

**Mansion House Foundation  
at Radley Run  
Mather's Brandywine Meadow Farm's  
Historic District  
Self Guided Walking Tour**

## ***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**.

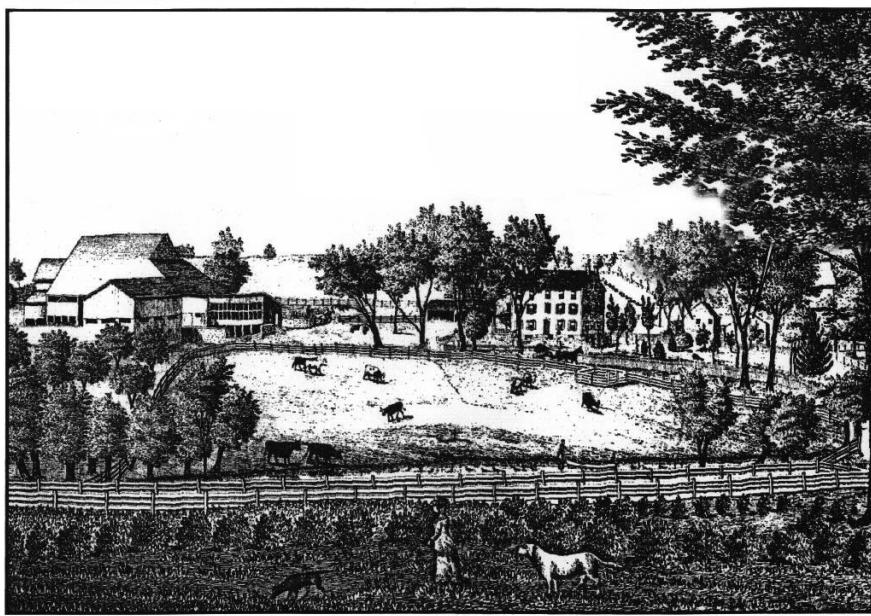
The Revolutionary War came through this quiet area for all to witness the largest Battle that was fought during the **Revolutionary War**. Jane's diaries quoted that the English soldiers drank the well dry and ate all food, including raw rising dough. See page 14, battle info.

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 11 of this booklet, along with close up view of the back of the enlarged Spring House for handling great quantities of wool fabric, p 13.

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 house and barn is in this picture.

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**, the Painter dairy farm sold for \$15,000 at a Sherriff’s auction and became 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 and Master of Radnor Hunt. This 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. The city estate of Mather was located in Haverford, The Farm was for weekends, occasionally Wednesdays, and Holiday pursuits.

## 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, which was redesigned to look like an Italian garden by Charles Mather's architects, Keen & Mead in **1901**.

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 back in the day.)

Proceed onto the massive 3-story portico outside the front door to the Mansion House. This majestic portico was added by architects to impress the visiting gentry so you cannot mistake this for the plain, simple Quaker farmhouse it once was.

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

This below photo was taken of Charles on his prize hunting horse to show off the new majestic 3 story portico.

The house's Dutch split front door is from Mather's era of ownership. Mather changed the hall stairs to mahogany, and



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

added a large palladium window on the stair landing to lend elegance to the entry hall. Elaborate moldings were added inside to the plain Quaker house to give the distinction of a high society home of today.

This walking tour does **not** take you inside the Mansion which you must have permission to enter.

At the far end of the mansion, the **1912** Charles Mather Ballroom addition was where many grand parties were held with the wealthy and famous in attendance. People traveled from far and near to ride in Mather's "most English of Fox Hunts."

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, one room up & down, plus the basement.

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. A photo of Mr. Mather's overview of his estate in 1927 (p. 11), 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-for drying were cut to pieces.

Image how many people it took to quietly chop up 70 yards of cloth!

