

Why Woodburne?

Although Woodburne Mansion, designed by Horace Trumbauer for Edgar Thompson Scott Sr. on the Heights of Darby only dates back to 1906, the land on which it stands holds riches of heritage and history of both Delaware County and the USA from much earlier. The Great Minquas Path along which native tribes traveled to trade their furs with the Swedes and the Dutch, passed by the site on their way south to Fort Beaversrede . (the Beaver Road)

When William Penn sent new colonists to mix with the Swedes, Dutch, and free people of color who already lived in the area, the tract of land on which Woodburne now stands was purchased by the grand-father of famed botanist John Bartram. The site included the Bartram farm where the botanist was born and raised, which in 1902 became Eden Cemetery, the oldest African American owned cemetery in the US. Eden is the resting place of Julian Abele, the first African American to graduate from University of Pennsylvania with a degree in architecture. Abele worked for Trumbauer during the time Woodburne was designed and built and may have had a hand in its design. The 1687 Holmes map of Pennsylvania shows that the original Bartram land grant, in addition to the current Eden Cemetery land, extended across what is now Springfield Road and past Woodburne on the Heights all the way down to the Darby Creek below.

During the American Revolution, British troops were encamped on the land where the mansion now stands. By the time of America's Civil War, the Heights of Darby belonged to George McHenry, a Philadelphia businessman and southern sympathizer who helped ships get through the American blockade to trade with the south. McHenry's land went for Sherriff's sale, it is believed through confiscation, and was next owned by Thomas Scott, who was President Lincoln's Assistant Secretary of War and VP and later President of the Pennsylvania Railroad. After the mansion Thomas Scott had built burned down, his son, Edgar Scott Sr., commissioned Trumbauer to build the current Woodburne in 1906.

Woodburne was primarily a summer home for both Edgar Scott Sr and his son Edward Scott Jr. Both Sr and Jr were active in ambulance work in France during WWI where Edgar Sr died 22 days before the Armistice. Edgar Jr married Hope Montgomery and when his Harvard roommate wrote the Play *The Philadelphia Story*, he based his character Tracy Lord (portrayed by Katherine Hepburn) on Edgar Jr.'s wife Hope Montgomery Scott.

The Scott estate Woodburne was sold to the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer in 1936 and was converted into Little Flower Institute, a home for orphans and displaced adults who also lived there and helped care for the children. It later became a home for retired nuns and other ladies and was known then as Villa St Theresa. The sisters kept Woodburne mansion open until 2005. The woman who founded the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer was beatified on September 9, 2018 at a ceremony at her birthplace.

In 2016 Woodburne and its 32 acres was purchased by and for Delaware County with the help of former state representative Nick Micozzie. The Friends of Woodburne was formed in 2018 to work with Delaware County and other partners toward the appreciation, preservation, and utilization of this magnificent treasure in our backyard Now it's up to us as citizens to preserve the mansion and its many stories for future generations.

