



# Haverford Township Historical Society



## WEST CHESTER PIKE, EAGLE HOTEL TO DARBY CREEK, 1897

Compiled by Richard D. Kerr

*[In his 1897 Rural Pennsylvania in the Vicinity of Philadelphia (published by George W. Jenkins & Co. in Philadelphia), Rev. S. F. Hotchkin provided a running verbal tour of places, people and history. The excerpts below proceed along the West Chester Turnpike from the Eagle Hotel (northeast corner at present-day Eagle Road) down to Darby Creek. Fortunately, an atlas of maps which included this area was also published in the same year. Over the next generation, suburban development would change this rural landscape dramatically.]*

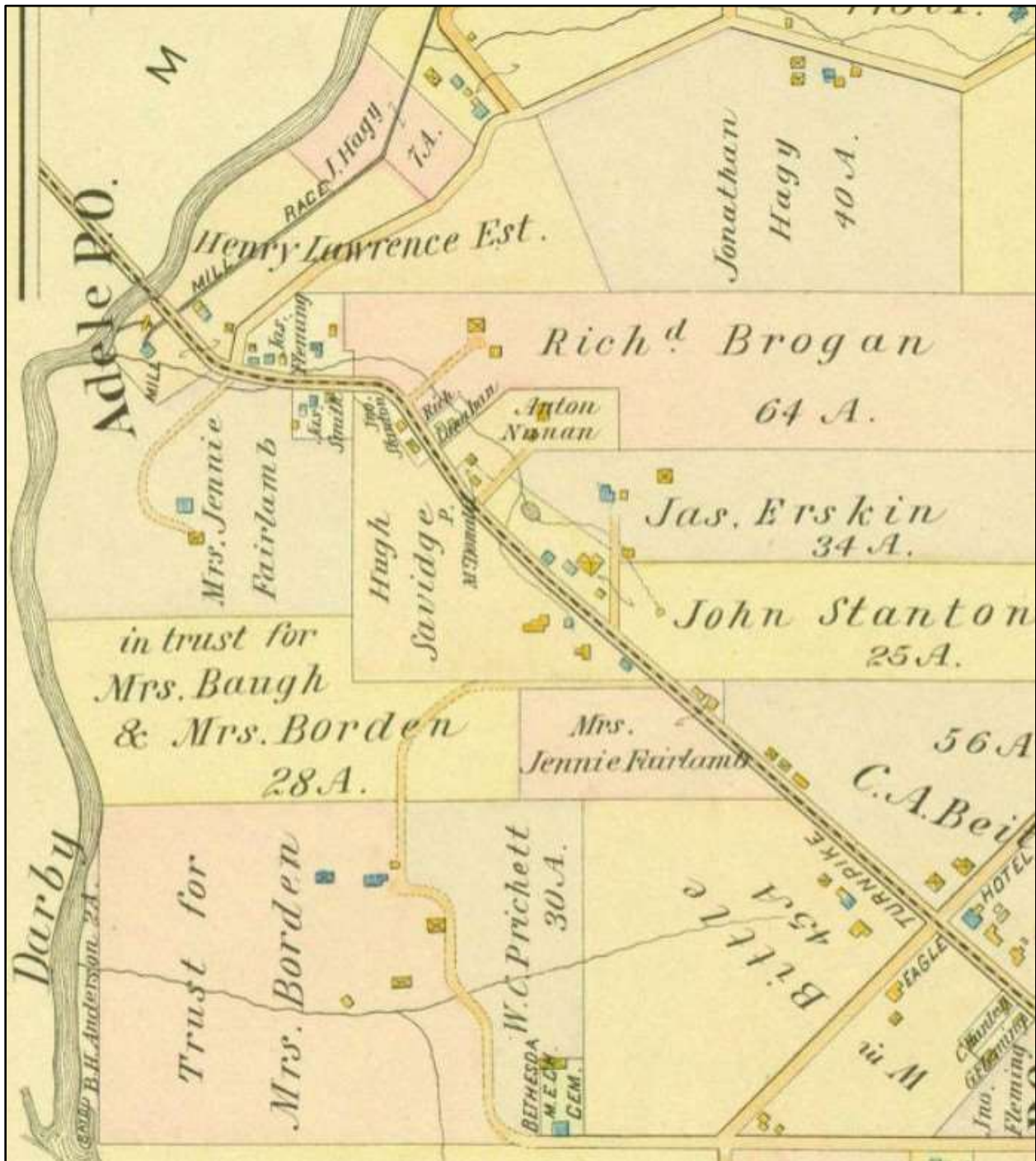
Nearly opposite the Eagle Hotel is William Bittle's farm-house, and his farm surrounds it. His grandfather owned the farm. Above the Eagle, on the left in going up the country, Hugh Savage has a farm, and his dwelling is marked by an entrance with large stone gate-posts. James Erskine's farm, beyond the Eagle on the right hand, formerly belonged to his father-in-law, Mr. Stackhouse. The farm-house is prettily situated on a hillside.

[. . .]

Toll-gate No. 4 has been kept by James Hannum about thirty years. He is a Justice of the Peace, succeeding his neighbor, James Smith, who declined re-election after serving for a generation. These men have been for years very active Stewards of Bethesda Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Smith's house and shop are on the slope of the hill on the left before reaching Lawrence's Mill. The West mansion stands on rising ground back from the road, a little above this point. [ . . . ]

As one passes out the West Chester Pike beyond the Eagle, the old Black Bear Tavern is on the right in descending a hill. It is now a farmhouse, owned by John Stanton. Wilmer Broadbelt was a previous owner, and William Y. Stackhouse at one time owned the farm, and lived here. On the other side of the way, perched on another hill, elevated by the deep grading of the road, is a building which was once a temperance hall. It is now a dwelling. Richard Lanahan's pretty new frame cottage is on the other side of the road. In the valley below is Lawrence's Mill, or rather mills, as both a grist and saw-mill are located here. They make a pretty picture, and the water scene below the road is remarkably beautiful.

"Henry Lawrence and his sons, Thomas, Mordecai, and William," according to Ashmead [History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, 1884], owned the saw-mill which was built on Darby Creek at the West Chester Turnpike, about the beginning of this century. There had been "an old fulling-mill on the north of the turnpike [now Old West Chester Pike], probably owned by Humphrey Ellis in 1790." The grist-mill was erected by William Lawrence. John E. Stanley and his father leased the mills. Clement Lawrence owns them and the adjoining farm on the south of the Pike. He lives on the farm, and rents the mill. The farm north of the Pike belongs to his sisters. On another farm near-by lived Dr. Lawrence. His daughter, Mrs. L. L. Griffin, is an authoress; she resides in Philadelphia. The post-office in the mill is named Adele, from Congressman John B. Robinson's daughter.



This 1897 atlas map detail shows the West Chester Turnpike from the Eagle Hotel west to Darby Creek.

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