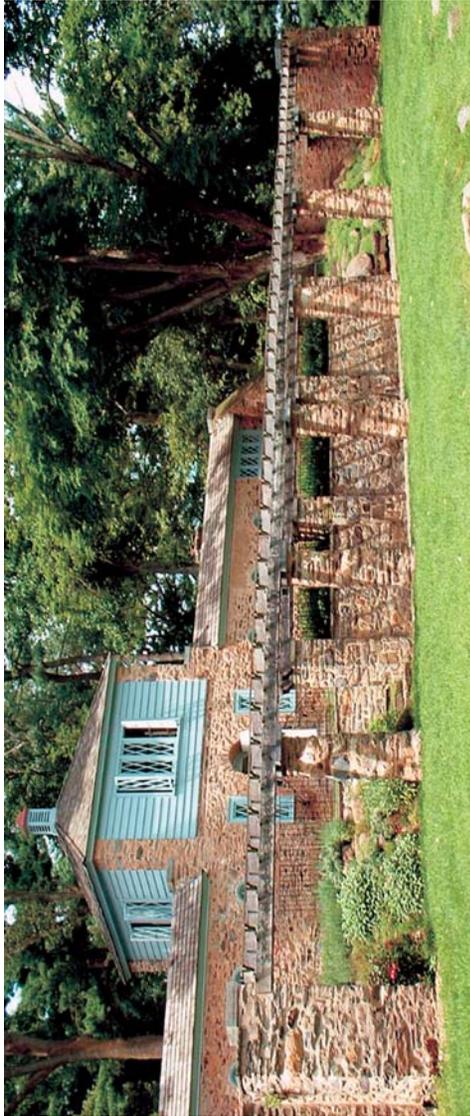
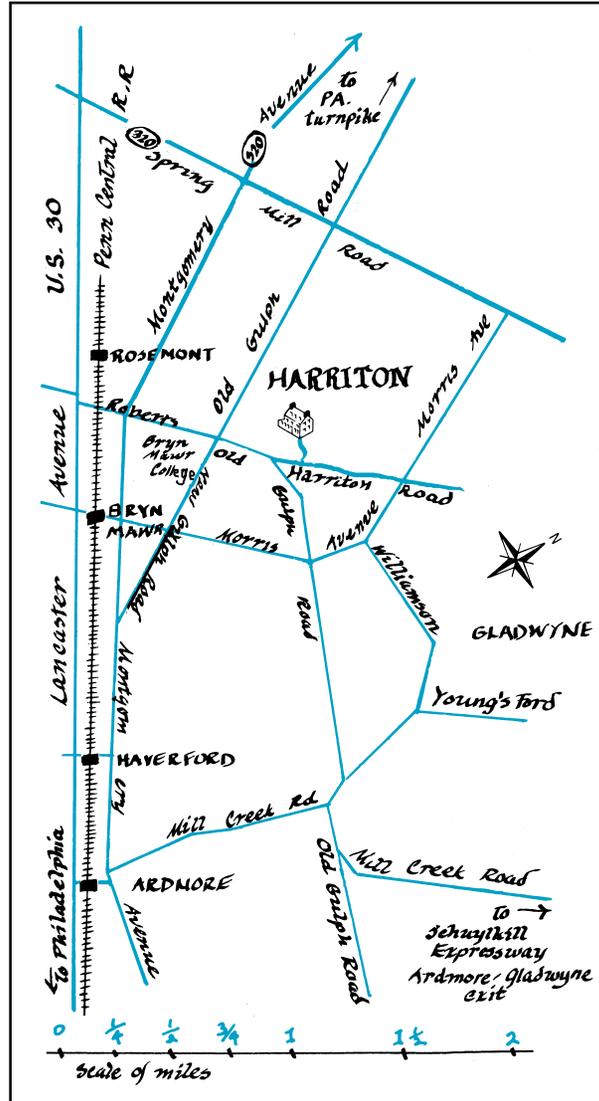


Today



The former poolhouse, now restored and converted to serve as the new Education and Administrative Center at historic Harriton.



HOURS: WED.-SAT., 10-4
(weekday appointments preferred)

HARRITON ASSOCIATION

500 HARRITON ROAD

P.O. BOX 1364

BRYN MAWR, PENNSYLVANIA 19010

(610) 525-0201

WEB SITE: WWW.HARRITONHOUSE.ORG

EMAIL ADDRESS: QUERIES@HARRITONHOUSE.ORG

HARRITON HOUSE

Home of CHARLES THOMSON
Secretary of the Continental Congresses

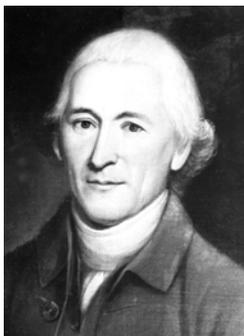


AMERICANS SEARCH for their heritage in the homes of their patriots. Harriton is no exception. Charles Thomson, first and only Secretary to the Continental and Confederation Congresses, was Harriton's most famous occupant, but the story of the house and estate encompasses more than 300 years beginning with the settlement of "Meirion" by Welsh Quakers. The property was originally a 700-acre land grant from William Penn in 1682 and part of a much larger tract of land known as the Welsh Tract or Welsh Barony. Today, the restored 1704 house and 16½-acre park are open to the public as a cultural resource owned by the Township of Lower Merion and administered privately by the Harriton Association.

