

CENTRE FURNACE MANSION TOUR

THE TOUR EXPERIENCE

History

1. Iron Industry

Iron, in the 18th century, was the common household material, and had been made for millennia. England had perfected the use of coke for iron furnaces, but in the U.S. charcoal was used. Iron manufacture had started in New England in the 1640s. There was a flourishing iron industry in Southeast PA, but in some places the ore deposits were exhausted, as well as the trees for charcoal.

a. Industry Origin in Central PA

After the Revolutionary War, warrants for the acquisition of land in central Pennsylvania were issued to former officers and soldiers. A **land warrant** was a grant for a specific plot of land. Ownership of the land was confirmed by the grantee having the plot surveyed and registered at the county courthouse. The registration fee and survey costs were the only costs involved. Among those who had acquired many of those warrants in his own name, as well as for friends and relatives, was Col Samuel Miles. One of those warrants was taken by a brother, Richard, who had a farm in what is now Boggs Township. He discovered iron ore on his farm. Samples were sent to a chemist in Philadelphia and found to be high enough quality for commercial production.

In 1791, Col Miles, with another officer, Col Patton, began to build an iron furnace. They named it Centre Furnace because of its location in the center of the state. The spelling was that used in the eighteenth century. The furnace went into blast in 1792, and was the first furnace west of the Susquehanna River and north of Cumberland County. In addition to cabins for the iron workers, apparently two log structures were built, one for the ironmaster and one called a kitchen which was used both as kitchen to feed single workers who could not find lodging with a family and as a company store. The dimensions given in glass tax records for the kitchen are those of the room containing the hearth including the adjacent area. The existing hearth is the original one.

b. Iron Manufacture Process

The manufacture of iron from iron ore requires at least two components and sometimes three. The first, of course, is **iron ore**. This is an oxide of iron that occurs naturally. There are several oxides, and the quality of the ore, so far as production is concerned depends on the particular oxide as well as the concentration. The second component required is a source of heat to melt the iron ore and also to provide something to remove the oxygen from the ore.

Carbon does both of those functions, and is readily available in the form of charcoal or coke. In the case of Centre Furnace, there was plenty of wood available to be made into charcoal. In fact, the use of wood served two purposes: it provided charcoal, and the cleared land could then be sold as farms. The third item often used is a “**flux**”, generally limestone. A fluxing agent helps separate the iron from the other minerals and creates a glass-like substance called slag. There were enough inclusions of limestone in the ore used at Centre Furnace that additional limestone was not needed.

Charcoal was made by men, called **colliers**, who, with helpers, would cut hardwood into approximately four foot lengths and stack this into a pile with a kind of chimney in the center. Each pile would contain forty to fifty cords of wood, a cord measuring four feet high, four feet wide, and eight feet long. The pile would then be covered with dirt to prevent an open fire, and then ignited at several points around the perimeter. After smoldering for two to three weeks, the pile would be uncovered, any residual fire extinguished, and the charcoal broken into small pieces and sent to the furnace. The usual measure for charcoal was the bushel.

The furnace itself consisted of a brick “bottle” (technically the (**bosh**) supported by a stone structure. That stone structure is what we see as “the furnace”. The site selected for the furnace required three things: a source of iron relatively close, a source of charcoal also relatively close, and a source of power to drive a bellows which supplied the “blast” of air. In the eighteenth century water power was the only option. Raw materials were “charged”, or added, into the furnace from the top, and the molten slag and iron were drawn from the bottom of the furnace. Supporting structures for the furnace would include storage for charcoal and iron, a means of getting the raw materials to the top of the furnace, and a casting shed in which the molten iron was cooled in “pigs”. The term “pigs” has an interesting source. In the casting shed, a trough from the furnace is made through the sand floor with rectangular depressions made at right angles to the trough. The iron which flows from the furnace is directed by a worker into these rectangular areas to cool. At some point many centuries ago, a worker commented that those rectangular areas and the trough looked like a bunch of suckling pigs, and the rectangular bars have been called pigs ever since. The iron ore could be stored outdoors, but the charcoal was generally stored in a building some distance from the furnace to prevent accidental fire.

