

THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

*The McCloughan Mansion*

BY BRIAN MULLAY

**If you've driven along Old Allerton Road, you've probably noticed the McCloughan Mansion, a beautiful brick Italianate mansion situated on the crest of the hill.** The prosperous history of the site is apparent at first glance. The property has its roots in the pre-Revolutionary colonial settlement of our nation with the manor house being built during the time of the industrial revolution and great railroad expansion. The mansion underwent renovation circa 1913 during the period depicted in the popular program "Downton Abbey." Both the land and the structure have remained prominent for centuries.

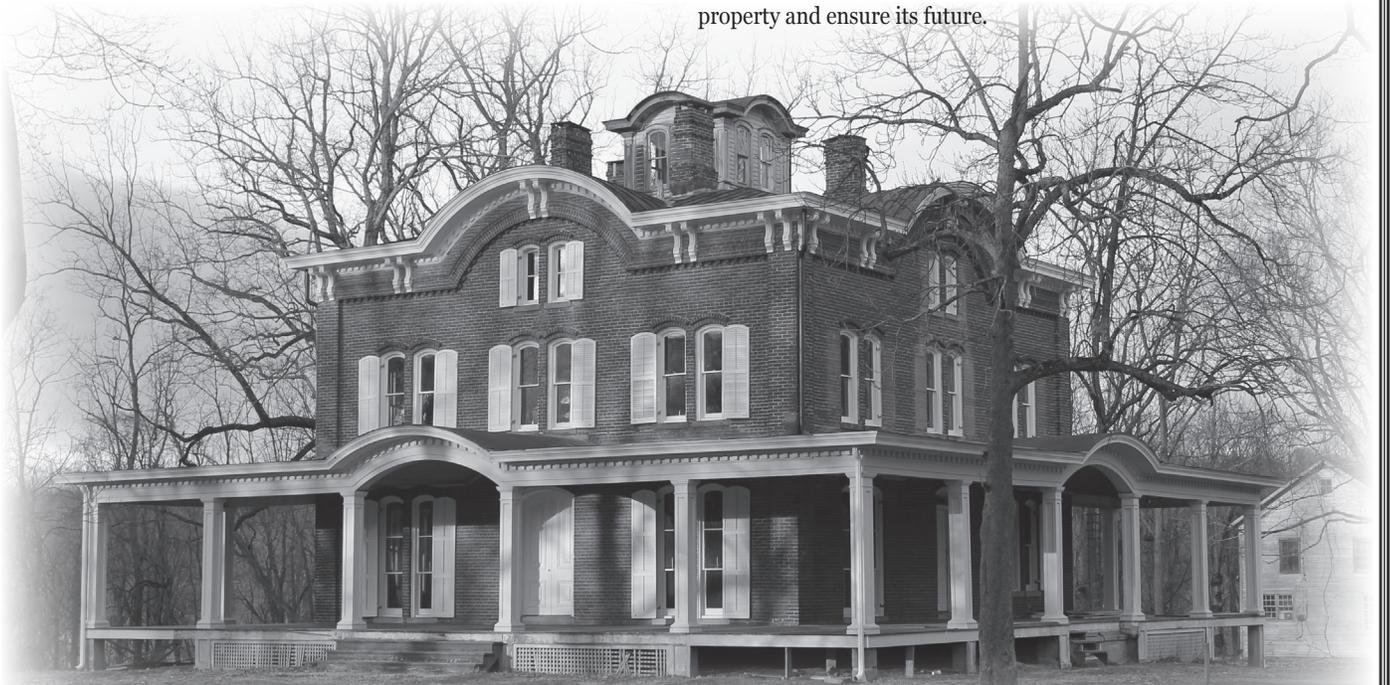
German immigrant Adam Von Runkle was born in 1719. He dropped the "Von" when he immigrated to the English Colonies and settled in the Western Division of the Province of New Jersey sometime around 1735. In 1749 Adam Runkle was married to Mary Youngblood, the daughter of the farmer for whom he worked. Adam and Mary purchased 225 acres from Mahlon Kirkbride in 1761 in what is today Annandale. Here they built a house and raised eight children and some of their thirty-seven grandchildren. The house stands today just to the south of Walnut Pond. The farm was passed to Jacob Runkle and his wife Euphemia Eick in 1805. Three years after Euphemia died in 1834 the family sold the farm to Henry McCloughan in 1837. The Runkle family cemetery stands on a separate, adjacent lot on the northeast corner of the property.

Henry McCloughan, a "financier" according to census records, and his wife Jane Bennett were living in eastern New Jersey. They had five children, but it was not until about the time their son John McCloughan was married to Euphemia Runkle that the work began to build the majestic brick Italianate villa circa 1860. The railroad had been in the village of Clinton Station since 1852 and the village was renamed Annandale in 1871.

The railroad certainly had an influence on the development in the area. Travel between Clinton Station and New York City, where Henry McCloughan often worked, was easy. In addition, political unrest was mounting, culminating with the Civil War being declared in April of 1861. On the 30th of March 1870, Henry McCloughan sold 185 acres of the original Runkle property to his son John. The purchase included the brick mansion and a wagon house. John and Euphemia had no children. In their later years the couple would spend their winters in Pasadena, California. After John McCloughan suddenly died one winter in California, Euphemia decided to sell the property and stayed in Pasadena for the rest of her life. The McCloughan property was sold in 1913 to Browne Morgan. The mansion appears to have undergone a substantial renovation after the purchase which included the introduction of a grand wraparound porch and a tennis court and pavilion.

The mansion maintained its prominence during the 20th century in a community of the elite. The Geobel Mansion, now the Exxon Mobil campus, was just to the south. Bret Morrison, the radio voice of *The Shadow* from 1945-1954, commuted from a neighboring property and the McCloughan Mansion was said to have been the site of grand parties with visiting celebrities such as Perry Como and Dean Martin. By the end of the 20th century, the McCloughan Mansion became a rental property. It fell into a state of neglect. Remarkably, the mansion remains in overall good condition and has retained much of its significant historic character and fabric.

In 2012, the McCloughan Mansion, LLC acquired the property. The company is a small team of investors and architects with a strong background and interest in historic preservation. The mission of the McCloughan Mansion, LLC was to breathe new life into the historic property and ensure its future.



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Interest in historic preservation of the mansion is led by Sarah Melvin and Michael J. Margulies, AIA.



"Spring is the time of plans and projects."

-Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina

