

A Treasure

HAYFIELD HOUSE

At the Penn State Wilkes-Barre

and is now the office of the administrative assistant for the Director of Academic Affairs. The walls are, again, hand painted.

The Director of Academic Affairs' office, **Room 206**, was John's personal dressing room. His penchant for horses and farms is clearly visible in the etching over the fireplace and in the beautiful grape and vine carving around the ceiling.

Down the other hall off of **Room 202** is Bertha's mirrored hall of closets. The first room on the right was her personal marble bathroom with gold fixtures. **Room 204**, now the Chancellor's office, was formally Bertha's dressing room, done in French style, with an antique marble mantle and 18th century painting, *Fete galante* by Jean-Baptiste Pater over the fireplace.

Room 205, now the conference room, was the master bedroom. The two twin beds were along the large interior paneled wall. On this wall there were two switches – the master switch controlled the burglar alarm which would turn on all the lights in the house and barn, and another switched controlled a fire alarm on the widow's walk.

The third floor originally had servant rooms as well as storage areas. A door leads to the attic and widows walk which offers a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside.

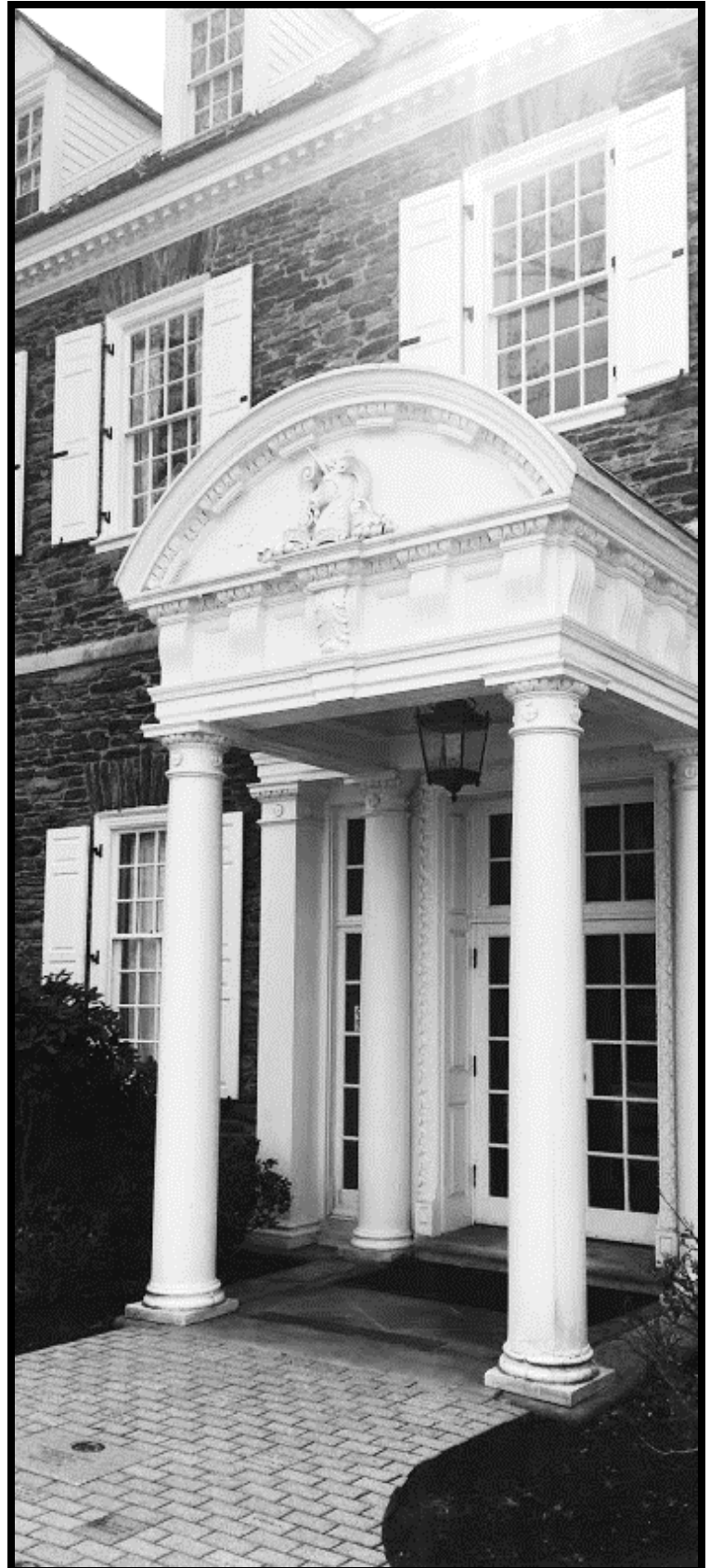
In addition to Hayfield House and its 19 car garage, now the Student Commons, other facilities were added over the years to meet the needs of the campus. Those buildings currently include, the John R. Murphy Student Services Center, Science Center, Bell Center for Technology, Athletic & Recreation Building, Abram Nesbitt III Academic Commons, and Struthers Family Career Services Center.

