

WHEATLAND

Good day, everyone--it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Only one Pennsylvanian ever made it up the long political ladder to the rank of President. And that was James Buchanan, the 15th chief executive of our nation---Buchanan of Mercersburg, Franklin County.

Buchanan also was the only President who was a confirmed bachelor. His niece, Harriet Lane, handled the social events at the White House when Buchanan was President.

Buchanan was born in 1791. He was graduated from Carlisle's Dickinson College and three years later he fought in the War of 1812.

He became a member of the Pennsylvania State Legislature in 1814, entered Congress in 1820 and remained there until he was appointed President Jackson's minister to Russia. He later became a Senator, a Secretary of State and finally was nominated by the Democrats and elected President in 1856.

One of Pennsylvania's national landmarks is Wheatland, Buchanan's home in Lancaster. It stands today in nearly the same condition as it did back in the mid-19th Century.

It was there at Wheatland where statesmen from all parts of the country met with Buchanan in the pre-Civil War days. They could be entertained either on the broad expanse of lawn in front of the mansion or in one of its gracious rooms.

Wheatland was built in 1828 by a Lancaster banker. The mansion was called "The Wheatlands" because of its glorious view of fluttering grainfields of Lancaster County. Like the home, Lancaster's agricultural beauty is still there.

Buchanan, when he was Secretary of State in 1848 under President James Knox Polk, bought the home for something less than \$7,000. He lived there until he became President--about nine years later. After leaving the White House in 1861, Buchanan and his niece returned to Wheatland--the home they had grown to love and which they had missed so much. The White House could not compare with Wheatland's beauty--not to James Buchanan.

And when you visit Wheatland you can see why. You can almost feel the presence of Buchanan and Harriet as you walk through the lovely rooms or in the spacious hallways. The mansion contains the furniture, silver and china which President Buchanan used at Wheatland. The President's study is in nearly exactly the same condition as it was in his day; so are the resplendent bedrooms and guest rooms on the second floor.

To the music-minded, a highlight of a tour through the mansion is the gorgeous Chickering piano in one of Wheatland's parlors which was given to Harriet Lane by her uncle in 1857--and it looks as beautiful today as it did when Buchanan's niece wiled away quiet evenings playing sonatas for an ex-President of the United States. At Wheatland, another of Pennsylvania's heritage homes, you might if you try hear Buchanan's footsteps; or the wind through golden Lancaster grain; or even Harriet's piano playing a lost melody of Pennsylvania's Stephen Collins Foster. Come to Wheatlands and

listen.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.