1893

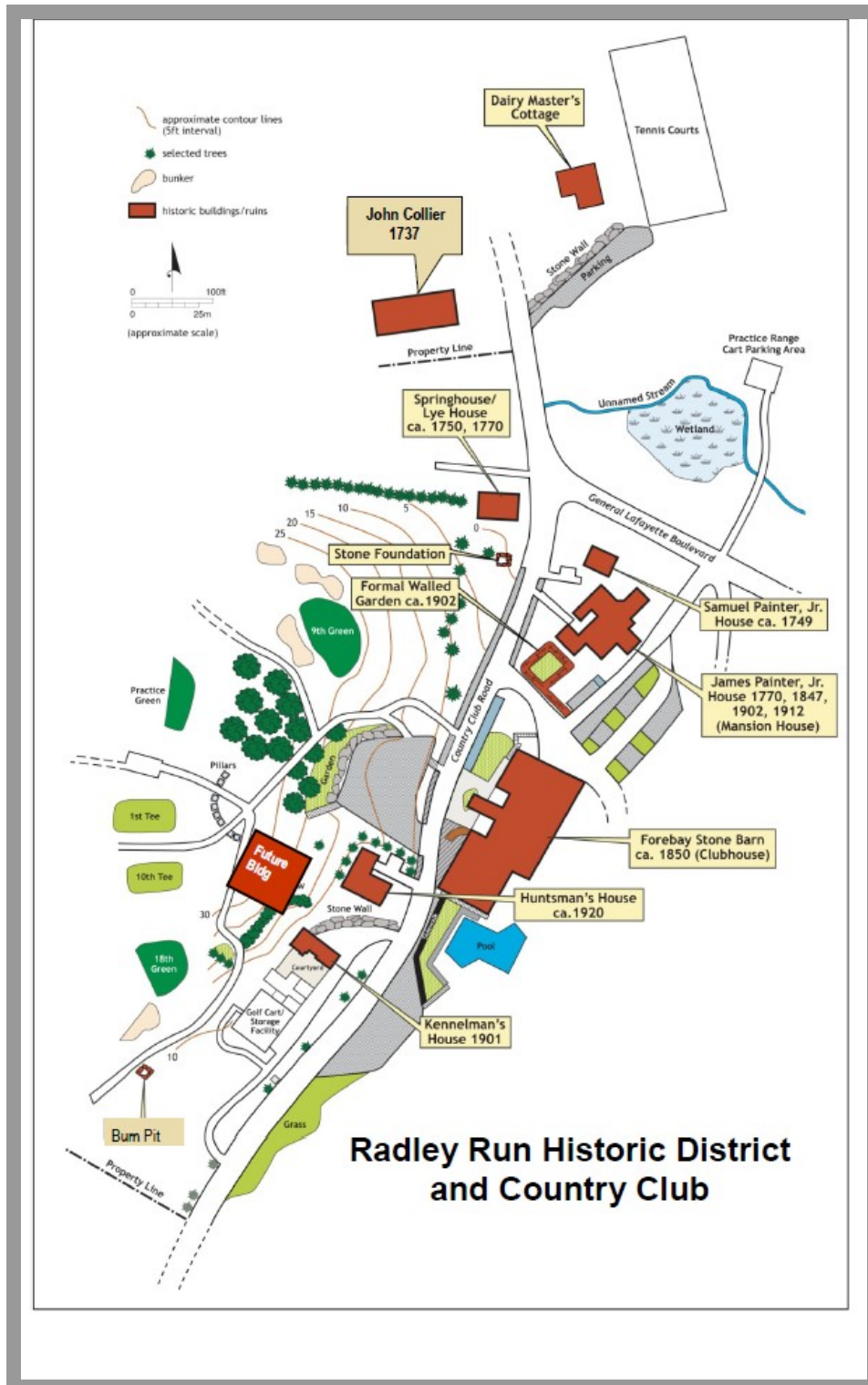
Charles E. Mather, M.F.H., center.

In **1897**, the Painter dairy farm sold for \$15,000 at a Sheriff's auction to become the celebrated home of Charles E. Mather's **Brandywine Meadow Farm's** Premier Fox Hunting Box. Mr. Mather was one of the most prestigious fox hunting enthusiasts in the United States. In the above photo, you can see Mr. Mather riding with Radnor Hunt in **1893**.

