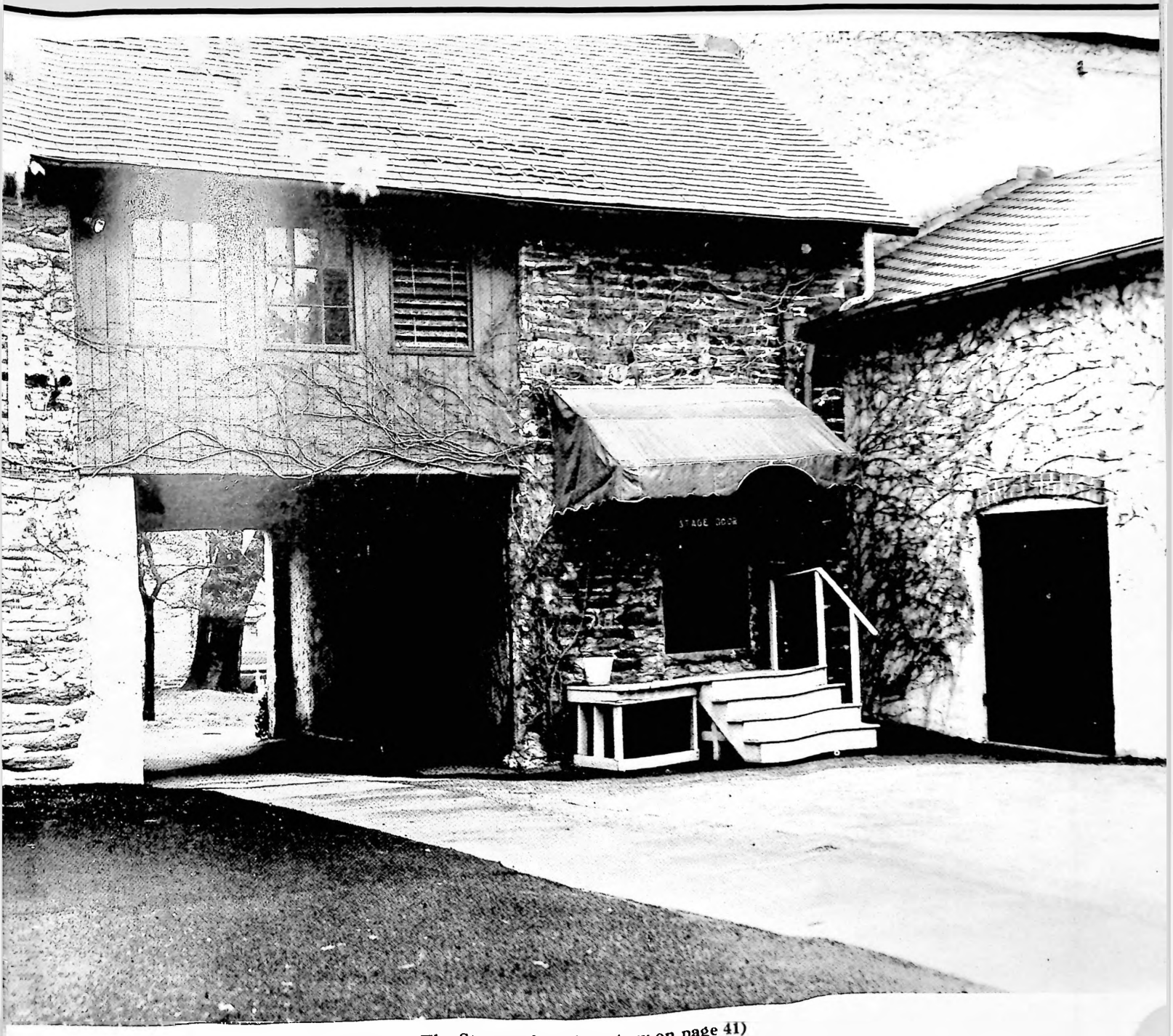
GERMANTOWNE CRIER



The Stagecrafters (see story on page 41)

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VOLUME 16 NUMBER 2



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SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

June 4, 1964— Garden Party

Dessert 7:30.

Little Choir—Germantown Friends School 8:30.

Annual Garden Party to be held in gardens behind the museum, or in case of rain, at the Trinity Lutheran Parish House.

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GERMANTOWNE CRIER



Vol. 16 | MAY, 1964 | No. 2

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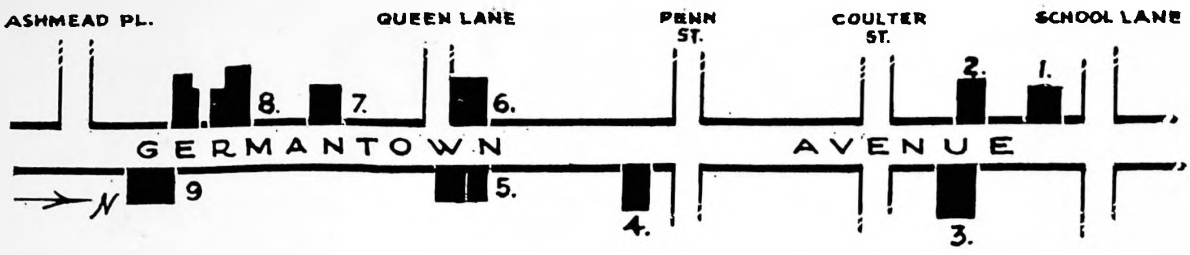
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Annual Tour of Historic Germantown Buildings



Nine historic buildings will be open for the Historic Tour to be held between one and five P.M. on May 16. Corresponding to the numbers in the above sketch, they are: 1. The Morris House, 2. Friends Free Library, 3. St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 4. Watson House, 5. "Grumblethorpe," 6. Trinity Church and Christopher Saur House, 7. The Bechtel House, 8. The Hacker-Conyngham House, 9. Saint Stephens Methodist Episcopal Church.

In addition to seeing how people in Germantown lived and worshipped a century or more ago, those on tour will also be able to participate in an auction of old books and magazines to be held in the garden of the Morris House. An art exhibit of the works of local artists will also be open to those on the tour.

Report of the Relics Committee

By THOMAS A. VON TROTT

From **Beatrice K. Wild**—Doll, German bisque, lace dress. Period 1870–80.

From **Miss Merea Knight**—A ladies chair, very fine hand decoration. Period 1850. Needlework and painted farm scene, very fine, rare. Period 1826. Hand colored lithograph, Town of Inverness, Victorian frame, very good. Period 1850–60. Blanket Chest with secret part. Pine. Period 1820. Wooden Hay Fork—Miniature painting on ivory, "The Crucifiction." Period 1820. Pair Oriental Vases—Pair Victorian Vases—Lot tortoise shell combs—Lot 4 Beaded Bags—Deck of old playing cards, German. Period 1840. Figurine of French Soldier. Period 1820. Lot needlework samples. Period 1820–50. Two small patchwork crib spreads. Period 1860–70. 2 Framed prints by George Moreland, black & gold glass mattes, hand-colored mezzotints. Period 1790.

From **Mrs. B. Hoff Knight**—Two fine Portraits in oil by Thos. Sully's daughter, Jane Cooper Sully Darby. 1808–74. Subjects are the Grandmother & Grandfather of Mr. B. Hoff Knight and Miss Merea Knight. Mrs. Darby was the wife of Felix O. C. Darby who was also a fine artist of the period. Also many small interesting items.

From the **Hon. Harold D. Saylor**—2 Hearth Stones, used for setting fire tools on at the fireplace hearth—A handmade hay fork. Period 1850.

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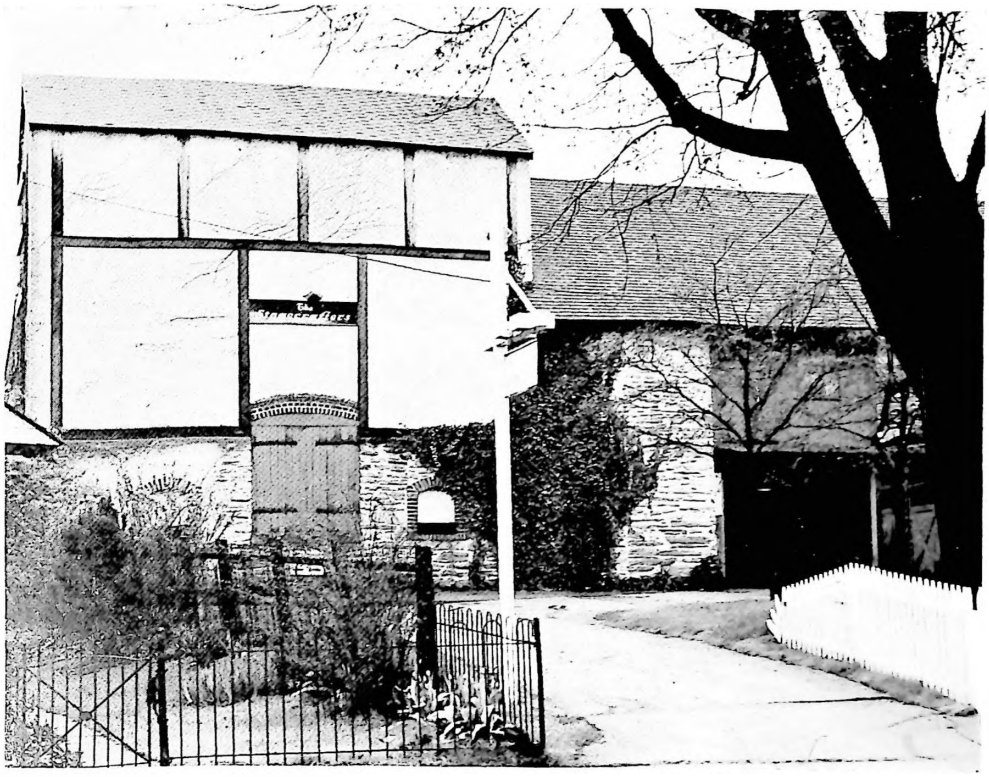
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THE STAGECRAFTERS

"Our True Intent is All for Your Delight"

By ELEANORA D. DYSART

THIS year of 1964 The Stagecrafters are celebrating their thirty-fifth birthday. Let us take our crystal ball in our hands and gaze back over the years —or like Alice of old, go "Through our Looking Glass" to a night thirty-five years ago.

In the late Coolidge and early Hoover period a group of twenty-five met with enthusiasm and determination for the purpose of starting a Little Theatre of their own. These people were no strangers to each other or to hard work, having acted together for some years under the auspices of The Woman's Club of Germantown, where the amateur actresses called themselves the *Handbag Players*. Whether the title was adopted because the group was tiny, or because it was as full of talent as is a woman's handbag is not known. However, they did present plays of definite merit with husbands, brothers and friends of members portraying the male roles.

It was an era when there was much talk of "two chickens in every pot" and "two cars in every garage." Everybody seemed enveloped in a rosy glow of prosperity and so, with abundant confidence and unbounded enthusiasm The Stagecrafters set forth in their search for a home of their own.



The first home of The Stagecrafters was a smithy in Colonial days.



The second building was annexed in 1931. Originally located on Hartwell Lane, it is said to pre-date the smithy.

In 1929 at 8130 Germantown Avenue, Chestnut Hill, a hundred feet back from the street, they discovered an old stone, one story building, which in Colonial days, had been a smithy and later an antique shop. Joyfully they signed a lease and got to work with paint and brushes.

Naturally, nothing elaborate was attempted in these limited primitive quarters. The place was used as a training school, a workshop and for building of sets for their main productions given at The Woman's Club.

Shortly thereafter the three story stone house directly in back of the old former blacksmith shop was rented. On the first floor was one room and a kitchen, with a stairway leading to the upper floors. Now that they had a Studio, one act plays were produced in this small area for the increasing number of new audience members. Heat was provided by a pot-bellied stove, which roasted those in the immediate vicinity, while the unfortunate ones on the outskirts froze. An audience of some thirty or forty could be seated at the end of the room while the actors, blue with cold made their entrances on the other half from the stairway or the kitchen. If ever there was an "intimate theatre"—this was one.

The first seasons were highly successful. Audiences on Club Nights swelled to such proportions and were packed in so tightly, that a sardine, taking one look at that end of the room, would have been glad to get back into his tin can. Something had to be done and The Stagecrafters did it.

In 1932 the owner was persuaded to enlarge the smithy and build a stage at the rear end of that building. This stage was small—the acting space was about twelve feet by eight—but the lighting was adequate and there was a beautiful velour curtain. From the door opening off the back of the stage a covered passageway was run to the entrance of the present studio. Here the actresses and actors donned costumes and make-up—and the usual after-theatre "socials" and board meetings were held. The auditorium had a capacity of about one hundred and twenty folding chairs, so uncomfortable that it is amazing that any one ever came back. Yet come back they did, and on occasions as many as a hundred and forty chairs were squeezed into the place, with "standees" packed in at the back. On one memorable night, a number of people, unable to find a square inch unoccupied, were forced to return home and reflect upon the virtue of early arrival. Conditions had reached the stage where again something had to be done. That same year they incorporated under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania as The Stagecrafters.

In the spring of 1934 an important step forward, proving wider vision, was taken by engaging a professional Director. His knowledge of theatre and experience in handling casts proved invaluable.

In 1936 plans were drawn for a completely new theatre, retaining, however in its original form the old building in the rear and part of the old smithy. The present building was erected and equipped by the club with a thoroughly modern gas heater system, up-to-date lighting and more comfortable seats, which were from the balcony of the old Garrick Theatre.

In November, 1936 The Stagecrafters' new Theatre opened with the presentation of "The Petrified Forest." It was a huge success and was followed, at intervals of a month by five other productions. At the end of the season it was found that two nights were not sufficient to accommodate the rapidly increasing audiences so each play was then presented for three consecutive nights, on many of which the S. R. O. sign was necessary.

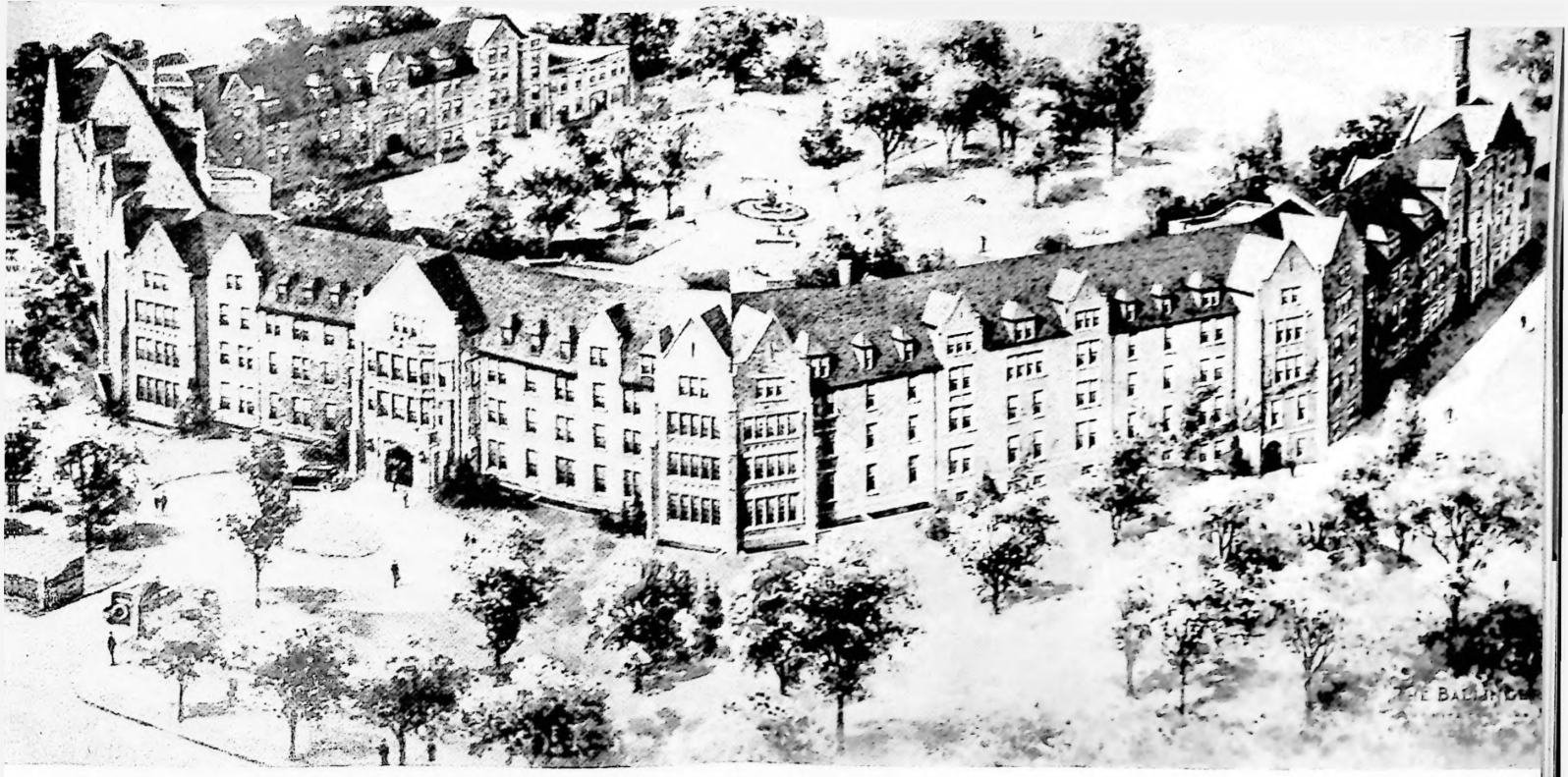
A special performance of "The Man Who Came To Dinner" for the benefit of the 5th War Loan Drive was given in the Spring of 1944, resulting in subscriptions totaling $100,000.

In the summer of 1946 extensive alterations pro-

(Continued on page 60)

Work progressed in the acquisition of buildings. Three separate entities before they were joined to make today's roomy theatre.





INGLIS HOUSE

The Philadelphia Home for Incurables

By Ann T. Snyder

IT IS only a short drive from historic Germantown to the white ribbon of the City Avenue bridge, and this highway linking the opposing banks of Schuylkill River transports the passenger faster than his thoughts. For the sensitive, there still hovers beyond the east bank of the river the faint odor of British musket fire, carrying with it the inexplicable fear and thrill men felt in defense of their own homes. While the west bank of the river recalls an expanse of country estates and open sky only lately challenged by the gaucheries of modern architecture and the inroads of commerce. But the skyroad bridges the distance and the years in a relentless stream of traffic.

From City Avenue a left turn leads past the reservoir's quiet lake out gray Belmont Avenue towards the periphery of the old Centennial fair grounds. At the Conshohocken Avenue intersection a great rough hewn stone facade liberally laced with ivy presents a dignified picture of an institution that is a unique part of the Philadelphia scene. The silver and black signs at three corners of the seven acre property announce that this is Inglis House, the Philadelphia Home for Incurables, and to the majority of passersby it is, for the most part, a place of mystery with which few can identify their personal interests. Actually, the great U-shaped building with its verdant garth and sweeping lawns is a lifetime home for 253 human beings suffering from chronic illness, whose ages range from 18 to 90 years.

Behind this Home—as with every institution worthy of the name of "home"—there is a story, a love story, if you will, that answers the age-old question: "Who is my neighbor?"

Once there was a little girl, handicapped from birth, who fell in love with the world, especially with others like herself who, nevertheless, lacked the tender care she received from her family. Before she died at the age of 18, Annie C. Inglis gave to her mother a prized possession—a gold dollar. She asked that this token be used to help establish a home for the handicapped who, in those days, if they could not be cared for by their families, were considered fortunate to be received within the charitable precincts of Old Blockley. And love won and purchased the world for a dollar, because Annie's golden coin was sold and resold time after time to raise funds for the "new charity." Fairs were held and subscriptions solicited until, in 1877, the group of interested women who had worked so hard for this dream were at last able to charter a home for "incurables."



Annie C. Inglis, aged 18.

