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(See story on page 9)

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 1 FORTY CENTS

MARCH, 1967



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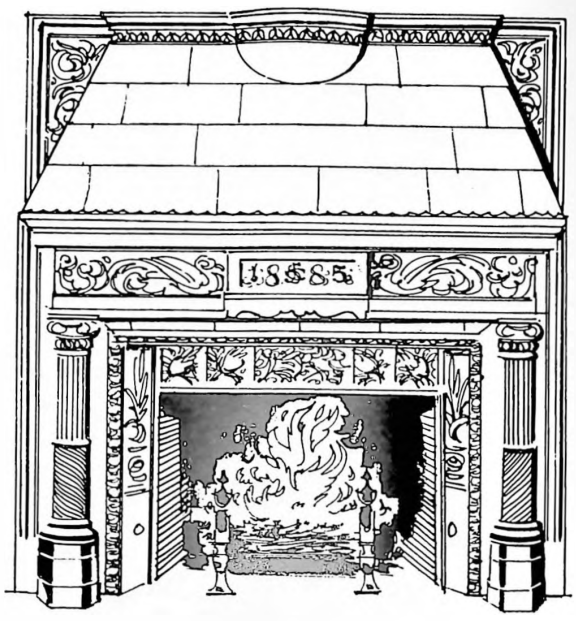
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The Germantown Historical Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to sustaining and promoting the cultural traditions of Germantown—through the preservation of historic landmarks; the maintenance of a museum of relics, a costume museum, and a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

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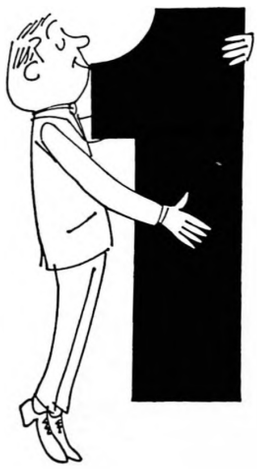
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In the December, 1966, CRIER Mrs. Clarence G. Stallman, instead of Mr. Clarence G. Stallman, was included in the list of deceased. We regret that this error was not detected and apologize for the resulting confusion.



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GERMANTOWNE CRIER



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A Map of
Historic Germantown

Designed by J. Riegel, Jr.

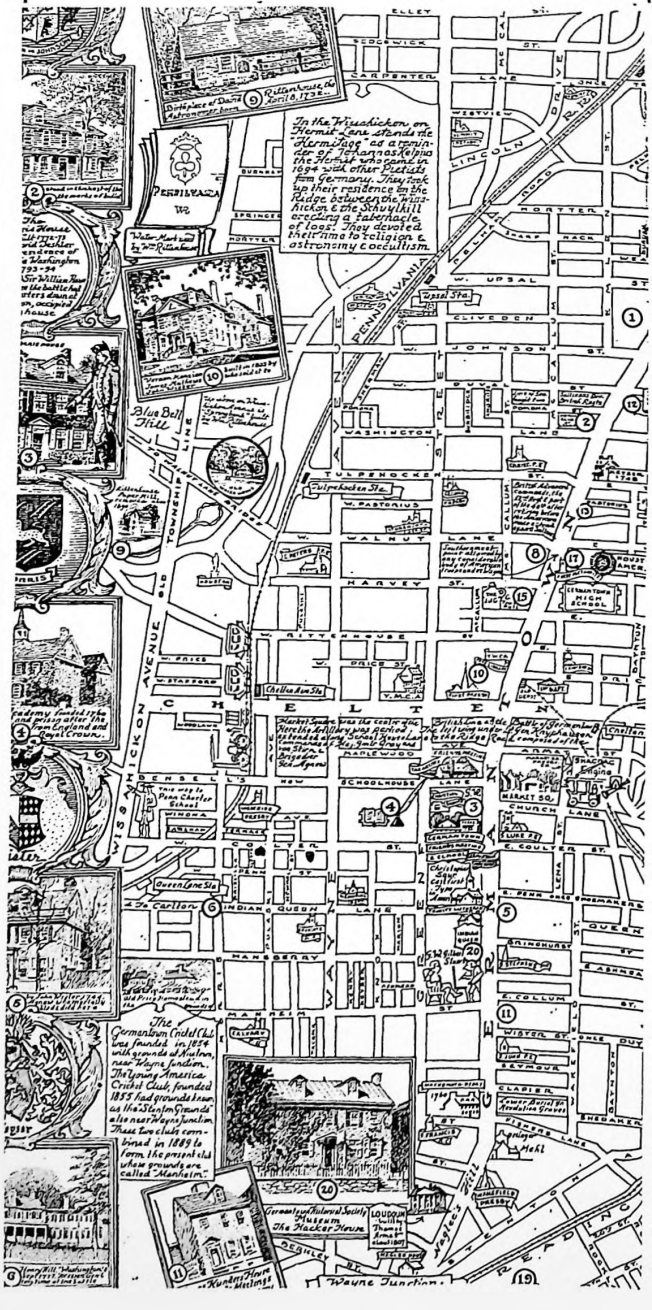
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Toward the Light

By Elizabeth Reeves Humphreys

The days are lengthening and in the earth
Hidden bulbs are reaching toward light
Pushing with their God-given might
Against the softening ground
Toward the glory of birth.

