

# A West Pikeland History Tour

by Mr. Mark Ashton (March 2026)



As America celebrates a quarter millennium (a 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary) we pause to look at where our community has travelled since 1700 when settlers first started to occupy the north rim of the Great Valley. Anyone driving our roads quickly grasps the physical beauty of this region. But the history of our township is remarkably well preserved in the buildings and ruins found inside our borders. Central to this is what was one of America's unique properties, the health spa at Yellow Springs. But just as, if not more important, is the preserved mill and supporting buildings at Anselma. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the eastern seaboard and New England were dotted with thousands of grist mills, sawmills, clover mills, and the like. Almost all have been destroyed or converted to other uses. West Pikeland has one of the few survivors that still produce food you can eat. And you can watch it done before your eyes on the second Saturday of every month, except in winter.

Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, West Pikeland was largely farmland. Settlers arrived here from Germany, Wales, Ireland, and England in search of a place to raise crops to support themselves. They built small log cabins and girdled trees to create space for wheat, corn, rye, and oats. They added limestone and clover to the land and the results were harvests producing more than they could consume. Rye was grown for hay which could be used to roof the house with a wee bit set aside

for distilling into whiskey. Most early farms grew an acre of flax for linen clothing. Farmers took any surplus of their harvest to Philadelphia in wagons and sold it to merchants who took it up and down the Eastern seaboard and the sugar islands of the Caribbean. With the cash the farmers earned, they began to enclose their homes with stone and to erect barns which first held crops and then were expanded to house livestock. Tanneries also began to appear just outside the township to process animal hides into shoes, boots and tack for horses and oxen.

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century livestock became a major business. Our region was probably the leading producer of beef in the U.S. such that six days a week hundreds of cattle were driven down the Conestoga and Lancaster Roads to be slaughtered in Philadelphia. By the 1840s Chester County was home to 40,000 or more cattle, sent here from points west to fatten before shipment to Philadelphia for slaughter and processing.

But the Pikelands were producing more than grain and beef. A nascent iron industry had been forming north and west of our township under the control of the Potts, Savage, Rutter, and Nutt families. Production of iron required access to iron ore, limestone, and huge quantities of wood. While the Pickering Creek did not attract any iron operations of its own, the area it flowed through was discovered to have substantial deposits of iron ore and kaolin, a form of clay used to manufacture pottery. These pit operations would continue until late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and would be augmented by the discovery of graphite, a metal lubricant found on Pikeland Road and Horseshoe Trail (then Nantmeal Rd).

Citizens met at Yellow Springs as early as 1836 to discuss the construction of a railroad from Phoenixville through the Pikeland townships and west as far as Honey Brook (then Waynesburg). The spa village was hosting 400-500 guests per day during its four month “season” and rails could also expedite transit of iron ore to Phoenixville’s steel mills. The Pickering Valley Railroad was completed in 1871, and the track bed berm remains visible along much of modern Route 113. By the 1870s milk could be processed to eliminate its most deadly bacteria and it became a popular drink. This prompted Pikeland farmers to switch from beef to milk and other dairy production which the railroad could quickly transport to the Philadelphia market. Sadly, just a few years after the rail line opened, seven residents were killed and dozens injured after a train carrying 130 passengers collapsed down an embankment and into the French Creek just east of Kimberton. This tragedy was on the front page of the New York Times on Saturday October 6. The site is pictured below.



By 1890 the railroad offered five trains a day and it was now practical to commute from West Pikeland to Philadelphia by train. This prompted construction of a village along Route 113 (the Shoppes at Pickering Mill) with many of the homes still standing between Yellow Springs Road and the Chester Springs post office. Former working farms became more gentlemanly as affluent Philadelphians sent their families to live in the Pikelands during the summer and would either commute or come on weekends to hunt foxes with the Kimberton Hunt (founded 1870) or simply enjoy rural life. Among those seeking respite were a U.S. Supreme Court justice, Owen Roberts and a retired physician/art collector named Albert Barnes.