To begin making iron, the furnace would first be heated up by charging it with charcoal, and burning that. Then additional charcoal would be added followed by broken or crushed ore, more charcoal, more ore, etc. About every twelve hours sufficient molten iron would have accumulated at the bottom of the

furnace to warrant drawing it off into the casting shed. The slag would be drawn off first since it floated on top of the iron; then the iron would be tapped into the casting shed. The Centre Furnace had a capacity, if operated continually, of 1200 tons of iron per year. Since each ton of iron required about an acre of hardwood to supply the charcoal, the available wood supply was depleted fairly rapidly.

c. Centre Furnace History

Col. Samuel Miles was an entrepreneur and politician. In 1790 he was elected Mayor of Philadelphia, and probably never saw Centre Furnace. Col. Patton, however, had experience with iron making in southeast Pennsylvania and acted as ironmaster. In 1798 he sold out to Miles and retired to a farm near what is now Shingletown. A furnace at that time was operated much as a plantation. Workers were provided homes or lodging and board if they were single, at a price, of course. They were not paid in cash, but rather their earnings were recorded in the ironmaster's books, as were the items purchased by them or their family at the company store. A small church was built at Centre Furnace and contributions to the church were provided by the worker writing a note directing the ironmaster to pay the pastor a certain amount and deducting that from the worker's account.

The furnace remained in operation until 1808. At that time, the furnace needed repairs and had to be shut down. The original owners, Cols Miles and Patton were dead. And operation of the furnace was by Col Miles' sons. They had several other operations, furnaces and forges, going in the region, and decided to not repair Centre Furnace. It remained dormant until 1826. The furnace was restarted by John Miles, Col Miles' son, and Joseph Green. In 1828 the furnace was purchased by John Irvin, his son, James, and Mr. Houston. They restored the stack, and built the present mansion. The Irvin's lived in Linden Hall. James Irvin bought out Houston, and when his father died became the sole owner of the furnace by 1838. In 1842, Irvin's brother-in-law, Moses Thompson purchased a one-sixth interest in the furnace as did his brother. Moses later acquired his brother's share. Moses moved into the mansion with his family and became the ironmaster. He and his wife, Mary, had three children when they moved into the mansion, and had five more subsequently, with only two deaths in infancy. The four-bedroom mansion was not large enough so in 1846 the ell extension was added to the rear. This provided Mary with an upstairs kitchen. Until that time, the kitchen was downstairs in the hearth room. The small door in the stair wall between the hearth room and the dining room shows that food cooked downstairs would be passed through from the stairwell to a maid in the dining room for serving. Extensive modifications were made to the house when the ell was added. A small stairway ran from the maids' quarters in the attic to the hearth room. Evidence of this stairway is

seen in the northeast bedroom with the small door and the cut in the floor. It was also found on the wall of the dining room during the mansion restoration by the Historical Society. The pass-through was closed when the dining room was rebuilt. This stairway was replaced by one in the rear wall of the ell.

The furnace remained in blast, with Moses Thompson as ironmaster, until 1858. In 1857 there was a financial panic which was very hard on the iron industry. In addition, some of the local “banks”, the sources of iron ore, were worked out, and the nearby trees had all been consumed for charcoal. With transportation costs for ore and charcoal increasing, and the furnace stack needing serious repairs, the decision was made to shut down Centre Furnace. It was never reopened as an iron furnace. It was used sparingly to burn limestone into agriculture lime, but that was not a serious effort. Effectively, the era of iron making at Centre Furnace was ended.

d) 19th century growth and the importance of Juniata Iron Area

Centre Furnace was the first of nearly 20 iron industries which were opened in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Before 1800 there were at least eight furnaces or forges working in the area. The iron industry in southeast Pennsylvania was dying because the ore sources and the trees were exhausted. Col Miles apparently had some experience with a furnace in Pottstown, PA. Others who migrated to central PA usually with contingents of iron workers, included Gen Philip Benner who established a forge at Rock on Spring Creek, and later built a furnace. The Miles sons and their Green relatives built several forges and furnaces including Harmony Forge, whose mansion is still in use, between Bellefonte and Milesburg.

