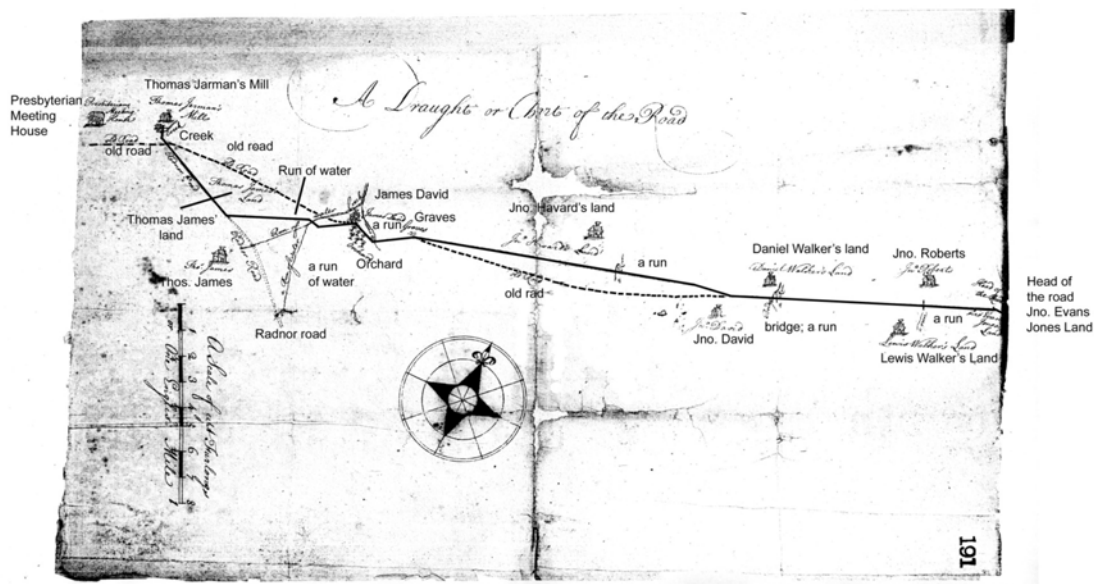


The 1724 Road Plan

Mike Bertram

The road papers in the Chester County Archives contain both approved and rejected roads. One of the road petitions that was not approved is from 1724. The papers for this road include the following plan:



1724 Road Map (enhanced to improve readability).

This is the earliest known map that shows houses in Tredyffrin Township¹. The plan covers the area around what is now Swedesford Road from the Great Valley Presbyterian Meeting House in the west to the Tredyffrin Township and Chester County boundary in the east. The following description reviews all the items shown in the plan.

The Presbyterian Meeting House was a log building built in 1720. Thomas Jarman purchased the property to the east of the church in 1701. He built a mill on Valley Creek between 1701 and 1710, when it was referenced as the start of a road to the Philadelphia Road at Radnor. This road is shown as the Radnor road on the plan. The diagram shows the mill and also Jarman's house. The mill was on the west side of North Valley Road and was rebuilt on the other side of the road at a later date. This later mill is the Great Valley Mill that stands today beside North Valley Road.

The next house shown on the plan is that of Thomas James. He bought the property in 1720. This property was directly east of Jarman's land. It was originally patented in 1681 and owned by members of the Mordant family, who were non-resident owners, as is shown by the tax records. There were a couple of other owners before James purchased the property.

¹ The map is located in the Road Papers files at the Chester County Archive.

Llewelyn Davis had owned the next tract to the east but he died before 1724. His eldest son Isaac Davis eventually inherited the property but the plan shows it occupied by James David. Also on the property were an orchard and a graveyard. The graveyard is well away from any of the churches and may have been a plot for the Davis Family. The house may have been sited on the edge of what is now Chesterbrook and the graveyard would be located in the corporate office development.

East of the Davis plot was a large tract of 800 acres purchased by John Havard in 1708. Today Chesterbrook occupies the majority of this property that stretched to Valley Forge Road (Route 252). The plan shows the existing road routed through the property. John David had land both to the south and to the east of the Havard property. North of the John David house, which was on the eastern tract, is the house of Daniel Walker. He was the eldest son of the first settler, Lewis Walker. He did not own this land in 1724; rather it was owned by his father, who sold it to him in 1728. Daniel's house may form the core of Meadowbrook Farm.

The road then followed the boundary between the David and Walker plots and continued between John Robert's land and house and Lewis Walker's home farm. Walker's house was across the road from where the Valley Friend's Meeting House was later built. This road, sometimes known as Valley Road, and now Old Eagle School Road, was laid out in 1719. The road between the John David - Daniel Walker and John Roberts - Lewis Walker plots is now known as Walker Road.

The map below shows the route of the existing 1724 road (dotted line) and of the proposed road (dashed line); Also shown are plot boundaries and the names of the plot owners adjacent to the road. This proposed road was rejected probably in anticipation of the Provincial Road we know as Swedesford Road that was laid out in the following year. Swedesford Road was laid out south of the road shown on the plan going along the southern boundaries of the Havard property, the David tract and the Walker home farm.