The early twentieth century brings the car and the telephone. Now you can go anywhere without reference to a train schedule. Roads began to be straightened and paved for the speed of cars. The railroad became superfluous with passenger trains abandoned in 1934 and freight in 1948.

So, let us travel around the township and see glimpses of a 300-year past.

1. The Hench property at 1446 Clover Mill is said to date from 1715 and was acquired by German immigrants who were part of the southward migration of German families from Lehigh, Berks and Montgomery counties which began in 1709. The Henches acquired the property from another old Pikeland Family, the Milhous.' The latter family later moved west, and Richard Milhouse Nixon became America's 37<sup>th</sup> President in 1969.



2. The Hartmann House at 1439 Clover Mill is from the 1770s and the Hartmann family records indicate the home was visited by General Washington during his retreat from Yellow Springs to Warwick and Reading (Redding) Furnaces on September 18, 1777. The Hartmanns operated the clover mill for which the road is named. Early farmers had discovered clover to be an excellent way to revitalize soils depleted by farming.



3. The Dietrich home at 1337 Art School dates from 1721 and is part of West Vincent, East and West Pikeland townships. The property was privately purchased by a consortium of fox hunting enthusiasts in the 1920s including William Clothier, Walter Janney, Owen Roberts, and Joseph Neff Ewing. Known as Arkadia it was acquired in 1965 by the Dietrich Family, who long owned

Luden's cough drop company in Reading. Richard Dietrich and his brother Daniel were leading collectors of American antiques and art. Richard's 18<sup>th</sup> century furniture and art are in nearly every major U.S. Museum. The Dietrich Farm, "Bryn Coed," comprised 1,500 acres in 2007 and is now largely open space managed by the Natural Lands Trust. Richard's copy of the Constitution (actually George Washington's) sold for \$9.8 million in 2012. His collection of antiques is found in a book called "In Pursuit of History" by Yale University Press (2020). If you want to explore the collection, try YouTube and type in Tudor Place, H. Richard Dietrich



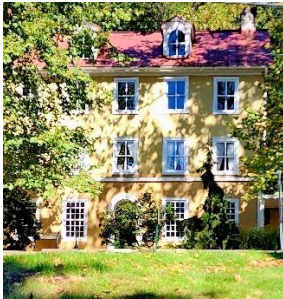
4. The property of 1461 Art School is on a private road that once led to major iron deposits owned by Phoenix Iron Co. The ponds at 1461 Art School and the corner of Art School and Kimberton Roads were once iron pits. The property is listed as dating to 1690 although today the house is now over 6,000 square feet. The house in the snow is the Fagley Homestead built in 1860 and on the National Register of Historic Places.



5. 1559 Art School Rd. (at Pikeland) is identified in 1847 maps as Pikeland Seminary. Charles Burleigh, a noted abolitionist, lectured here during that year.

Yellow Springs is a historic district first identified for its iron spring in 1722. By 1750 a stone inn was erected at 1701 Art School Road and the place gained notoriety as a health spa. On September 17, 1777, the American Army of 11,000 men came here in a driving rainstorm and camped overnight. It is probably while camped here that Washington decided he could not keep the British from capturing Philadelphia. A hospital was built here for the army during the Valley Forge encampment of 1778. After 1780 the village resumed its position as a fashionable spa attracting patrons from North America and the Caribbean. The hotel was discontinued after the Civil War, and the property was sold to a syndicate that operated a home and school for Civil War orphans. The orphanage was closed in 1912, and the Pa. Academy of Fine Arts acquired the property as a summer school. In 1952 the property was sold to a Christian film studio which made religious and industrial films but is known primarily for early sci-fi thrillers "The Blob" (1958) and "4D Man" (1959). The studio closed in 1972 and became Historic Yellow Springs- an art school and wedding venue. The iron, sulfur and magnesium springs remain open to the public on a 140 acre preserve. Deep behind the property is a pond which once was used to mine kaolin,

a clay needed to produce the common pottery made by the Vickers Family in Lionville and the decorative majolica produced by Phoenixville's Griffen Smith & Hill.