When the furnaces first started there was not enough market locally for all the pigs produced, so other markets were sought. The nearest larger market was Pittsburgh, but there were no roads so iron had to be carried by pack horse. Transportation cost more than producing the iron. The waterways, Bald Eagle Creek and the Susquehanna River were used to float “arks” loaded with iron on the spring freshets, but some were lost as well as some of the bargemen. Good transportation was a vital part of the success of the iron industry. James Irvin invested in the canal which was constructed from Bellefonte to Lock Haven to connect with the Susquehanna Canal which was part of the State works. Later he invested in the Central Railroad of Pennsylvania which ran from Bellefonte to Lock Haven. The improved transportation allowed the Juniata Iron area consisting of Centre County, the northern part of Huntington County, the eastern part of Blair and the western part of Clinton Counties to supply one-third of all the iron produced in the United States by the middle 1850s. The only country which produced more iron than the Juniata area was England. With this economic power also came political power, and two Pennsylvania

Governors, Curtin and Beaver, elected in the 1860s, lived in Bellefonte. Before the financial panic of 1857 caused some of the industries to close, there were nearly 60 iron-related businesses in Centre County. The Juniata Region, in 1850, had 48 furnaces and 42 forges.

e) Decline and Close

Several factors combined to cause the decline of the iron industry in Centre County. The first immediate cause for some of them to shut down was the financial panic of 1857. With no or many fewer customers, several furnaces could not sustain operation. The cost of producing iron rose with the need to transport both ore and charcoal from greater distances because the more local ore banks and trees became depleted. Furnaces in the western part of the state and in some more western states were using more modern methods and taking much of the market. And by the end of the century, massive deposits of higher grade ore were discovered in the upper Midwest, and transportation by boat on the Great Lakes, and by rail from the lake ports made the Juniata iron industry unprofitable. A few hung on until the last decade of the 1800s, but by the end of the first decade of the 1900s only two furnaces, Pennsylvania Furnace and Eagle Furnace at Curtin, were still operating. The last one to close was the Eagle Furnace. It stopped production in 1921, was opened up a few times for special orders, but by 1923 was permanently closed.

The ore deposit at Scotia, about five miles west of Centre Furnace, was the most extensive in the area. Andrew Carnegie purchased the ore field from Moses Thompson and built a large washer and other ore processing facilities. A small town called Marysville grew up to supply workers for the mine. The operation lasted a number of years, although about the turn of the century, ore from the Midwest supplanted that from Scotia, and Carnegie stopped getting ore from the area. Thus by 1900 the industry which had made Centre County an important economic area had essentially ceased to exist. If it hadn't been for action taken by James Irvin and Moses Thompson in 1855, this area would now be rural much like some of the surrounding counties.

2. Centre Furnace Mansion

a. 1791-1808

When Centre Furnace was built, it was necessary to build a number of supporting structures. In addition to housing for the workers, two log cabins were built for the business. One was a residence for the ironmaster, the other was described as a kitchen. In the 1790s there was a tax on window glass. The glass tax records describe a log cabin, called the kitchen which has the dimensions of the room containing the hearth. This was used for feeding those single men who did not have lodging with a family and also for the company store. When the log cabin was replaced by the present building, the hearth was

retained, and is the one currently existing in the Hearth Room. The original buildings apparently served for the entire time the furnace was in blast until 1808.

A note about the hearth: In the back wall of the hearth, there is a section of brick which differs from the stone of the rest of the fireplace. This is because the original construction included a beehive oven outside the building with an opening into the hearth so embers could be shoveled into the oven. When the oven was hot, the embers were removed, the goods to be baked were inserted, the openings closed up, and the baking carried out by the hot oven.

