GERMANTOWNE CRIER



Cliveden

National Trust Acquires Historic
Chew House—See page 41

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 2 FIFTY CENTS SPRING, 1972

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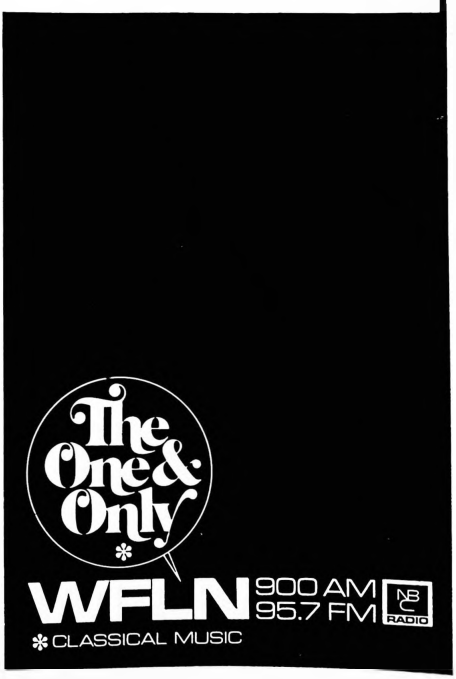
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The Germantown Historical Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to sustaining and promoting the cultural traditional of Germantown—through the preservation of historic landmarks; the maintenance of a museum of relics, a costume museum, and a library; the sponsorship of lectures and tours; and the publication of articles relating to local history.

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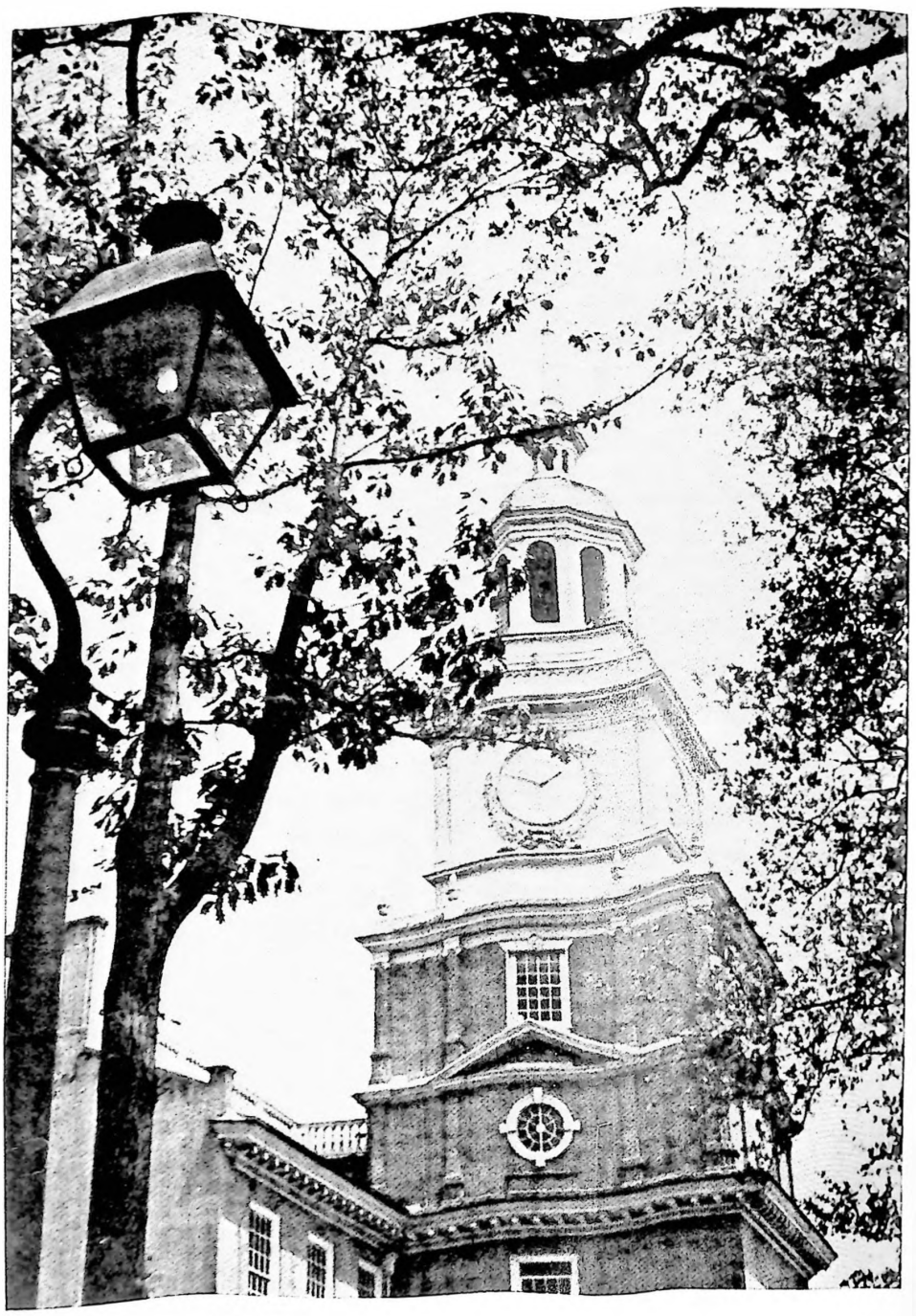
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Independence Hall, on Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.





History was made here, too

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National Trust Acquires Historic Chew House in Philadelphia

"CLIVEDEN," the historic Chew family house in Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—a house intimately associated with the American Revolution—has been acquired by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Trust President James Biddle announced today (March 6, 1972). "This is our first major effort in the National Trust's observance of the American Revolution Bicentennial," Biddle said. "It would not have been possible," he added, "without the generosity of the Chew family and David Chew Stephenson and Lowry Chew Stephenson."

Splendidly Furnished

The Chew House was built between 1763–67 by Benjamin Chew, Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, and has remained continuously in the Chew family except for an interval of 18 years at the close of the 18th century. "This very important house," Biddle said, "contains splendid furnishings."

Many pieces of the original 18th century furniture are still in place, including some outstanding examples of Philadelphia craftsmanship; and there are numerous other pieces and decorative objects in the neoclassic style of the Federal period. The house itself, which was heavily damaged in the Battle of Germantown on October 4, 1777, stands in the center of a park that encompasses an entire city block, and in effect is an island of Revolutionary War history preserved in its original state.

"With its collections, its architectural and historical significance, the Chew House is one of the most important properties to be acquired by the Trust," Mr. Biddle said.

Administrator Appointed

At the same time, Mr. Biddle announced the appointment of Raymond V. Shepherd, Jr., as Administrator of "Cliveden." Mr. Shepherd attended Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, has a B.S. in business administration from Columbia University and an M.A. in American culture from the Winterthur Museum Program.

Until accepting his appointment with the National Trust Mr. Shepherd was Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Mr. Shepherd is married to the former Ruth Thomasson Hallowell. They have two children, Raymond and Mark Richmond, and live in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania.

The Trust is happy to welcome the public to "Cliveden" on the afternoon of May 20th in cooperation with the Germantown Historical Society.

It looks forward to its official opening to the public sometime in the Fall when the planned refurbishing of "Cliveden" is nearer completion.

NEWS FROM GERMANTOWN
"WHITE HOUSE"—(1793-94)

Have you visited the Deshler-Morris House recently—to see:

—the lovely old Philadelphia furniture placed on loan by Mrs. William Noble, whose great, great grandfather was David Deshler. Included is a beautiful secretary, Queen Anne teatable, a Hepplewhite sideboard and other pieces.

—the primitive painting of the old coach house at the rear of the house is very interesting. It was painted by Hannah Perot Morris, wife of Samuel B. Morris, shortly before her death in 1831. Mrs. Morris had lived in the house, with her parents, during the summers most of her life. The diary of Samuel B. Morris includes the following account: "Summer school was begun composed of two or three families and held in the old Coach House of General Washington which stood at the rear of the mansion (5442 Main Street, Germantown). A row of lilac bushes lead to this one story structure. From sketches made by the children, under a Drawing Master, we get fair ideas of sunny windows and globes and maps. . . ." The painting was presented by Mr. and Mrs. A. Ernest D'Ambly (Clara Perot), a member of the Women's Committee.

—the garden (now bursting into bloom) planned and cared for by Mrs. Knowlton Montgomery, a Committee member, is lovely to see. There is a beautiful 18th Century Queen Anne bench at the rear which, when one enters from the house, draws attention to the full sweep of the garden.

MRS. RICHARD WILSON
Chairman, Women's Committee

Germantown Historical Society Costume Museum

Mrs. J. Bradford Ritter, Chairman of the Costume Committee, reported recently that the Germantown Historical Society's Costume Museum received over two hundred articles from about sixteen persons during 1971. One can easily see why it is such an interesting place to visit.

Members have asked . . .

An act of Congress approved October 26, 1949, created the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States as a charitable, educational and nonprofit corporation, with its principal office in the District of Columbia, to further the national historic preservation policy, to facilitate public participation in the national historic preservation movement and to administer properties significant in our history and culture for public benefit.

The work of the National Trust is under the general direction of a Board of Trustees composed as follows: the Attorney General of the United States, the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the National Gallery of Art, all ex officio; and 30 general Trustees chosen by members of the National Trust from its membership at a regular meeting. The National Trust is not a government agency, but it does receive some matching and other grants from the government. The National Trust is financed primarily by tax-deductible gifts and contributions from its members and friends.