Today, Inglis House possesses a treasured scrapbook of yellowed clippings describing the Home's founding in a rented house at 47th and Darby Road. A newspaper article of 1880 describes the first permanent structure at 48th and Darby Road as "designed (by W. G. Hale) somewhat after the Queen Anne fashion, and with deep slanting Gothic roofs covered with Akron tiles in red and buff." Throughout the scrapbook can be seen programs and newspaper announcements describing lectures, promenade concerts and other public entertainments held for the benefit of the Home. A delightful, but undated clipping states that "At ten o'clock General Grant and wife, together with General Sherman and Mr. James L. Claghorn, stepped into a carriage and were driven to the Academy of Music, where a reception and concert in aid of the Building Fund of the Home for Incurables was in progress. It had been given out that the distinguished guest would be present, and the result was that the magnificent art salons of the Academy were thronged with the beauty and fashion of the town."

At first only women were admitted to the Home until it became practical to admit men as well, and the liberal admission requirements were then much the same as today. Only a few residents formed the first "family" of the 47th and Darby Roads Home, in comparison with today's peak capacity of 253, but the need for an establishment of this kind was so real and so desperate that by the nineteen-twenties a larger building, one especially designed for maximum nursing and custodial care was essential. The Board of Managers selected the present site at Belmont and Conshohocken Avenues in 1927, and the Ballinger Company was asked to provide architectural plans for a new Home for Incurables. The grounds were a providential choice, creating a setting that was both beautiful and secluded. A homestead had been built here by a French settler, M. d'Invilliers, where formerly a tavern stood to welcome travellers who penetrated the country lanes. He called the estate "Chantilly," and its intangible loveliness has survived

The first permanent structure—48th and Darby Road





Construction underway on the building located at Belmont and Conshohocken Avenues.

the bulldozers and the construction of the present building to comfort the residents of the Home for almost forty years. The new Home was soon occupied by one hundred and twenty men, women and children. The former Children's House in the south wing is now a part of the Home's total function, but a number of the residents who today use the recreation room on the ground floor remember it fondly as the school room of their childhood days.

Not all who visit Inglis House see it in its entirety, although they are welcome to do so, but even the hurried visitor cannot fail to capture something of its homelike atmosphere as he moves through the corridors of private rooms—there are no dormitories here. The residents can be seen gathering at different times of the day in Founder's Hall, a huge room overlooking the grounds, where entertainments and various religious services are held. It is noticeable that certain groups always reappear at sunset when, quietly conversing, they watch the shadows lengthen across the wide lawn and the last flashes of red and gold catch fire to the shrubbery. And Founder's Hall is well-named. Brass plaques on the walls attest to the generosity of many prominent families. Some of their descendants still show interest in the Home, and through the years philanthropic individuals have remembered Inglis House with legacies that have become part of its endowment fund. This great room does honor to the fourteen women who signed the original charter, and to the succession of dedicated ladies, who, since 1877, have ably guided the affairs of the Home as members of the Board of Managers, or as members of the Annie C. Inglis Memorial Auxiliary. They carry on a great tradition of love and service and gentleness that has survived the harsh tempo of our world, even as they work to keep pace with the advantages of our times. It is significant that in 1960 the name of the Philadelphia Home for Incurables was officially changed to Inglis House, and this change was in keeping with the loving spirit of its Foundress.

It is not difficult to see among the wheel chairs gathered at dusk in Founder's Hall a little girl—always young—who mingles with the residents of "her" Home with a special and shining joy.



GRUMBLETHORPE'S GRENADIER

By Marion Fay



THERE are times, I think, when all of us wish that walls could speak. But seldom have I wished so much that the historic rooms of "Grumblethorpe"—the stone mansion built in 1744 as a summer home by John Wister—could unfold the tales of the strange scenes they have witnessed and tell us of all the events that have transpired behind its doors.

It was in this very house that General Agnew of the British Army lived during the occupation of Philadelphia in 1777. And in this very house he died after receiving a fatal wound in the battle of Germantown. In fact, his blood stains can still be seen on the floor of the north parlor.

At one time there stood in the hallway, a very interesting relic of the Revolutionary days; a wooden figure of a British Grenadier, standing about six feet tall. Today, this same Grenadier can be found in the museum of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. And this is the story about it.

According to Sally Wister, who kept a diary during the Revolution, the American army was encamped nearby, and the Wister family became acquainted with a number of the officers. One of them, Major Tilley, was so shy and bashful that he was the object of much teasing by the ladies in the home.

On a December evening in 1777, only two months after the battle of Germantown, Major Tilley was among a group of American officers relaxing at the Wister home. The girls Sally, and Betsy Wister and another officer decided to play a joke on him. The wooden figure was taken out of hiding and placed in the hall in front of the door that led to Germantown Avenue. One servant was to conceal himself behind the figure, and then another servant was instructed to go to the room where the officers were, and announce to Major Tilley that: "There is somebody at the door who wishes to see you." Tilley then turned and said, "Who? All of us?" and according to Sally Wister, the boy said "yes sir."

Tilley led the men into the hall. The first thing he saw was the wooden British Grenadier and then a thundering voice demanded "Any rebel officers here?" Here I must quote Sally Wister, for at this point she wrote: "Tilley darted like lightening out the front door, through the yard and over the fence. Swamps, fences, thorn-hedges and ploughed fields no way impeded his retreat. He was soon out of hearing. The woods echoed with "Which way did he go? Stop him! Surround the house."

All the other officers were now on to the trick, and everyone was almost overcome with laughter. Picture that poor Major Tilley! Sally adds: "On a snowy evening, no hat, shoes down at the heel, hair unty'd, flying across meadows, creeks and mud-holes. Flying from what? Why, a bit of painted wood."

When Tilley returned to the house, he had to endure the derision of all who were witness to the scheme, but like a good sport, he joined in the laughter over the joke against himself.

It is reasonably certain that this effigy of a grenadier, was painted by the famous Major Andre. When the British were occupying Philadelphia, a benefit program was given in order to raise money for the relief of widows, orphans and soldiers, and this wooden soldier was placed outside the old Southwark Theatre as an advertisement. We know that Major Andre painted much of the scenery and also this figure, which had been bought by Sally Wister's uncle Miles to amuse them.

The Grenadier is a detail of the Riegel map.

STREET SOUNDS circa 1920

By DOROTHY C. JONES

Illustration by D. Richardi

THE screaming sirens of police cars and ambulances frequently awaken me during the night. They make one wonder, are these ear-splitting, nerve shattering wails indicative of the times?

The sounds of my childhood, no longer heard around Germantown were, for the most part, happier sounds.

The one that goes back the farthest in my memory did *have* overtones of Alfred Hitchcock for me. It brings back memories of winter twilights when a sweet clear high-pitched female voice would be heard calling "Pepp'ry Pot, nice and hot" over and over.

I don't know what there was about that voice but it chilled the marrow in my bones, and they were very small bones then. My Grandmother used to have to put her hands over my ears, otherwise, I got hysterical.

About the same time, a male vendor hawked his wares every Friday night by calling "Crab, hard-shelled Baltimo' crab! Fresh crab." His voice didn't "send me," thank goodness.

Everyone wasn't a vendor, some of these people wanted to buy things. For instance, there was the man who wanted to buy "soap fat." I don't know what "soap fat" was but I assume it was renderings. I do remember that children used to taunt him by chanting "What do you feed your wife on"? Of course, the answer always came back "Soap fat"!

To get back to the vendors, many of them were seasonal and we heard them only in the summertime. The fruits and vegetables the hucksters hawked are legion but some still stand out among them—"Red ripe tomats, 5¢ a peck." I know now that a peck is a measure but when I was little it puzzled me because I thought it was a verb, without knowing what a verb was! "Straw*bayries*," "watermel*ones*," and of course these were always "red ripe" too, "*fraish* fish" and "bananas" also stand out. These hucksters had their own dialect, perhaps it was a hangover from Cockney as many of them came from Kensington which was almost one hundred per cent English.

The sound we children listened for was the Good Humor man of that day. He didn't drive around and ring chimes; he pushed a cart and called "Ice Cream —hokey pokey ice cream." This was the nearest thing to ice milk as we know it today but I think "hokey pokey ice cream" sounds much more enticing. I wonder where the "hokey pokey" came from?

Do you like horse-radish? If you are my age (and I won't tell it) you'll remember the man who came around and ground it fresh in the glass you furnished. You'll know too, that the horse-radish you buy in the super-market today is real sissy stuff! You had to approach the freshly ground with caution and respect or you couldn't speak above a whisper for awhile.

Waffles were another treat, for a penny, no less. But the gentleman who sold them did not hawk them; he announced his approach with a bugle. I suppose this set him a cut above the hucksters. The waffles were tasty and the penny included a dusting of sugar.

There were other cries of "Scissors to grind," "Umbrellas to mend," "Clo'es props" and "Any rags today?" I think the rag man was the only one who used sales psychology by adding the word "lady."

I can't let the sounds of yesterday go by without mentioning the German bands who played on the street corners and passed the hat after they had oompahpahed their way through two or three songs.

There was also the tinkle of the hurdy-gurdy and the organ grinder with a monkey that tipped its hat and passed a tin cup for his penny.

The police band concerts ranked high on the list of entertainment but nobody topped the Medicine Man who stayed as long as three nights. In the light of gasoline flairs, he entertained with a banjo, tambourine or mouth organ. He gave out coveted prizes such as ruby glass toothpick holders (I still have one) and then he sold our mothers and fathers the wonderful Elixir of Youth at $1.00 per bottle.

The last sound that comes to mind was a winter sound because somehow I never noticed it in the

(Continued on page 50)



American History:

AN IMMIGRANT'S-EYE VIEW

By W. Edwin Collier

Illustration by Clint Bradley

Editor's Note:

Mr. Collier claims that the events of American history about which he writes in the following article are part of his schoolday memories—a bit hazy, at times. However, we detect a strong evidence of real British humor running through the sentences and believe he wrote these memoirs with 'tongue in cheek.'

BORN and bred an Englishman, in 1934 I was suddenly offered a position in Philadelphia. This prompted me to review my knowledge of American history. Such as it was, it derived mainly from High School lessons on British history, colonial sub-division. Undoubtedly my attention had been poor; my apprehension, limited; and my memory, defective. A strictly inaccurate account of the residual confusion follows.