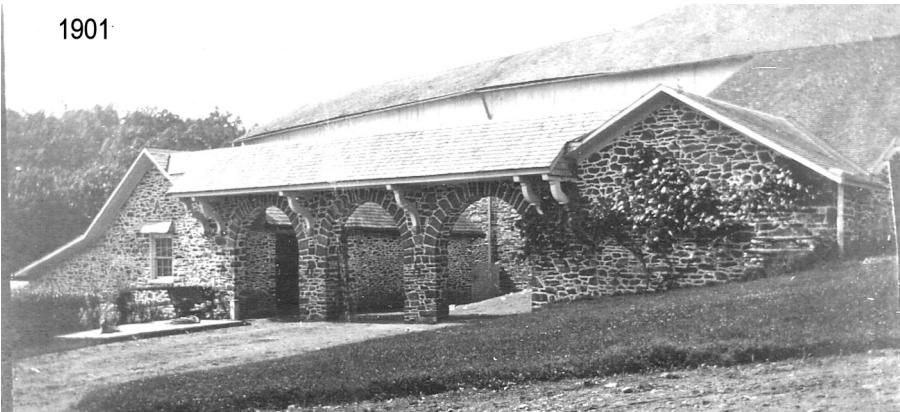
Painter offered a \$200 reward (huge for that day) for persons who did this deed.



## 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 barn** 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.



Mr. Mather would leave a small silver fox on his desk in the city 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. Gilbert moved his family into the Mansion as his year round home, traveling to Philadelphia by train.

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 in the 1920s.



The Chester County Parks & Recreation Walking Tour in 2010 had a visitor to the tour who was the last Huntsman's wife (Mary Ann Poppa) to work on Gilbert's farm. She said Mr. Mather was the nicest man who took care of everyone. All hands loved working on his farm. He provided picnics and entertainment for his men and their families.



This is one of Mary Ann's photos of everyone enjoying a game at one of the picnics. Sunday afternoons were for visiting family,

friends and tea.

And a day of rest for the fox.

Our native PA fox was gray.

The Hunts wanted English fox hounds, and they also wanted English red foxes to chase. In the 1800s, Radnor and Rose Tree Hunts shipped English red foxes to their hunt areas.

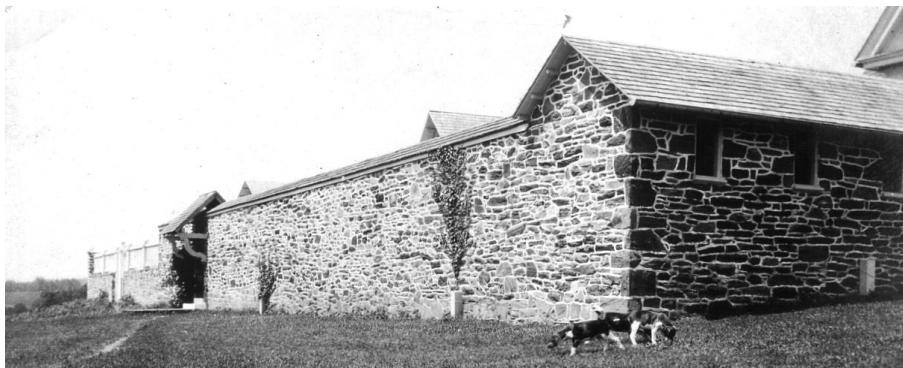




HOUNDS LEAVING KENNELS IN CHARGE OF WILLIAM THOMPSON, *Huntsman, 1905-1925*

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 than his horses.

Mr. Mather's English fox hounds could run faster and further, out running the American hounds. Riding with a pack of fast, English fox hounds was so exciting, that many wanted to ride in Mather's Hunts.



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.

Hound's beds were burned in the burning pit that is now beside the 18th green. Burning helps keep disease at bay.

The back end of the Kennels do not exist today, which were torn down to make room for a Golf Cart storage barn in 2005.





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

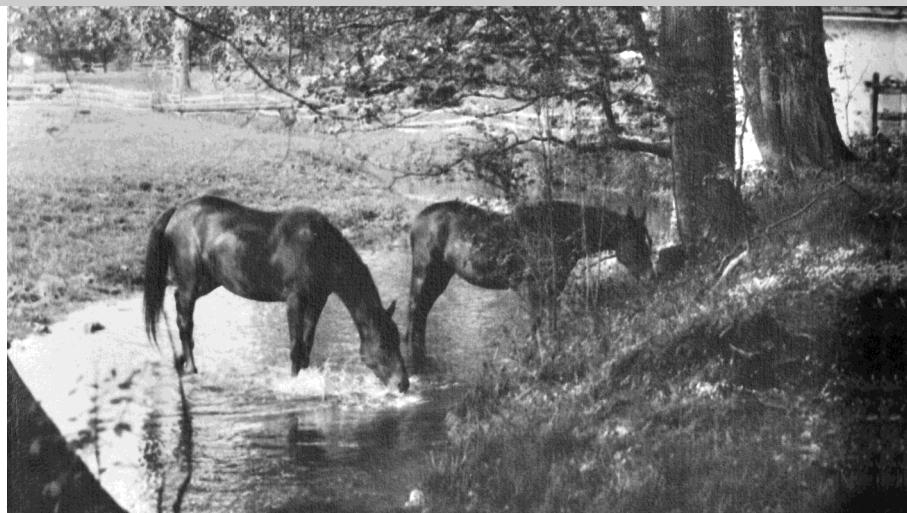
You have **finished** Mather's Brandywine Meadow Farm's Walking Tour of Radley Run's Historic District.