Excerpts from report of Joseph Prendergast, Executive Director, in the Annual Report for 1971 of National Trust for Historic Preservation.

A Map of
Historic Germantown

Designed by J. Riegel, Jr.

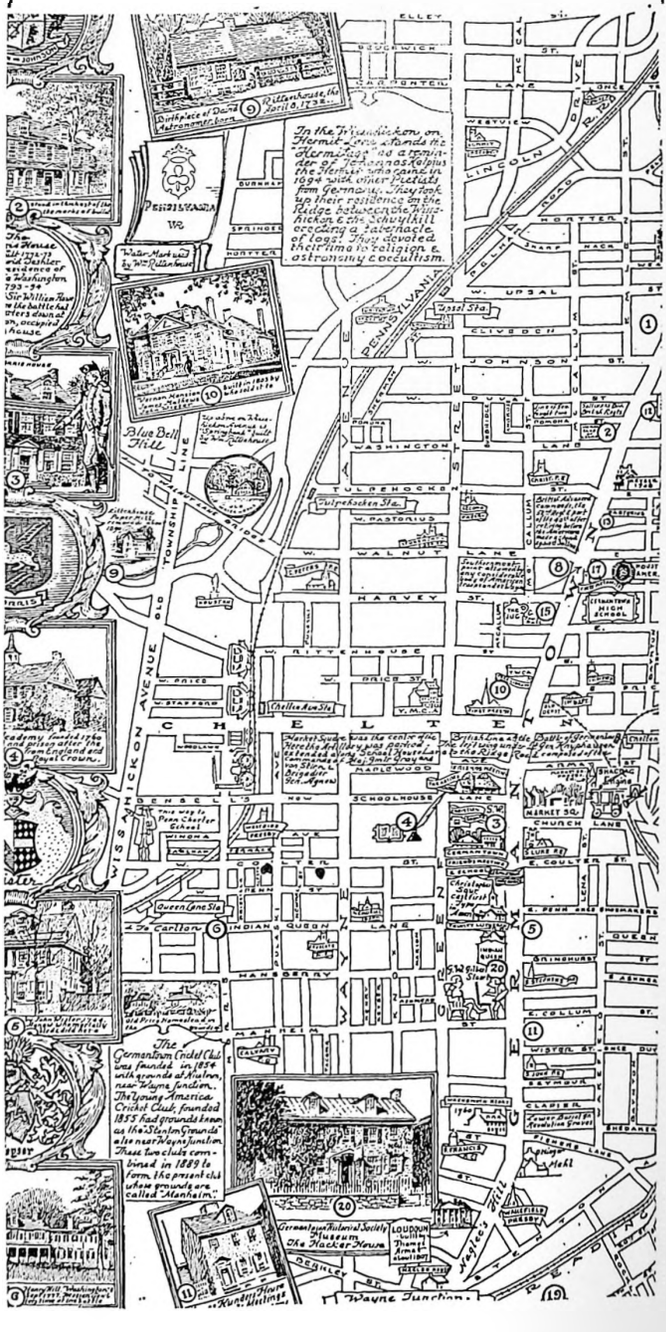
This detailed map, elaborated with numerous sketches, shows the locations of streets, historic buildings, churches, etc. It is replete with data concerning local people, places, and events.

Size: 19 by 25 inches
Price: Black and white, $5.00
Beautifully hand-colored, $25.00

The map may be ordered from:

Captain Edmund A. Crenshaw, Jr.
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Checks should be made payable to Captain Crenshaw.



The Reception at "Cliveden"

The following recollections in verse of the reception given at the Chew Mansion, "Cliveden," in June, 1914, by the Site and Relic Society (now known as the Germantown Historical Society) was read before the Annual Meeting of the Society, on Friday evening, October 23, 1914, by Miss Jane Campbell, the Society's historian.
As Miss Campbell so aptly remarked at the time—"prose being too tame for such an event, like Silas Wegg I have 'dipped into poetry' "—

RECEPTION OF THE SITE AND RELIC SOCIETY AT "CLIVEDEN"

JUNE 10, 1914

BY JANE CAMPBELL

Awake, my Muse, and strike your lyre,
Invoke your most poetic fire
And sing your very sweetest lay
To tell how it happed one fair June day,
The Site and Relic wended its way
To "Cliveden" that most historic spot,
And a more historic spot is not
To be found in the whole of Germantown
Though we search the Main street up and down.

'Tis hard to tell just where to begin,
With so much outside and so much within,
For the "Cliveden" grounds were a sight to see
With flower and shrub and stately tree,—
The very grounds that in days of yore
Were filled with soldiers and guns and gore
And other gruesome adjuncts of war.
Outside was the coach for all to view,
In which Chief Justice Benjamin Chew
Rode into town. I believe it is true
The great G. W. rode in it too.
And when he rode out to take the air
'Tis said, Philadelphia turned out to stare!

And here my Muse is free to declare
That she has heard say,
That if even to-day
Were the Chews to go about the land
In this old coach, once so very grand,
Or down Chestnut street drive to take the air
All Philadelphia again would stare!

Statues! No doubt once "rich and rare"
But now considerably the worse for wear
Were some of the curios also seen there
Now coach and statues were old and staid;
But a modern note outside was played,
For lady fingers and lemonade
Were served by many a fair young maid.

But haste, O Muse! We must go inside,
The great front doors are open wide,
And gracious and kindly stands Mrs. Chew
To greet the throngs of people who
Come in the old-time house to view,—
Greeting all with most cordial grace,
A perfect hostess in a perfect place.

Oh! how much was there for my Muse to see
All as antique as antique could be!
Drawing room, breakfast room, pillared hall,
Though the "muniment room" excelled them all,—
Which is what old-timers would the office call—
With its secretaries and cases high
Concealing from every curious eye
Deeds and titles and records galore;
An almost priceless historical store
Which any historian would love to explore!

There's scarcely time to mention all
The pictures hanging on every wall;
Of course Chief Justice Chew was there,
And more than once. Peggy Oswald, fair,
At least I think her name was Peg—
And if it wasn't, her pardon I beg—
And the father-in-law of Chief Justice Chew—
His name was Turner I know for true,
General Washington, Lafayette too,
And, Muse, Henry's picture do not forget
Of the reception given to Lafayette.

But precious and venerable as all these are,
The relic, which was the particular star,
Grim reminder of the old-time war,
Was the badly-battered old front door,
Riddled and broken by many a score
Of good American bullets, which tore
Destructive way through the stout old wood,
In a way American bullets could,
In a way American bullets should!

But hasten, Muse! The time grows late,
And much there is still to relate.
Of course you can't speak of everything,
As now the reception is in full swing,
As brilliant no doubt, and as fine a show
As Lafayette's ninety years ago!

Mr. Jenkins was there of course, for he
Is president of the Society,
And as he's president—could do no less
Than make the affair a brilliant success
By giving a happy historical address.
He did it! There was one other speech,
But a cold interfered, the voice did not reach
Very far and few heard, but still 'twas a gain,
To *see* a descendant of Anthony Wayne!

And who else was there on that memorable day?
Anna Johnson, of course. And I'll venture to say
Not any old General, in any old war,
Could have planned and arranged so successfully for
A reception like this. So credit is due
To Miss Johnson, who brought it so brilliantly through.
There was sweet Mrs. Chapman, who aided so much;
And the scene was given a medical touch
By Doctors Willits, Johnson and Burgin; and such
Other directors as Chapman and Bacon
Allowed it an air of officialdom to take on.
Messrs. Jellett and Howell kept thinking for sure
Accessions they easily now could secure.
Mr. Jellett wants books; Mr. Howell would lure
New members into the Society's fold,
Else why should it a reception thus hold!

Mr. Morris was there, distinguished and wise,
And he, as is known, a "ghost story" supplies,
For did he not in the days of his youth
See some one who had in his youth forsooth
Took tea with Washington; now this is truth.
The house, where this ghostly old-timer was met,
Is the house Mr. Morris occupies yet!
But halt now, O Muse! There is no time to name
Any more of the guests who that afternoon came
To the "Cliveden" reception, but all the same
If any one is most anxious to know,
To a City Directory straight let him go,
Plus our membership list, combined they will show
To a certainty all who attended that day.

But seven has struck. The guests haste away,
And as they depart my Muse heard them say,
"A perfect occasion and we hope that if e'er
The Society gives such another affair
'Twill invite us again—and we will be there!"

The lay is now ended, the song dies away,
In the hush that comes with the close of the day,
But still on the air a last lingering note,
Backward is heard like an echo to float,
And the echo will swell, till the ages resound,
With tales of the "Cliveden" reception renowned,
Which the Site and Relic once held on the ground
Where the Germantown Battle was fought, and so we
Through our Site and Relic Society,
Through "marking" and "saving" as well as can be
Are making good Germantown history!

The Charter Oak Library and Literary Association of Germantown

By Doris F. Ritzinger, C. G.

Note: The Charter Oak Association was an influential part of the social and cultural life of Germantown for more than fifty years. It was an interesting study to follow Charter Oak thru the exuberance of youth; the process of maturity; the seriousness of war; and the sophistication of advancing age. This brief account of their activities thru the early years, was taken from extant records kept by the Association. It is worthy to note that their many diversified functions were all self sustaining and all profits were added to their Treasury. HOW NICE THEY LEFT US THEIR MEMORIES!

D. F. R.

DURING the 19th century, societies, clubs, lodges, and like organizations were very popular. There were beneficial societies, secret organizations, some with a purpose, but all were social to some degree. It was the era of "mens get togethers".