Bryn Mawr The house we know as HARRITON was built by Welsh Quaker Rowland Ellis in 1704 and called BRYN MAWR meaning “high hill” in Welsh. The three-story, T-shaped stone house with its flaring eaves and tall brick chimneys is a unique survival of substantial early American domestic architecture in the Philadelphia area. Interior panelling and the closed-string staircase endure in the house from this early period. Ellis was a significant member of his Welsh community, serving as a member of the Assembly and as an overseer of the Quaker schools in Philadelphia.

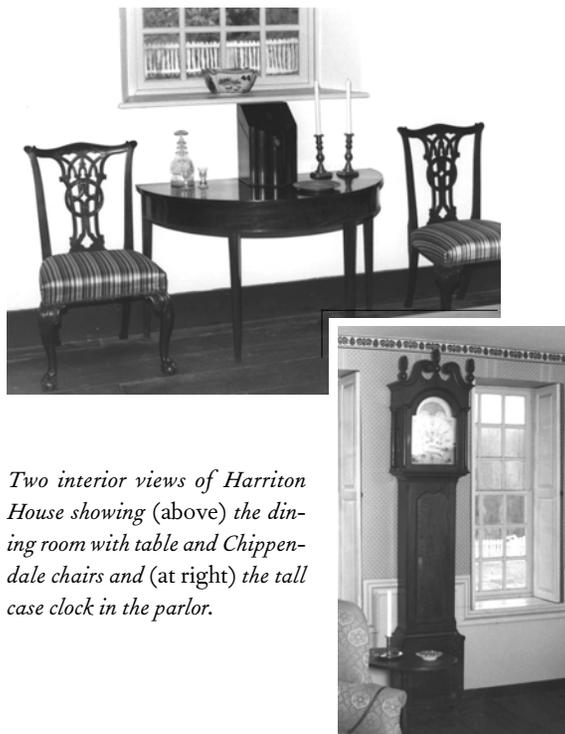
Harriton The name change of the house and estate came in 1719 with Ellis’ sale of the property to Maryland tobacco planter Richard Harrison. Though a Quaker, Harrison brought tobacco culture and African slaves to Harriton with him, and this property is believed to be the northernmost tobacco plantation operated on the slave economy in the Colonies prior to the American Revolution.

Charles Thomson Charles Thomson was Harriton’s most famous occupant. Thomson came to Harriton by his 1774 marriage to Richard Harrison’s daughter Hannah. Thomson spent his retirement years here, from 1789 until his death in 1824, after 15 years of public service (1774–1789) as only Secretary to the Continental Congresses. Thomson had two major interests at Harriton. The first was America’s principal industry following the Revolution—agriculture. He experimented with new agricultural techniques and crops, and he was an avid beekeeper. Thomson was an ardent abolitionist, and he managed his farm not with slaves but by letting it out on “shares” with his workers. His second interest was the completion of the first translation of the Bible from Greek to English to be published on the North American continent.



Charles Thomson

Today After Thomson’s death, the substantial house was the home of tenant farmers, last used by the dairy manager for the “Harriton Guernsey Dairy” (c. 1908–1926) before it was sold out of the family. Today, the



Two interior views of Harriton House showing (above) the dining room with table and Chippendale chairs and (at right) the tall case clock in the parlor.

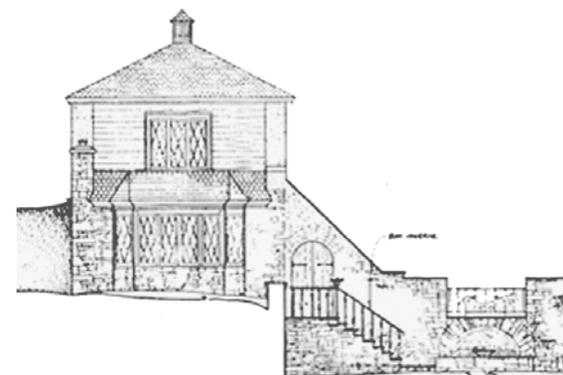
house has been faithfully restored to the period of Charles Thomson’s occupancy and is open to the public on a regular basis. The house is furnished with a fine collection of 18th-century American decorative arts, including objects owned and used by the first and only Secretary to the Continental Congresses, Charles Thomson.

We invite you to visit and learn from Harriton something of our local and national heritage, and we urge you to help support the continued preservation of this historic site with a tax-deductible contribution to the Harriton Association.

The stone structure above our parking lot is a fragment of a large stone barn, the foundations of which were converted to a poolhouse and pleasure garden in 1929. The building and Harriton House reflect the long, rich, and important agricultural heritage of this site and the surrounding area. Further, they reflect the change from agricultural use to comfortable suburban residential use in the twentieth century

The barn-come-poolhouse structure is now our Education and Administrative Center, supporting Harriton House with visitor amenities including lecture space and restrooms. The new office and flexible space permit visitor reception and education, program and work space, and better preservation of the 1704 house. The surrounding grounds and gardens keep several additional acres of quiet, open space in our increasingly built-up community.

Join us today and stay with us in the future for a visit into the past.



Harriton and its grounds are available for rent for your next social function or meeting. Small weddings, business meetings and retreats, club meetings, private parties, funeral luncheons, classes, exhibits, and children’s birthday parties have all been successfully held at this historic site. We welcome your inquiry, and we offer to help make your event a success too.