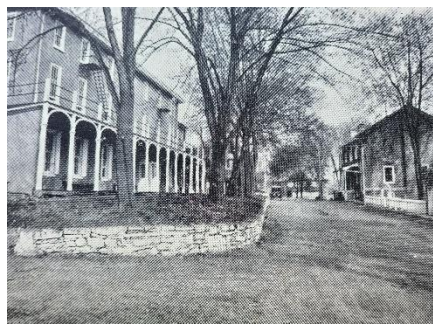
Yellow Springs Tavern



Revolutionary War hospital ruins



Sulfur Spring



1916 View west to east.

Just west of Yellow Springs at 1809 Art School is a 1740s mill on the Pickering Creek which is today a residence. Mills dotted the length of both the French and Pickering Creeks throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.



6. In the 1830s, a leading physician and abolitionist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bartholomew Fussell moved from Kennett Township to West Vincent, just inside the western border of West Pikeland. In addition to this role as a major figure on the Underground Railroad, Fussell helped found the first medical college for women. His son Morris lived on the property at Art School and Miller Roads and practiced medicine in the community for 50 years.

Vincent Baptist Church is just west of the township but important to its history. Baptists were among the earliest settlers in northern Chester County beginning in 1715-1720. A log church was

erected in 1737 at 2109 Art School, and the nearby stream was used as a baptistry. The oldest part of the present church is from 1812.



7. The Joseph Jones House at 908 Messner Road may be part of another mill and dates to 1742. It has a former blacksmith shop on the property. Again, this corner of the township was a major area from which Phoenix Iron extracted that mineral to make rolled sheet iron and rails as well as bridges, elevated railways and a ferris wheel. An abandoned mine, now a pond, is off Poplar Mill Road. Just down the street is 1001 Messner Road which dates to 1800 and retains a mounting block by which a person could get onto his horse without climbing up via the stirrups.



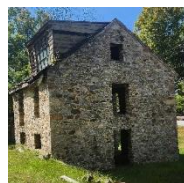
8. Anselma Village is a collection of buildings which demonstrates life in this community in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The mill itself was erected by Samuel Lightfoot in 1747. The mill operated until 1982 although its importance as a milling establishment eroded quickly once motorized vehicles became popular. The advancement of this mill is credited to John Oberholtzer and his wife, the poet Sara Vickers. John was seriously injured by the wooden millwheel in 1871. A 1909 metal wheel replacement still runs today. He opened a general store and persuaded the Pickering Valley Railroad to put its “Cambria” station on the property. He had one of the first telephones in the United States. Wife Sara was an esteemed poet, economist, and women’s rights advocate. In 1882 the Oberholtzers would join their Yellow Springs neighbors the McCullough’s in founding a vacation resort called Longport, NJ. Their son, Ellis Oberholtzer, was a prominent early 20<sup>th</sup> century historian.



Opposite the Anselma site is Shenneman's school house which appears on the 1847 map.



9. The intersection of Kimberton Road and the Conestoga Turnpike (today's Sunoco) was called Opperman's Corner. In 1684, today's Conestoga Road (Rte 401) was dubbed the Allegheny Path. It was less than two feet wide and took Native Americans between modern day Philadelphia (Allegheny Ave) and Pittsburgh. In 1718 it was designated a "road" by the General Assembly and in 1811 it became Pennsylvania's fourth toll road or "turnpike." Until the Civil War there was St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church on the west side of Route 401 just below Rte 113. The 1873 map identifies the building Keystone Hall, probably the home of a local band. A decade later the band occupies a building on Yellow Springs Road, later the property of a group called the Patriotic Order, Sons of America. Just east of the intersection is a series of houses opposite a car dealership. This village was called Marisville. Its oldest house dates to 1776. There was once a train stop here called "Camp" and the Chester Springs Graphite Co. operated a graphite mine in Marisville near Horseshoe Trail.