Brandywine Meadow complex has provided our community with an American style of gracious and exciting pastoral living patterned after the colorful recreational fox hunting pursuits of England. Mather's city estate of was located in Haverford, The Farm was for hunting week-ends, occasional Wednesdays, and holiday pursuits. Charles did not live at the Farm.







## Historic Area Self Guided Walking Tour

Your self guided walking tour will **begin in the garden** of the Mansion House. This area is where the Painter's carriage house stood in ruins, which was redesigned to look like an Italian garden by Charles Mather's architects, Keen & Mead in **1902**.

Look up at the house's date stone at the roof peak. The Painter original house's date stone says **1770 I P** ("I" was

often used for "J") Our property is on the edge of the Brandywine Battlefield *Planning Boundary* map which is not within the Landmark area where the 1777 battle took place.

From Mather's Garden, proceed onto the massive 3-story portico outside the front door to the Mansion House. This majestic portico was added by Mather's architects to impress the visiting hunting gentry so you cannot mistake this for the plain, Quaker farmhouse of yesteryear.

While standing under the portico, look to the right of the front door to find a straight seam of mortar going upward that indicates the widened **1847** addition of the house, from the original 30x30 Painter's 2 story house, making it 3 stories high.

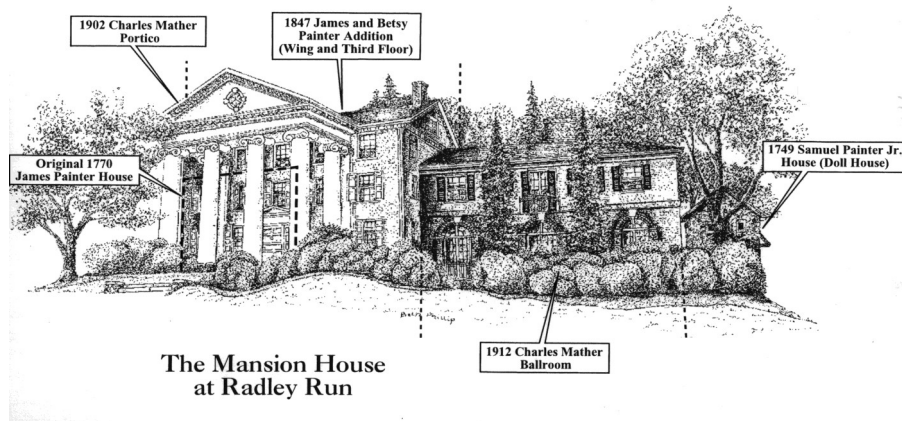
This below photo was taken of Charles on his prize hunting horse to show the new majestic 3 story portico in **1902**. Notice the small house in the right background on a snowy day. Mather changed the



CHARLES E. MATHER, ESQ., M. F. H.

entry hall stairs to mahogany, and added a palladium window on the stair landing to lend elegance to the hallway.

This tour does **not** take you inside the Mansion.



In **1912**, the Ballroom addition was added at the east end of the mansion, where many grand parties were held with the wealthy and famous in attendance. The upstairs had 8 bedrooms and baths for house guests for the farm's fox hunting weekends and holidays. Many traveled from far and wide for the chance to ride in Mather's famous "most English of Fox Hunts." Invitations were prized achievements.



Charles Mather with his sons Gilbert (youngest) and Victor (oldest) in a touching photo before they served in World War I.



### Gilbert Mather during a hunt



After Charles died in **1928**, Gilbert moved his family to the farm to be close to his beloved fox hounds and commuted from the farm to his Philadelphia insurance firm during the week..

Gilbert knew every name of his fox hounds and spent many Sundays playing with his pack. His favorite fox hounds spent a great deal of time at his farm house.



Gilbert and Gladys had 3 girls, Mary, Ann and Jane. Jane loved the hunt and riding best of their children. No one could out ride Jane.