Instinctively each living thing
Turns lightward; the plants upon the sill
Arrange their leaves
With cunning skill
So each can greet the spring.

At night
There is the wonder
Of flawless white
Growing in a garden, guiding us
And setting our goal,
While those lying wakeful in a darkened room
Turn their eyes to the glowing gleam
In a distant house
With the inborn yearning of the soul.

Schedule of Meetings

April 10, 1967—1:30 PM. Annual card party for the Morris House—Will be held this year at Aulenbach House, 29 West Tulpehocken Street. Donations of $6.00 may be sent to Mrs. Almon N. Kidder, 443 Carpenter Lane, Phila., Pa. 19119 (checks payable to Phoebe C. Kidder).

April 20, 1967—8:30 PM. The Germantown Historical Society will visit the Philadelphia Maritime Museum at 427 Chestnut Street.

May 20, 1967—Annual Spring Tour. A "Period Tour" of houses on West Walnut Lane.

June 1, 1967—7:30 PM. Annual garden party at 5214 Germantown Avenue, following which the Society will be in the parish hall of Trinity-Lutheran Church to hear Miss Penelope Hartshorn, architect of the Independence Hall restoration.

Report of the Relics Committee

By John Welthal

Recent acquisitions for the museum include:

Two crocheted bed spreads from Mrs. Harvey B. Moore; made by her mother about 1900.

A 37 star U. S. flag from Mrs. Edwin Owen.

An autographed print of David Crocket from Mrs. Freda Morris.

A navy dress hat box that belonged to Lt. Edward J. De Haven. 1817–1865. Given by Mrs. Richard Grosholz.

A Glimpse into the Life of our Ancestors

By George W. (Pop) Sommer

FAMILY dinners are usually pretty much alike. And yet a moment's thought would reveal how some have certain possibilities, which can lead to an interesting chain of events. Not so long ago, as we were seated I noticed a suggestion of deep thought in my thirteen-year-old Mark, in contrast to his usual animation. But it was not until my wife questioned him that he disclosed why. "Ma, *I wonder how Germantown people in the Revolution lived.*" Goodness, why did he ask that?

"Our class is to put on a sort of play about it, and I'm captain. But how on earth can I find out?" How indeed?

"Have you tried the library?" queried his older sister.

"Not yet," wearily.

But I had an idea. "Isn't there some kind of a collection of Germantown relics of those days?"

"Why, yes," mother remembered, "the Historical Museum down on the Avenue. I've wanted to see those antique items for some time. Let's pay it a visit. It's open Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons."

Well, it turned out to be the stone, well-shuttered Conyngham-Hacker homestead at 5214; located at the second line of the British Army at the Battle. By the portico two stone lions flanked the big door. Then we somehow parted the curtains of Time, and seemed to enter for a glimpse into the life of our forefathers. First a living room scene—with great, well used gateleg table of the Ashmead family from which Indians were once fed, fireplace and its accessories, dower chest, spinet, and library desk.

But Mark was exploring on beyond. He even discovered tokens of the years before the Revolution: dishes and objects used by the Pastorius family, desk from a mill of 1720, chair that William Penn may have used, and finally a great ironbound chest that Peter Engle had brought here as immigrant about 1700. It seems this family established the first tannery here in 1758 at 5938 Germantown Avenue.

"Just imagine," Helen exclaimed, "when the British searched their house, an American spy was hiding in here!"

She found a parchment deed to the Engle property, with the new United States arms. We were contacting their early lives through these intimate belongings.

