

THE LEGACY  
OF  
DU PONT  
FAMILY







I live not far from the Longwood Gardens and Winterthur Estate and I do visit them at least couple times a year. It is so much to see there that every time I go, I find something new that I haven't notice before. It is hard to describe my feelings when I am there - maybe because I love nature, I feel so alive and gaining energy to fight any obstacles in life.

I always see on the signs the name Du Pont and hear some stories about it but I never took the time to read some more about it. Now, after two weeks of research, I have to admit that I am amazed of what one person, coming to this country with his family and brother 200 years ago, has achieved.

The Du Pont family today owns many beautiful Estates open to the public and one of the most successful company in the world. He and his family went through so many obstacles but never give up and when they were making profit, they always were trying to contribute to the local society (schools, hospitals...)

Can you imagine if we have more people like the Du Pont family! We would have much better world!





## *Coming to America*

**E**verything began in 1800 when Eleuthere Irene du Pont (1771-1834), decided to immigrate from France to America so his family can escape political persecution. He arrived at Newport, Rhode Island on January 1, 1800 with his father and his brother's family. His father, Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours (1739-1817) was a French-American writer, economist, publisher and government official. He had his own publishing house in Paris.

Interesting fact is that one of the reasons for the French Revolution was the American Revolution in which France in 1778 took the side of the colonists and that converted the essentially been a civil war into an international conflict. The final outcome was that with the French help British surrendered but that caused many problems in France.

Shortly after his arrival, Irene went on a hunting trip in Delaware. He discovered that the American refining process was poor and inefficient compared with the techniques he had learned in France. So, he went to France in the beginning of 1801 to get the necessary financing and equipment.

That was the beginning of one of the largest and most successful American corporations.

No other family has dominated a single state longer than the Ponds in Delaware. Over time the company grew into the largest black powder manufacturing firm in the world. The family DuPont remained in control of the company up through the 1960s and family trusts still own a substantial amount of the company's stock.



# *The company DuPont*

**B**y the mid-19th century, the company DuPont was the largest supplier of gunpowder to the U.S. military, and supplied as much as 40 percent of the powder used by the Union Army forces during the Civil War.

After the death of E.I. Du Pont in 1834, his sons, Alfred, Henry, and Alexis, took over as partners. They continue the legacy and expand the business. They took advantage of opportunities like the California Gold Rush, the construction of Western railroads, the Crimean War, and the American Civil War.

His grandson Lammot was a good chemist and understood that the dynamite production has big future. He created his own company "Repauno Chemical Company" but after 4 years he died in an accidental factory explosion. "DuPont acquired Repauno and incorporated their relative's vision into their own production line. DuPont chemists made their mark on the world by developing revolutionary substances like the following:

- Freon (1930) a substance for refrigeration
- Neoprene (1931) a synthetic rubber
- Lucite (1936) a clear, acrylic resin used for home furniture
- Nylon (1937) a synthetic material used to replace silk stockings and in World War II parachute production
- Teflon (1938) a lubricant and non-stick material
- Mylar (1952) a synthetic film
- Dacron (1953) a washable polyester batting and fabric
- Lycra (1958) a synthetic fiber used in athletic clothes due to high elasticity
- Kevlar (1973) a high-tensile strength fiber with heat resistant properties"

