

CALN HEXAGONAL SCHOOLHOUSE

In 1833 Richard Pimm married Mary Edge and they moved onto the land Richard had acquired from his Mother. The land was bounded to the west by what is now Bailey Rd., to the east by Bondsville Rd. and north and south by the rolling hills. In 1841, having found a need for a bigger home, Richard had the Manor House built which they called "Greenwood". It is still standing today about ½ mile away on Edge Lane.

Richard and Mary were both well educated for their time. Richard was an agriculturist, one of the Founding Fathers of Chester County Agriculture Society, Director of the National Bank of Chester County, a School Director and a successful farmer. Mary was an 1820 graduate of Westtown Boarding School. They were Quakers and education was very important to them.

In 1837, Richard had this schoolhouse built to accommodate his nine children and occasionally neighbors' children went there also. The school master stayed in the house, with the family, from September - June. We are not sure how many children attended this school at one time. After they became a certain age, they attended a larger school across the fields above Thorndale, on Bondsville Rd., and then onto Westtown Friends School in West Chester.

The schoolhouse is a very unique building. It is hexagonal, or six sided, where most were octagonal, or eight sided. Each wall measures 90" and it is made of brown field stone and some gray stone native to the area. The ground level of the school was the springhouse that had an entrance to the left of the front door. At its original location, a stream ran next to it. In this springhouse is where the family had their drinking water and cooling facilities for such things as milk, butter, cheese and eggs that were produced on the farm. One of the Pimm children told the story to her grandchildren that she remembers going to the springhouse and feeding cheese and butter to a friendly trout that lived in the water. The middle or main floor was used for the school room. In back or front whichever way you are standing is a small narrow stairway leading to a shallow loft where meats were smoked or cured on a revolving rack. The stove in the school room was used for heat in the winter as well as to smoke the meat. The stove pipe went through the ceiling and the smoke from the fire cured the meat. Perhaps during this time school would have been excused because the heat from the stove must have been intense!! Each child had a slate and a slate pencil to write their lessons. This could be erased with a cloth and another lesson written.

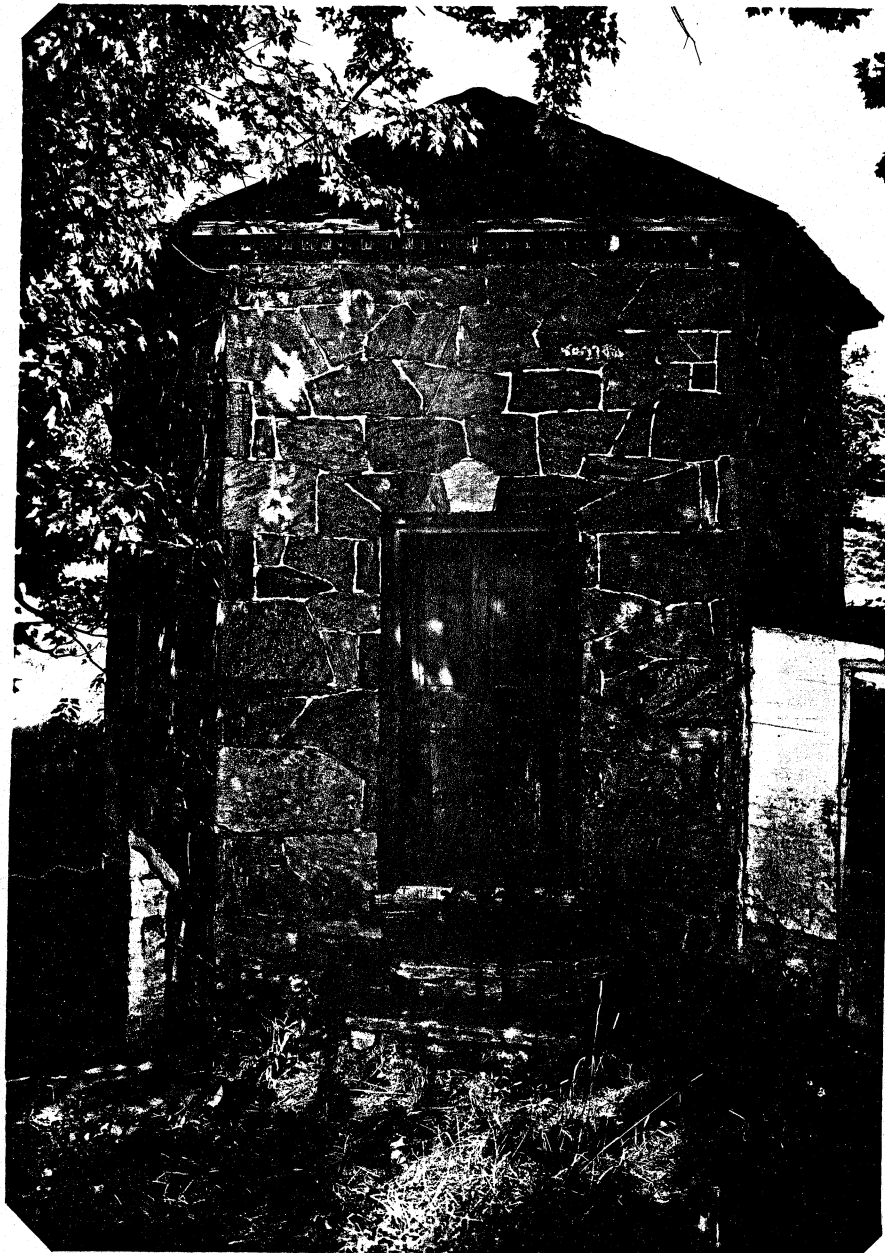
In 1857, Richard died, and in 1871 Mary moved to West Chester and passed the Manor house and 192 acres to her brother, John G. Edge. For the next 114 years, it remained in the Edge family.

