POSTAL SERVICE IN HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP

by Richard D. Kerr

GENERAL POSTAL HISTORY¹

In 1775, the Continental Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin as the first Postmaster General. Chester and Philadelphia were two of just five post offices established that year for all of Pennsylvania.² The United States Post Office Department was created in 1792 by the Postal Service Act. For many decades there was no home delivery. People had to go to a post office, and in cities often stand in long lines, to see if they had any mail waiting for them or not. In 1863 Congress established free postal delivery in cities where postage could cover the cost. This service was later expanded to other cities, with smaller and smaller city population thresholds being authorized over time.

Residents of rural areas, including Haverford Township, continued to have to go check for mail. In 1891 the Postmaster General was John Wanamaker, the famous owner of Wanamaker's department store in Philadelphia. He proposed free home delivery to rural Americans. Congress granted authorization for rural free delivery (RFD) in March 1893, the month Wanamaker left office. Trial service began in 1896 out of three post offices in West Virginia. In 1902 the service was declared permanent, and over the following decades, rural mail delivery spread across the growing nation, as city delivery had done earlier.

Up to this general point in time, rural post office operations were contracted out to general stores, railroad station agents and others. Their creation and selection often involved political influence and favors. The places used were places that people frequented and, in the case of railroads, where bulk delivery of mail to and from the post office could be handled expeditiously on trains. The number of post offices in Pennsylvania peaked about 1900 and has declined more than 60 per cent since that time. Over time, the Post Office Department took greater direct control of its operations, building and staffing its own internally operated and staffed public post offices.

As postal volume grew enormously, the logistics of mail handling grew. The Pony Express service begun in 1860 in the West is famous, but it lasted only about 18 months. In actuality it was railroads, trolleys, motor trucks and airplanes that successively improved the bulk hauling of mail. In 1963 the Post Office Department inaugurated a nationwide system of 5-digit "ZIP codes" to help streamline sorting and delivery. In 1971 Congress established the United States Postal Service (USPS) to replace the Post Office Department. ZIP codes were further refined in 1983 with "ZIP+4" 9-digit numeric coding, and thereafter computer-controlled optical address scanning and sorting further improved mail handling efficiencies.

POST OFFICES SERVING HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP²

As mentioned above, a post office was established in Chester in 1775. It served as the first post office in present-day Delaware County. It was joined by the Spread Eagle post office in 1804, Derby (later spelled Darby) in 1809, Marcus Hook in 1813, Painter's Cross Roads in 1815, and finally Buck Tavern in Haverford Township in 1817. Thus, Haverford Township hosted the sixth post office in Delaware County.

The following is an historical list of post offices that have served Haverford Township. The post offices are listed in order of the date of their original establishment, and grouped with any succeeding post office names, in order to show the historical flow and growth of postal service.

The basic tabular information at the start of each group listing below comes from the 1995 edition of "Pennsylvania Postal History" by Kay and Smith, Jr. This thick book is a reference work of tables, largely intended for people who collect postal "covers" and postmarks, the surviving physical artifacts of postal service that they desire to collect, understand and organize.

The local historian, on the other hand, is interested in additional obvious questions, like "Where exactly were the post offices located over time?", "What geographic areas did these post offices serve?" and "How exactly did the postal service work, and how did people use it?" In understanding and interpreting the data in this book to answer questions like these, careful caution must be used. The authors note that "...the dates may not necessarily mean an office is opened or closed on that date, but simply that some change in status occurs. For example, the name may change slightly." Conversely, the listed existence of a post office name over a long period of years should not be construed to mean that the post office did not move or change during that period. (For example, the Bryn Mawr post office is a single listing, yet it has had a half-dozen locations during its existence.) As a result, inaccurate statements about old post office locations have been made through the years, especially when the years of existence of a store, hotel or inn are misunderstood to also be the years that a post office was operated in the establishment.

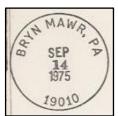
It is often hard to pin down exactly where a post office building was located, if it was not noted on a contemporary map or related to a railroad station or store with a known location. This is because rural addresses were simply a name and a post office, with no street number or name. The listings in the Kay and Smith book provide us with the county name, but only for the date when the post office was established or changed. So, for example, we know where the Buck Tavern was, but only know that the Miller post office was in Montgomery County on June 24, 1836 (see below).