About 1850, a small group of very young men, in the vicinity of Washington Lane and Germantown Avenue, met periodically at various places, such as Gideon Keyser's Shoe Store and Cowell's Weaving Shop. They called themselves the Byron Assembly. They were encouraged by the "seniors" of the area, with the hope that the young men would stay out of taverns, fire companies and pool halls, not thought to be worthy diversions at the time.

By 1855, the Assembly had acquired a permanent meeting place on the second floor of the Concord School House. Their membership increased, and Bylaws, Rules and Regulations were established. At that time, it was decided that the Assembly should have a new name, and the "Password" should be abolished. By vote, the Byron Assembly became the Charter Oak Library and Literary Association.

There were three classes of membership, Active and Contributing, limited to twenty five each, and Honorary Members.

The Association met every Monday evening at seven thirty, at which time weekly dues of six cents were payable. Members in arrears for more than four weeks were no longer considered members, and their names were "stricken from the roll". Absence from six successive meetings, without a valid reason, required an explanation. The Initiation Fee was twenty five cents, later increased to five dollars. New officers were elected every three months. The Bylaws were framed and placed on the wall.

The members were serious about the Rules and Regulations which were very strict. Fines were imposed on all members who violated them, and were placed in the Treasury. They were levied for many reasons. Interrupting the meeting; Refusing to serve on a committee; Neglect of duty; Violating Bylaws; Leaving a meeting before adjournment unless excused by the presiding officer; Playing cards for money in the library, and many others. Fines were from five cents to five dollars. The deportment of their members was important to Charter Oak.



An Old Line Illustration of
Concord School

Small plaque at second floor level, states:
Charter Oak
Library
Inst'd Nov. 22
1855

The members were enthusiastic about their new meeting room, and made plans to make it attractive and "home like". Curtains were placed at windows, engravings and pictures framed, and a Committee collected money for carpet that cost thirty seven and a half cents a yard. Spittoons were bought and "oil-cloth" was placed under the stove. A new lock was put on the door and every Charter Oak member had his own key.

Chairs and settees were presented by the Jefferson Assistance Society, who held their meetings in the Charter Oak room. They also contributed twelve cents for books.

The room had an elegance all its own, and members became concerned with keeping it in good order. Every week a committee was appointed to perform this duty, but it was agreed that the membership as a whole was responsible for cleaning the spittoons. On meeting night, the first one to arrive built a fire.

As the Christmas season approached, the room was to be decorated, and it was arranged that a Brass Band accompany the members on their quest for evergreens. A profit of seventy nine cents was recorded.

Library books were purchased as money became

available. Newspapers and periodicals were kept in the library, and well read by the members. In 1859, newspaper subscriptions included the Phila. Transcript, Phila. Weekly Press, N. Y. Mercury, N. Y. Weekly, N. Y. Ledger, True Flag, Sunday Atlas, and Flag of our Union. Each member was asked to contribute three cents per month to pay for the subscriptions.

A lecture was planned as a money raising project. Admission was twelve and a half cents, and tickets were printed and sold by members. Rev. Heston and Mr. Duval offered their services as speakers. The evening was a success and was the first of many such affairs. Lectures were "fashionable", and Charter Oak was invited often by other societies to attend their functions. The members usually attended "in a body", which by then was an established custom. Charter Oak in turn, extended their hospitality to other societies. Societies mentioned were the Aldine Association, Irma Glee Club, Minerva Association, Iona Club, Nicetown Baseball Club, Washington Association, Franklinville Glee Club, Arctic Association, Germantown Hose Company, the Y.M.C.A. and others.

The Charter Oak Association became more and more social, and additional activities were arranged. A singing society was formed, and a debating society became part of Charter Oak. Debates were held with nearby debating groups, and were well attended. The Excelsior Debating Society, also of Germantown, and Charter Oak, held several meetings. Concerts were planned and became social events. The Town Hall was rented for these affairs. The Aeolian Glee Club was invited to sing at one of the Charter Oak concerts and accepted, provided Charter Oak would pay them thirty dollars, or get them their supper and pay the expenses.

The first Ball held by Charter Oak was on Thanksgiving evening, 1857. They held many Balls and Receptions thru the years, which became important social affairs. It was recorded that "seventy or eighty couples participated in the Grand March to the music of Professor Fitzpatrick, who played in his usual happy style". They even had "gate crashers" in those days. The "Independent" noted that "two young men attempted to gain admission to the Charter Oak Reception by means of a ladder and trestle. They were caught in the act by Policemen Geyer and Hopkin and remanded to the dungeon at Fort Buchanan".

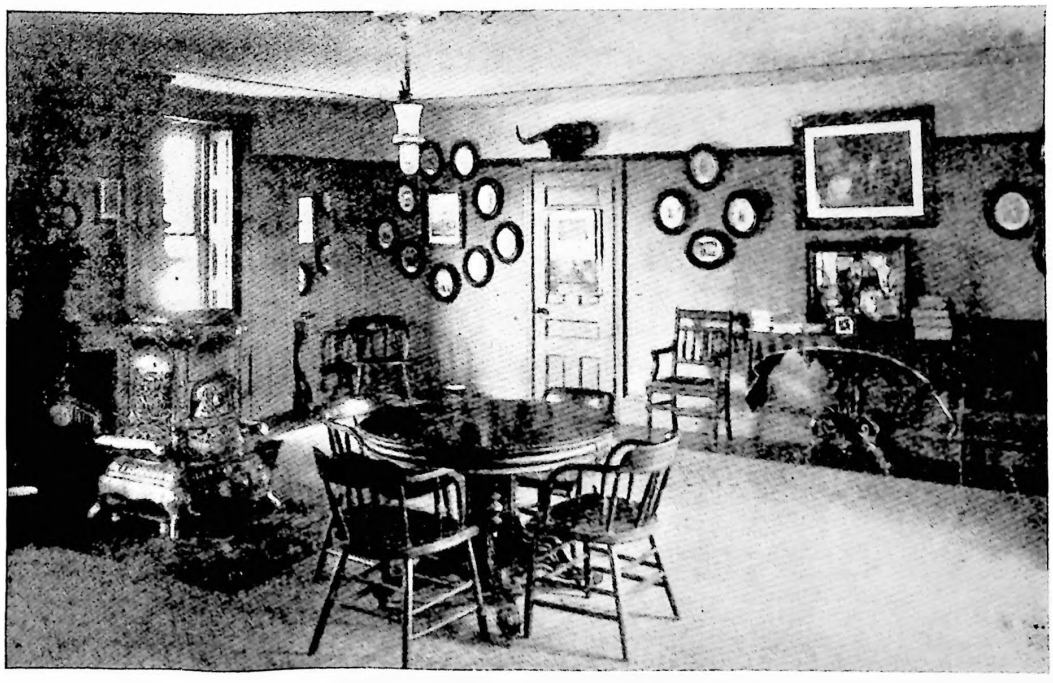
Parades were enjoyed by people of all ages and were very popular in this era. Charter Oak had purchased a banner to carry in parades, and they further identified themselves with a badge worn by each member, lettered Charter Oak. (Cost—one dollar each.)

The men had become very close friends and as time passed, became more so. It was agreed, "that as long as there were six members of the library, who were willing to remain as such, it shall not be dissolved or broken up".

The anniversary of the Charter Oak Association was celebrated on November 22 of each year with a supper. Each member usually had the privilege of bringing a friend, "at the same cost as to themselves". In 1859 the anniversary was celebrated with a cotillion party in addition to the supper. Only active and contributing members were permitted to attend.

The Association was well thought of in the community. "The ladies holding the fair for the Methodist Church on Haines Street, invited the Charter Oak members to attend the fair during the week, but especially so on Friday evening, to receive a cake baked especially for them". The Association agreed

(*Continued on Page 56*)



View of Second Floor Where Charter Oak Library Association held its Meetings

ANNUAL SPRING WALKING TOUR

The Germantown Historical Society

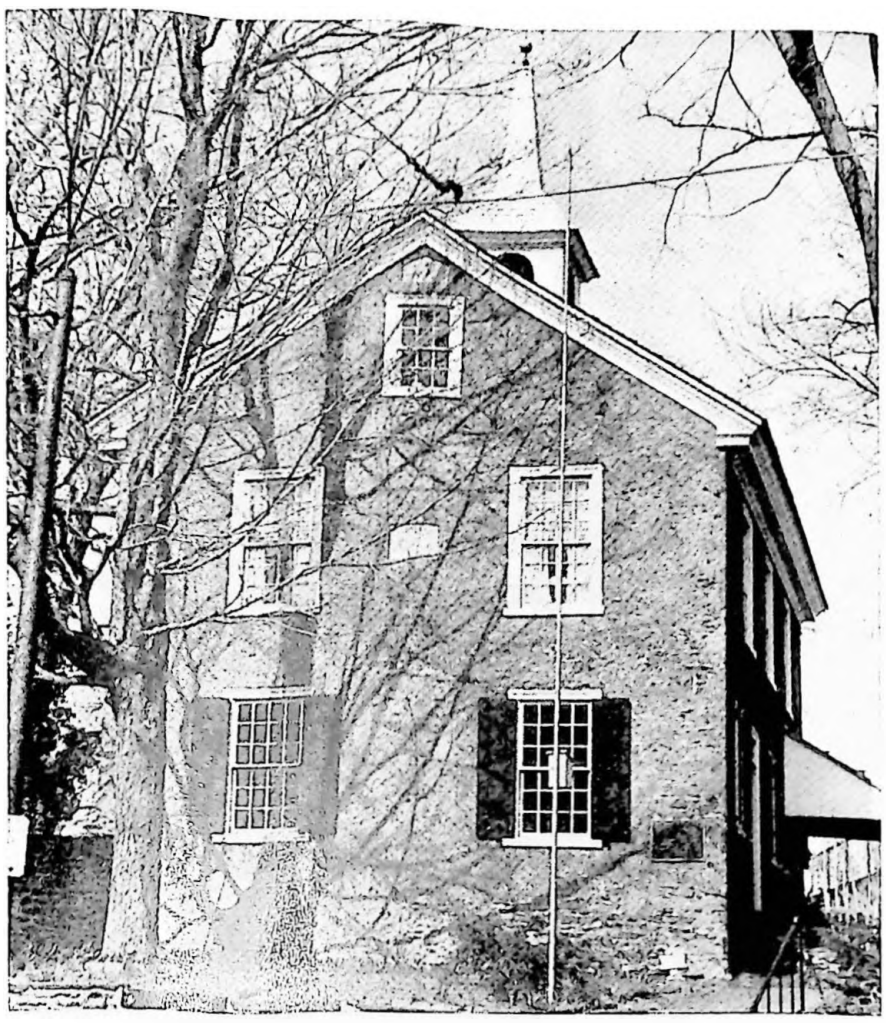


These are the houses that will be open to visitors on Saturday, May 20, 1972.