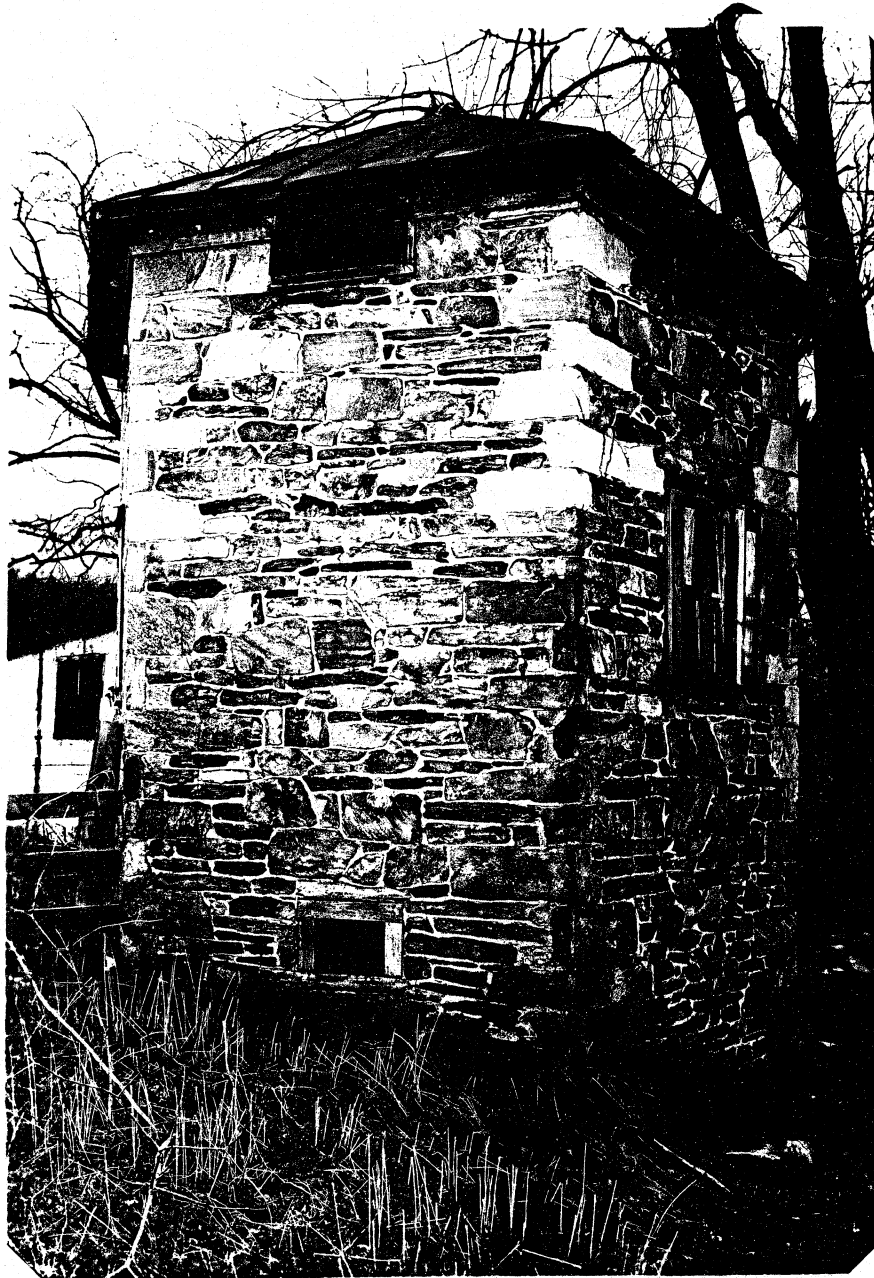
Over the years, parcels of land were sold off to developers and the little school

house sat unused and fell in disrepair and suffered occasional acts of vandalism. In 1968, a descendant of the Edges sold much of the remaining land, including the land on which the schoolhouse stood. Hearing that it was to be demolished, Mrs. Grace Mann, a member of the Caln Civic Club, went to the township Commissioners and asked them to "save part of Caln's history." As it turned out, this happened to be Caln's Centennial year and they were focusing on the history of the township. The Commissioners realized that this could be the center of their celebration. Later it became the logo for the township. Now the problem, how to move the 75 ton schoolhouse by June 29th in time for the celebration. It was sitting in the middle of a field with no road leading to it. To add to the problem, it is constructed of dry stone which means no mortar was used and it had to be lifted off of the springhouse foundation. A company from New Jersey was the only one willing to take on this job. They had to put steel beams under the main floor and steel bands had to be tightly locked around the outside of the structure for support and to hold it in place. It took a week to move the schoolhouse ½ mile to its present location at the cost of \$6,500. It was restored, white washed inside and the floor was taken up and re-installed upside down with pegs just as it was in 1837.

Outside the door there is a time capsule buried in the ground with this and other information in it. It will be opened in the year 2068 - 100 years from when it was buried at the township centennial.

Another note of interest, in 1862, President James Buchanan bought the large white house on the western border of the Pimm farm. In 1863, he bought 95 acres from the Pimm's for an investment. Although he never lived here, the house is still standing on Bailey Road, at the entrance to the golf course.





SIX SIDED SCHOOL

CALN TOWNSHIP