Careful analysis of the various post offices that served Haverford Township reveals that between 1918 and 1929 there were no post offices actually located within the township. It was served entirely by post offices in neighboring townships. This occurred between the phasing out of contracted post offices and the establishment of staffed post offices operated directly by the U.S. Post Office Department.

| Name | Established Discor | ntinued 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Buck Tavern | Apr. 1, 1817 June 2 | 24, 1836 Jonathan Miller | Changed to Miller |
| | | | (Montgomery County) |
| Miller | June 24, 1836 June 3 | 30, 1837 Jacob Castner | In Mont. Co.; Changed to |
| | | | West Haverford (Del. Co.) |
| West Haverford | June 30, 1837 Nov. 2 | 21, 1871 Jonathan Miller | Changed to Bryn Mawr (in |
| | | | Mont. Co.) |
| Bryn Mawr (19010) | Nov. 21, 1871 Active | william H. Ramse | ey In Montgomery County |







West Haverford

Bryn Mawr 1913 Bryn Mawr 1975

Notes: [The Buck Tavern stood on the south side of the Lancaster Turnpike, just inside of Haverford Township, between present day Old Buck Lane and Martin Avenue.] ("Battle of Paoli", Thomas J. McGuire, Stackpole Books, 2000, page 227, http://books.google.com/books?id=yNNjGIs-3xUC&pg=PA227#v=onepage&q&f=false)

[The Buck Tavern is indicated on the 1851 Levering map of Lower Merion Township (http://lowermerionhistory.org).]

"At West Haverford post office, located in the extreme northeast corner of Haverford Township, John G. Henderson was postmaster from 1847 to 1867. This office was later moved into Montgomery County and is now known as Bryn Mawr."⁴

"The Henderson store is in the 1851 Map right on the border of LM but in Radnor twp. and mentioned in Josiah S Pearce's Recollections and its importance as being the West Haverford Post Office in the 1840's long before Ardmore and Bryn Mawr had a P.O.! It took me awhile to figure it out as the old Conestoga Mill (Yang Ming restaurant of today). In 1877 it is shown as the W. H. Ramsey store, in 1937 Ye Old Store and finally in 1948 the Conestoga Mill." 12

"In 1831, the "Old Store" was built on the triangular site bound by County Line Road and Old Lancaster Road (now Conestoga Road). It was later renamed the General Store, and operated by Thomas Crosely and his wife. The store again changed hands in 1869, when it also housed the West Haverford Post Office." ¹³

In 1846 the Postal Service listed West Haverford Post Office in Delaware County, Pa. with Thomas L. Priest as postmaster. 14

The 1848 Ash Map of Delaware County shows Buck Tavern as a post office. It also shows Henderson's Store in Radnor and a place called Millers in Haverford Township along the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad north of Haverford College. The map does not identify Henderson's Store or Millers as being a post office.

The 1870 atlas map of Radnor shows "West Haverford P. O." at the "Wm. H. Ramsey & Bro." store in Radnor Township.

[In 1869 the Pennsylvania Railroad "straightened" its main line, eliminating the White Hall curve. That right of way is used today for Railroad Avenue and Glenbrook Avenue. After being "straightened" the rail line passed through the small town of Humphreyville, which the railroad renamed Bryn Mawr.] ¹⁵ [The neighboring Bryn Mawr post office presently serves a band of land across the entire width of the northern edge of Haverford Township.]

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

[The present Bryn Mawr post office building dates back to 1932.]

| Name | Established | Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Newtown Square | Feb. 29, 1828 | 3 Active | David Beaumont | [in Newtown Twp., Del. Co.] |
| (19073) | | | | |

Notes: [A number of sources reveal that the Newtown Square post office, named for a location in nonadjacent Newtown Township, served parts of Haverford Township during some span of time:

