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From the Editor

In this issue, we are proud to feature an article by prominent local architect James B. Garrison, about a local architect from the past, Richardson Brognard Okie. I met Mr. Garrison for the first time in 2004 at a book-tour event in the Strafford home of Drexel University President Constantine Papadakis. He was addressing the Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust and signing copies of his book, *Mastering Tradition: The Residential Architecture of John Russell Pope*. Four years later, Mr. Garrison was out with a new book, *Houses of Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill and the Wissahickon Valley, 1880-1930*, and I again had the pleasure of seeing him when he addressed a similar audience at the Chapel of the Cathcart estate in Devon. Currently, Mr. Garrison is preparing a pictorial monograph of Okie’s work for Rizzoli International Publications, due out in 2012.

Mr. Garrison can often be found lecturing on subjects of local interest, most recently the loss of the wonderful La Ronda estate of Lower Merion Township. We appreciate the work he is doing to chronicle and catalog many of the historic showcase homes and structures that dot the Main Line and tri-county area landscapes. He recently became the proud owner of a 250-year-old home in East Pikeland Township, which is listed on the National Register. Maybe someday he’ll do a “restoration” of the property in the manner of Okie.

The Okie name is revered in our neighborhood, especially since a number of family members were involved in the early days of the *Quarterly*. Half-brother Howard wrote a dozen or more articles for our journal; a half-sister wrote beautifully about their father; and R. B. himself penned a story about the renovations to Pennsbury Manor. So, if it’s more Okie you crave, look no further than the TEHS archives.

In Society news, we prepare to say goodbye to active members and patrons Mike Bertram and Kathy King, who have moved about an hour west of here. In the six-plus years we knew him, Mike made himself indispensable in a number of areas, including author, researcher, cartographer, photographer, archivist, lecturer, and leader of walkabouts. Mike shepherded more than a dozen Society research projects, in addition to producing the seminal 90-page *Quarterly* double-issue, *The History of Tredyffrin Township*, published in conjunction with the township’s 300th anniversary celebration. Mike will be missed in his capacity as the foremost expert of all things Valley Forge. For her part, Kathy presented research about Colonial weaving with a live demonstration on her own spinning wheel. As a testament to their dedication, Mike and Kathy will finalize a few more projects in the coming months as they wind down their T/E research repertoire.

In the wake of this vacancy we are happy to welcome to our team Dr. Richard Brake, local resident, political scientist, and school board member. Dr. Brake’s first assignment is his reflections on the significance of the recent School Fight Commemoration ceremony. Welcome, Dr. Brake! We hope you’re ready to roll up your sleeves and get to work!



Kathy King and Mike Bertram.

Excerpted from Vol. 47 No. 2 of the Tredyffrin Easttown History Quarterly
Cover Descriptions

Front Cover: The Browning residence in Devon, one of R. Brognard Okie's designs. The property is now part of Jenkins Arboretum. *Photo by James B. Garrison.*

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TREDYFFRIN EASTTOWN HISTORY QUARTERLY



**The Residential Architecture
of R. Brognard Okie**

Commemoration of the "School Fight"

First Settlers in the Great Valley?

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Excerpted from Vol. 47 No. 2 of the Tredyffrin Easttown History Quarterly

Back Cover: Top: Included in the Commemoration of the “School Fight” were several individuals who, as school children, were prohibited from studying in the township’s white-only elementary schools. From left to right, Mrs. Bessie (Marshall) Cunningham, Mrs. Bessie (Crosby) Whitney, Mrs. Estelle (King) Burton, and Mrs. Elsie (Holly) Fuller, at Mt. Zion AME Church in Devon. *Image courtesy of Tony Varlack.*

Bottom: First row (L to R): Mrs. Estelle (King) Burton, former School Fight student; Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter, educator and anthropologist and daughter of the Hon. Raymond Pace Alexander & Dr. Sadie (Tanner) Alexander; and Mrs. Elsie (Holly) Fuller, former School Fight student.

Second row (L to R): Rev. Dr. Charles H. Lett, Sr., AME Presiding Elder; (partially obscured) Mrs. Bessie (Marshall) Cunningham, former School Fight student; Rev. April M. Martin, Pastor, Mt. Zion AME Church, Devon; Mrs. Bessie (Crosby) Whitney, former School Fight student; Mr. Raymond Pace Brown, grandson of the Hon. Raymond Pace Alexander & Dr. Sadie (Tanner) Alexander; Mr. Roger D. Thorne, president of the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society; Mr. Vernon Odom, WPVI-TV Channel 6 Action News reporter, and Commemoration Master of Ceremonies; and Dr. Donald L. Clark, President of the Willow Grove, PA, branch, NAACP. *Image courtesy of Tony Varlack.*



Veterans of the “School Fight”



Commemoration Participants