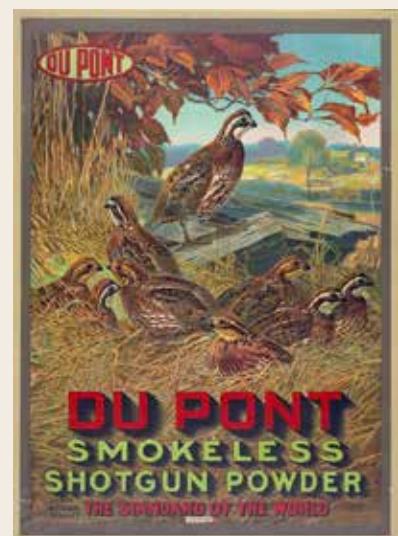
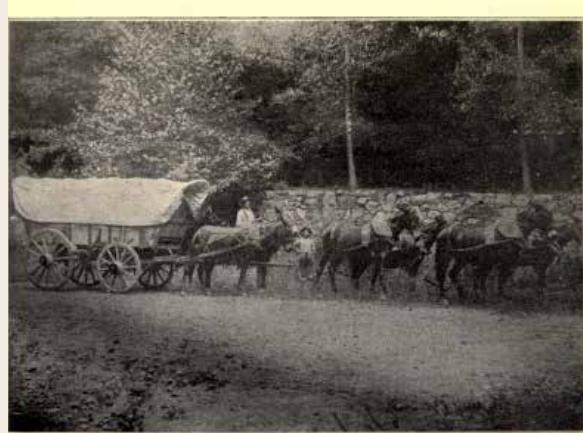
DuPont's rising power also came from various mergers and acquisitions of other companies and become global power in the chemical innovation.

In 2015 DuPont company merged with Dow Chemical.

I am sure that if today Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours could see how much the company has grown, he would be very happy.

We are all trying to accomplish something in our lives that can last much longer after we are not here anymore, and is hard to achieve that but looking at the life of people like him, gives a hope and courage that things are possible - we just need to try harder and take advantage of opportunities in life.

We have to remember that nothing comes easy in life - I read about the obstacles that they were going through establishing the company and delivering the powder (many of the ships sank and everything was lost) and it amazes me how they didn't give up.







## Winterthur

**E**n 1837 *Eleuthere Irene du Pont* daughter Evelina married Jacques Antoine Bidermann and the couple purchased 450 acres from the fathers estate. The home that they build was names Winterthur - in honor of Antoine's ancestral home in Switzerland. Over the years they planted many flowers, fruits and vegetables

In 1867, their son James, sold Winterthur to Evelina's brother Henry du Pont, which in 1874 gifted the property to his son **Colonel Henry Algernon** (1838 - 1926) when he got married to Pauline Foster. They continued the farming and gardening traditions and also increased the size of the house.

His son **Henry Francis du Pont** (1880–1969) was born at Winterthur and, in his words, "always loved everything connected with it."

In his later years, H.F. du Pont wrote:

*"I sincerely hope that the Museum will be a continuing source of inspiration and education for all time, and that the gardens and grounds will of themselves be a country place museum where visitors may enjoy as I have, not only the flowers, trees and shrubs, but also the sunlit meadows, shady wood paths, and the peace and great calm of a country place which has been loved and taken care of for three generations."*

He took full responsibility for the place in 1906 and after that he developed and improved the garden area. Before the world war II the was traveling often to Europe where he was studying the great gardens. By 1925 the property exceeded 2,500 acres with 250 workers. It had a post office, a railroad station, a sawmill, greenhouses, vegetable and flower gardens, dairy farms and many animals (turkey, chicken, sheep, cow, hog...)



## *The soup kitchen exhibition*



In 1929 H.F. du Pont planned a big enlargement of the house and hires the landscape architect Marian Coffin, to design his garden. Like many designers of that time, Coffin was inspired by the symmetry, proportions and architectural features of Italian Renaissance gardens. The reflecting pool on the back yard was a reflection of that trend. The twin bath houses was another example. They provided space for family members and weekend guests to change before and after swimming. Behind the circular grillwork in the stone wall that connects the two houses was a stereo system. It broadcasted music for the people in the pool and around.

As a young boy, H.F. du Pont gathered flowers and other natural objects in the fields and woods of Winterthur for their beauty and form. For fifty-eight years, between 1908 and 1968, du Pont recorded the flowers and containers used on the dining room table. Working with his butler, he coordinated the china, glass, and custom-made linens to complement the floral arrangements. The visitors could experience different place setting for each meal. I saw some of those arguments and I am amazed how so many years ago he had such an amazing taste and ability to make perfect combinations of plates, linens and flowers.