- 1. In A History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania and Its People from 1914, John W. Jordan refers to several people as living in "Newtown Square, Haverford township, Delaware county," including in the biographical sketch of Haverford Township resident William Patterson Lawrence.
- 2. In a 50th anniversary history of the Brookline Club (a women's group), compiled in 1962 from club records, Clara May Parks wrote, "The Club took credit in 1916 for an improved mail service in the Township. The Improvement Association had tried to get better service, but failed. [Here she quoted the club records directly:] 'The Civic Committee of the Club took the matter up and wrote letters to our Representative in Congress until he became tired and switched us off to the Postmaster, whom we bombarded with letters, and in a short time our post office was changed to Llanerch.' Up to that time the postal address for Brookline was Newtown Square P. O., R 3, Penna." (HTHS Collection)
- 3. Summary notes from a 1991 Haverford Township Historical Society oral history interview of Hilda Shadel Lucas, whose family moved to Bon Air from West Philadelphia in 1913, state the following: "The area was very primitive – Mailbox at Eagle and Bon Air Rd. – mail came from Newtown Square. Bread man left bread there." She added later on, "We didn't get our mail from [the Manoa P.O.] but from the Rural Post office. Mr. Clessius was the only postman that I remember." From this and note 2 above, it appears that rural public "mailbox" stations for the use of entire neighborhoods for both delivery and pick-up were set up at this time and served from the Newtown Square post office, with the Brookline one being "R 3."
- 4. The 1917-1918 military record for William L. Nunan, killed in action during World War I, lists his next of kin as "Edward M. Nunan, Newtown Square, Manoa, Pa." The 1910 U. S. Census shows Edward M. Nunan and family, including 16-year old William, living on Ellis Road in Haverford Township. William attended Haverford Township schools.
- 5. As quoted in the Llanerch section below, a 1940 directory published by the Haverford Township Chamber of Commerce stated, "The major portion of the Township is served by the Upper Darby Post Office through the Llanerch Branch. Except in those sections served by the Ardmore, Bryn Mawr, and Newtown Square post offices, all mail should be addressed "Upper Darby" or "Llanerch" to insure proper delivery."
- 6. A newsclip from late 1945, in the collection of the Haverford Township Historical Society, announced the renaming of the Llanerch Branch of the Upper Darby post office to "Havertown" effective January 1, 1946. The article also lists the Newtown Square post office among the other post offices that would continue to serve Haverford Township at that time.

Thus service by the Newtown Square Post Office in Haverford Township spanned at least 1914 to 1945.]

| Name | Established Discontinued May 10, 1830 Dec. 22, 1882 | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|-------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Haverford | | Lewis Bennett | Changed to Manoa |
| Manoa | Dec. 22, 1882 Mar. 1, 1915 | Samuel H. Moore | Service from Llanerch [starting July 1, 1897] |



Manoa 1908

Notes: [Different than the Haverford College/Haverford post office in Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County, 1871 to present, which also has served Haverford Township. See below.] "Established in 1814, the Spread Eagle Tavern was located on the northeast corner of Eagle Road and West Chester Pike. Original owner and turnpike shareholder James P. Afflick profited very well from this major stop on the West Chester Turnpike. William Bittle operated the Haverford post office at this location from 1841 until it moved to the Black Bear Tavern in 1847."5

"The Stackhouse Tavern, built in 1820 and owned by William Stackhouse, is located between Lawrence and Eagle Roads on West Chester Pike. The tavern is believed to have been part of the Underground Railroad. In the 1860s, James Erskine renamed it the Black Bear Inn. The Haverford post office was located here from 1847 until the early 1900s."⁵

"On West Chester turnpike was an office known as Haverford, and William Y. Stackhouse was a newlyappointed postmaster since Feb. 8. He held this appointment for 20 years. Years later, the name of the office was changed to Manoa."4

The "Haverford P.O." is indicated in the area of Manoa Road and West Chester Pike on 1870 and 1875 Altas maps, and the "Manoa P.O." is identified in the 1887 Smith Atlas (Plate 1) as well as the 1902 Baist Atlas.9

"This 1894 photograph shows Samuel Moore's general store, at the northeast corner of Manoa Road and West Chester Pike. The gentleman with his hands on hips is Samuel Moore, proprietor and postmaster since 1833. Moore began calling his establishment the Manoa Store, and this post office name was adopted."5

"Samuel Moore's general store served as the Manoa Post Office and was located at Manoa and Darby Roads [Manoa Road and West Chester Pike]. It was in operation Dec. 1881 [1882] to March 1915."6 In an 1872 directory for Haverford, T. J. Reed is listed for "Store and postmaster." (A Thomas Reed is listed for "Dry goods and groceries" in an 1870 Haverford directory.) ²¹

In an 1897 directory, S. H. Moore is listed for "General store, flour and postmaster" for Manoa. 18 In a 1902 directory, S. H. Moore is listed for "General store, insurance and postmaster" for Manoa. 19 In a 1914 directory, S. H. Moore was listed as postmaster for Manoa. ²³

"At this writing, 1936, it is a receiving mail station only and there is no record of any other than Mr. Moore ever having been postmaster."²⁴

| Name | Established | Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Cabinet | Feb. 2, 1853 | Mar. 11, 1874 | Joseph T. Pearce | Changed to Ardmore (in |
| | | | | Mont. County) |
| Ardmore (19003) | Mar. 11, 187 | 4Active | George H. Baker | (in Montgomery County) |





Cabinet 1860's

Ardmore 1944

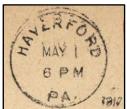
Notes: [This neighboring post office serves a mid-township area extending in from the eastern edge of Haverford Township, including the neighborhoods of Ardmore and Merion Golf Manor, as well as the Merion Golf Club.]

