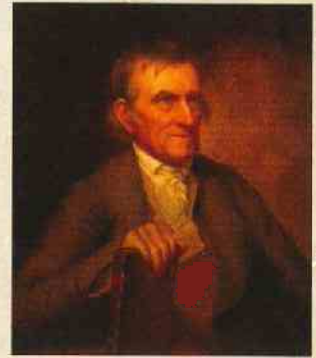


HENRY WYNKOOP

Northampton's Elder Statesman

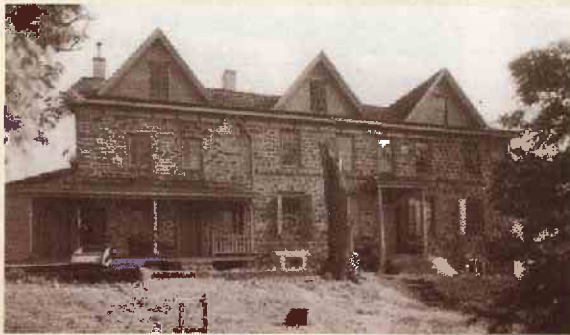
By Beverly Schaefer

A contemporary of George Washington, Henry Wynkoop is Northampton Township's most notable resident.



Portrait of Henry Wynkoop (1737-1816) by Rembrandt Peale, circa 1810.

He was born in 1737 on the 521-acre property purchased by his grandfather, Gerardus Wynkoop, which extended from the Neshaminy Creek to the intersection of Holland and Newtown-Richboro Roads. Henry went on to inherit the farm when his father, Nicholas, died in 1759. This derailed his plans to attend Princeton University (then known as The College of New Jersey) as he now had property to manage. He married Susanna Wanshaer in 1761 and two years later they had their first of seven children, all born within five years time.



The Wynkoop Mansion known as "Vredens Berg" or "Vredens Hof", circa 1910. It was destroyed by fire in 1911.

Henry, known as Judge Wynkoop, was largely self-taught in the law. He was appointed to a grand jury for the first of six times in 1762. Gaining stature and influence in the local community he then went on to be appointed as a Justice of the Peace and then as a lay associate circuit court judge. He was elected, at the age of 23, as a representative of the Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly, a position he held for 53 years.

In the run up to the outbreak of the American Revolution, Henry Wynkoop additionally served on the Committee of Safety, the Committee of Observation, and the Committee of Correspondence. He became known as an outspoken supporter of the drive for independence. From 1774 to 1776 Wynkoop was a delegate to the

Pennsylvania Provincial Congress. He then served as a member of the Second Continental Congress from 1779 to 1783. Tragically, his wife, Susanna, died in August of 1776 from injuries she sustained from either falling or hiding in a well when British soldiers or Hessians came to their property searching for Henry.

In 1780, Wynkoop was also appointed President Judge of the Bucks County Quarter Sessions Court at the same time as he was serving as the Judge for the High Court of Errors and Appeals. He resigned both positions in 1789 to take his seat as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives during the First United States Congress, serving alongside John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, and Peter Muhlenberg. While he never kept a diary, letters sent to his son-in-law, Dr. Reading Beatty, survive and tell of his excitement at being in attendance at George Washington's presidential inauguration at Federal Hall in New York City. Wynkoop had dined with Washington several times over the course of the war and both had a keen interest in agriculture.



Henry Wynkoop's gravestone - Dutch Reformed cemetery (present-day Addisville Cemetery).

In 1791, Wynkoop was named the first Associate Judge in Bucks County court. A few months later Pennsylvania Governor Mifflin named him as President Judge in the first Judicial District of Pennsylvania. Wynkoop continued to serve in his position as Associate Judge until his retirement in 1812. After his first wife's death, Henry Wynkoop went on to marry twice more, Mary Cummings who died in 1781 and then Sarah Newkirk.



"The Tithing Pig"

(above and at right)
Mid-eighteenth-century English
Delft fireplace tiles recovered
from the Wynkoop Mansion.



"Pleasant Couple,
the man with
Bottle & Glass"



"Mercury instructing
Cupid before Venus"