1776 house on Kimberton Road

10. On Conestoga Road at Lower Pine Creek is the site of an early industrial building where carpet was made. Southeastern Pennsylvania became famous for making wool floor coverings early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Coulton's operated two factories. Between the factory on Conestoga and Opperman's Corner (Rte 113) was Shafer's store, one of four in West Pikeland in 1860. The one wool factory was on the Lower Pine Creek just west of Rte 401. Across the street and slightly to the north is 1427 Conestoga, an 1802 house that retains a double door entrance.

Folklife historian Henry Kauffman’s research indicates that frugal Germans eschewed a grand front door and center hall; too grandiose. They adopted a two-door approach. The one door was for daily activities. The other door was for formal occasions such as out-of-town guests, weddings, and funerals. The latter led to the parlor where people were married or “laid out” for burial so that friends and family could view the corpse and make certain it was death and not a coma.



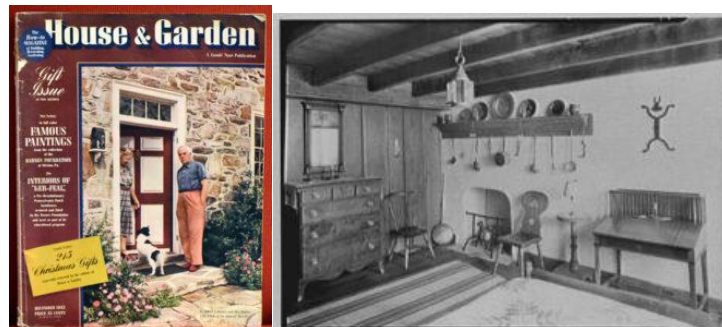
11. In 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century America not all inns were alike. Yellow Springs was a resort catering to the affluent. But the typical inn was quite humble; intended to provide travelers with a simple warm meal, a place in a bed occupied by fellow travelers and a barn or field for animals that were either driving other beasts to market or transporting the owners of those animals. This is what we find at 1251 Conestoga Road, home to the Rising Sun Inn since 1815. John Wagonseller operated the Red Lion Tavern in Lionville. William, likely his son, applied to add this inn and held that license until 1836.



12. Again, early commerce follows water and the complex of buildings on the Lower Pine Creek at Horseshoe Trail (formerly the Nantmeal Road) illustrates this. The earliest building, the sawmill (now a home) is 1764. The grist mill is 1790. The house itself dates to 1801, and the millpond and waterfall still exist. In 1847 this is listed as the Evans Grist and Sawmill. At harvest time the mill would grind wheat and corn. At other times it was a sawmill. One of these sawmills is now owned by the Smithsonian Institution. It was on the Lower Pine Creek. The “up and down” sawmill was acquired by the Smithsonian for its collection in 1926.



13. The Pickering Railroad started a movement by Philadelphians to dwell in the Pikelands. The flexibility of travel, once the auto became prevalent, accelerated the process as did the rise of paved roads throughout the county, especially during the Great Depression. In 1940 a new “country” couple arrived in West Pikeland, purchasing 140 acres of land and an 18<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse. Albert Barnes was born in poverty, secured a medical degree, and then invented a patent eye medicine which was hugely popular and effective. In 1929 he sold his company and devoted himself full-time to collecting and studying art. At a time when most Philadelphians still rejected impressionist painting, Barnes amassed one of the world’s finest collections of it, while mocking the affluent Philadelphia establishment. He named his house at 1083 Bodine Road for his dog (Ker-Feal) and filled it with an unusual collection of French impressionist paintings, African art and Pennsylvania German furniture and ironwork. The house stands as it did in July 1951 when Barnes’ car was struck and he was killed by a truck on Conestoga Road. The 4,000 pieces of art not in his house are now part of the Barnes Foundation’s \$25 billion collection at 20<sup>th</sup> & the Parkway.