America is called the Land of Discovery. This is because it has been discovered so many times. It was first discovered by the Red Indians. The Red Indians started the tradition of variety in American architecture, well exemplified today on the campus of the U. of P. Under their chief, Hiawatha, they lived in a pleasing conglomoration of wigwams, teepees, hogans, pueblos, birchbark canoes and igloos. They worshipped a weird and mysterious Spirit who dwelt on the shores of the aptly-named Lake Eerie. Their hobby was collecting scalps. Far from expecting to see Red Indians stalking the streets of New York—an American misapprehension of British misapprehensions—I supposed them to be extinct!

America was next discovered by the Chinese. Approaching the Pacific coast, the Chinese admiral noted through his spyglass that the natives ashore were naked. He thereupon issued his historic order: "No clothes: no laundry. Fleet return to China".

A Viking called Erikson was the third discoverer of America. He built a tower at Newport (R. I.), founded Vineland (N. J.), and is reputed to have been the originator of the common saying: "It's a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there. (R.S.V.P.)".

The fourth discovery of America was by Christopher Columbus. This was in 1492. 1492, 1776, 1814 and 1861, were fortunately the only dates which happened in American history. Columbus' sailors were mutinous and wished to turn back but, descrying land on the horizon, the admiral said: "Sail on." The Spanish crew, misunderstanding Columbus' Italian accent, thought he said: "Ceylon", and the islands on which he landed were consequently named the West Indies.

The next discoverer of America—and, to Englishmen, the first *real* discoverer—was Sir Walter Raleigh. Raleigh's voyages made an important contribution to the development of national characteristics. They enabled the English to become a nation of pipe-smokers and the Irish to become a nation of potato-eaters. The Welsh and the Scots, being left out, were understandably jealous. The Tudor (Welsh) Queen Elizabeth therefore imprisoned Raleigh and the Stuart (Scottish) King James had him executed. Some of our more conservative teachers thought that Columbus deserved the same fate!

America was finally and definitively discovered, and colonized, by the Pilgrim Fathers, who sent a scarlet letter home to announce that they had settled in Massachusetts (pronounced—by us—"*Massa*-chews-*ettes*") and Connecticut (pronounced ""*Conneck*-ti-cut"). The Pilgrim Fathers were lower-middle-class and upper-lower-class types; they were not Church of England; they were Puritans (and therefore given to the Cromwellian habit of stabling their horses in cathedrals); and they came to America because they wanted freedom from having to eat plum-pudding at Christmas. On all these counts they were to be thought of by right-minded boys as "Good Riddance". With a proper disregard for interloping nations who got there first, the Puritans called America, "New England". The Pilgrim Fathers and their wives, the Colonial Dames, were the cause of Yankees, Thanksgiving dinner, pumpkins, and such phrases as "high hat", "talking turkey" and "This article is a lot of corn".

Three features of English life promptly imported into the newly-formed colonies were tea, taxes and amateur theatricals. These were interestingly brought together at an afternoon-tea party given in Boston. The guests, annoyed at being deprived of the pleasure of taxing themselves, dressed up as Red Indians and poured the whole brew of tea into the harbour (spelt "harbor" and pronounced "habbah"). At about the same time, a firm of London bell-founders sold a cracked bell to the town of Philadelphia. The English held this truth to be self-evident, that what wasn't good enough for home consumption was good enough for emigrants, and that, to secure this right, colonies had been instituted among men. But the people of Philadelphia, without any decent respect for

the opinions of mankind or the science of campanology, issued a Declaration to the effect that the sound of the bell hampered their pursuit of happiness. Being good Quakers, they demanded a better bell or their £60/14/6d. back again, *with interest*. This drove the Hanoverian (German) King George III mad, and he said with a sneer, "Verdammung; let them ring carillons." So began the American Revolution, led by an English squire from Virginia named George Washington, who cut down a cherry-tree and couldn't tell a lie. (Yes; we learnt that one too).

There were only four important battles in the American Revolution. The first of these was Bunker Hill. Here the American commander waited until he could see the whites of the Grenadiers' eyes and then said to his subordinate: "You may fire when ready, Gridley". The result was a British victory. The British were also victorious at the Battles of the Brandywine and of Germantown. At the latter village, American General Stephen defeated American General Anthony Wayne. This made Anthony as mad as King George, and he asserted that his reverse didn't count as he "had not yet begun to fight". In Germantown too fell General Agnew, and no wonder! —the floor at Grumblethorpe is still so slippery that spike-heels are not allowed.

The Battle of Saratoga would have been another British victory if General Johnny Burgoyne had not been such a Gentleman. One result of the bourgeois origin of the Americans (see above) was that they had never learnt cricket. Consequently they did not fight fairly and broke all the rules. Instead of standing in serried ranks and brilliant colors to receive the fire of our gallant (mercenary) allies, they disguised themselves as trees, bushes, swamp foxes and other natural phenomena, and shot the brave British soldiers when they were prevented from giving battle by a shortage of powder (for the officers' wigs). Disgusted at having to contend with such unsporting conduct, the British stopped playing and let the Americans win. However, they got their revenge by giving the Americans their Independence, a trick they would later play on Ireland, India, Cyprus etc., and a terrible blow to American history. Figuring that what was good for a religious heretic in 1431 was good for a political heretic in 1814, the British did indeed burn Washington, but the other Revolutionary leaders were allowed to die in their beds. From this period dates the British custom of celebrating Thanksgiving on July 4th.

Being now outside the British Empire, America disappeared from history for nearly a century. She emerged briefly during the War Between the States, when Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves. This step was a mixed blessing. It was obviously a good thing that Lincoln should follow an example which the British had set: on the other hand, it was bad for the Lancashire cotton trade. (A sore point: I lived in Lancashire). Lincoln was succeeded by General Grant, who was born in a log cabin but moved into a white house.

America had no more important (i.e., related to England) history until World War I but I gathered a few odds and ends about her expansion. I learnt, for instance, that American unsporting proclivities shewed themselves anew against the Indians and on the plains. No English gentleman on a grouse-moor would think of shooting at a sitting bird, but the Americans would even shoot at a Sitting Bull. Using this method, they easily exterminated vast herds of buffalo. I further discovered that Americans were keen on kitchen fixtures already in the era of Westward migration, for the annals were full of references to the troublesome Humboldt sink.

The movies of my youth taught me that all Americans were good and all Indians bad (and that therefore, obviously, Indians were not Americans), though current T.V. informs me that the exact opposite is the truth. From the same source I learned that America beyond the Alleghenies had no trees and that people were engaged in perpetual travel, in covered wagons, stage coaches, pony expresses, cattle drives and wood-burning locomotives. Perhaps this presentation of "the American way of life" was subliminal advertising by the automobile manufacturers. It appeared that Niagara was a favourite resort for married couples, the husband taking the trip over the Falls in a barrel. After the invention of Reno, Nevada, this custom was discontinued in favor of divorce. This is considered a good instance of "the progress of civilization". It led Theodore Greely to advise any young man who went West to ensure his wife's devotion by carrying a big stick. Young men carrying several sticks could be thereby identified as Mormons.

American songs were a final fount of information;

(*Continued on page 61*)

"Lafayette, we are here!"



Next-Door Neighbor

By MARION BENASUTTI

OFFICIALLY, the district known as Mt. Airy, Germantown's "next-door neighbor," is designated as U. S. Postal District No. 19. But as early as 1759, Scull's map labelled this region "Mt. Airy"—with varying boundaries.

In 1750, William Allen, Chief Justice of the Province of Pennsylvania, Mayor of Philadelphia, leading citizen of the province, established his country estate on the Germantown Road opposite the lane which was soon called by his name. That same Allen's Lane is still very much a part of present-day Mt. Airy.

Mr. Allen believed firmly that "America is the finest country in the world; Pennsylvania is the garden of America; Philadelphia the finest city of America and my house the best situated in Philadelphia." It was only natural, then, that he should call his estate "Mount Airy." The estate was of such importance that it soon gave its name to the entire area and that is how Mt. Airy got its name.

Mr. Allen's home became the gathering place for such famous people as Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Hamilton, Biddle, Peters, and Benjamin Chew. Justice Allen used to dash up the Germantown Road in his landau, driven by a liveried coachman, drawn by four coal black horses costing four pounds sterling.

This was the land of the Lenni Lenapes. Their trail south, from the Longhouse in Central New York through the Tulpehocken region and east to the Delaware, became the Great Road, our Germantown Avenue. Their council rock on the Wissahickon at Rex Avenue is marked by the statue to their great chief, Tedeyuscung. As late as 1750 Indians were known to have camped where John Johnson's place, Upsala, was built. Their picture writings were seen on the rocks of the Wissahickon as late as the 1850's. With the purchase of land from William Penn this became a permanent settlement. The Dutch, Swedes, British and German people settled here.

The earliest houses were built along the Cresheim Road. The earliest industries were grist and woolen mills located on Cresheim and Wissahickon Creeks to utilize the only source of power then known. The Thomas Livezey house, built in 1848, still stands on the Wissahickon at the extension of Allen's Lane. The earliest church was St. Michael's Lutheran, established before 1728 on Germantown Road at the present Phil-Ellena Street. The earliest school was maintained by St. Michael's Church. The little sandstone building used for this purpose, erected in 1740, still stands on the avenue below Phil-Ellena Street.

Taverns and inns must have existed, for Bradford's almanac of 1755 lists Mt. Airy as "a suitable stopping place for travelers."

The Battle of Germantown began triumphantly at Mt. Airy on the foggy morning of Oct. 4, 1777.

Mt. Airy became a fashionable summer resort for Philadelphians. Whole families, with their maids and butlers, came to stay for the hot months at the Mt. Pleasant Inn which stood on the west side of Germantown Avenue just north of the present Mt. Pleasant Avenue.

Taverns to accommodate farmers bringing in produce from outlying farms occupied various places on the Germantown Road.

Public schools came early to Mt. Airy. In 1853 the Reading Railroad reached as far as Mt. Airy and travel to Philadelphia became much easier. The street railway, with the first horse cars, began service in 1859. Trolleys, supplanted horse cars in 1894, and the Pennsylvania Railroad began to serve Mt. Airy in 1884. These faster modes of transportation transformed Mt. Airy from a community of farms and country estates to suburban, then urban status.