The numbers correspond to the numbers used on the map on pages 48–49

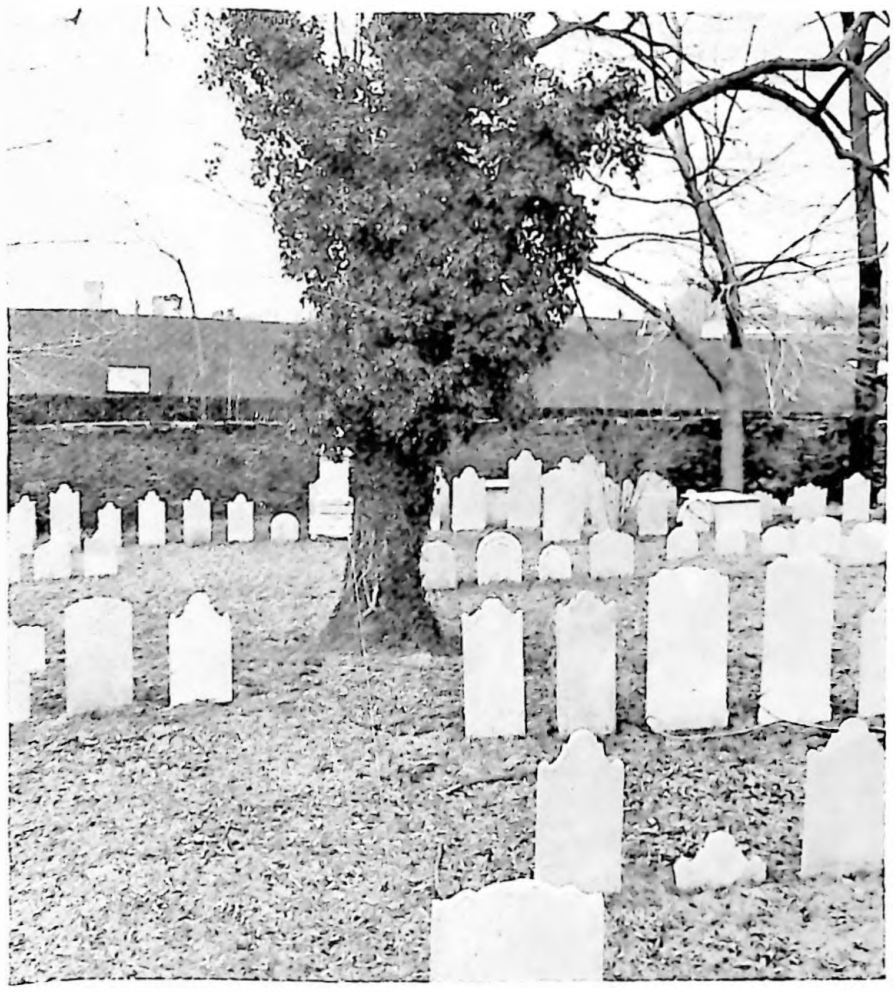


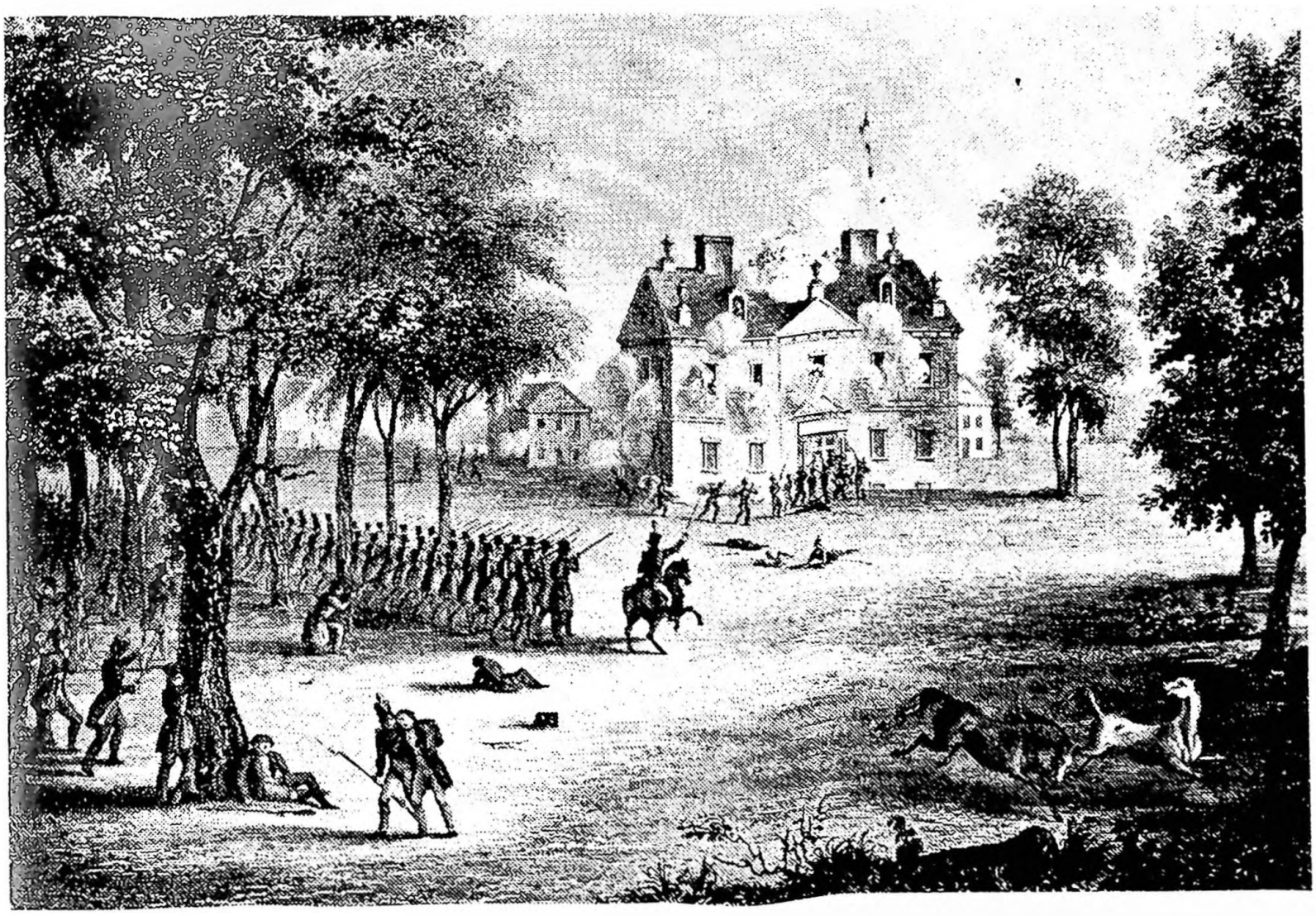
1. **Johnson House**—6306 Germantown Ave. This house stood during thickest of the fight during the Battle of Germantown—still contains bullet holes and the mark of the cannon ball that chipped the north corner of the house. During pre-Civil war period the house served as "Underground Railroad" station—no trains, but sympathetic waiting rooms.



2. **Concord School House**—6309 Germantown Ave. Built in 1775. Used as a school for many years for the residents of Upper Germantown. First meeting was held here which led to organization of Junior Order of United American Mechanics.