Ker Feal in 1942

14. One should think there is no controversy over the location of Chester Springs. Alas, tis not so easy. Until the 1830s Chester Springs was unknown. But a dispute over another Yellow Spring in Blair County (Altoona) forced a name change for the Pikelands. In the 1790s what is today Street Road offered an alternate route to Phoenixville and houses began to rise along with immense barns such as that at 1380 Street Road. A drive along Street Road includes a varied collection of stone farmhouses and outbuildings reflecting the wealth that the land could produce. Among those of note are 1253 (1790); 1517 (1784); 1541 (1784). The home at 1371 has a belfry reflecting its status as home to the Mount Vernon schoolhouse. At the intersection of Street and Yellow Springs Road (once called White Horse) is a triangular intersection called “John’s Store.” It is most likely the building at 1212 Yellow Springs which dates to 1790. Many people would say this intersection is “Chester Springs.” Significant houses in the vicinity include

1209 Yellow Springs (1825; the Lutheran parsonage on an 1873 map); the barn at 1183 Yellow Springs (1740); and 1165 Yellow Springs (1850). The latter includes a “sleeping porch” where a resident in summer could escape the nighttime heat (a bit) in days a century before air conditioning.



15. It is all a matter of how you measure but West Pikeland is ranked by some as the second wealthiest township in Pennsylvania. We do have lots of palatial stone homes and some magnificent 19<sup>th</sup> century barns. But Elbow Lane between Yellow Springs and Pikeland Roads offers a sampling of modest 19<sup>th</sup> century charm. 1225 and 1410 Elbow Lane both date to about 1800. 1240 Elbow dates from 1850 and has a great complement of outbuildings shown as they would have been—working fields to grow grains, then beef cattle and eventually to produce milk beginning just after the Civil War. This is also the home to the Hartman Wheel Co. until Hartman found graphite in his backyard and went into the mining business.

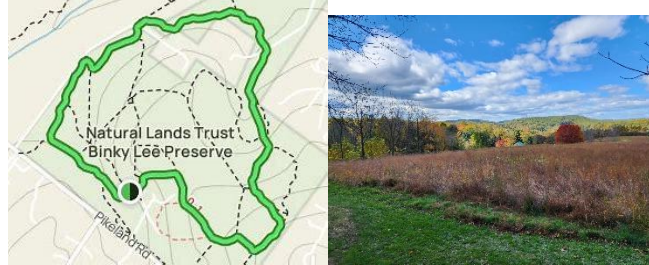


In October 1934, a farmhand murdered a local farmer in a barn on Street Road. Amazingly, based on a written description alone, the murderer was caught while hiking by a policeman a month later outside Charlotte NC.

16. St. Peter’s Lutheran Church at 1193 Clover Mill Road was founded in the home of Michael King. He would later combine with some familiar Pikeland names such as Moses, Emery, Hartman, and Miller to establish a place to build a log church on Clover Mill Road in the southeast corner of the township in late 1772. The building was appropriated as a field hospital during the 1777 campaign. Just after the war, elements of the reformed Lutheran church united with the traditional wing to bill a parsonage. By 1812 the parson was serving both groups, the building had been faced with stone and an organ was added. Services were available in German and English. It is believed an arsonist burned the building in 1835. The present structure dates from 1836. The “sharing arrangement” came apart in the 1840s and the evangelicals built a new

church on the west side of Clover Hill. That church was consumed in a brushfire in 1918 and never re-built. Rather, the churches again merged.

17. The Binky Lee Preserve has been part of the landscape since 1989. The land was donated by Leonora Dinkey Seiple. Leonora was the daughter of Alva and Margaret Dinkey. Alva followed the rags to riches path forged by Andrew Carnegie and in 1911 was nearly selected to run United States Steel. He “settled” in Philadelphia where he ran both the Midvale Steel Co. in Philadelphia and Worth Brothers Steel in Coatesville. The Seiples were married in 1925 and acquired this property at 1445 Pikeland Road which they called Binkeylee Farms. Their home burned in the 1930s and the outbuilding are all that survive.