In 1854 all boroughs and townships in the county of Philadelphia were incorporated in the ctiy, and Mt. Airyites became Philadelphians and residents of the 22d Ward. By this measure they secured coordinated systems of schools and courts, fire, police, sanitation and highway departments.

The Mt. Airy we have now is the result of the way all the people of past generations lived—how they used the land, what they thought were the worth-while things to preserve and to create, their interests, their faith.

STREET SOUNDS

(*Continued from page 47*)

summer. It was the sound of the factory whistles blowing all over the city at six p.m. and what an eerie sound it was. To most people it meant the end of a day of toil; to me it sounded like Gabriel's horn, especially the deep basso that was the pride of the Midvale Steel and Ordinance Company. I always held my breath and thought of the end of the world! I'm so happy that they don't blow any more and look forward to the day when the sirens of today will be silenced in the night when they race around empty streets screaming to clear their path of traffic that doesn't exist.

The Great Road out of Philadelphia

By Catharine Macfarlane

Text and pictures from a lecture given by Dr. Macfarlane at the March meeting of the Society.

TRADITION tells us that Germantown Road was once an Indian trail. We can picture a group of Lenni Lenapes, in the spring of the year, leaving their camp at Chestnut Hill and walking single file through the woods to the Delaware River to fish for shad. They left no records. Both Indians and shad have disappeared.

Three thousand miles away, on March 4, 1681, Charles the Second, King of England, granted land in the New World to his friend, William Penn and named the vast tract "Pennsylvania."

On September 1, 1682, William Penn set sail from Deal on the *Welcome*. Two months later, he arrived at Upland—now Chester—on October 7, 1682. From there the Proprietor proceeded by barge to Philadelphia, the capital of his colony. It was a village of ten houses.

The news of Penn's colony had spread over Western Europe. In 1683, thirteen men of the Rhineland sold their homes and possessions in Crefeldt, a town near the border of Holland and bought lots on the outskirts of Philadelphia.

From Rotterdam they crossed over to London and on July twenty fourth, 1683, they sailed from Gravesend on the *Concord*. After a pleasant voyage they arrived in Philadelphia on the sixth of October and proceeded to the lots assigned to them on the outskirts of Philadelphia. There they founded the "German Township." Industrious and God fearing people, they brought skills that the young colony sorely needed.

Many of the Germantowners were weavers. They wove linen for men's ruffled shirts and women's pretty dresses "as fine as any brought over from Europe."

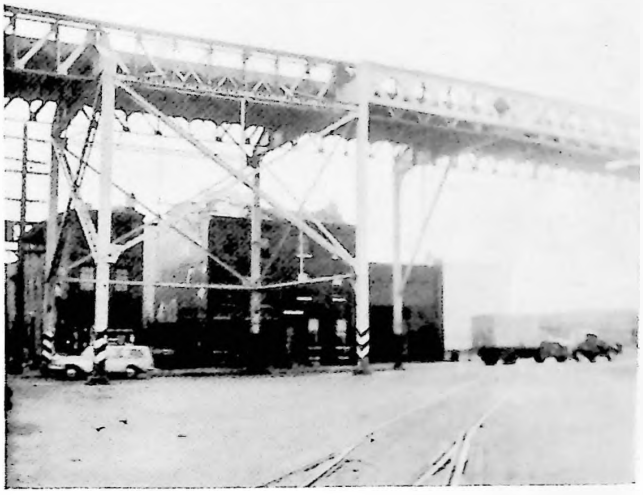
At first, paper and linen were carried on men's backs over the Indian trail which became a well worn path. Soon it was inadequate. In 1709, fourteen men petitioned the Assembly for a plan for laying out a "Publick Road." The Assembly ordered that this be done.

In 1754, Governor Thomas Pownall, after telling of the Lancaster Road to Harris Ferry on the Susquehanna, told of "another great road which goes from Philadelphia to the same ferry but keeps on the Northeast side of the Schuylkill and runs through Germantown to Reading."

In 1802, The Germantown and Reading Turnpike to Reading was incorporated.

After one hundred and nineteen years, the Indian Trail had become a turnpike.

Today, Germantown Road extends from Front and Laurel Street to the Forks of the Road at Chestnut Hill. Laurel Street, near the Delaware River, is lined with neat two story, red brick houses. I doubt if many people know where it is except those who live there. For the rest of us, Germantown Avenue begins near Front and Poplar, under the Frankford El and ends—eleven miles and almost three hundred feet higher—at the Forks of the Road.



Germantown Ave. starts at Front and Laurel Streets.

Below Broad Street, both sides of the road are lined with small stores and small businesses. Some of these look very prosperous, others quite the reverse.

At Second Street, stands Schmidt's Brewery—a fine office building in front, large brewery buildings behind. William Penn would have approved of this, for the first building to be erected at his Manor of Pennsbury was a "Brew House." It is the only original building standing to-day.

Near Fifth Street is the imposing Stetson's Hat Factory with nearby hospital and Savings and Loan Building. I am sure President Johnson would approve of Stetson's for most five gallon hats are made there.

At Ontario Street, York Road and Rising Sun Lane branch off.

At Cambria Street (2900), we find Fairhill Meeting and Fairhill Cemetery. The meeting was established in 1703. There have been several buildings. Many first Philadelphians are buried in the Cemetery.

Nearby there was once a beautiful mansion "Fairhill," the home of Isaac Norris, leading Quaker and city official of colonial days. This and a dozen other mansions were burned by the British after the battle of Germantown.

Near Somerset Street we find a Porto Rican colony. The movie house shows Spanish films, Cantinflas etc. A good place to brush up your Español.

At 3256, the corner of Westmoreland Street, is a building that is not very old but certainly is imposing. Now Carmen Hotel and Cocktail Bar, it was once a Seventh Day Adventist School, and during World War II was occupied by a German Bund.

Above Broad Street, I found no old buildings until at 4126 Germantown Avenue, above Hunting Park Avenue, we found "The Oldest House in Nicetown." No one in the neighborhood knew anything about it, except that it was "the oldest house in Nicetown."



The oldest house in Nicetown.

At Wayne Junction, historic Germantown begins. The Naglee house, 4518, is one of the oldest houses in Germantown. John Naglee lived in it, 1727 to 1752 and James Logan occupied it while his mansion, Stenton, was being built—1727 to 1734. It is a quaint 1½ story house now occupied by Mr. Kulp, a florist who was born in the house sixty some years ago.

On the left as we climb Naglee's Hill we come to Loudoun, a beautiful mansion built by a wealthy merchant—Thomas Armat—about 1801. His Granddaughter married Gustav George Logan and the house remained in the possession of the Logan Family until 1939 when the house and its five acres of ground were bequeathed to the City of Philadelphia by Miss Maria Dickinson Logan. Standing on the front porch, Miss Logan told how on a clear day she could see the ships on the Delaware six miles away.

Across the road, at the top of the hill, are two interesting and well preserved old houses. The Mehl House, 4821, stands on ground that was in possession of the Mehl family from 1763 to 1865. A converted barn, at the rear of the property, houses the Germantown Theatre Guild—a great asset to our community.

The Ottinger House, 4825, was built by Christopher Ottinger, and remained in the family until 1929. Too young to be drafted, he volunteered, fought in the battle of Germantown and through the war being listed as a noncommissioned officer at its close. After the war, probably 1781, he built this house and became a coach builder—a popular occupation in Germantown at that time. His son, Douglass Ottinger, a Captain in the U. S. Navy, invented a life saving apparatus called the Life Car.

At the Northeast corner of Logan Street, is the Lower Burying Ground or Hood's Cemetery. The ground was conveyed to the Community of Germantown in 1692 by Leonard Arets for one pound Holland gold "provided that it shall be used in no other way than as a burying place." The oldest tombstone is that of John Coulston, dated February 1, 1708. The imposing wall was the gift of William Hood, a former resident of Germantown. He died in Paris in 1850 and was buried here.

On the opposite side of the street, 4908, is the Wachsmuth Henry House. It was built in 1760 by Gottfried Wachsmuth. It was sold in 1828 to John Snowden Henry, whose son Alexander Henry was born here. He served as Mayor of Philadelphia from 1858 to 1865. Many alterations have been made to the house.

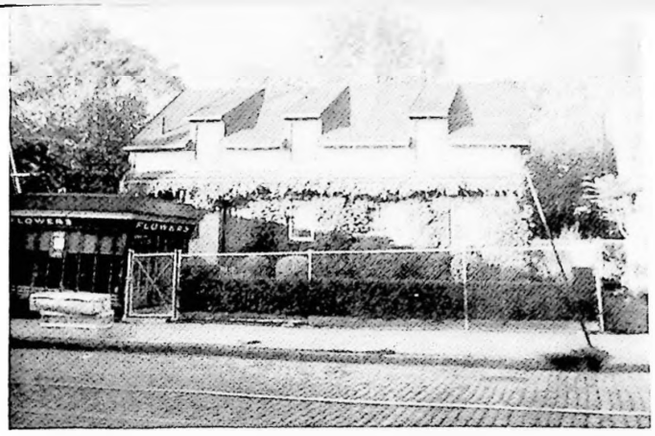
In 1683, Thones Kunders, one of the thirteen original settlers of Germantown, lived where 5109 Germantown Avenue now stands. Friends Meetings were held in his house. In 1688 a protest against slavery was passed. The protest was sent to the Monthly Meeting in Frankford, from there to the Quarterly Meeting in Philadelphia and from there to the Yearly Meeting in Burlington, New Jersey. There it was "adjudged not to be so proper for this meeting to give their positive judgment in this case."

Until last year, a plaque on the wall of 5109 told of this protest. It is not there now. The present owner told me the plaque had been taken down by the Germantown Historical Society and placed in their museum.

Gilbert Stuart, the portrait painter, came to Germantown in 1793 to escape the yellow fever in Philadelphia. He lived in a little house on the grounds of 5140 Germantown Avenue where he painted his famous portrait of General Washington, who was living in the Morris House at the time. The house has been torn down and a large supermarket occupies the area.

St. Stephen's Methodist Church (5207) was built in 1857. The Church House (5213) is older, probably built about 1809. It has a lovely fan doorway.