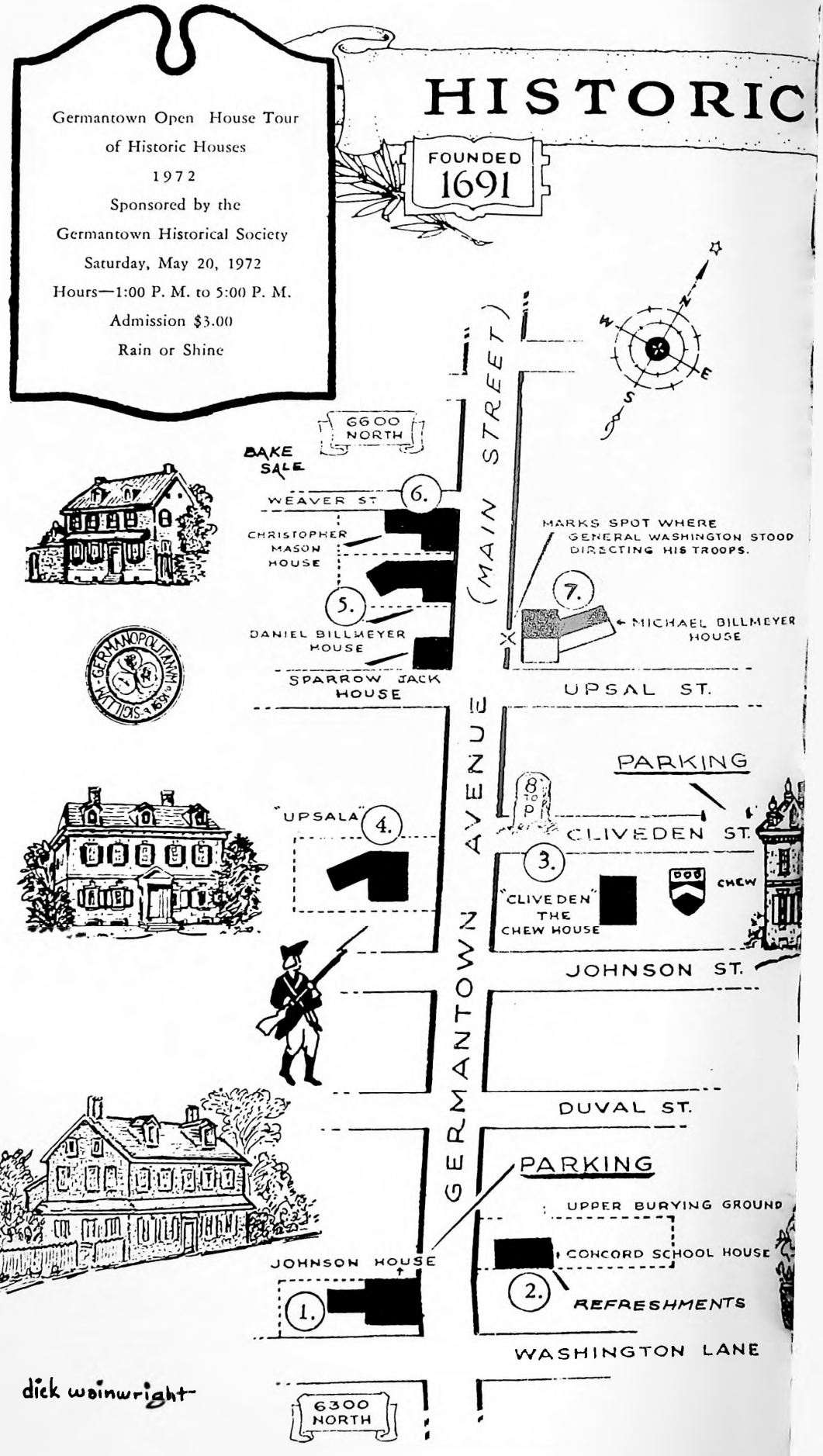
Upper Burial Grounds—Adjacent to Concord School. Here are buried many of the early settlers of Germantown and their descendants. The oldest known grave is that of Cornelius Tyson, 1716, which is considered to be the oldest existing tombstone in Pennsylvania. In east corner of grounds are graves of several American soldiers killed in battle. Indians are also buried here.





3. **Cliveden**—6401 Germantown Ave. The Battle of Germantown (October 4, 1777), was focused around Cliveden. Colonel Musgrave, with 120 men of the 40th British Regiment, in retreat, barricaded himself in the Chew House. All efforts to dislodge them proved futile, though some 3,000 troops surrounded Cliveden. If this pocket of resistance had been by-passed, and there had been no heavy fog that morning, which caused such great confusion, Washington's retreat and the name of Valley Forge might never have been recorded in history. Currently acquired by National Trust.

Germantown Open House Tour
of Historic Houses
1972
Sponsored by the
Germantown Historical Society
Saturday, May 20, 1972
Hours—1:00 P. M. to 5:00 P. M.
Admission $3.00
Rain or Shine



ERMANTOWN



H.NSON HOUSE, 6306 Germantown Avenue
)od in the thickest of the fight at the time of the Battle. Still contains bullet holes, d the cannon ball chipped north corner of house. Now the Woman's Club of rmantown. Built 1768.

NCORD SCHOOL HOUSE, 6309 Germantown Avenue
ilt in 1775. Used as a school for many years for the residents of Upper Germantown. 'st meeting was held here which led to organization of Junior Order of United ierican Mechanics.

'P'ER BURIAL GROUND, adjacent to Concord School House
lest known grave said to be that of Cornelius Tyson, 1716. Said to be oldest existing nbstone in Pennsylvania. In east corner of grounds are graves of several American diiers killed in Battle. Indians are also buried here.

3. "CLIVEDEN," 6401 Germantown Avenue
In 1763, Benjamin Chew, Attorney-General of the province and last Supreme Court Justice under Governor Penn, built the country seat of "Cliveden." During the battle in 1777, the heavy walls of this house defied the American attack. "Cliveden" is impressive and spacious. Newly acquired by the National Trust.

4. UPSALA, 6430 Germantown Avenue
Was built in 1798 by John Johnson, 3rd, Grandson of the John Johnson, builder of the older Johnson House. Today it is considered one of the finest examples of late Georgian architecture. The Upsala Foundation was formed by interested people to raise funds to buy the house in 1943. During the Battle of Germantown, cannon, trained by the Americans on the Chew House opposite, were placed on the lawn.



5. DANIEL BILLMEYER HOUSE, 6504 Germantown Avenue
It was built by Michael Billmeyer in 1793. Daniel Billmeyer inherited the property from his father in 1831. The house is a fine example of the domestic architecture of Germantown during the Federal Colonial era. It remained in the Billmeyer family until 1913. Now owned and occupied by Mrs. Manning Smith, Jr. and Mr. Manning Smith, 3rd.
(6500) SPARROW JACK HOUSE (garden only will be open). John Bardsley is credited with having introduced the English Sparrow into this garden.

6. THE CHRISTOPHER MASON HOUSE
6514 Germantown Avenue
The kitchen wing is the earliest part of the house and it was probably built about 1765, the date inscribed in the chimney. The main part, or front of the house, was built in 1798 as inscribed in the chimney. House is now owned by the Germantown Historical Society.

7. MICHAEL BILLMEYER HOUSE
6505 Germantown Avenue
The Michael Billmeyer House is in reality two houses with similar plans under one roof. Built in 1727. Billmeyer, a printer, occupied this property in 1789. Tradition has it that during the Battle of Germantown the attack against the Chew House was directed from in front of this house by General Washington. Houses are now owned by the Germantown Historical Society.





4. **Upsala**—6430 Germantown Ave. Was completed in 1798 by John Johnson, 3rd, grandson of the John Johnson, builder of the older Johnson house nearly seventy years earlier than the main house, which was in existence at the time of the Battle of Germantown. American cannons were trained on the Chew House from the lawn. Today Upsala is considered one of the most magnificent houses of its time and one of the finest examples of Colonial Georgian architecture.