18. We know it as Hallman’s Gulf where your gas is pumped, and your dog can be licensed. But this area had a kind of ever-changing history over time. The bridge across the Pickering on Pikeland Road was, in 1847, the site of Pennypacker’s Grist and Sawmill. It was also a “factory.” An 1878 West Chester newspaper informs us that John Senior had just rented the Pennypacker Woolen mill and had made an investment in new equipment to make blankets for calico printing. Two years earlier investors formed a business near Byers Station (Eagle) to mine and process black lead, which we would call graphite and they also called plumbago. This prompted a kind of “lead rush” as the element was found next in Charlestown and then in West Pikeland. In 1880 Joseph Hartman was making wagon spokes and wheels on Elbow Lane when he announced he would convert his business to mining and processing graphite. The 1883 Breou map shows a mine directly behind Hartman’s property and appears to show the Chester Springs Mining Co. at 1448 Village Lane with the mine itself just south of the Pickering Bridge on the west side of Pikeland Road. Eventually the area from Route 113 south to Elbow Lane along Pikeland Road was leased for mining. At the time, graphite was a source of pencil lead and stove polish. The only other domestic source of supply in Saratoga NY was running out. The industry died quickly but was revived during the two World Wars as graphite was used to lubricate artillery. The area was long called Mosesville because Moses Powell operated a store there as early as 1866. The neighborhood also had other residents with the surname “Moses” just as Marisville was named for the Maris family.



Hallman’s Gulf



Pennypacker Wool factory

Just south of the Pickering Creek was Abraham Pennypacker's woolen factory at 1548 Pikeland Road. A decade later this was M(ariah) Pennypacker's plumbago mill. The pillars for the track of the Pickering Valley Railroad run just behind the service station as does Village Lane, the original Kimberton or Pike Springs Road. The house at 1615 Pikeland Road is that of Joseph Tustin, a prominent politician, and a founder of the railroad. On Village Lane the oldest house is 1431, which dates to 1800 although its mansard roof is post-Civil War. The other houses on Village Lane appear to date to 1900, which is when the other houses along Route 113 between Pikeland Road and Yellow Springs date to.



19. Our tour ends near the third possible “center” of Chester Springs, Route 113, and Yellow Springs Road. The intersection is dominated by the Pickering Mill, a relatively late addition to the township. What brought people here in contrast to the other stops on the railroad was the Soldiers’ Orphans Home opened at Yellow Springs in 1868 and closed in 1912. The school was residence for three hundred children or more for most of its history. And, as we have noted, in the 1880s and 1890s many city residents preferred to weekend and summer in the country, 300-550 feet above and thirty miles away from the polluted and infectious city. So, as you look along Route 113 and Village Avenue (behind the mill and its shops) you will see a collection of homes, some modest, while others are ornate with belvederes and towers. The area west of this village was “iron country” owned by Phoenix Iron and Prizer & Tustin. As people did back then, Isaac Tustin lived in the middle of his operations in the house which survives at 765 Spring House Road. Isaac and his son Jones were both killed in the Kimberton train wreck of October 1877. In 1907 West Pikeland entered the modern age of education with its own two-story schoolhouse.