On the west side of the road is a group of old houses. The Baynton House (5208) a brick house built about 1800, houses the Library of the Germantown Historical Society. The Conyngham Hacker House (5214), probably built about 1750, was given to the Historical Society by its last owner, Isaiah Hacker "provided it be used for historical purposes." It houses the very interesting museum of the Historical Society. The Bechtel House (5226) with a date stone marked 1742, is now used as a costume museum by the Historical Society. The Howell House (5216) is privately owned.



The Naglee House where historic Germantown starts.

Across the street (5219) was the home of John Bringhurst, Carriage Builder. He built a very handsome coach for General Washington. Years later, his successors built the popular Germantown wagons. They were high, with black bodies and yellow wheels. They had no cut under and had to be carefully backed if you wished to turn around.

Grumblethorpe (5267 Germantown Avenue) was built in 1744 by John Wister for a summer residence. Before long, he occupied it all the year round. During the battle of Germantown, it was the Headquarters of the British Commander General Agnew. Mortally wounded by a sniper's bullet, he was brought back here and died in the front room. The blood stain on the floor *was* a bit of history familiar to the children of Germantown. The blood stain is not there now—the floor has been varnished and is covered with a rug.

The landmark at the corner of Queen Lane is Trinity Lutheran Church with its very beautiful steeple, built about 1837. The Parish House is almost a hundred years older. It was the home of Christopher Sauer, who in 1743 printed America's first German Bible and later a newspaper. Many of his books and papers have been preserved and can be seen in the Parish House.

"Jimmie Joneses" whose boast "in business continuously since 1844" may be seen at the corner of Coulter St. (5301). This emporium was Germantown's first drygoods store.

Nearby on West Coulter Street is the Friend's Meeting House. Erected in 1871, this is the fourth Meeting House building. The first one was built of logs, probably about 1693. The Coulter Street Friends School adjoins.

Above "Jimmie Jones" is the very beautiful St. Luke's Church—the first Episcopalian Church in Germantown. The Congregation was organized in 1811. The Church was built in 1876.

At 5418 is the present building of the Friends Library, which has made an important contribution to the culture of Germantown for almost one hundred years.

5427 Germantown Avenue is the site where Louisa May Alcott—author of our childhood's favorites, Little Women and Little Men—was born.

The Ashmead House (5430) was built in 1796 by John Ashmead, another carriage builder. The carriage factory was at the rear.

At Market Square, we are surrounded with history.

The Market Square Presbyterian Church stands on the site of the first church in Germantown. This was the German Reformed Church, built in 1733, to serve German Reformed members from Skippack, Chestnut Hill, and Germantown. General Washington attended services here in 1793.

The Fromberger House, corner of Church Lane, probably built about 1795, was the first brick building in Germantown. Once occupied by the Bank of the United States, it is now occupied by the Germantown Fire Insurance Company.

The Deshler Morris House (5442) was built shortly before the Revolution by David Deshler, a West Indian merchant. During the Battle of Germantown, it was the Headquarters of General Howe. In 1793, during the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia, it was the Capitol of the United States. General Washington, Lady Washington, and her son Charles Custis lived there. Seated in the breakfast room, General and Lady Washington could watch young Custis on his way to the Germantown Academy at the end of the long yard. Beautifully preserved by succeeding owners, the house is now a National Shrine. It is a *must* for everyone who visits Germantown.

For many years, the National Bank of Germantown and the Saving Fund Society of Germantown have occupied opposite corners of Germantown Avenue and West School Lane. According to my Mother's records, one Mary Ottinger was the first depositor in the Bank. In this day of mergers, the Bank is now the Germantown Branch of the Girard Trust Corn Exchange Bank.

At the Northeast corner of School Lane, the Fidelity Philadelphia Trust Company built a replica of the De La Plaine House. The original house was built by James De La Plaine, a French Huguenot who settled in Germantown about 1691. The revivalist, George Whitefield, preached from the balcony when he visited Germantown probably about 1764.

Fairhill Meeting



In the center of the Square is the Civil War monument. I have been told that the soldier on top was modeled from a Germantown man named Roop. The metal scrolls bear names of men of Germantown and Chestnut Hill who fought during the war.

Leaving history behind us, at the corner of Price Street, we find the old Reading Railroad Depot. At first, there was train service only to Germantown but later it was continued to Chestnut Hill. Some trains ran to this depot as late as 1900.

Opposite the depot is Vernon Park and Vernon, the beautiful mansion built by another John Wister about 1812. When the house was first occupied there was a meadow between the building and the street, through which ran a little stream with a spring house.

Opposite Town Hall, there was once a beautiful mansion—Butler Place. The last owner sold it to the City of Philadelphia provided the trees would be preserved. So, the Germantown High School overlooks these beautiful old trees.

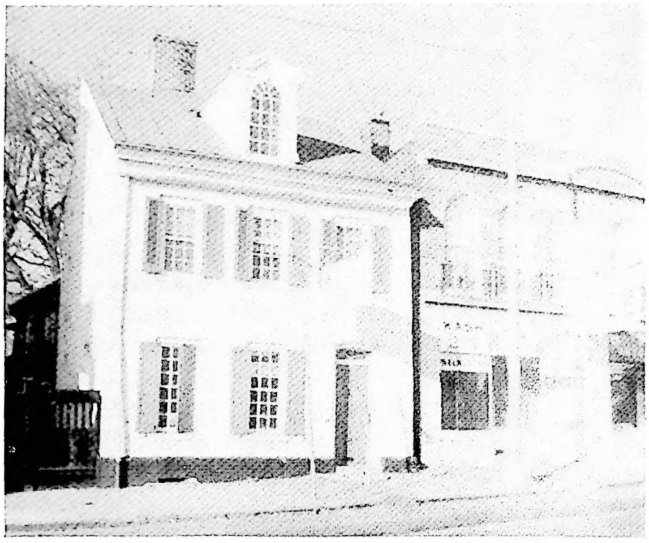
Haines Street was once called Methodist Lane because the first Methodist Church in Germantown was built there. The present beautiful church stands upon ground once occupied by the home of David Rittenhouse, America's first great astronomer and the grandson of William Rittenhouse who built the first Paper Mill in the colonies. The house was moved back a short distance on Haines Street, and at the turn of the century was occupied by Dr. William Rush Dunton, one of Germantown's medical triumvirate. Unmarried, he took a great interest in helping young doctors—including me. He never had office hours, believing that if a patient were sick enough to need a doctor, he should stay at home. At the front door hung a slate and slate pencil. If one of his patients wanted to see him, someone came (there were few telephones) and wrote the name and address on the slate. During the morning, Dr. Dunton would be driven to the door and make the call.

The Green Tree Tavern (6019) was built about 1748. It was a busy hostlery for many years. In 1793, when Germantown was the Capitol of the United States, Thomas Jefferson was quartered there in a room with three other men. The Virginia aristocrat did not like this and consequently later was quartered in a house near Market Square.

Opposite the Green Tree Tavern (6026) is Wyck, one of Germantown's most beautiful homes. It was built by Dirck Jansen in 1690 in two parts with a large connecting room. General Lafayette was entertained here on his return visit to America in 1825. The house and its beautifully cared-for grounds has remained in the possession of Dirck Jansen's descendants—the Haines family—to this day.

The Laurens—6043 Germantown Avenue, corner of Walnut Lane—was the first three-story house in Germantown. Dr. Christopher Witt, Germantown's first physician lived in it, as did Dr. William Shippen, who purchased it in 1789. Recently it has been purchased by the Historical Society.

The Dirck Jansen House (6112 Germantown Avenue) was built about 1690. That is where I started in the practice of medicine in 1900. It is a lovely old house built in two parts with connecting rooms in between. Two cellars with two heaters to take care of made life a little difficult at times. But its most serious drawback were two marble steps at the front door. In every well-regulated Philadelphia household, marble steps had to be scrubbed every day. If there was a maid in the kitchen, she took care of that. If there was an interregnum, the Doctor had to get up early in the morning and scrub those steps *from the inside*. It was not exactly professional.



The Dirck Jansen house where Dr. Macfarlane started the practice of medicine.

On up the road, on the opposite side (6119) is the Menonnite Meeting House. Built in 1770 to replace a log building built in 1708, it is still in active use.

At the corner of Washington Lane (6306) is the old Johnson House, now the home of the Woman's Club of Germantown. It was built in 1765 by Dirck Jansen for his son and remained in the Johnson family until 1920 when, through the efforts of the first Mrs. Thomas Raeburn White, it was purchased by the Women's Club of Germantown.

Across the street is the Concord School House built



Concord Schoolhouse



The Upper Burying Ground.

in 1775 by residents of upper Germantown, because it was too far to send their children to the Union School, now Germantown Academy. Instruction was in English.

Adjoining the Concord School, is the Upper Burying Ground, known to some as Axe's Burying Ground. Though their graves are unidentified, Indians and some soldiers from the Battle of Germantown are buried here.

The Sproegel House (6358) built about 1710, was also constructed in two sections with connecting rooms. It is now occupied by Mrs. Bradford Ritter, whose late husband had the distinction of being descended from Governor Bradford of Massachusetts who came over on the *Mayflower* and from William Bradford, the Philadelphia printer, who came over on the *Welcome*.

The pride and glory of historic Germantown is Cliveden. Built in 1763 by Chief Justice Benjamin Chew, it is owned by his descendant Samuel Chew today. A stately mansion set in beautiful grounds, Cliveden was the seat of active fighting during the Battle of Germantown, October fourth, 1778. The British in possession of the house, resisted all efforts of the Americans to dislodge them. General Washington watched the battle from the Bensell House at the corner of Upsal Street.

Opposite Cliveden is Upsala (6340)—one of the finest examples of Regency architecture in Germantown. Dirck Jansen bought the ground in 1755 and the original house may date from then. The front part was built by John Johnson, 1786 to 1801. Upsala remained in the Johnson family until 1941, and was purchased by the Upsala Foundation in 1944. The house is beautiful, inside and out. I once counted sixteen fireplaces and one bath room. The owners probably agreed with my great grandmother who thought too many baths were weakening.

At 6613 Germantown Avenue is the Dunkard Church, built probably about 1770.