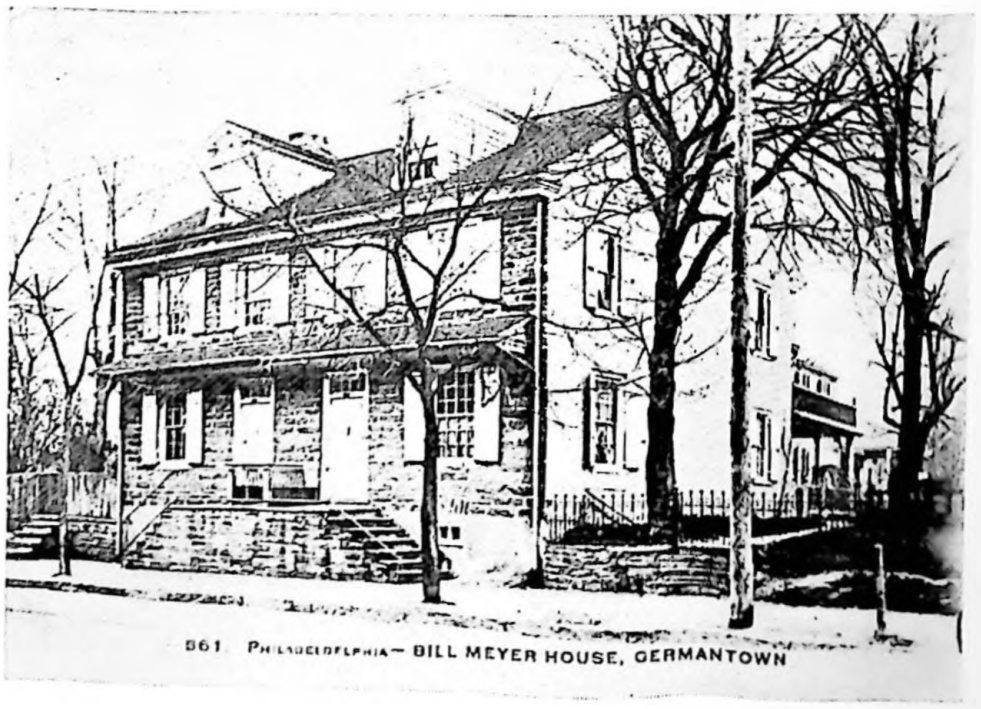


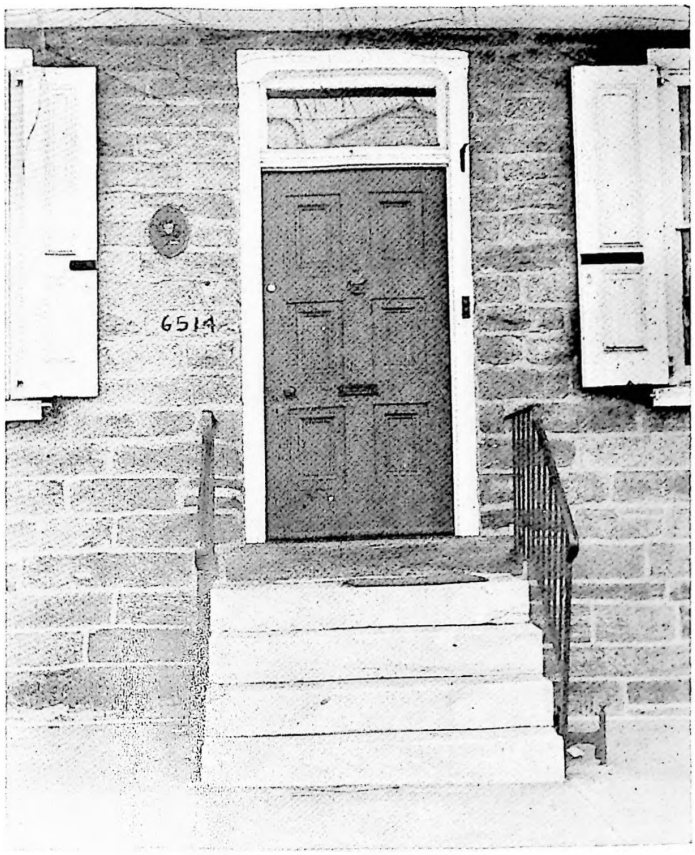
JUNIOR BILLMEYER HOUSE

5. **Daniel Billmeyer House**—6504 Germantown Ave. The Junior Billmeyer House, a beautiful example of a more formal Georgian colonial architecture. There is a lovely panelled stairway and several beautifully carved mantels. The house was built shortly before 1800 by Michael Billmeyer, Germantown's second printer, who lived directly opposite. He built it for his oldest son who had just been married. Unfortunately, before he could bring his bride to the new home, he tragically died.

Sparrow Jack's Garden (next to Daniel Billmeyer House)—This house, standing at the time of the Battle of Germantown, was for a long time the home of John Bardsley, a painter by trade, who was sent to England to bring over a lot of English sparrows to destroy the caterpillars, then infesting the trees of the city. It is believed this was the first introduction of the sparrow on any great scale. The house has since been called Sparrow Jack's House.

6. **Michael Billmeyer House**—6505 Germantown Ave. This house was erected about 1727, and formerly was one house. About 1788 it was bought by Michael Billmeyer, a celebrated German painter, who here carried on his trade. It is said that during the Battle of Germantown the attack against the Chew House was directed from the front of this property by General Washington. It belongs to the Germantown Historical Society.





7. **Christopher Mason House**—6514 Germantown Ave. The kitchen wing is the earliest part of the house, said to be built in 1765 which is the date inscribed in the chimney. The main part, or front of the house, was built in 1798. Property belongs to the Germantown Historical Society.

GERMANTOWN SITES ADDED TO NATIONAL REGISTER

On Page 3 of the March, 1972 "Pennsylvania Heritage" a list of Pennsylvania Sites added to the National Register since December, 1971 includes:

Beggarstown School
Daniel Billmeyer House
Michael Billmeyer House
Conygham-Hacker House
Deshler-Morris House
Germantown Academy
Howell House
Johnson House
Upsala
Wyck House

The comment is made that "it is interesting to note that of the 21 Pennsylvania sites recently accepted for inclusion in the National Register, 11 are located in Philadelphia, and 10 of those 11 in the historic Germantown area."

Publications of the Germantown Historical Society

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The GERMANTOWN CRIER, published in Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall, is available at the subscription rate of $2.00 annually.

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Life of David Rittenhouse

By Isaac Sharpless*

DAVID RITTENHOUSE was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, on April 8, 1732. His great grandfather, William Rittenhouse, a Mennonite who emigrated from Arnhem, Holland, in 1688, set up on the banks of the Wissahickon Creek the first paper mill in America. His mother, Elizabeth Williams, was from a Welsh Quaker family. When David was a small boy, the family moved to a farm in Montgomery County and he lived the usual life of a country boy. From an uncle he inherited when about twelve years old some books on calculation and geometry and



White painted stone house on Wissahickon Drive near Rittenhouse Street is birthplace of David Rittenhouse. It was built by William Rittenhouse, great grandfather of David, in 1707 and is now a part of Fairmount Park.

Painted by Grace Brewster McConnell, 5th generation descendant of David Rittenhouse
Photograph by Claire Kofsky

henceforth his life was determined. Mathematics and computation became the passion of the boy and the absorbing interest of the man. To these should be added a great facility in mechanical invention and execution. In his teens he began to make clocks of wood and metal, and his father set him up in the business of maker of mathematical instruments and clocks. He is said to have independently discovered the method of fluxions or the calculus when but nineteen and to have foreseen its vast utility before he heard of claims of Leibnitz and Newton. A friend, Rev. Thomas Barton, furnished him with linguistic and scientific works and his intense assiduity made him a scholar.

In 1763 his fame as an accurate worker in science gave him his first public employment. He was appointed to lay out on the ground the twelve mile circle around Newcastle which forms the boundary between Pennsylvania and Delaware. This he did most accurately with instruments of his own creation and Mason and Dixon accepted his results as final. In 1769 he located the point where the 41st parallel of latitude, the boundary between Pennsylvania and New York, strikes the Delaware River. His scientific activities were incessant. In 1769 occurred the transit of Venus, then supposed to be the most reliable means of determining the distance to the sun. Rittenhouse had read a paper before the American Philosophical Society, with computations of the time of ingress and egress, and the Pennsylvania legislature had appropriated 200 pounds towards the observations. He built an observatory near his home in Norristown and in company with a committee appointed by the Society, he made the most exquisite preparations for the occasion. Every thing came off beautifully and after it was over he fainted. His results were the best obtained in the world and the computed parallax of the sun the most accurate then known.

* Isaac Sharpless (1848–1920), a member of the Religious Society of Friends, taught mathematics and astronomy at Haverford College from 1875 to 1884. He was Dean of the Faculty, 1884–87, and then President of Haverford, 1887–1917. Author of books in political science, American colonial history, mathematics, and science, in 1883 he published his *Astronomy for Schools*. In that year he received his Sc.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania. The article printed here is adapted from an unpublished, longhand manuscript in the papers of Isaac Sharpless in the Haverford College Library Manuscript Collections and is published here with the permission of the Library. Melvin Gingerich—Mennonite Information Center.

He invented the plan of placing spider lines in the focus of his telescope, an arrangement that has done more to make accurate measurements possible than anything else of the kind. In 1770 he completed his famous orrery based on computations of his own. This showed the movements of the planets and moons in elliptic orbits around their primaries, the phenomena of eclipse, and the relative places of the members of the solar system over a space of 5,000 years preceding or following. For this he received 300 pounds from Princeton University and a like sum from the legislature of Pennsylvania for a second orrery for the University of Pennsylvania as a testimonial to his genius. The first one was injured by the British troops in the Revolutionary War.

Then followed computations of the orbits of comets, surveys of the land between the Delaware and the Susquehanna for canal purposes, calculations for almanacs, surveys for a series of dams to make the Schuylkill River navigable, and various papers on astronomy for the Philosophical Society. His fame extended to Europe, and many honors came to him, while he was looked upon with profound respect and pride by his countrymen who could appreciate his work. He was most modest and simple in his tastes, and if his life could have been spent in the pursuit of science, it was fondly believed that the American Newton had been found.

But he conceived that his country called for service in another field. He was engineer and finally vice president of the Committee of Safety of his state during the Revolutionary War, and plunged into military problems with all his energy. In 1776 he was made a member of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, the earliest under the reorganized Revolutionary movement, and was active in the creation of the new constitution, the first for the state of Pennsylvania. No one took a more prominent part than he. In 1777 and for twelve successive years he was elected State Treasurer. He was also Trustee of the Loan office. Throughout the War his time was taken up with administrative duties which he disliked but faithfully performed.

After the War about five years were expended in determining the boundaries of Pennsylvania. The five degrees along Mason and Dixon's line were ascertained by observations on Jupiter's satellites at each end with instruments made by himself. He was also engaged in measuring the western and northern boundaries of his State, and at the appointment of Congress in 1787 the line between New York and Massachusetts. From 1779 to 1782 he was Professor of Astronomy in the University of Pennsylvania and afterwards Trustee and Vice-Provost of that institution. In 1792 he was made Director of the United States Mint by President Washington. After three years of service he resigned and returned to scientific work.

He succeeded Franklin as President of the American Philosophical Society in 1790. Degrees were conferred upon him by the University of Pennsylvania, by Princeton, and by William and Mary. The Royal Society of London made him an honorary member. Thomas Jefferson said of him, "We have supposed Rittenhouse second to no astronomer living; that in genius he must be the first because he is self taught."

He was an ardent Republican. He allied himself with the strong Revolutionary party and with the Anti-Federalists after the war. He was president of a society organized to sympathize with the French Revolution and was a loyal member of the party which later under Jefferson introduced the extreme democracy of the reactionary period which followed federalism. Whether he was in fault or not in his political affiliations will be differently judged, but posterity can unite in admiration for the self educated scientist of the highest type and for the lovable, honorable, sincere gentleman. He died on the 26th of June 1796 in the 65th year of his age.