One beautiful day, Jane begged her mother to please let her miss school and go riding. Mom said no. Gilbert heard a ruckus in the kitchen and came in to see what was happening. Jane ran to Gilbert to beg him to allow her to go riding on such a lovely day. Gilbert

slapped his thigh and said, "What a great idea! Let's go riding!" Jane did not go to school that day.

Gilbert died in **1958**.

Young Jane riding in a show.

Jane inherited the farm and became Master of the Brandywine Fox Hounds. The Farm was sold in **1963**.





Walk around the Mansion's ballroom to find Samuel Painter Jr.'s small indentured **servants house** that first appeared on tax records of **1749**.

Men were paid free passage to America to work for 5 years, plus a small stipend. Consider how many did not make it over the rough seas. Take a stroll around the exterior of the house that was originally one room up and down, plus the basement.



In the **1980s**, this small house was remodeled for rental income by adding a kitchen and bath. The small historic house has had continuous rentals since this renovation. The latest reroofing of the little house occurred in March **2021** by the **Mansion House Foundation** who wanted to preserve it's structure for future generations to enjoy.

Across Country Club Road is now the stabilized ruin of the **1750 Spring/Lye house**. In **1770**, another floor was added to expand the Painter's successful wool factory business. The family used this as a multipurpose workhouse for many different Painter businesses.



*Photo by M. Kennedy*

A photo of Mr. Mather's overview of his estate in **1927** (p. 19), shows a long annex wing added on the back of the Spring House.

Joseph Painter sold woolen goods to the US Army for uniforms for the War of 1812. Good Quakers did not assist in aiding dissention of any kind. Painter's neighbors did not like how he conducted business that was forbidden by their faith. One night, seventy yards of flannel stretched on frames outside to dry were cut to pieces. Image how many

people it took to quietly chop up 70 yards of cloth! Mr. Painter offered a \$200 reward (huge for that day) for persons who did this deed. At another time, Painter's barn was burned in response to his dealing with the government.

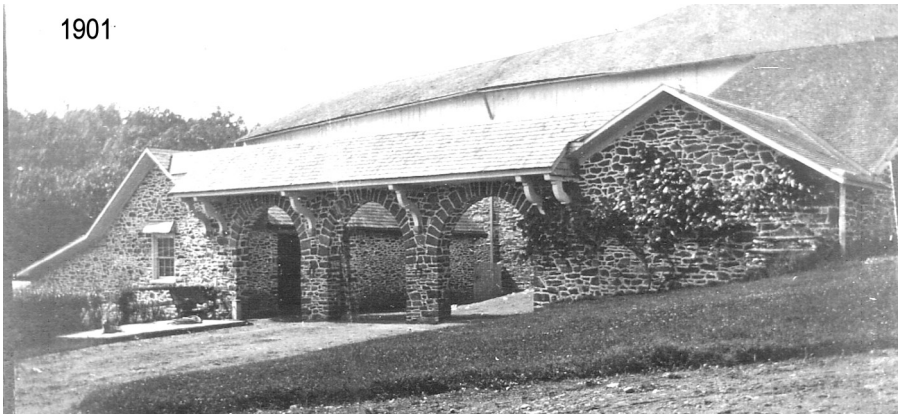
This is how the Spring/Lye House looked in the **1990s**. It has been used as a real estate office for Radley Run Homes, country club office and tennis office.



## ***Mather's Fox Hunting Era***

Walk up the hill to see the present Club house on the left that was once the largest **fore bay bank stone barns** and most beautiful in Chester County of the day.

1901



Grand arches were designed inside and out for a pleasing look to impress guests. Mather's architects redesigned the old dairy barn for his valuable hunting horses that were equipped with soft cork floors to protect the horse's hoofs. Cow sanctions from the dairy days were removed and made into elaborate horse stalls for Mather's prize horses. It was a state of the arts equestrian facility for all riders.



Mr. Mather would leave a small silver fox on his desk at the insurance company during the week when he was away fox hunting.

Guests were supplied with spirited horses and Mr. Mather made sure the hounds ran one or more foxes during the day's hunt. Charles stopped riding in the hunts past **70** years of age, but could be seen "hill sitting," watching the fox hunt below. Charles died in **1928**.