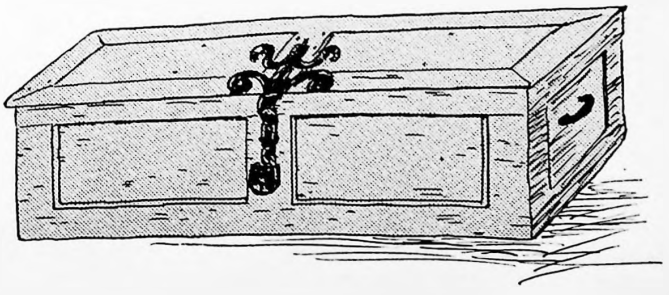
Now for those Revolutionary War survivals. Here was actually a section of the bullet-riddled fence from the Johnson House, in the thick of the Battle in October '77. Then the very weapons used, muskets, rifles, swords, drums, cannon balls. Major Andre, who arranged Benedict Arnold's treason, fashioned a life-size figure of a British grenadier for the grand festivity in Philadelphia, and we saw it. Some mid-room fireplaces that Ben Franklin invented were shown also.

The brig named "Germantown" was recreated in two models made by its sailors, also telescope and instruments used by the captain, and the ship's bell. Mother was tickled with its officers' own silver service, and more by those bed warming pans, candle snuffers and lanterns.

We saw the full-sized ensign hand-made on shipboard. It was flown high on the mast. We counted just thirteen stars.

I mustn't forget that handsome engraved brass compass produced by David Rittenhouse, and used for his scientific work in the infant republic, likewise his favorite Windsor armchair. Then I'm sure none of us had an idea how Market Square appeared in those days, as shown by a color drawing.

Sister sought and found many an object that captured her fancy. A set of toys hand-carved of wood or shaped from metal showed us how the little folks played. My children speculated about them, and at their school supplies we also uncovered. She fell in love with some fine examples of grandfather clocks, and was intrigued by sets of china the Pastorius family dined from, and some other tableware with an American eagle design. These served Lafayette and



The Engle Chest



The David Rittenhouse Compass

other notables at state functions. She found a decanter from the Billmeyer house. I remembered it was at that location that Washington stood with his telescope, vainly trying to pierce the fog the morning of the Battle.

Old solid Pennsylvania German earthenware testified to another side to our town's crockery. Then there was a demonstration of candlemaking, illustrating their efforts to lighten the long winter evenings.

It was my wife who brought us to see an early formal marriage certificate of 1765, complete with dates of the children. Penetrating further into their housekeeping and kitchen arrangements, we found much to help us understand difficulties and simple fortunes in a more primitive day. There was a set of beautiful, unbreakable pewter ware that one family used for many a hearty meal, likewise a coffee grinder and roaster to assure a fresh cup; nutcracker, butter churn.

Upstairs we found much more to represent the housewife's busy years. Spinning wheel and carding apparatus, patchwork quilting procedures, chests, cradles, and those charming samplers in frames.

I must confess that some of the things that *I* most enjoyed finding opened my eyes to a man's world of bygone days. We imagined ourselves sitting at those oldtime desks. Or watching Dr. Ashmead unpack his kit of rather rudimentary instruments and medical case, even though they were then of the latest model. And those all-wooden carpenter tools that helped build their homes seemed somewhat deficient today.

There were beautifully printed volumes from Christopher Sower's earliest press, just across the Avenue at 5253. Then there were many firemarks, plates which indicated the only houses which that fire-fighting company was obligated to protect. Next, in the rear of the manor we came on a real fire pumper cart which operated at many a blaze just by arm power. Their very hats, trumpets, helmets, leather buckets, flares, torches and decorated belts were on display.

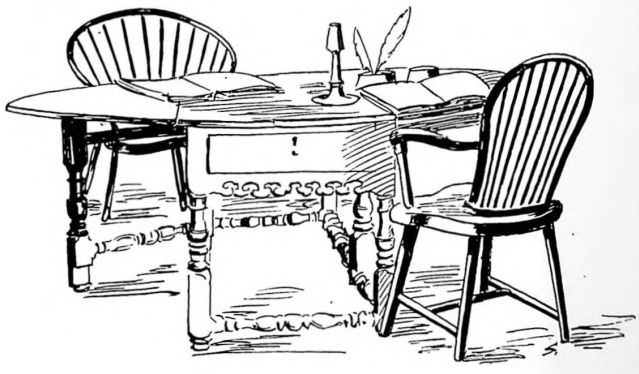
Ye olde King of Prussia Tavern that stood on the Avenue at 5516–20 was shown by the inn sign that swung there. It is said Gilbert Stuart painted the original emblem—Frederick the Great on horseback. The British put the inn to good use during the Battle. Thomas Jefferson lived here in 1793, and Hamilton and Knox dined there. It was the terminus of the stage from Philadelphia.

I almost forgot to mention the face of the clock of the nineteenth-century clock tower at Phil-Ellena, weather vane from Vernon mansion, and a great millstone from the cider mill at the Keyser house, also well worn wooden implements that were used on farms here.