Chester Springs Station



1218 Kimberton



1248 Kimberton



1626 Yellow Springs



1908 Kimberton



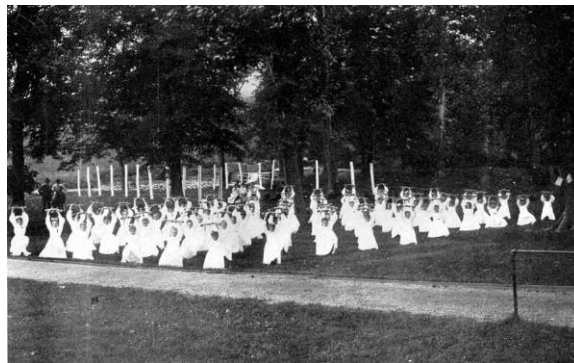
Tustin Farm with Barn



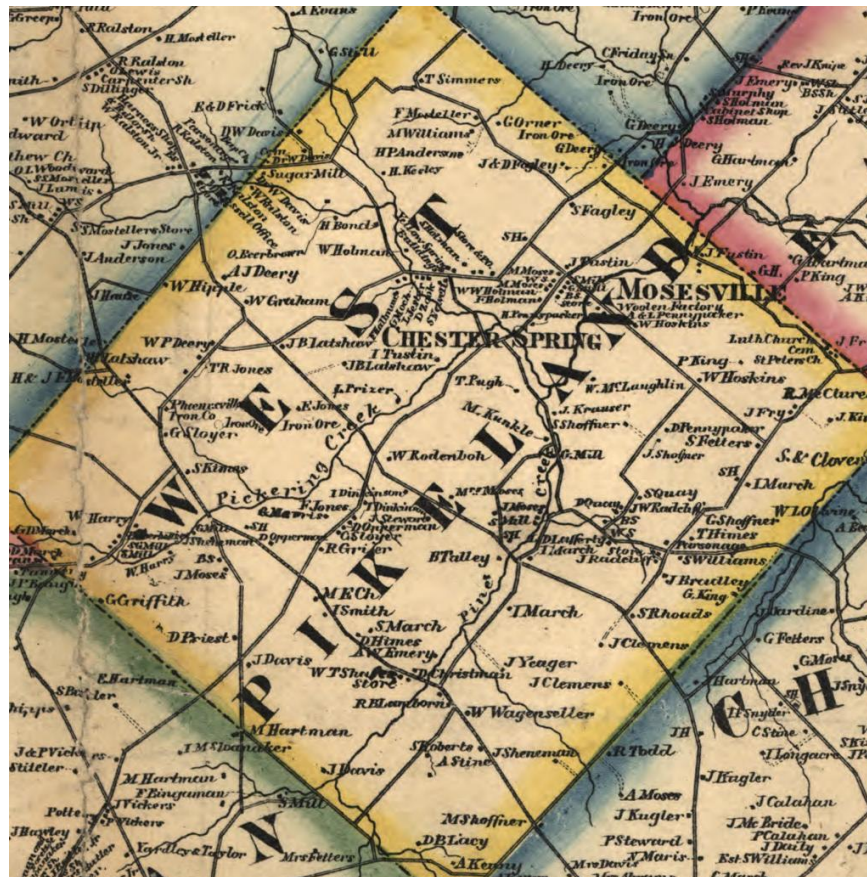
Tustin House

In 1988 a new educational institution would arrive. The Montgomery School had been operating in Lower Merion Township since 1915. When the farm of Philadelphia lawyer George Beechwood became available, the school decided to move to the country and put down roots on Kimberton Road. Administration is still managed out of the Beechwood house overlooking the Pickering Creek.

Having completed the tour, we take a bow with help from the 19<sup>th</sup> century orphans.



West Pikeland 1856



In 1705 William Penn granted 10,000 acres of land in Chester County to Joseph Pike of County Cork in Ireland. As with many early investors Pike never came to America and his death

triggered nearly a century of litigation in Pennsylvania and England over who owned this land. Meanwhile, a collection of German Lutherans and English Baptists wandered into our dark howling forest and found land that was fertile and streams that turned millwheels. They had no clear title to own the land but then it was not clear who owned it.

In 1722 it was reported in Philadelphia that there was a spring emitting iron infused water deemed healthy to consume and bathe in. By 1750 a tavern license was granted to operate an inn at the Yellow Springs. Six years earlier Samuel Lightfoot erected a grist mill on the Pickering Creek that still runs today. The Pickering soon hosted mills of all types; grinding grains and clover as well as cutting wood.

In September 1777 war came to Chester County as the British sought to depose the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. An immense battle forming along Lancaster Road was effectively "rained out" by a torrential nor'easter that caused George Washington to retreat north from the Great Valley to camp at the Yellow Springs on September 16, 1777. Three months later that same army was back to encamp at Valley Forge and to convert the Yellow Springs from a resort to a military hospital.

The war caused huge destruction throughout the region, but Yellow Springs resumed its operations as a spa attracting visitors from throughout North America. Meanwhile, as the city of Philadelphia grew, areas like the Pikelands became the bread, butter and beef basket for a city that had 100,000 residents by 1840. The Allegheny Path forged by Native Americans centuries before western colonization became the Conestoga Turnpike in 1811 and hosted hundreds of sheep, goats and cattle driven daily from Chester, Berks, and Lancaster farms to be slaughtered in Philadelphia.