b. Present Building 1828

When the furnace was purchased in 1828 the original buildings used by the ironmaster needed to be replaced. The front four-room footprint was built with at least a part of it using the original kitchen area since the hearth is the original one. The mansion was completed around 1830. This date has been verified by the first, i.e. earliest layer of wallpaper removed from one parlor during the restoration carried out by the Centre County Historical Society. The wallpaper was dated as being from 1830 by an expert in old wallpaper. The mansion consisted of the kitchen and other rooms on the ground floor, four rooms on the first floor, four bedrooms on the second floor, and accommodations for maids on the third floor. There was apparently a small stairway from the third floor to the first floor. This is suggested by the small door in the model mansion room and the cuts in the floor boards as well as marks discovered on the dining room wall during the restoration by the Historical Society.

c. Irvin—Thompson Era

During the period from 1828 to 1842 the furnace was owned by John Irvin, his son James, and a Mr. Houston. When John Irvin died, James received his portion and eventually bought out Houston. By 1838, James was sole owner of the furnace. In 1842, Moses Thompson, who had married James Irvin's sister, Mary, purchased a one-sixth interest in the furnace. His brother also purchased a one-sixth interest which Moses eventually also purchased. Moses and Mary Thompson with their three children moved into the mansion with Moses taking over the job of ironmaster. The Thompsons continued to have children, eventually having eight, only two of whom died in infancy. In the 1800s only about one half of the children born lived even to the age of six years, so the Thompsons were fortunate to have six survive. With additional children, the four bedrooms were not sufficient so in 1846, Moses Thompson added the extension on the rear of the house. This also had the advantage of moving the kitchen up to the first floor. During the restoration, the former exterior wall was left exposed on the rear stairway to show the original configuration of the

building.

The Thompson family continued to live in the mansion after the furnace was closed. James Irvin was a businessman and investor, and with the financial panic of 1857, lost all his fortune. Moses Thompson apparently purchased the mansion at some time to continue using it as his residence. The elder Thompsons died in 1890 (Mary) and 1891 (Moses), but their fourth son, William, continued to live in the mansion until 1912. At that time the mansion stood empty. It may have been rented to students on occasion. In approximately 1917, the mansion was purchased by a professor on campus for his son and daughter-in-law. Mr. and Mrs. Garver had no children, and when Mr. Garver died in 1974, his wife having died earlier, he willed the Mansion and grounds to the Centre County Historical Society because of its historical significance.

The Thompsons were quite well to do, so the mansion was modified several times during their ownership. Victorian architecture required the addition of a number of features, including the fancy eave brackets, the porches, and extending some of the front windows to the floor. At some time the small stairway to the attic was replaced with the broader stairway. Modern conveniences were added, i.e. electricity, central heat, running water and a full bathroom. Some of these were apparently added by the Thompsons, since David Garver has been quoted as saying the heating plant was broken and there was no way to get water in the house when he bought it.

d. Historical Society Ownership

When the Historical Society received the property, it was decided that the Mansion should be restored to its appearance in the mid-1800s. Certain modern conveniences were retained or modified. Central heating was retained, but the radiators which had been in place were removed. Running water and restroom facilities were installed only on the lowest level. Electricity was maintained throughout the house, but most rooms do not have operable overhead lights. An extensive fund raising effort was made to raise the money for the restoration, and efforts were made to use wallpaper and furnishings of the period. Descendants of Moses and Mary Thompson were asked if they had any furniture or other items which had been used by the Thompsons, and many were generous in donating items for the mansion. The attic was converted to the offices of the Historical Society.

e. Penn State Connection

- **Agricultural Society of PA request for proposals:** In January of 1855, the Agricultural Society of Pennsylvania decided that farm boys needed more education, particularly in science, than they could get in the usual one-room, eight-grade school. A request for proposals was issued for a Farmer's

High School. A number of areas submitted such proposals, including some larger cities, but also a proposal was generated and submitted by James Irvin and Moses Thompson.

- **Centre Furnace offerings and acceptance:** A copy of the letter to the Agriculture Society from James Irvin and Moses Thompson lies on the table in the front room called the founders' room. In it, Centre Furnace offers 200 acres or 250 acres of ground if required. Supplemental information indicates that 200 more acres were available if needed. It also suggests an offer of \$10,000 pledged by merchants in Bellefonte. Although this was not necessarily the best offer received by the Society, the isolation of Centre Furnace meant that farm boys would not be distracted by the lights of the big city. It also helped that one of the men in the Agricultural Society was from Bellefonte. The offer was accepted, and the Farmers High School was chartered in 1855. The first class was admitted in 1859, and graduated in February of 1862. Although there were many ups and downs along the way, the Farmers High School eventually became the Pennsylvania State University of today.