His publications about twenty in number appeared in the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society. The most popular was an Oration on Astronomy. An interesting "Eulogium" was delivered after his death by Dr. Benjamin Rush.

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More of Isaac B. Tyson's Jottings

A Bit of Autobiography (recorded from time to time for his children)

By courtesy of Miss Caroline A. Slotter, of Germantown

(I) Isaac B. Tyson was Born th26 of October 1804. I can remember my Grand Father about the year of 1810 when I was about 6 years old. I Remember that we had an old house; untill 1812. In 1812 My Father Isaac Tyson and My Mother Barbara Build the huse . . .; it was in time of the war of 1812 To 1816. Everything was Very high. My Father Brought all the Schingles From Philadelphia; the lumber From the Delewere New hope, you must Know that theire was then no Canal; or Railroad. Farmers had to Haul their wheat; To Wissahickon; there were then no Mills in Montgomery County that Bought wheat. Wheat was then 200 250 300 dollars per Bushel; land sold as high as 200 dollars per Acre for Woodland some said it would be higher this was from 1812 to 1816 I am now speaking; I heard my Father say that he Might have had 100 dollars per Acre for his place. Father Bought a lot of 7¾ acres paid 650£ or D1,733. 33C. That same lot with 5 acres of Woodland along with it Making 12 acres ¾ Mother took at the appraisement in 1823, Valued then 850 dolles. About the year 1820 the digging of the Canal was begun at Schuikill 1820, 21 the Fever and ague was raging along the schuilkill, in 1822 1823* it spread all over the Country; oh what a time it was then; I Forgot To say after the war was over 1817 land and nearly Every thing Ells went down in price; and was then Just as low; as it was high Before; and what Made worse yet was; Death was raging Carrieng Many Many off; wich put so Much land in the Market that Many Farms that had a dower in them were sold; and Brought only the dower on the 3 day of March 1823 My Father died; we then had about 75 Bushel rye wich we Hauled To Samuel Detwillers Mill at Perkioming For 37½ cents per Bushel there was no demand for anything then

My Fathers Farm was Sold in the Fall of the year for 46 dollars and 63 Cents per Acre I then went in 1824 to My Brother Daniel Tyson to learn the Veavertrate. in 1825 I went To uncle John Fry did Follow my Trate theire part of the year Veaving for the ½ I soon got tired of it and gave it up the latter part of the summer I then Began to Cut wood by the Cord for John Detweiler for 25 Cents per Cord Made rails For 37½ Cents per 100; posts 75 cents per 100 in 1825 I hired to John Keyser at Scippack road for the 6 best sumer Month at 6 dollars per Month. The following winter I Cut wood again For William Hornung for 25 cents per Cord.

---

* In another of his recordings in which he describes the symptoms, tells of the many deaths, and gives his reflections on the ravages of the "ague" he says:

"Father's Estate—our Farm was sold in 1823—For 43 dollars and 63 Cents per Acre Containing 98 Acres with about 40 acres of wood with the Best Kind of Buildings on it; about that time the Canal was Made at Shuelkill and it was thought the much Ground that was thrown out and the water damed up Made it so unhealthy; one thing I know that our young people Can form no idea of what, For a time, was then. Men that had Money Could Buy land at any price along Schuilkill it would not sell at all The year 1820 1821 1822 1823 Funerals with hardly Enough that wer well to Burry the dead."

1st article "The deep snow of 1831" appeared in Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter, 1972). 1



MAXWELL MANSION "VICTORIANA PURCHASE" DINNER

The Maxwell Mansion Committee of the Historical Society of Germantown held its annual dinner at the Philadelphia Cricket Club on April 9, 1972.

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, a former Professor of Art at Smith College and at the University of Massachusetts, and currently Adjunct Professor of History of Architecture at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University and President of the Victorian Society of America, was the speaker.

His subject was "Victorian Architecture in Ireland" which he illustrated with many old magic lantern glass slides and a number of shots he took there last year.

The ballroom of the Club was filled to capacity. Mrs. John R. Giomi is Chairman of the Maxwell House Committee and Mr. Henry J. Magaziner was Chairman of the dinner. Mrs. F. Joseph Stokes, Jr., a talented painter and sculptor, was Chairman of Decorations. Mrs. Stokes, with her committee, vividly re-created the "Maxwell House" period.

It was a long-to-be-remembered affair.

Charter Oak Library

(*Continued from Page 45*)

to attend "in a body".

Charter Oak had become more affluent and during 1857, 1858 and 1859 the library was redecorated in a more sophisticated style. "Gilt" frames replaced the wooden ones, the looking glass was exchanged for one framed in gold, and a large "gilt" frame was purchased for the picture of "those beautiful ladies". The room was papered, painted and "grained". Draperies lettered Charter Oak were hung. New carpet at fifty cents a yard was laid, and a new clock was ordered. The old chairs were repaired and new ones purchased. Gold framed "ambrotypes" of the Charter Oak members were placed on the walls, and a new frame with space for thirty more was obtained. The new gilt frames were to be protected by gauze that had been ordered. A gift of a book on ambrotypes had been received from G. Carpenter, and was presented by P. Keyser "in his usual style of eloquence".

Boys will be boys and apparently some of the members thought they had become "more worldly". Humorously, a suggestion was made "that a Free Love Society be opened and ladies be invited to join our library". No action was recorded. The meeting must have been a stormy one, as fines were levied. A resolution was passed that liquor be excluded from the library room. The meeting adjourned in harmony.

The celebration of Independence Day on July 4th was very important in the 19th century. It was the custom, then as now, to hold picnics on that day. Charter Oak was no exception. Plans were made for a picnic to be held in Johnson's Woods, at the foot of West Johnson Street. Members were to pay one dollar. The celebration was a big success and became an annual event. A profit of nineteen cents was shown, which was "thrown in the paper fund". The Committee on Festivities made the following report.

Pies and rolls	$10.25	Pickles	$ .60
Brandy	4.00	Vinegar	.25
Ham	3.12	Butter	1.00
Lemons	.45	Six bottles of claret	3.00
Half barrel of ale	3.25	Whiskey	1.00
Six dozen eggs	1.20	Segars	2.25
Crackers and cheese	1.07	Ice	.80
Sugar	1.52	Salt and mustard	.43

Total $36.16

A fine time was reported by all.

The death of Charles Taylor, one of the original Charter Oak members was reported August 29, 1859, the first break in their ranks. Mourning badges of black crepe rosettes were purchased and worn at the funeral. Six yards of black crepe draped the room. Two photographs of the deceased were ordered, one to be placed in the library, the other to be presented to the family, accompanied by a eulogy.

A crisis disrupted the unity of the clannish Charter Oak Association. It was reported that one of their members had made a statement that demanded investigation. A Court of Inquiry was appointed. After a report was made the member was suspended and notified to appear before the Association in regard to the charges made against him. Statements made by members were denied by the member in question. The case was referred to a committee for consideration. The member resigned, but as his dues were in arrears, it was not accepted. By unanimous vote, he was expelled.

It was now on the eve of the Civil War. Thirty four Charter Oak men went to war; four of them did not return, Major William B. Hubbs, Samuel Keyser, George Reaver and Henry Smith. Others were wounded. Black crepe draped the Roll and Charter in mourning for these men. There were few meetings during the war, as so many were away, but those at home kept the room in order. The Treasury was depleted, too. As the soldiers returned, meetings again were held, but they did not seem the same. They were not nearly so light hearted and gay. It took time to forget the dreadful conflict. The men busied themselves with new furnishings; the purchase of a new chandelier, and the selection of new chairs. It was suggested that chairs like those at Brunner's Hotel might be found.

The question of the Fourth of July celebration arose. Should it be held? They had one, after all, and three pieces of music were procured. The Charter Oak picnic had become increasingly popular, and with the restlessness and tension following the war, it was thought wise to invite the Lt. of police in case there was an emergency.

On the 5th of June, 1866, contributions were solicited among the Charter Oak members for the installation of a bath tub in the ante room of the Association. By June 26, twenty two dollars had been collected, so the bath tub was installed.

The Association was invited to visit the Franklin Library in the city. The members were anxious to go, so the Fellowship Fire Company ambulance was obtained for transportation, gratis.

It was decided to go farther afield for the 1873 Independence Day celebration. It was held at Willow Grove Park, and the tickets were six dollars. Supper and beer were served and conveyances were engaged for those attending. The following year Schutzen Park was the locale chosen by the members.

Several mysterious happenings were noted in 1875. On motion, a detective was employed "to ferret out the abduction of the Treasurer". No further explanation was given. A pitcher disappeared from the library. A committee was appointed to find it. They located the perpetrator, who explained that he was not aware of taking it, and he was exonerated. The Charter Oak Association was very careful of its possessions. If a book disappeared from the library, a committee was appointed to locate it, and searched

for it until it was found.

In 1875 the Charter Oak members placed a marble stone in the front wall of the Concord School House, to mark the floor the Association occupied. This was done WITHOUT THE PERMISSION of the Concord Trustees, and considerably incurred the displeasure of some of them.