Northern Chester County was also a center of the American iron industry with the Coventry, Nantmeal and Warwick townships hosting more than a dozen furnaces to make iron and forges to fabricate it. In 1790 an iron slitting mill was established in today's Phoenixville to make nails. It would grow to become a manufacturer of artillery, iron and steel rails for trains and a leading international builder of bridges. To meet that need, iron pits were found throughout West Pikeland, and raw iron was shipped first by wagon and later rail to Phoenixville for processing.

On the western side of the township locals found deposits of kaolin which is the basis of making ceramics from clay. Local Quakers had moved to Uwchlan Township early in the 1700s and established a meeting in Lionville. The Vickers family built a pottery just west of the township line on Gordon Drive. The Vickers and their Quaker neighbors often lined their wagons with false bottoms to carry another form of cargo; Black men and women who had escaped slavery in search of freedom.

The Civil War left our region highly conflicted. Chester County was a center of the abolitionist movement. But ironically, its factories were heavily invested in processing raw cotton into cloth. And its heavy concentration of iron manufacturing in Coatesville, Parkesburg, Phoenixville, and Pottstown made it a prime target for the Confederate forces driving north to Antietam in 1862 and Gettysburg a year later.

After the war ended, much changed. The spa village at Yellow Springs became a school for children orphaned by the war. In 1871 a railroad company is formed to lay a line from Phoenixville to Byers Station (Eagle) with four stations in West Pikeland. The development of pasteurization makes cow's milk a healthy beverage and beef cattle operations give way to dairy farms. There is a carpet factory on Conestoga Turnpike and a wagonwheel factory on Elbow Lane. But in the 1880s deposits of graphite are found along Pikeland Road and Horseshoe Trail prompting a kind of plumbago "gold rush." It would survive until the 1920s.

The Pickering Railroad transports milk into Philadelphia but also transports Philadelphians out of the city. Houses spring up in the 1890s along modern day Route 113 intended to provide wealthy city residents with an escape to the country where infectious diseases are less prevalent. The Pickering Hunt, a club devoted to fox hunting forms in 1874 and fox hunting precedes golf and tennis as a favored sport. The arrival of cars in the early 1900s accelerates suburbanization although none of the roads in this region would be paved until the 1920s.

The car and the truck combined with concrete and macadam roads cause forever changes. The railroad is abandoned in the 1930s. Tanneries and grist mills become superfluous as these forms of processing can be better done in factories. In 1917 the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts takes over the campus at Yellow Springs to teach "Plein air" painting. But by 1952, impressionism is yielding to abstract painting, and students now live in suburban homes where trees and streams are part of their daily landscape. The campus is sold to a filmmaker, Irwin "Shorty" Yeaworth. By 1950 the township is invaded by the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Between 1960 and 1990 the township population triples and Main Line private schools like Montgomery come to address education needs that were met by one room schoolhouses as late as 1950.

Today West Pikeland has just over 4,000 residents. Yet almost a third of its ten square miles are conserved from development. And if you are willing to wander, much of our history remains visible if you look carefully. You can trace the trackbed of the Pickering Railroad. The iron, sulfur and magnesium springs at Yellow Springs continue to feed the Pickering Creek. The Anselma Mill operates, producing oats you can eat, and you will see other mills along the Pickering, either abandoned or converted to housing. The clay and iron mines remain on the maps except today they are ponds. You will discover houses with two front doors: a German tradition dating back more than five hundred years. The foundation of the revolutionary war hospital overlooks a 19<sup>th</sup> century village at Yellow Springs where N.C. Wyeth and Daniel Garber taught painting, and Steve McQueen played his first starring role in a movie.

In his 1907 history of Chester County the author Wilmer MacElree quoted the poet and writer James Russell Lowell. Lowell modestly suggested

“Men should be familiar with their own villages before they go abroad.”

This is your invitation to do just that.