[The present Ardmore post office building dates back to 1937.]

| Name | Established | Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Haverford College | Sep. 5, 1871 | Mar. 17, 1892 | Isaac Hunter | Changed to Haverford (in |
| | | | | Mont. County) |
| Haverford (19041) | Mar. 17, 189 | 2Active | Ralph N. Warner, Jr. | (in Montgomery County) |







Haverford College 1881

Haverford 1894

Haverford 1917

Notes: [This neighboring post office originally served Haverford College, and now serves a band of land across the entire width of northern Haverford Township, south of the band served by Bryn Mawr post office. A note from 1940 does not include it in post offices serving the township at that time.] [The present Haverford post office building dates back to 1935.]

| Name | Established | Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|--------|-------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Coreze | May 2, 1881 | Sep. 30, 1895 | George Zell | Served from Bryn Mawr (in |
| | | | | Mont. County) |

Notes: "Zell's Store on Darby road, established the Coreze Post Office and served the residents of Bryn Mawr, 1881-1895. George Zell was the postmaster."

[Its location, on the east side of present-day Darby Road just below Ardmore Avenue, is identified in the 1881 Hopkins Atlas (Plate 4), 1887 Smith Atlas (Plate 6) and 1896 Mueller Atlas (Plate 8).]⁷

| Name | Established Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|-----------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Wolfenden | Nov. 28, 1881 Jan. 31, 1891 | Thomas Wolfenden | Served from Ardmore (in |
| | | | Montgomery Co.) |

Notes: "The Wolfenden Woolen Mill, Haverford and Eagle Road was home to the Wolfenden Post Office 1881-1891 and provided mail service to Ardmore."

"The Old Haverford Store is seen here as it appeared in 1908. This was a popular meeting place for mill workers and for a short time was a post office at the busy intersection of Church [now Eagle] and Haverford Roads." ⁵

| Name | Established | Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Wynnewood (19096) | May 17, 1882 | 2 Active | Frank P. Hunter | (in Montgomery County) |



Wynnewood 1971

Notes: [This neighboring post office serves the very southeast corner of Haverford Township. A note from 1940 does not include it in post offices serving the township at that time, nor does the late 1945 newsclip about the new "Havertown" post office name. The present Wynnewood post office building dates back to 1954. Haverford High School yearbooks reveal that in at least the 1960s, many residents in the Carroll Park and Penfield Downs sections had as their post office "Philadelphia 51, Pa.," while just to the north "Wynnewood" was used concurrently. "Philadelphia 51" is likely the pre-ZIP Code designation for the "Overbrook" post office, established on September 15, 1961 and later given the Zip Code 19151. The 1945 article also mentions the West Park Station of Philadelphia Post Office as continuing to serve part of Haverford Township.]

| Name | Established | Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|-------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Adele | July 21, 1892 | May 15, 1901 | Augustus Leedom | Served from Manoa |

Notes: "Shown in this 1900 photograph is the Adele Post Office, established in 1892 at the gristmill on Darby Creek. August B. Leedom was proprietor and postmaster from 1892 to 1901, when the post office was shut down. The post office was named after the daughter of Congressman John B. Robinson, who secured the post office's location on Old West Chester Pike." In an 1897 directory, August B. Leedom was listed as Adele postmaster. 20

| Name | Established | Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Llanerch | July 1, 1897 | Apr. 30, 1918 | Isaac. N. Durboraw | Served from Upper Darby |
| Upper Darby (Branch) | May 1, 1918 | Dec. 31, 1924 | | Branch of Philadelphia; In |
| | | | | Upper Darby Twp. |
| Upper Darby | Jan. 1, 1925 | [Sep. 30, 1929] | Robert S. Medary | In Upper Darby Twp. [no |
| | | | | longer a branch] |
| Llanerch (Branch) | Oct. 1, 1929 | Jan. 1, 1946 | | Branch of Upper Darby |

Manoa Branch (19083) July 1, 1957 [June 17, 2011] ---

Branch of Upper Darby











Llanerch 1897

Llanerch 1909

Upper Darby 1925

Llanerch 1938

Havertown Br. 1948



Havertown Br. 1995

Notes: "The Llanerch post office, established July 1897 was located in the Railroad Freight Station on West Chester Pike and lasted until April 1918."

In a 1902 directory, Maurice C. Riggs was listed for "railroad, freight agent and postmaster" Llanerch¹⁷ In a 1914 directory, Maurice C. Riggs was listed as postmaster for Llanerch.²³

"The Llanerch branch of the Upper Darby post office was opened on the west side of Darby road in 1929 and lasted to 1946 when the name "Havertown" was designated for the area. The post office was located at Darby and Lansdowne Ave. This change made it possible for the 70% of residents of Haverford Township who were served mail through the Llanerch Branch of Upper Darby Post Office to have a Havertown, PA address."

[The Llanerch Branch post office was originally located at 312 Darby Road, in a red brick building that still stands. Paul Garcia was Superintendent from 1935 or earlier and 1936, and J. W. Landenberger from 1937 to at least 1942.]¹⁶

"[1935] Postal Service Sub-Stations / Brookline No. 1 – Sorber's Drug Store, Brookline Boulevard and Darby Road / Manoa No. 3 – William J. Wilds, West Chester Pike and Manoa Road / Oakmont No. 5 – Oakmont Pharmacy, Eagle Road and Darby Road"

"[1936-1937 adds] "Belmont Drug Store – Pont Reading and Morris Roads, Ardmore Park" "[1938 and 1940] Belmont No. 2 – Belmont Drug Store, Point [sic] Reading and Morris Roads / Brookline No. 1 – Sorber's Drug Store, 1 Brookline Blvd. / Manoa #3 – William J. Wilds, West Chester Pike and Manoa Road / Oakmont No. 5 – Oakmont Sweet Shop, 10 E. Eagle Rd."

"[1940 replaces Manoa No. 3 with] Llanerch No. 3 – Tollenger's Pharmacy, 447 West Chester Pk. [and adds] "The major portion of the Township is served by the Upper Darby Post Office through the Llanerch Branch. Except in those sections served by the Ardmore, Bryn Mawr, and Newtown Square post offices, all mail should be addressed "Upper Darby" or "Llanerch" to insure proper delivery."

"[1942] Sub-Stations in Haverford Township / Belmont No. 2 – Belmont Drug Store, Pt. [Pont] Reading and Morris Rds. (Ardmore P. O.) / Brookline No. 1 – Sorber's Drug Store, 1 Brookline Blvd. / Llanerch #3 – Tollenger's Pharmacy, 447 West Chester Pk. / Oakmont No. 5 – Oakmont Sweet Shop, 10 E. Eagle Rd." ¹⁶

[According to atlas maps and other information, sometime between 1950 and 1961 the Havertown branch office moved to a larger tan brick building built at East Darby Road and Lansdowne Road (not Avenue), now 101 Darby Road, which also still stands.]

"Having outgrown the old building at Lansdowne [Road] and Darby Rd., the current building [post office] on Township Line Rd and Eagle [Earlington] Road was opened in 1972. It was formerly a Food Fair store building and renovated to be the new Havertown Post Office with the zip code 19083. The facility was three times the size of the former building. The post master in 1972 was Benjamin S. Hehn of Sharon Hill. This new facility provided 24 hour service, a new motorized delivery system, increased rental boxes and improved customer parking." 6

[The Manoa (19083) neighborhood branch office was located in the "leftmost" corner of the main building line of stores in Manoa Shopping Center, behind the Weinberg's department store (now Applebee's restaurant). It was closed by the USPS on June 17, 2011.]^{10,11}

| Name | Established | Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|-----------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Grassland | May 24, 1898 | 8 Sep. 29, 1900 | Jonathan R. Hagy | Served from Manoa |

Notes: "Construction commenced on the main line portion [of the Philadelphia and Delaware County Railroad] in October 1883, and was completed in July, 1895. Operation of the railroad began June 30, 1894, with ten station stops along the line. All were flag stops except Llanerch and Newtown Square, where large single-story wooden buildings were built. These stations also housed the post offices for their communities. Another station was constructed at Grassland, PA, but was abandoned early and used as a dwelling."

"The train station on Eagle Road was also the Grassland post office from 1898-1900." [Its location, on the north side of Eagle Road and the east side of the railroad track, is indicated in the 1900 Smith Atlas (Plate 5), and also indicated in the 1908 Mueller Atlas (Plate 10), but correctly not identified as a post office at that time.]

| Name | Established | Discontinued | 1st Postmaster | Notes |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Drexel Hill (19026) | Oct. 5, 1912 | Active | Margaret Lesser | (in Upper Darby Township) |



Drexel Hill 1953

Notes: [This neighboring post office serves the very southwest corner of Haverford Township. Its Pilgrim Gardens neighborhood branch office is physically located just inside Upper Darby Township and also uses the "Drexel Hill" postal designation. The Post Office established its own employee-staffed Drexel Hill Post Office on April 1, 1939. [The present Drexel Hill post office building dates back to 1939.]

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