St. Michaels Lutheran Church, corner of Philellena Street, was the first Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germantown. Founded in 1728, the cornerstone of the original building was laid in 1746. The present building was erected in 1897. The cemetery is a mine of gold for students of Germantown history. Among others, Christopher Ludwig, the baker of the Revolution is buried there.

The Gorgas House (6901) was built by Joseph Gorgas on land bought in 1798. I asked my friend and contemporary, Miss Anna Gorgas, to tell me something of its history. She said "that is not a historic house. It was built by the third generation." The house remained in the Gorgas family until 1851.

Above Mt. Airy Avenue (7301) is the Lutheran Theological Seminary. The ground was once owned by Judge Allen who eventually moved up the Pike and founded Allentown.

Chestnut Hill begins where Cresheim Creek runs under Germantown Road. The property on the East side of the road was bought by Martin Painter in 1795. His deed to Israel Gilbert in 1819, lists "a public tavern and three acres of ground." Some nostalgic Britisher probably called the little tavern "Mermaid Inn." I do not know when the present building was built.

The log cabin—Yeakel's Cottage—that once stood in the triangle opposite the Inn was torn down in 1900. It may have been the oldest house in Chestnut Hill. A beautiful Gaelic Cross stands there now, placed there by Dr. and Mrs. Woodward in memory of the men killed in World War I.

Up the hill, near Abington Avenue is the eighth milestone. Near here, 901 East Abington Avenue, is Chestnut Hill's oldest house. Built in 1742 by Hermanus Groathausen, it is lovingly cared for by Lieutenant Commander Joseph Hoffman and his wife. The fireplace is of such a size that an adult could walk around inside it!

At 8031 Germantown Avenue stands the building that was once Abram Rex's store, Chestnut Hill's main emporium in the latter part of the eighteenth century. It remained in the Rex family until the late 1850's.

At 7921 is the Melchior Newman House probably built by Wigard Miller, one of Chestnut Hill's early citizens. On the barn is a date stone marked 1812.

Up the hill is the Water Tower, 125 feet high, erected in 1859. We really did get our water from that tower when I was a child. The tank on top held 40,000 gallons of water that came from a well and springs. There was a reservoir at the base which we carefully



The Sproegel House, built about 1710.

avoided lest we fall in and be drowned. Today Water Tower Park is a playground for young and old, the Tower a dejected relic.

The Jacoby House (8327) built on ground purchased by Wigard Jacoby in 1794 remained in the family until 1905.

Robertson's Store (8501) was once the Cress Hotel, a stopping place for stage coaches. American soldiers, wounded in the Battle of Germantown, were cared for here as the Army retreated to Skippack.

The Artman Miller House (8607) purchased from Jasper Scull in 1757, was owned by those families and their descendants until 1915.



The oldest house in Chestnut Hill, 901 E. Abington Ave.

The Hill House (8517) was owned by Wigard Miller and his heirs from 1750 to 1844.

Next to these houses is the Chestnut Hill Baptist Church situated on ground given by Israel Gilbert. The congregation was organized in 1834, the first building was erected in 1835, and the present one in 1857. The tower with its clock and bell was added in 1874. The first minister, Reverend Robert F. Young said the religious condition of the people of Chestnut Hill was "very poor." My grandmother told how she and her brothers and sisters would walk to the church Sunday School from the farm on Paper Mill Road—half way to Oreland. In summer, they carried their shoes and stockings so they would not get dusty. Nearing the Church, they sat down by the side of the road, put on their shoes and stockings and appeared as properly dressed children.

Here the Great Road to Germantown ends. To the right is the Bethlehem Pike over which Washington's army retreated to Skippack. To the left, is the Reading Pike, old Stage route to Plymouth Meeting, Norristown, Reading and Harris Ferry on the Susquehanna.

How fitting that this should have been named the Great Road. I'll wager there's not another eleven mile stretch of road anywhere in this country that equals the Great Road for historical, religious and social significance. It's well worth travelling.

A Sliver of Silver

By Elizabeth Reeves Humphreys

The moonpath, a sliver of silver,
Lay across the room
Luring me out doors where lilies
Blended the fragrance of their bloom
With the moon's pale brilliancy.
I lifted my eyes and saw
A glowing pendant in the sky,
And I heard the wind hum softly
As though singing a lullaby
To little hidden winds,
Making perfect this night,—
Music in magic light.

We hear the wind and know its moods,
When it is angry
And when it broods
Tho we cannot see it.
We see the moon
But cannot hear it,—
And yet it tells us
Of the everlasting verities,
Down from long-dim ages
No man has lived who has not felt its spell
From battle-scarred warriors
To bent and venerable sages,—
All have stood awestruck
Before the wonder of its radiance,
And felt its divine order
Which lifts the bruised and bewildered spirit
And comforts it.
Arrogant is he
Who does not bend the knee
Before its sublime serenity.

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Rittenhousetown—America's Introduction to Paper



By Ed Adams

Illustration by Vernon Huppi

PAPER Mill Run at Rittenhousetown is hazed over with a glorious mist and mixture of history, folklore, fact and fiction. Separating those things is impossible. All we can do is take what we have heard, and read, and re-weave them into a new pattern of words.

The story has been told and retold a thousand times. Poets John Greenleaf Whittier and Tom Daly have touched the area as have many historians including Watson and Barton. They told their stories as they heard and saw them. The variations are many and wonderful.

On what you'll find below we can only say with Houseman;

"I tell this tale that I heard told . . ."
from "A Shropshire Lad"

In discussing the early history of the valley of the lower Wissahickon and the glen of Mooshone Creek or Paper Mill Run one is confronted with a glorious and hopeless mixture of hazy history and folklore. Thus it is that an attempt to fix the location of the first paper mill in America anywhere but in the small group of buildings on Paper Mill Run west of Wissahickon Ave. and directly off Lincoln Drive will get you in trouble. You'll be told by most folks who are familiar with the section that the small white building on the south side of the creek is the mill—no doubt about it!

You might even get into a mild dispute over the name of the heavily trafficked road running through the area. Some call it Wissahickon Drive and others call it Lincoln Drive. Starting at the Ridge Road, Wissahickon Drive winds with the creek past Hermit Lane and Henry Ave. Bridge. A short distance south of Rittenhousetown, Wissahickon Drive turns with the creek into the reaches of the upper Wissahickon . . . no autos permitted and the heavy traffic continues along what now becomes Lincoln Drive.

Pinpointing the location of the Rittenhouse Paper Mill is something else. It would be pleasant to accept folklore and say the mill is exactly where it has been since 1690—in that little white building to the east of Paper Mill Run and close by Lincoln Drive. But there are flaws in this story. The topographical features of the glen at this point would make this an unlikely place to locate a millpond and millrace and other things important in the operation of a water-powered mill.

And the small building in question is of stone. It is a matter of historical record that the original Rittenhouse mill was built of logs and clapboard. It is also in the record that the first mill was washed away by a freshet in 1700 and a new building erected about 1702. What is called by many the old paper mill is in reality the Rittenhouse homestead and historical records tell us that it was erected by William Rittenhouse in 1707. The facts on the Rittenhouse home seem to be firmly fixed and for a good reason. Here in 1732 was born one of the greats in American history and a world-famed astronomer, David Rittenhouse. Patriot, leading citizen of his days, public official, a scholarly writer, skilled in the mechanical arts, President of the American Philosophical Society and kindly gentleman. The name of David Rittenhouse is constantly mentioned by those involved in the fields of astronomy and clock-collecting. David Rittenhouse died in 1796. One hundred and sixty-seven years later his clocks are running and keeping excellent if not perfect time. His birth place is quite properly an honored American shrine.

However, we are not largely concerned here with the life and works of David Rittenhouse—papermaking is our principal interest.

If paper had not been invented we might find ourselves thumbing through a hundred foot stack of one inch clay tablets to find a telephone number. Yellow

clay for classified. Let's face it; we're not living in the iron age and we're not living in the atomic age. We're living in the paper age. We're surrounded by paper, we lead paper lives and we have paper government. We work for paper and we pay our bills with paper, paper announces our births and paper announces our departures . . . paper summons us to traffic court and we pay our fines with paper. We are overwhelmed by paper and someday we'll be smothered in paper. Archeologists 2000 years hence will have to dig through 200 feet of paper to find our pulp civilization. Washington, D. C., will be under a mile of paper.

With paper, paper everywhere and lots of drops of ink, it's hard to realize that in the colonial America of 1685, paper was not in short supply. It was in no supply. None was being made here and imports were meager.

In recording the history of paper making in America we must go back to Mulheim-on-the-Rhur where in 1644 was born Wilhelm Rittinghausen into a family of papermakers. By 1707 Herr Rittinghausen had become William Rittenhouse.

That section of Europe being in religious ferment and inhospitable to the followers of Menno Simmons, Rittenhouse and other Mennonites went to Amsterdam in about 1674. Wilhelm—now Willem—became a citizen of Amsterdam and was engaged in papermaking.

The dates given must be on a give-or-take-a-few-years basis. A passage in the "Memoirs of David Rittenhouse" published in 1813 tells us that William Rittenhouse arrived in New York prior to the year 1674 which if true, would give credence to the oft-told tale that William went directly from Germany to America. This same passage in the memoirs has Nicholas, possibly William's brother, establishing the first paper mill in America.

The date of William Rittenhouse's arrival in America is unclear and unimportant. It does seem certain that his point of arrival was New York and that he spent some time there before moving to a home on what is now Germantown Avenue. There he lived through the early days of his papermaking business and until the building of the home on Paper Mill Run in 1707. The actual year in which the mill was constructed is difficult to ascertain. Some writers tell us that Rittenhouse operated a grist mill at Rittenhousetown before he made paper there. This would place the building of the mill a few years before 1690 . . . perhaps 1687 . . . which would make him a contender for the honor of having been the first to use the waters of the Wissahickon and its tributaries for commercial purposes. But it is likely that Wissahickon Mill (Robeson's) at the mouth of the creek was the first.

It seems sure that William Rittenhouse and his sons were hardy folk. The Valley of the Wissahickon and the Glen of Papermill Run were inhospitable places in the ancient days.