For more pictures of the house visit the Gottsch-Schleisner Collection in the Library of Congresses at:
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?q=gottscho%20hayfield>

For information regarding Hayfield House and its history contact Arts at Hayfield
<http://www.artsathayfield.org/>



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The existence of the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) Wilkes-Barre Campus is a tribute of community action and continued support.

The history traces back to 1916 when a group of local citizens, interested in the advancement of higher education in engineering and technical subjects, asked Penn State to offer courses in Wilkes-Barre. The University met the request of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce, and the Rotary Club, and thus became the first higher education presence in the Wyoming Valley.

In 1968, after 52 years of serving the educational needs of the people and industries in the Wyoming Valley from rented rooms in two local high schools, the campus reached a milestone by opening a permanent campus centered in Hayfield House in Lehman, PA.

Hayfield House, the palatial mansion of the late John and Bertha Robinson Conyngham, along with a 19 car garage and 50 acres of land, was presented to Penn State by Mr. and Mrs. Richard I. Robinson of Greenwich, Connecticut. Richard Robinson was the nephew of Bertha Conyngham who helped raise him with her sister Mary Robinson Merkle.

Hayfield House was built from 1931-1933 at a cost of over one million dollars. The entire house is steel-framed with steel floor joists covered with concrete floor and an overlay of hardwood floors. The roof is Vermont slate. The stones used on the house came from the estate's surrounding fields. Directly across from the house is a 15 acre arboretum, once considered one of the best in the state.

Standing proudly among the 900 acre Hayfield Farm, Hayfield House was a show piece for the Conynghams. Upon entering the three-story home, visitors find themselves in the main entry where the Conynghams greeted their guests. The bespoke light sconces and chandelier, and the carved wooden pillars and arches around the doorway that date back to 1693 originally from Chipstead Place in Kent, England, are all that remain of the original contents in this room.

Room H-105, the room directly behind this wall, was originally the living room. It is now used for events and functions. The inlaid oak floor was originally covered with a full length rug designed to replicate the ceiling. The four paintings on the wall are of John and Bertha Conyngham, Mrs. Mary Moore Robinson Wright (Bertha's mother), and William Lord Conyngham (John's father). On the right side of the room is a marble fireplace which is several hundred years old. Legend has it that it came from Emperor Franz Josef's Hofsburg Palace in Vienna. The fireplace on the left side of the room is an exact copy of the fireplace on the right, which the Conyngham's had made when they build the house.

To the left of the living room is the hallway with the floating staircase. It is called "floating" because it is supported only from the ceiling and the floor. Bertha specifically wanted this feature in the house.

The rooms to the right of the living room were the more informal spaces in the house. **Room 104**, originally a Louis XV library, is now the office of the Director of Student Affairs. Paneled in Norwegian pine, the room has two sets of 14th century stain glass windows from the Tuileries Palace in Paris which can recede into the walls.

Room 101 served as a sun porch. The beautiful marble fountain is still operational, as is the moon and stars chandelier above it, which John Conyngham designed. The arched windows are designed in such a way as to prohibit drafts in winter. The former sun room, next to the sun porch, still has the original barometer, thermometer and clock. The ceiling once depicted an open sky with soft shades of blue, white, and pink.

Room 107 was formally the family dining room. The coats of arms over the doorways and windows depicts the Conyngham and Robinson families, which were also woven into the rug that once covered the floor. Beyond the dining room, **Room 108**, was the beautiful Chinese Breakfast room whose canvas walls were hand painted in China. Passing through a hidden door you encounter the house's original elevator, and beyond, one of two staircases Penn State installed when they moved into the building. This staircase went through the original serving pantry which connected the kitchens with the dining room. The kitchen originally had a commercial size coal stove as well as a gas and electrical one. **Room 111** was the servants hall, and beyond in **Room 112** was the laundry room, and pantry. These rooms are now home to the Finances, Business Services, and Security offices.

Half a flight up the new stairs takes you into the maids rooms, **Rooms 216-226**, which are now faculty offices. Further up on the second floor were the six guestrooms **Rooms 209, 212, 213, 214, 227, and 228**, each with their own theme, which now house Continuing Education, Development, and Marketing Communications. **Room 213**, Development, was decorated in a colonial style complete with two canopy beds. **Room 212** was the Chinese bedroom, with hand painted wallpaper.

Down the hall, **Rooms 207 and 208**, which are now Continuing Education offices, where originally John Conyngham's private bathroom and closet. Of interest here are the unique shower and the painting of polar bears and penguins above his bathtub.

Room 202, takes you into the Conyngham's private suit of rooms. This room was used as a writing room