A truce must have been reached, as the Association invited the Concord Trustees to their anniversary supper which was held on Nov. 25, 1875, at which time they celebrated the centennial anniversary of the Concord School, founded in 1775. Every effort was made to have the affair a very special one. The Germantown Guide carried an account of the celebration supper "which had been grandly and gracefully done, and down to a better table never sat lord or king". There was entertainment by Mr. Stephen Coulter and Mr. William U. Butcher, and "joyous intervals of music and singing, accompanied by Mr. Freeman." The gathering of "fifty cheerful faces and happy hearts" dispersed at half past three in the morning, when the bell in the Concord School House cupola was rung, "its tones blending with the crowing of the chanticleer in the early morn. All honor to Charter Oak." (The account was written in the effusive style of the time.)

* * * *

The years passed, and the Charter Oak Association

(*Continued on Page 59*)

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WORTH WAITING FOR AND GREATLY APPRECIATED— THANK YOU JUDGE SAYLOR

As the Wissahickon Valley is on the borders of Germantown, it is a matter of great interest to all the members of this Society that on February 7, 1972, Fairmount Park was entered in the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior.

For some years as a member of the Fairmount Park Commission I corresponded with the authorities at Washington in my effort to have the finest and oldest municipal park in the country set aside as a national historical area. I was assisted by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, of which at that time Dr. S. K. Stevens was Director, by Mr. Henry J. Magaziner, one of our Managers, and by other architects who provided the necessary data to supplement that forwarded by me to Washington.

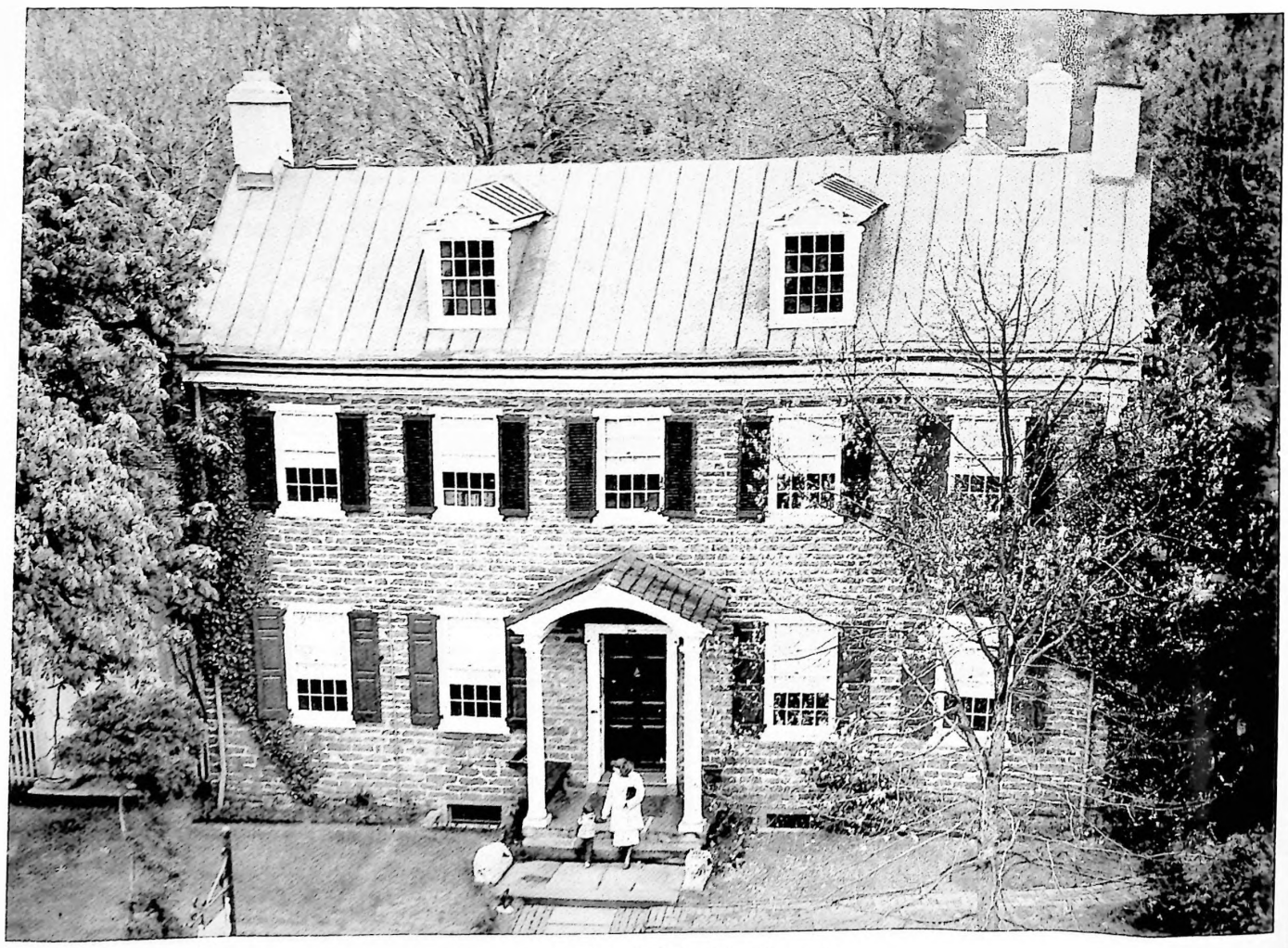
At long last word was received from Senator Hugh Scott that the Park had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places on February 7th. The designated area includes the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, all of the East and West Park, and the Wissahickon Valley.

This is a most important event. The designation of a place or area on the National Register carries with it two main benefits: one, protection against any federally funded projects that would have an effect on the designated area and, two, eligibility for matching federal funds for restoration work through the Department of Interior's grant and aid programs.

On March 1, 1972, William J. Wewer, the new Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, informed Honorable Robert W. Crawford, President of the Fairmount Park Commission, of the inclusion of the Park in the National Register of Historic Places as established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The Fairmount Park Commission, for the benefit of all areas under its jurisdiction in Fairmount Park is most happy about this recent development which should be of great benefit to the Park and those who enjoy its privileges.

HAROLD D. SAYLOR
President



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Charter Oak Library

(*Continued from Page 57*)

continued to function much as it had thru preceding years, but the meetings became more subdued, and their activities became more dignified, and encompassed a wider scope. The members continued to refurbish their library occasionally, and their collection of memorabilia increased.

By 1902 it was noted that there were few members left, but meetings continued to be held in their headquarters. In 1932 an inventory was made of the two hundred forty four library books. Ten years later, some of them were transferred to the Germantown Historical Society Library, a few remain in the Concord School room, the rest, including their memorabilia, were sold, as there were no members left.

Thus closed the chapter on a worthy and enterprising organization, remembered by few today, but which contributed much of importance to the social life of Germantown.

* * * *

Some of the articles mentioned in the foregoing account, remain in the Concord School House; Engravings (of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin); The looking glass (the gold has gone from the frame); The clock hangs on the school room wall; The black chairs around the school room. I believe the "saluting cannon," in the school room, was used at their Independence Day picnics. The controversial marble stone remains in the front wall of the Concord School House building, although it was discussed having it removed, from notes in the Germantown Historical Society Library. An undated Roll of Members is in the Concord School House. Extant record books of the Charter Oak Association were transferred to the Germantown Historical Society some years ago.

The first Officers were:

*Charles P. Haupt
*Howard H. Buzby
*George Keyser
*Henry Smith
*William C. Freas
John Zener
George Bevan
Franklin Jones
Stewart McNaughton
J. P. Reaver
William Pownall
R. Thomas
*Charles Taylor
*Robert Patton
*David Patton
*Joseph Ross
Paul Keyser
Jacob Keyser
Charles Pastorius
*Samuel Cowell
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William Hergesheimer
George Wolf

and others thru the years.

* Original Charter Oak members.

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Germantown Historical Society welcomes new members. Privileges of membership include attendance at all lectures, tours, and other functions sponsored by the Society. Members also receive current issues of the GERMANTOWNE CRIER without charge. Society dues are as follows:

Life (payable quarterly or at once)	$100.00
Sustaining or Business	10.00
Annual	7.50
Junior (under 18), Teacher, or Librarian	3.00

Interested persons are invited to obtain further information by contacting the chairman of the Membership Committee:

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SITE AND RELIC SOCIETY MEETING—MAY 9, 1908

Miss Jane Campbell Gives Delightful Talk on Songs of the Civil War.

Miss Campbell, the Society's historian, spoke upon "Songs of the Civil War" and was most ably assisted by Miss Caryl Perot, soprano, and Miss Burr, accompanist. Miss Campbell opened her very interesting talk with some reminiscences of the war from the standpoint of a schoolgirl and then proceeded to tell of the composition, or adaptation, the reception and sale and true worth of the songs that with their patriotism, humor, or pathos stirred so many hearts during the great conflict. As each composer and his work were spoken of Miss Perot, who possesses a beautiful voice, sang the songs.

Among the songs sung, the strains of the majority of which were familiar to the different generations present, were

When Johnny Comes Marching Home
Rally Round the Flag
Marching Through Georgia
The Prisoner's Hope
Tenting To-Night
Nicodemus
Dixie
Maryland, My Maryland
Who Will Care for Mother Now
Kingdom Come
Babylon is Falling
John Brown's Body

Before the singing of the last mentioned Miss Campbell said that as "Dixie" and "Maryland" had been sung to the Southern lines she thought it was only right that a Northern audience should render the third verse to the words "We'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree." This was done to the great enjoyment of the members of Ellis Post present. At the conclusion of the lecture it was announced that Miss Campbell and Miss Perot would give a similar evening upon "Old Minstrel Songs" on Wednesday, May 13, before the meeting of the City History Society in the Normal School.

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