Possibly discovered by one of the early Swedes . . . there were Swedish settlers at the mouth of the creek and at the Falls of the Schuylkill, long before the coming of Penn—the Valley was accessible only on foot until some time after the building of the Rittenhouse mill. The lower end at what is now Ridge Road was blocked by granite. This massive rock was removed and a road opened in 1826. Access to the Robeson mill at the mouth of the creek was by water and the primitive highway known variously as Manatawney, the Ridge Road, and before that King's Highway.

Access to the Rittenhouse mill was by horse from Germantown. Linen rags for paper went part of the way on pack-horses and part of the way on the backs of men. The finished product went out in the same way.

It seems likely that the word about a resident of Germantown being an experienced paper maker reached printer William Bradford of Philadelphia. But how the English-speaking Bradford and the German speaking Rittenhouse communicated with each other is unknown. Perhaps one was bi-lingual. But get together they did and the result was a partnership of sorts. Rittenhouse provided the skill and Bradford raised at least part of the necessary cash. There are indications that there were other partners.

We have this bit of verse about Bradford from the pen of John Holme, 1696.

> Here dwelt a printer and I find
> That he can both print books and bind.
> He wants not paper, ink nor skill,
> He's owner of a paper mill.
> The paper mill is here hard by
> And makes good paper frequently.

It should be mentioned that the paper made at the Rittenhouse mill was of excellent quality. Their reported source of the linen rags which constituted the raw material was Germantown—then the linen weaving center of Pennsylvania. Further indications may be found in the report that during the Battle of Germantown, the Americans set fire to flax stubble in a field near the Chew house—and flax, of course, is the raw material from which linen is made.

Winter in old Rittenhousetown.



The distribution of the product of the paper mill in the earliest days is veiled in mystery . . . several sources tell us that William Bradford used all of the paper produced by Rittenhouse and other accounts tell us that Rittenhouse supplied paper for all of the middle colonies.

But whatever its final destination, the paper made in a year at the mill was, by present standards, small in amount. It has been said that the total output would not be enough to print one edition of the local weekly newspaper.

In later years Bradford moved to New York and continued to use some of the Rittenhouse paper with other printers sharing in the mill's output. By the mid-1700's there were other paper mills in the area as well as saw mills, mills for the processing of cloth —the Holgate mill on Paper Mill Run being one of the latter. The Rittenhouse mill continued operation well into the 19th century and we are told that it produced blankets—not paper—during the Civil War.

Annual Fete

Elfreth's Alley will celebrate its 261st year of history with its annual Fete Day, Saturday, June 6, 1964. This Philadelphia historical corner of colonial realism between Front and Second Streets will open its doors to the public, showing the homes and furnishings of the artisans and craftsmen who lived on the alley during the early American period.

Highlighting the anniversary will be tours conducted by hostesses in colonial costume, a complete museum and sidewalk cafe-style luncheons.

Philadelphia's Elfreth's Alley is the only complete street remaining in the United States with small, modest dwellings on both sides of the six foot wide, cobblestoned site. Thirty-one of these colonial dwellings are still inhabited even though commerce and industry have invaded this section of old Philadelphia. The public is invited to visit the Alley from Noon until 5 p.m. on Fete Day.

The Association has as its goal the authenticity of colonial history. The Alley is no contractor's project built to a patterned uniformity; it grew as each colonist built his home according to his taste. Necessary adjustments have been made inside the homes but many still retain fine colonial woodwork and other furnishings of the period.

Fete Day gives everyone an opportunity to participate in history. The historic shrine of Elfreth's Alley is for the people, built by the founders of our country. Why not pay it a visit?

A Map of
Historic Germantown

Designed by J. Riegel, Jr.

Showing twenty Colonial Houses and important locations of action during the Battle of Germantown October 3d 1777

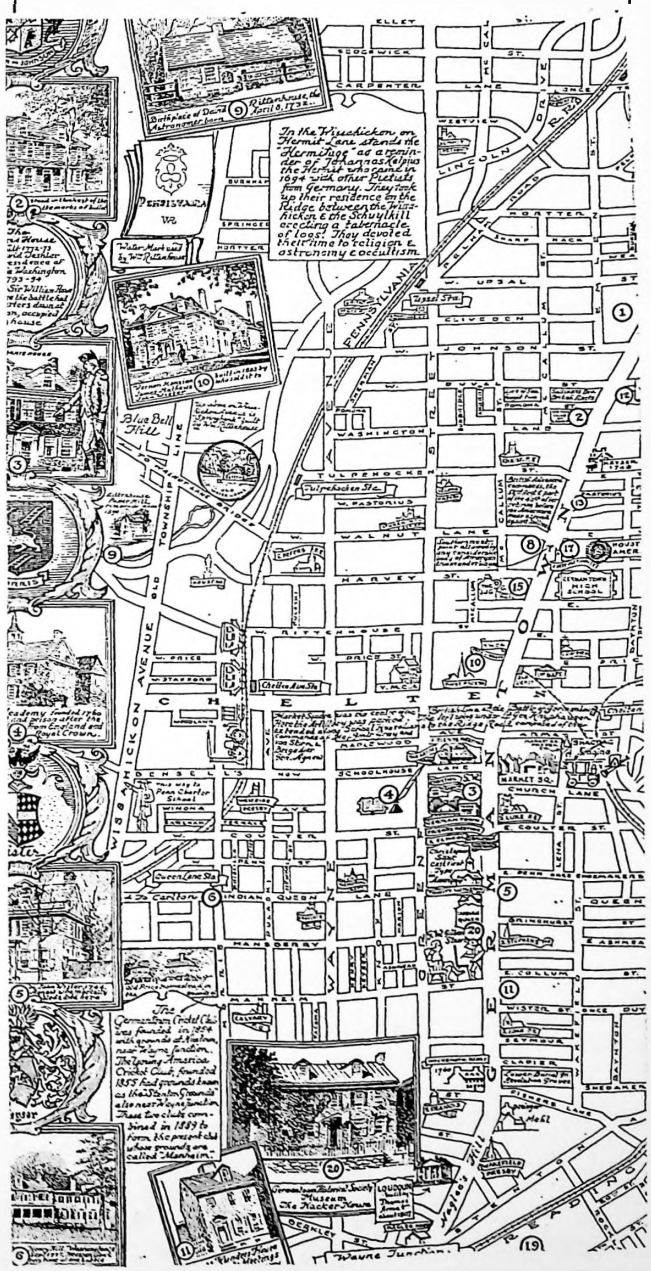
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Detail of map shown below





An early view of the theatre. Grounds have since been landscaped and a patio courtyard has been added.

THE STAGECRAFTERS

(Continued from page 42)

vided a cloak room while the rearrangement of the dressing rooms back-stage supplied more room for handling furniture, "props" and so forth.

The next summer, 1947—the elevation of the seats in the auditorium was completed.

The Stagecrafter's twenty-first anniversary, February 1950 was highlighted by the purchase of the theatre and the Aiman house at 8134 Germantown Avenue known as the Peters House 1752. After alterations the building is now used as the Club House. An increased membership to one thousand called for a seven night schedule—a long step from the original one night presentations.

Summer Season Theatre's first productions were presented in June, July, and August 1950, giving hot weather relaxation to our audiences.

The Stagecrafters' members' first Annual Art Exhibit was proudly hung in the auditorium in April 1953.

In May 1953 our professional director announced his resignation at the final curtain of "The Philadelphia Story," his one hundredth production. Since then our members have skillfully directed the plays.

Member Kathryn Fields Bovaird wrote a script portraying the founding of the National Education Association (N.E.A.) which was telecast over WFIL to the delegates at the meeting in Convention Hall on its one hundredth anniversary on July 3rd 1957. Ten members of The Stagecrafters were in the cast and it was rumored of the possibility of a kinescope being made of the event, so that those in the forty-eight states, not at the convention might see "N.E.A. The United States Salutes You."

One of the important functions of a little theatre is the production of original plays, especially those written by their own members. In 1940 The Experimental Play Committee had presented original one act plays written by members.

In February 1960 for the first time in its history, The Stagecrafters produced an original three act play, "The Ithacan," by Shaul Gladstone, who won the 1958 award in The Wilmington Drama League Play Writing Contest.

The Stagecrafters had an ideal—converted by hard work into a purpose and the purpose into a theatre for which the best plays procurable are chosen. Talent of no mean order comes to our door, scene designers, carpenters, technicians, make-up artists and property custodians find their way back stage with the actors, young and old.

We may look back with some justifiable pride over our thirty-five years—in no other way have we as much reason for happiness as in the opportunity given old and young, men and women, to find the joy of creative artistic work.

As this year is the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, The Stagecrafters may produce their first Shakespearean play to delight the eleven hundred members of the organization.

AMERICAN HISTORY

(Continued from page 49)

from them I knew that there were women in the Gold Rush, including one called Clementine; that Irishmen carried bundles on their shoulders when they set off for Philadelphia in the morning; that students enjoyed weeks of hunting/In the woods of Maine; and that John Brown's soul was peripatetic.

By the time of the Kaiser's War, I could begin to rely on my own observation. The United States re-emerged into history towards the close of that war and "our American cousins" were enthusiastically welcomed in Europe. At Liverpool, a British regimental band-master, wishing to greet troops from the South with a nostalgic selection, gave a spirited rendition of "Marching Through Georgia". In France, the Americans, mindful of services rendered as well as of Paris' largest department store, said, "Lafayette, we are here", and the French, never to be outdone in courtesy, replied, "Macy beaucoup". American doughboys won the war; this all Englishmen knew for a fact because the doughboys themselves told us so, repeatedly and emphatically. In this way they earned our undying affection. After the war, many Americans visited England; we boys could pick them out because they were rich, had gold teeth, smoked cigars in—or, as they said, "on"—the street, and called the railway station, "the deepo".

Later, I had—believe it or not!—several Rhodes scholars among my friends at Oxford. They assured me that the United States was still there, but its history seemed to have stopped abruptly once more, for it was not even a member of the League of Nations. Unable to find congenial spirits at home, my American friends, rejoicing in a land without Prohibition, obtained them readily from the College cellars. Their compatriots, being denied this solace, fell into a Depression.

In 1942, by some oversight of the authorities, I was allowed to become an American citizen. With so much to learn and unlearn about my adopted country, it's not surprising that I daren't miss a single meeting of the Germantown Historical Society, now is it?

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