The Mather Hunt did not observe "social" fences. Courteous relationships were cultivated with farmers whichever direction the fox took the hounds and hunters. Any damage done by the hunt would immediately be repaired by Mather's workmen. Local farmers were encouraged to breed free of charge with Mather's prized hunting horses. Many offspring became hunting horses and sold very advantageously.

Anyone was welcome to ride in Mather's fox hunts if they could keep up with the pack.





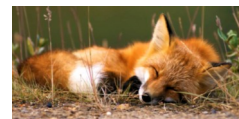


While you are in front of the present day Club House, look across Country Club Road to see the **Huntsman's House** built of fieldstone ca. **1920s**. The house is now used as the Club's Golf Pro Shop. The kitchen and garage wing was added to the north at a later date. The **2010** Chester County Parks & Recreation Walking Tour had Mary Ann Poppa visiting the tour who was the last Huntsman's wife to work on



Gilbert's farm. Mary Ann said Mr. Mather was the nicest man who took care for everyone. All hands loved working on his farm. There were picnics and games for his men and their families. Mary Ann gave us photos of their fun at picnics. See above. Sunday afternoons were for visiting family, friends and tea. And a day of rest for the fox.

Since the native Pennsylvania fox had gray in it's coat, local Hunts wanted English fox hounds, and they also wanted true English red foxes to chase. In the 1800s, Radnor and Rose Tree Hunts shipped English red foxes into their hunt areas.



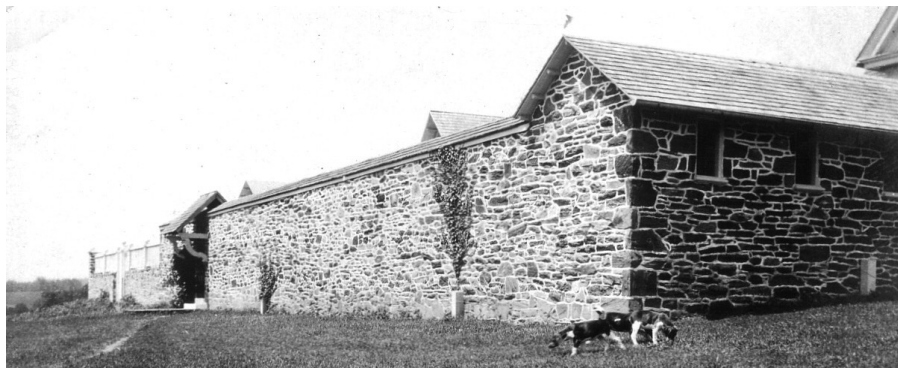




HOUSES LEAVING KENNELS IN CHARGE OF WILLIAM THOMPSON, *Huntsman*, 1905-1925

To the left of Huntsman's House is the **Kennelman's House**. The kennels were designed after Belvoir Kennels of England, from where the fox hounds were purchased. Mr. Mather's pack of 65 English fox hounds were his pride and joy and were more important to him than his horses.

English fox hounds could run faster and further, out running American hounds. Riding with a pack of fast, English fox hounds was very exciting, that all riders were eager to ride in Mather's Hunts.



Hound's beds were burned in the burning pit which helped keep disease at bay, The pit is beside the 18th green,

The back end of the Kennels were torn down in **2005** to make room for Golf Cart storage barn so it does not exist today,

Mr. Mather was careful to not over hunt an area of foxes and watched their liars to be sure there were ample foxes to hunt now and in the future.





Across the street from the **Huntsman and Kennelman's Houses** was once called **Mud Row** for the farm's work horses. As you can see today, this is now the swimming pool area..

You have **finished** Mather's Brandywine Meadow Farm's Walking Tour of Radley Run's Historic District.

We hope you enjoyed your history walk and can appreciate all the red foxes that have survived to run another day.



Here is an old photo from Mather's family album that was taken at the intersection on Creek Road, along the Brandywine Creek.

Notice Mather's signature posts that were on entrances marking his property. Today, these posts are smaller and few remain.

