

A History of the Circa 1760 Few Property on Street Road

By Paul Mullin, Westtown Township Historical Commission

If you drive west on Street Road towards the Westtown Amish Market for your Saturday doughnuts and fresh meats for the week, you may have noticed an old 1760s farmhouse and barn on your right just as you pass the Pleasant Grove development. This property has a long history of hosting small businesses to the surrounding community.

Early Colonial Period

Richard Whitpain purchased a large amount of land in Pennsylvania. Some of his land was in Westtown and stretched from what is now the Westtown School property to today's Crebilly Farm.

After Richard's death, his wife divided the land and sold it to other settlers. Philip Taylor purchased 200 acres which included the property on Street Road. Philip's son, John Taylor, inherited the property around 1732. After John's death, his son Colonel Thomas Taylor inherited the property, on part of which the Pleasant Grove Development now occupies.

After Col. Taylor's death, his son John Taylor inherited the southwestern section of the Taylor farm.

Deed Information

On April 1, 1792 John Taylor of Westtown sold the property (5 acres) which he inherited from his father Thomas Taylor (when John was 21, circa 1788) to Richard Few of Birmingham Township for 5 pounds.

From this point until the early 20th century, the property, now 131 Street Road, has had a rich history of being owned by several craftsmen and businessmen. They conducted various businesses at the property, which was located on the busy Street Road (originally Marlborough Street Road). This was an essential route used by farmers and drovers to get their goods to Philadelphia.

In the 1800 Federal Censuses, Richard Few is listed in the "Other Free Persons" column. The 1799 and 1807 tax records indicate that Richard was a cooper or barrel maker. It was rare in that time for people of color to own such a large property and business. Richard's son Jacob was born in 1790 and by 1807 was likely helping his father make barrels.

The house and property had obviously been modified by 1792 or soon after. The Westtown Township Historical Commission lists the original core part of the property as circa 1760.

According to a deed in 1822, Richard Few had died. The house and 5 acres were auctioned to the highest bidder to settle a debt Richard owed to Henry Taylor. The high bidder was Richard Few's son Jacob Few for \$340. In the Septennial Census of 1821, Jacob was listed as a farmer. He likely leased additional land in the area

to farm in addition to the Street Road property. In the Septennial Census of 1828 and 1835, Jacob is listed as a butcher.

In 1826, Jacob purchased an additional 16 acres from Benedict Darlington for \$518. The 16 acres formerly belonged to Job Taylor. The property was now a 21-acre lot.

Jacob died in 1838 and was buried in the Taylor Family Burial Ground that now lies between the driveways of two houses located in Pleasant Grove. Jacob's wife Elizabeth died in 1852 and is also buried in the Taylor Burial Ground. Her children, Mary, Jane, Elizabeth, and Simeon had inherited the property from Elizabeth. The 1860 Federal Census lists Simeon Few and family as free persons of color and Simeon as a farmer.

A deed dated November 12, 1856, indicates that the children sold the property to their brother, Ephraim Few for \$3,200.

Three years later in 1859, a deed documents that Ephraim had died without a wife, children, or a will. His brother Simeon and his wife Ann, and his sisters Mary and Elizabeth had become the owners by law. Simeon and his wife as well as Jane were selling their shares of the 21-acre property to sisters Mary and Elizabeth Few for \$1750. The 1860 Federal Census lists Simeon and family as free persons of color. Simeon is listed as a butcher with an estate worth \$635. An 1862 IRS Tax Assessment states that Simeon paid taxes of \$2.50 for 5 cattle and 10 sheep.

In April of 1864, a deed states that Mary and Elizabeth Few sold the 21-acre complex to Eli Bullock of Thornbury Township for \$4,500. Thus, the property left the ownership of the Few families. They had continued the butcher business on the property up to this time. Simeon moved to West Chester (28 N. New Street) and had a meat business there for many years. Eli Bullock was in the mercantile business.

Two years later in April of 1866, Eli Bullock and his wife sold the property to Stephen Taylor, a retired farmer, for \$4,500. Stephen and his family became millwrights and carpenters after retiring from farming.

On April 1, 1892, the 21-acre property was owned by Stephen M. Taylor, Amos N. Taylor, and Rachel Taylor Woodward and her husband, Pierce. In the will left by their father Stephen Taylor Sr., the property was left to his brother Moses, and then after Moses' death, his children would inherit the land and buildings. Stephen Sr. died in 1876 and Moses became the owner. Moses Taylor is listed as the property owner on the 1883 Breou Farm Atlas. Moses was a farmer and he died in 1891. This deed documents Rachel Taylor Woodward and her husband selling their share to Rachel's brothers Stephen M. and Amos for \$1,000.

In May of 1903, Stephen M. Taylor and Amos N. Taylor, now of West Chester, sold the 21-acre parcel to Benjamin Bradley of Westtown for \$3,000. This ended the property's 100+ years of providing services to the surrounding community as it began its residence only status and marks the beginning of several families enjoying its bucolic setting, raising children, and becoming caretakers of this wonderful home and historic property.

Sources:

Ancestry.com, US Federal Census: Westtown, Chester, Pennsylvania (various years)

U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current

[http://www.chesco.org/1402/Deeds-1688-1865 Deed Indices](http://www.chesco.org/1402/Deeds-1688-1865%20Deed%20Indices)

Chester County Archives



Close up of house



131 East Street Road looking south