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.

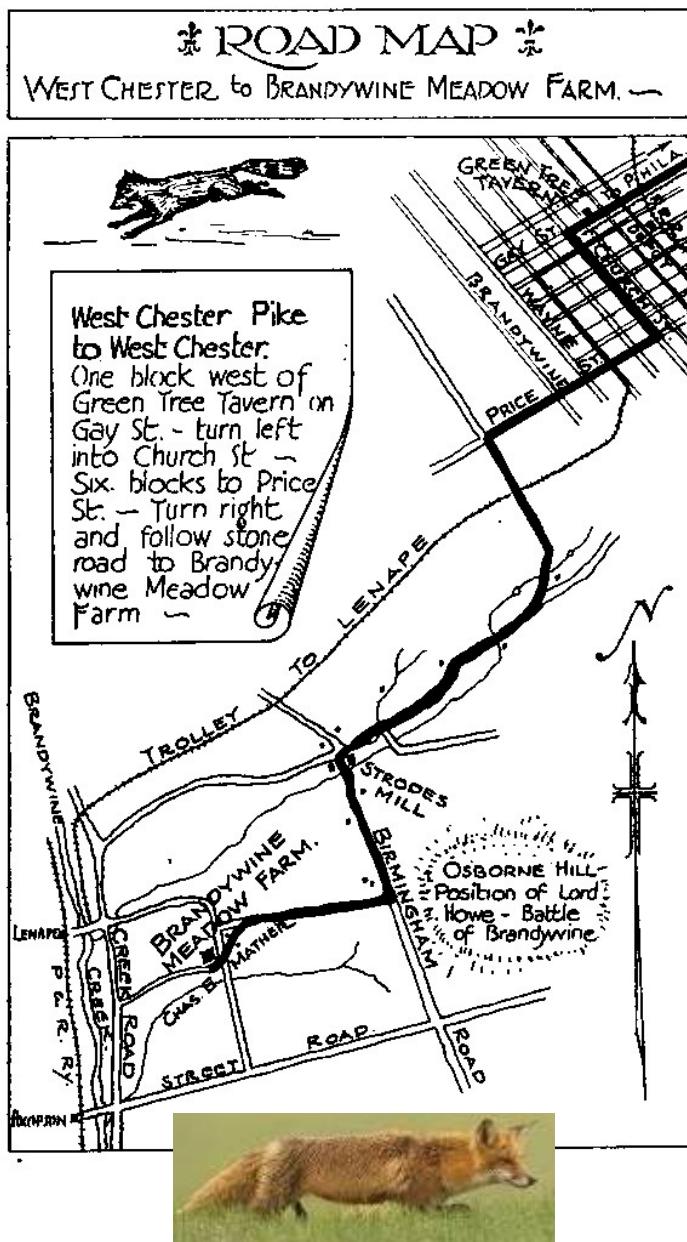
Notice Mather's signature posts that were on entrances marking his property Today, these posts are smaller and few remain.



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, but this also shows the edge of Painter's Fulling Mill on Radley Run. (A small stream was called a "run" back in the day.)



Trains ran from Philadelphia to West Chester. Guests received Mather's **Road Map** from West Chester to Brandywine Meadow Farm. There also were trains from Wilmington to the small serpentine train station that is now Street and Popcopson Roads. Rides were pre-arranged from stations to farm.



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 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 extensions to make room for Painter's busy work house. 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 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, Knyphausen'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>

## Mansion House Foundation

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