

## The Development of Devon Village

**1883 Map** — This map is believed to have been used by Coffin and Altemus for real estate marketing purposes, and shows the lots available for sale in Devon. It also includes one of only two images of the first Devon Inn that we have found. The map has been restored by its current owner, whose research reflects that it is dated 1883. *Courtesy of Lisa Ruch.*

Coffin and Altemus not only constructed the Devon Inn, but they also built houses nearby and sold lots for people to build their own homes.

In May of 1885 the *Times (Philadelphia)* reported that since the previous summer “a dozen cottages had been added.” Henry C. Davis had purchased Lot 39 and was building at the corner of Berkeley and Waterloo. Across the street and directly west of the Inn, William B. Mann’s 14-acre, five-lot property “was under a high state of cultivation.” This estate would later become the home of George H. Earle, Jr., and where his son, the future Governor of Pennsylvania was born. Lemuel Coffin was building what he called a “baby cottage” that was to be suitable for sale to a newlywed couple.

Two lots across from one another at the southeast and southwest corners of Arlington (now Lancaster) and Waterloo Aves. had been purchased by Henry M. Warren and William B. Paxson.

Warren’s house was on Lot 26 where the TD Bank sits today. It was apparently known for its “very attractive stone porte-cochère” or carriage porch seen in this 1893 image from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Warren later added Lot 25 to the west and increased his land ownership to five acres.



Warren

Paxson’s cottage was across the street (Lot 28) and was located where Santander Bank stands today. The image shown here is from the same 1893 article, and the house was described as “bright and airy and really an ideal summer residence.”



Paxson

By 1895 Devon was a village of over thirty houses, in addition to the Inn.





# The Remarkable Story of the Devon Inn

## A Long-Lost Treasure of the Victorian Era

Meg Wiederseim, Joyce DeYoung, and John O. Senior

The Devon Inn is no longer visible as a prominent and central feature of the landscape in the Devon community, but evidence of its influence may still be found and felt today. The magnificent sprawling structure built on a local high point became the thriving center of summer resort lifestyle for many Victorian-era Philadelphians, and brought many to the area who understood its appeal and subsequently built homes nearby. The developers' original plan for a village surrounding the Inn is illustrated by the map and commentary on the facing page.

For many reasons, we believe that this story is intriguing and worthy of further exploration. We have attempted to present a new perspective based on recent extensive research.

Robert ("Bob") Goshorn was president of the Tredyffrin Easttown History Club from 1978–1981, and editor of the *Quarterly* from 1978–1995. His memorable contributions were wide-ranging in scope, and his excellent work as an historian was authoritative.

Goshorn's article, "Devon Inn," originally published in the October 1984 issue of the *Tredyffrin Easttown History Club Quarterly* (Vol. 22 No. 4, Pages 125–138), is considered to be one of the most definitive treatments of the subject, and served us well as an essential reference source. It is reproduced here with a few minor editorial updates.

The Goshorn article provides a foundation for the much larger second part of the issue, titled "The Devon Inn Story: Further Discoveries" and contains a wide variety of additional illustrations, information, and insights discovered during the extensive research begun by Michael and Meg, and continued by Joyce and John. This supplemental material is organized into six broad categories covering the historical context of the Inn, its structure and infrastructure, its immediate surroundings, some of the personalities who shaped the Inn and its environs, interesting aspects of life at the Inn, and finally a postscript describing the end of its role as a hotel and what became of it thereafter. We are also pleased to include an invited contribution from Greg Pritchard on the architecture of the Devon Inn.

Selected subjects in the original Goshorn article are annotated with references indicating where in the following expanded "Further Discoveries" section additional material can be found. We have included a full list of source material references at the end of the article, organized by subject title, and for those who would like to explore further, a selected list of other related articles from past issues of the *Quarterly*.

The final section is a memorial to our companion, the late J. Michael Morrison, who did so much for the study of local history, and to whom this work is dedicated.



**1907 Postcard** — The second Devon Inn was a commanding presence, situated on a rise just to the south of the Pennsylvania Railroad "Main Line" tracks and the Old Lancaster Turnpike. This view from the north shows the curved driveway leading up to the front porch entrance and staircase leading up to what was referred to as the "flume," the high-ceilinged transverse hallway, open on both ends, that was said to have created a constant cooling breeze. *Courtesy of Meg Wiederseim.*