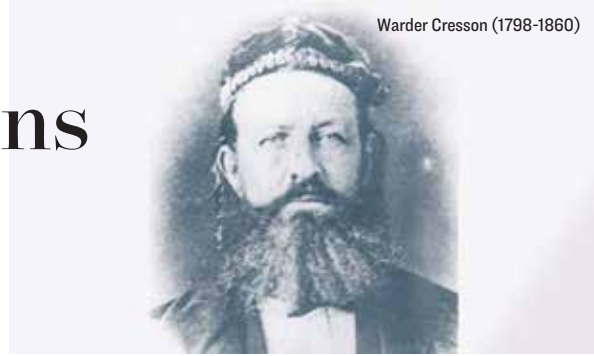


Gwynedd Hall Turns 200 Years Old

BY CAROL KALOS, PRESIDENT, WISSAHICKON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Warder Cresson (1798-1860)



Gwynedd Hall, a private residence located at 1276 Meetinghouse Road in Lower Gwynedd Township, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places to recognize its outstanding architecture. The property's history reflects its many important owners.

Gwynedd was settled by Welsh Quakers in 1699. A blog by Yen Ho relates how the Gwynedd Hall property was first farmed by Cadwalader Evans and his descendants for four generations. Then the farm changed hands several times. In 1824, Warder Cresson made improvements and built a stone farmhouse (the rear of the present house) and several outbuildings. A prominent citizen and an ardent Quaker, he visited Jerusalem to discuss agriculture techniques and was inspired to convert to Judaism.

By 1852, Miers Busch owned the land, which he called Mayfield. Using scientific principles, he improved the farm and enlarged the mansion in the Greek Revival style, adding porches, a massive portico, and four pillars while the stately house reveals high ceilings, tall windows, and many large rooms. In 1860, Busch sold to John Gilbert, the founder of Smith, Kline, and French. Then the home became a rental.

In 1934, Eugenia Wainwright purchased the property, evidently raising her son, Nicholas Biddle Wainwright, to love history; he became Director of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and President of the Library Company of Philadelphia. Restored in the 1990s by Paul and Maria Vantresca, the house and gardens are today preserved by the Metcalf family.

Author Carol Kalos is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society, which serves Ambler Borough, Whitpain Township, and Lower Gwynedd Township. On Friday, October 4, and Sunday, October 6, Gwynedd Hall will be open to the public for guided history tours with proceeds benefiting the nonprofit historical society. For details about purchasing tickets, please email to info@WValleyHS.org

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