## **Mather's Family Album** *(continued)*

*Returning home from the meadow*



A lovely day for exercise



*The Brandywine Hounds 1929-1930*

*Courtesy of Mrs. Jeremiak Sullivan*

*Left to right: Harry McNair, Whipper-in, Gilbert Mather, M.F.H.,  
Jack Smith, Huntsman, Odes Hayes, Whipper-in*





A newspaper article in 1905 commented the presence of 55 hunting horses grazing in the meadows at the Mather farm. Here is a lovely photo taken by Mather's photographer, which also shows the edge of Painter's old Fulling Mill on Radley Run. (A small stream was called a "run" back in the day.)



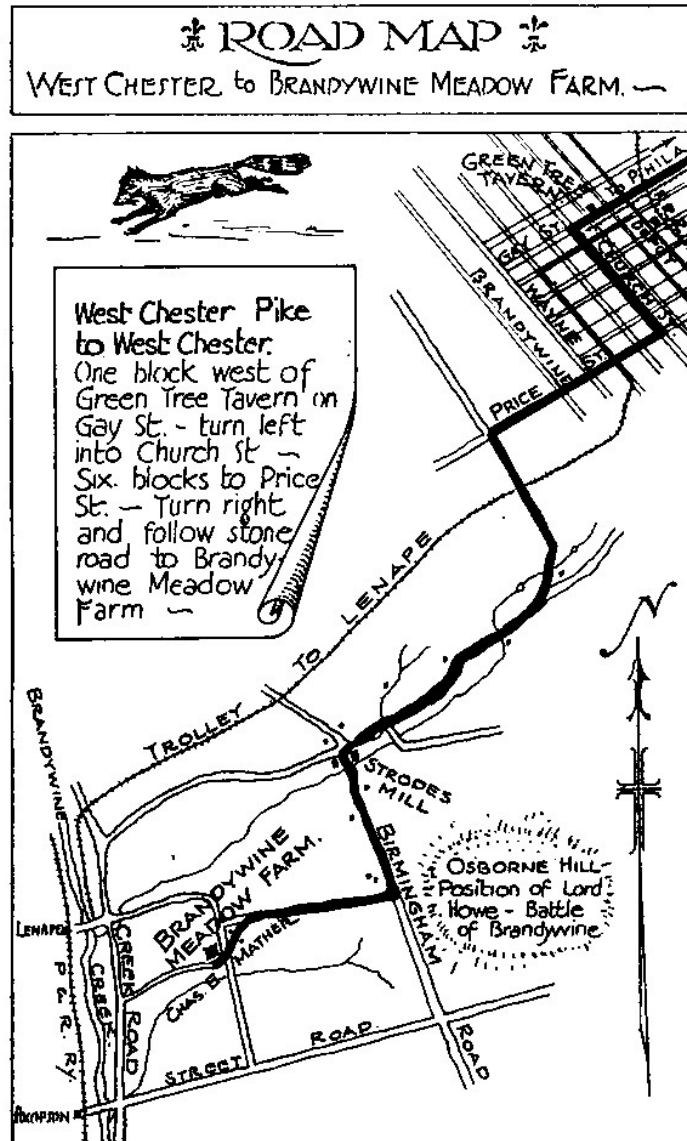
*...the fox hounds were more important than the horses...*



The kennels were a popular site for visitors to see the famous English Belvoir style that was the cutting edge of design. This huge complex easily accommodated 100 hounds at any given time. Special meals were cooked just for the hounds.



Trains ran from Philadelphia to West Chester. Guests were given Mather's **Road Map** from West Chester to Brandywine Meadow Farm. There also were trains from Wilmington to the small serpentine train station that still sits at Popcopson and Street Roads today. Rides were pre-arranged for visitors from train stations to Mather's farm if needed.







Overview of Mather's Estate in 1927



These are cropped images from Mather's overview of his property in **1927** which shows us what was still standing of Painter's property at this time. This is the remains of early Painter's old Fulling Mill on Radley Run creek. You can make out more of the building under the tree canopy.

The bottom photo is the view of the back of the Spring/Lye House with large wooden extensions for use of Painter's early work house factory. These back annexes were torn down long before the property was purchased in **1963** to build a golf course.

Notice a shed with a chimney to the right of the Spring House. Only the foundation remains at this present time under the grass.