Some steps along the way included the change of name to the Agricultural College of Pennsylvania, the designation of the College as the Morrill Land Grant college, the name changes to The Pennsylvania State College and to the Pennsylvania State University.

- **Thompson and mansion involvement:** Moses Thompson was involved with the school from the start, not only by the contribution of land, but he was treasurer of the school for 17 years. There were no accommodations for visiting trustees or other persons, so hospitality was provided by the Thompsons at the mansion. Meetings were held there as were social events. It was reported that at one gathering there were about 150 guests at a party. As an additional note, the Thompson's second daughter, Elizabeth, married John Hamilton, who was then treasurer of the college and had an apartment in Old Main. The daughter who is pictured with Elizabeth in the photograph in Moses' parlor, was born in Old Main and lived there.

Show and Tell: The Mansion Tour

The following is not intended to be the only order in which the tour of the mansion can be conducted. It will provide notes on how the Thompsons lived, and what items in the mansion were obtained from Thompson descendants and were used by the Thompsons while they lived in the mansion. Again, if you have extra knowledge or get any from visitors, please share it!

1. Living in the mid eighteenth hundreds: The mansion is representative of how a well-to-do family lived during the nineteenth century. As such, there were modifications made while the Thompsons lived there as well as after the place was sold. It is not likely that much change was made to the exterior of the building after Moses and Mary died. However as the influence of Victorian architecture spread, some changes were made to the building to keep it in style. These changes included adding the porches, the fancy eave brackets, floor length windows on the front of the house and similar “updates”. There still were no internal improvements such as running water, central heat, electricity and other amenities of the twentieth century during the period selected for the mansion restoration. Where possible, these were eliminated during the back dating.

2. Room Specifics

a. Hearth room and stairs: When the mansion was first built, the hearth room was the kitchen for the home. The hearth of the original structure on that foundation was retained for the new building. The crane in the fireplace is original. It may be of interest to the visitor to see some of the iron utensils in the hearth. The small door in the wall in the stairwell was used to pass food through from the kitchen to the dining room. Obviously maids would have done the serving. The dining room side of the pass through was covered when the new kitchen was built in 1846.

In the nineteenth century, servants’ quarters were rigorously separated from those of the family. The maids slept in the attic where there were no fireplaces. A servant’s stairway ran from the attic to the hearth room with doors to the main rooms. During the expansion of the mansion in 1846, this stairway was removed and replaced by one in the rear wall of the extension. This stairway ended in the kitchen since the hearth room was no longer used for that purpose. At some time, possibly during the Historical Society restoration, that stairway was at least partially removed, and the space converted to closets.

b. Dining room: The dining room has been set up to represent the way it generally would have appeared in the middle of the 1800s. Original Thompson items include the dining room chairs, the linen press at the end of the room and the beverage service on top of the linen press. The beverage service would probably have been used for cold beverages such as water or iced tea. It is monogrammed with the letter “T”. The side board or buffet was made by a man in Bellefonte, and has no connection with the Thompsons. However it is typical of the furniture of the period. The rugs on the floor of the dining room and the founders’ room are reversible and made from the same materials and patterns as rugs of the 1850s. There is no jute backing as used in Oriental rugs. If the son of a poor family was going off to the Civil War and the family could

not spare a blanket, a piece of the rug could be cut off and used as a blanket. The brass wood chest belonged to Moses Thompson. Each fireplace would have a wood box near the fire thus avoiding trips outside in cold PA winters.

- c. **Founders Room:** The room is so-called because it is believed the General James Irvin letter proposing the Farmers High School be located at Centre Furnace was written and the charter signed in this room. The large table in the center of the room was brought by Mary Thompson when she moved into the house in 1842. The desk was also an original Thompson piece. The side chairs are original Thompson pieces. Other items of interest in this room include the picture of James Irvin and the stereopticon. Visitors may use the stereopticon to see the three-dimensional effect enjoyed by users in the 1800s. The vases on the mantel may be original Thompson pieces. They are of the proper period.