Du Pont was changing seasonally the curtains and chairs, bed and sofa covers, so they can reflect the colors in the garden and the mood of the season. "One can look at the colors and objects chosen for the rooms and discover that the outside and inside blend into a complementary and singular aesthetic."

Winterthur Museum opened in 1951.

The museum has collection of more than 90,000 objects - it is a space where visitors can admire beauty and history. The home reflects H.F du Pontt passion for collecting unique pieces of art and gardening. In 1961 he was invited by Jacqueline Kennedy to oversee restoration of the White House

Henry lived there with his wife, Ruth, and two daughters. He had a passion for collecting historic American furniture, art, and decorative objects. When you walk through the rooms in the museum today, you feel like you are getting transformed to different times and different places - there are so many old objects from all around the world.

*Henry had a great sense of proportion, composition, and color. He mentioned that "I have always loved flowers and had a garden as a child, ...and if you have grown up with flowers and really seen them you can't help to have unconsciously absorbed an appreciation of proportion, color, detail, and material."*

Today the museum, garden, graduate study programs, and a library that is recognized as a research center for material culture, are a legacy that provides constant beauty and insights into America past and present."

*Henry du Pont also established graduate programs for the study of material culture and art conservation at the Delaware University. "Winterthur, in partnership with the University of Delaware, sponsors two graduate programs, the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture (WPAMC, est. 1952) and the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC, est. 1974), that train leaders creating lasting impact in the fields of material culture and conservation."*



Guests on the East Terrace  
just outside the Loggia  
ca. 1935  
Photographer unknown













# Longwood Gardens

**P**ierre Samuel du Pont was a remarkable man. He was head on two of America's most prosperous corporations - DuPont Company and General Motors. Pierre was the eldest son of Lammot du Pont, he was born in 1870.

At an age of 14, his father died in a chemical explosion and he took role of father to his brother and sisters. At age of 20 he graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and at age of 23 he had been issued a patent as co-inventor of smokeless gunpowder.

When he discover that Peirce's Park is about to be destroyed, decide to purchase the land. And I know a lot of wealthy people today but it seems to me that most of them care about keeping the wealth or giving it to their kids but not contribute to the society or nature (unless is something they do for tax deduction purposes). So, what Pierree did was innovative and inspiring. So, to save the trees, on July 20th, 1906, Pierre bought Peirce's Park, soon to be known as Longwood Gardens.

The purchase included 202 acres, a house, and farm buildings, for \$15,500.

In 1907, he laid out Longwood's first flower garden, the 600 foot long Flower Garden Walk.

1915 the married Alice Belin. They began an ambitious program of improvements and expansions, building the massive Conservatory, numerous greenhouses, and tenant housing and recreational facilities or their expanding staff.

Over the years, he added thousands of trees and created many projects that reflected his chiilldhood fascination with water.

He build spectacular water displays and in 1925 he began the Italian Water Garden, inspired by a garden see had seen near Florence, Italy.

In 1926, he build the Open Air Theatre and made each show a one-of-a-kind experience.

Each Christmas he held a party in the Conservatory to the staff and their families, personally handing out the presents. I think a lot of business owner today can learn a lot of his appreciation to the people that work for him.

Each summer, Longwood would be home to their many nieces and nephews

He also managed to find time to help support the local community. Pierree financed construction of local hospitals, and although he had no children of his own, he gave millions of his personal fortune to the local school systems.

In April 2, 1954 Pierre was recognized for his lifetime of accomplishments, receiving a Legion of Honor from the French government but three days later, Pierre Samuel du Pont died.











Winterthur and Longwood are educational institutions with graduate degrees programs; Bellevue is a state park; Mt. Cuba is a research center for the university of Delaware; and Eleutherian Mills is part of Hagley Museum & Library, a center for business research.

*Today*

