### Battle of Brandywine - 1777 The largest Battle of the Revolutionary War...

The Battle of Brandywine was fought between the American Continental Army of General George Washington and the British Army of General Sir William Howe on **September 11, 1777**, as part of the American Revolutionary War. The forces met near Chadds Ford, Pa, as Howe moved to take Philadelphia, then the American capital. The British forces routed the Continental Army and forced them to withdraw, first, to the City of Chester, Pa, and then northeast toward Philadelphia. More troops fought at Brandywine than any other battle of the American Revolution. It was also the longest single-day battle of the war, with continuous fighting for 11 hours.

On September 11, 1777, General George Washington was determined to prevent the British from capturing the American seat of government, Philadelphia. Taking up positions along Brandywine Creek, Washington mistakenly believed that his army blocked all fords across the Brandywine.

Opposing Washington was Sir William Howe and an army of 15,500 British Regulars and Hessian troops. Hidden by heavy fog, the British moved into position. General Wilhelm von Kynphausen was ordered to demonstrate against the Americans' front at Chadds Ford, while the bulk of Howe's forces crossed the Brandywine further upstream.

The battle had been raging for hours by the time Howe's force appeared undetected on the Continental right flank. Washington dispatched troops under General John Sullivan, William Alexander, and Lord Stirling, to shore up his right flank. However, despite putting up a stiff resistance, the Continentals were eventually overrun by Howe's men.

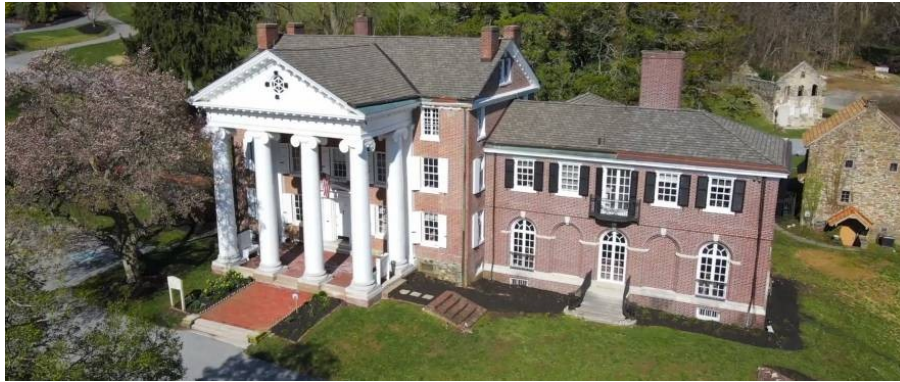
Simultaneously, Kynphausen's troops hit the American units that remained near the Quaker meeting house at Chadds Ford.

Washington's line collapsed.

To prevent the defeat turning into disaster Washington ordered Nathanael Greene's division to act as a rear-guard so that the Continental Army could escape to the northeast. Greene's brave men counterattacked, going toe-to-toe with the British along the crest of Birmingham Hill. When night fell, the remaining Americans fell back in an orderly retreat, led in part by the Marquis de Lafayette. Although wounded, the charismatic young Frenchman remained on the field to ensure an organized withdrawal.

The crushing defeat allowed the British to occupy Philadelphia, but the bulk of the Continental army survived to fight another day.

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war/battles/brandywine>



**The Mansion House At Radley Run** is now a 501c3 public charity Foundation that accepts tax deductible donations.

### **MISSION**

The Mansion House Foundation at Radley Run (MHF) strives to restore, preserve, and protect the Chester County, Pennsylvania historic culture of the Battle of the Brandywine and the Brandywine Meadow Farm's Fox Hunting Era and their connection with the Mansion House at Radley Run, (1770). Our goal is to create an enriched experience for our community through education, engagement, and historic preservation.

### **THE FOUNDATION**

Established in 2019, our goal is to restore and preserve the 250-year-old Mansion House that has been a part of the rich historical legacy of not only Chester County, but our country as a whole. We strive to increase awareness and funds to support our mission, serving as a 501(c)(3) public charity. All individual contributions and donations are tax advantaged.

### **SUPPORT**

Support will allow the Foundation to fully realize our goals of restoring the Mansion House back to its former glory and establishing it as an educational landmark and premier setting for tours and social gatherings to be enjoyed by current and future generations to come.

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