- d. **Grand Front Entry Hallway:** The pier table in this area features a “petticoat mirror” and belonged to Moses and Mary Thompson. Since women wore long dresses with, sometimes, several petticoats underneath, a mirror near the floor was used to check to see if any of the petticoats were sticking out below the skirt, thus the name for the mirror. Mirrors also had the added benefit of reflecting light in a room. The figurine on the étagère, and the cane near the door were Thompson items. When the Thompson children were married, their parents gave each a Renaissance Revival style furniture set including a sofa, a settee, and two chairs – the chairs in this hallway are part of these sets. The chandelier in the hallway was included in the bequest by Mr. Garver. It was originally an oil lamp later changed to electricity. That would have been used by the Thompsons. The iron garden bench was sold at auction in Williamsport as being from the Thompson mansion. No documentation of this is known, but the bench is certainly of the proper period. The étagère was not owned by the Thompsons, but is typical of a piece of furniture of the period.

- e. **Moses’ Parlor:** All three of the marble topped tables in the room were used by the Thompsons. No acquisition date for the oval table is available, but the small round one was shipped to Moses Thompson via the Lemont Railroad Station, and the large square table was brought by Mary when they moved in in 1842. The desk, or butler’s secretary, was said to be used by Moses Thompson. It originally had glass doors, but when it was sent to a restorer by one of the descendants, the doors were lost. The pier mirror on the front parlor wall is thought to be the same mirror in the same position occupied when the Thompsons lived in the mansion. Three wrought iron supports in the wall matched exactly the support points on the mirror. Other items of interest include the photograph of Moses Thompson over the mantel, the fireplace itself which is fitted to burn coal or coke rather than wood, and the photograph of the Thompson’s daughter, Elizabeth, and her daughter Anne. Anne appears

to have had her hair cut short. This is probable since she had just recovered from scarlet fever and the child's hair was often cut off to help cool the fever. The portrait was likely done as a celebration of Anne having survived.

- f. **Mary's parlor:** Original Thompson pieces in Mary's parlor include an upholstered red chair, the pier table between the windows and the mirror above it. The oil lighting fixture in this room as well as the one in the front parlor date from the 1870s, though not original to the mansion. The picture over the mantel is of Mary Irvin Thompson. The Square Grand piano, built by the Weber Co, about 1870, is thought to have been in the home of Daniel Hastings, Pennsylvania Governor from 1895-1899. After passing through several owners, it was acquired by the Daughters of American Colonists who restored it and presented it to the Historical Society. The pocket doors between the two parlors could be closed if the conversation level or cigar smoke seemed to interfere with occupants of one of the rooms. The fireplace here is also configured to burn coal or coke rather than wood.

- g. **Nursery or children's room:** Although the furnishings and toys in the room are typical of the period, the only items known to have belonged to the Thompsons are the pull toy and the books in the cabinet. The children's clothes in the closet are more likely to be from the early 1900s rather than the 1850s since boys commonly wore dresses until the age of five or six years. The box with the enamel pail which would be used as an accommodation when a trip to the outside privy would be unpleasant is probably not as good as the Thompsons would have had. It is illustrative of what might have been used by some in the 1800s. The wooden bricks were toys made long before the same thing made of plastic and sold as Lego existed. The pictures of children show what was available before and after the invention of photography. The drawing of the girl by a folk artist seems to give a reasonable appearance of the girl. The two paintings on the wall behind the crib may be examples of another practice. Itinerant artists would spend the cold months painting pictures of children, but without any heads. When warmer weather came, the artist would travel to the more well-to-do merchants and farmers and offer to paint pictures of the children. The Mother and/or Father would look through the available pictures and select the one they liked. The artist would then paint the child's head on the picture. The heads in both pictures seem to be slightly wrong for the bodies. The fireplace is not at all fancy.

- h. **Master Bedroom:** The fireplace stove is called a Baltimore Heater or Latrobe stove, named after the inventor, John H.B. Latrobe. It was manufactured between 1845 and early 1900s, so was in the house when the Thompsons lived there. The bedstead similar to the one used by the Thompsons. The dresser and chest of drawers are both original as the rocking chair. The carpet is not

original but dates from the 19th century. It was woven in strips and sewn together. The whatnot shelf in the corner and the mantle clock are original. The wedding dress is that of Elizabeth Thompson whose picture with her daughter is in Moses Parlor. It is interesting to note that the top part of the dress is not closed in the back even though the manikin has a very small waist. Clothing that is displayed is typical of that worn in the 19th century but is not from the Thompson family.

- i. **Upstairs Front Hall:** This may be considered Mary Thompson's upstairs sitting room. The portrait was painted by a local artist, Jean Grimm, from a photograph. At some time, probably when the house was purchased by the Garvers, this area was converted into the bathroom. Since it could not have been there during the 1850s, it was removed during the restoration.
- j. **Southeast Bedroom:** The washstand and dresser are original Thompson pieces. The trunk belonged to John Elliot Thompson, a grandson of Moses and Mary, who grew up in the mansion. The rope bed is not original, but is typical of the period as is the mattress ticking stuffed with straw. A bed such as this is the basis for the nursery rhyme: Night night, sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite. The sleep tight reference is thought to refer to the need tightening the ropes so that the mattress wouldn't sag; and the straw may have had insects or insect eggs included when it was used for stuffing.

The shadow box over the mantle was made by Laura Yearick Martin in Jacksonville, Marion Township, about 1880 and is a prime example of the use of hair which was popular at that time for decoration. The flowers are made of wax by Mrs. Martin. The hair is from her niece, Artimitia Shaffer, (1875-1949). There are a few pins on the dresser in which hair has been encapsulated. The hair most likely came from a member of the family. The sewing machine was made by Grover and Bakers Company of Boston, with an earliest patent date of 1848. There is no evidence that this was a Thompson original. The pitcher and basin were typical for a bedroom at that time, as was the "accommodation" for night use.

- k. **Miniature Mansion Room:** The prime display is the model of the mansion, built by Richard Hoy with support from Carolyn and Tom Smith and Linda and David Thiel. The models of the workers' houses make a good contrast between ironmaster and workers. The small door and cut in the floor show where the original servants' staircase was located. The tin "pumpkin" shaped object (if it's there) was used at a stage coach stop to signal the driver as to whether a stop to pick up passengers was necessary. If there were none, the ball would be raised to the top of a pole. Thus the driver could "highball" right on past.

- l. Back East Room:** This is now the library of the Centre County Historical Society. Members may borrow the items, others may use them by arrangement, but not remove them from the room. The framed document on the wall has no connection to the mansion, but was signed by Benjamin Franklin. It is a bankruptcy proceeding involving Mathias Slough of Lancaster who owned land in the Bellefonte/Milesburg area in the 1760s. The original exterior wall of the mansion has been left exposed in the stairwell. The framed areas on the wall contain the signatures of two of the Thompson children, Elizabeth and Sarah, who were able to write when the addition was built in 1846. At that time they would have been 7 (Sarah) and 5 (Elizabeth).
- m. First Floor Kitchen:** The crane and “S” hooks in the fireplace are original to the Mansion. The fireplace was covered over at some time and a stove with stove pipe hole above the mantle placed in front of it. This was replaced at a later time by an electric heater. A safe like the one that is here, may have existed under the stairway – it would have been a good place for Moses Thompson to store important papers, since with all the fireplaces in the home, and no local fire company, any fire which started would likely consume the entire house. This safe is not original to the Mansion. There is no reason known for the two doors beside each other to the porch. The staircase was probably originally in the front hall, but was moved so a more stylish staircase would be evident to the visitor. *This will bring the tour back to the stairs down to the hearth room, and effectively conclude the tour*
- n. Sources of Information**
Several of the books we offer for sale contain much of the information of the iron manufacturing portion of the tour, but not of the Thompson family. These include The Centre Furnace Story, The Scotia Mine history, and Linn’s History of Centre and Clinton Counties.