In our delight over this aggregation in the museum, we had little time remaining to examine a display of traditional costumes. This we found in the period costume museum at 5226, which is open to the public on the same days as the Museum. These quaint articles of clothing are at times rented for use at fancy dress parties.

As my wife expressed it, "So much has passed from our view today, but now we feel very close to those early inhabitants whose lives and sacrifices made our beloved Germantown."

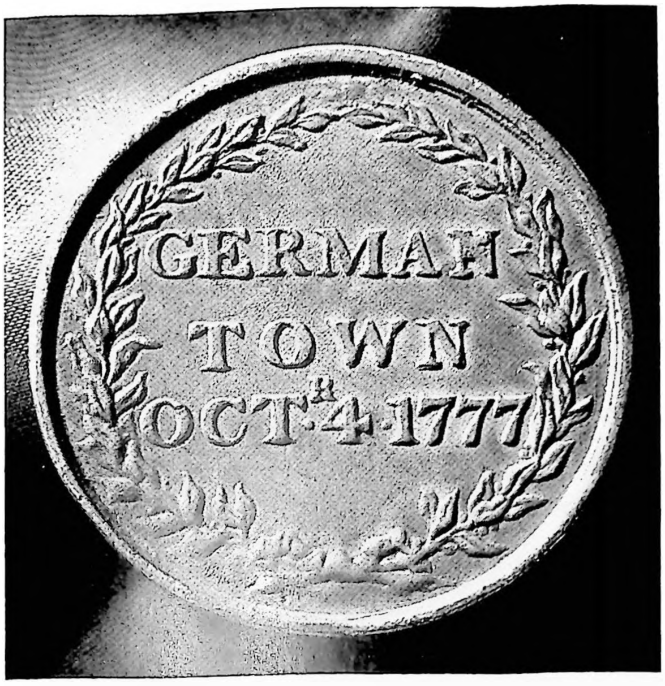
I would say that parents and teachers introducing children to the development of this community should let them come here and see it for themselves. And we all felt rewarded for our visit to this Germantown Historical Museum.



The Ashmead Table

Library Note

We are happy to welcome seventh graders from the Germantown Friends School who, under the tutelage of Mrs. B. F. Waltz, Jr., visit our library at regular intervals as part of their study of American History.





The 40th's Germantown Medal

By John McA. Harris, Jr.

THE Germantown Historical Society has received, as a gift from Mr. Calvin S. Hathaway, a bronze medal commemorating the battle of Germantown. As the illustration shows, one side of the medal bears the inscription, GERMAN TOWN OCTr 4—1777; the other shows a large building under the fire from two field-pieces, with a group of soldiers standing in the roadway. The donor of the medal did not know its history* and it remained an enigma until our librarian, Francis Shunk Brown, III, discovered an article in an issue of THE HOME MAGAZINE, published in 1897, written by W. L. Calver, entitled, "The Defenders of the Chew House—An Episode of the Revolution." The article includes a picture of Colonel Thomas Musgrave, the commandant of the defenders, and pictures of a medal. Mr. Calver says: "For the part taken by the Fortieth [regiment] in the battle of Germantown, a bronze medal was specially struck and presented by the colonel to the officers and men of the regiment. The medal was worn at one time by the officers round their necks and was the first decoration of the kind in the British army. A specimen of the medal is now preserved by the officers of the Fortieth in their mess; there is also a copy in the Royal United Service Institution." The medal Mr. Hathaway presented to the Germantown Historical Society is an exact duplicate of the medal described in Mr. Calver's article.

Most of us, when we stand at the corner of Upsal Street and Germantown Avenue and look toward the Chew house, find it difficult to neglect the all too familiar trolley tracks, pavements, and automobiles and, in imagination, picture the events for which Colonel Musgrave and his "Fighting Fortieth" won their medal. Fortunately eye-witness accounts are available to help us visualize the action.

General Hunter, "a proud, intelligent British officer" on outpost duty at Biggenstown (Mt. Airy) wrote in his diary:

> "General Wayne commanded the advance and fully expected to be revenged for the surprise we had given him (Paoli Massacre). When the first shots were fired at our pickets, so much had we all Wayne's affair in our remembrance that the battalion was out and under arms in a minute.
>
> "At this time the day had just broke, but it was a very foggy morning and so dark we could not see a hundred yards before us. Just as the battalion had formed, the pickets came in and said the enemy were advancing in force. They had hardly joined the battalion when we heard a loud cry of "Have at the bloodhounds! Revenge Wayne's affair!" And they immediately fired a volley.
>
> "We gave them one in return, cheered, and charged. As it was near the end of the campaign,

it was very weak. It did not consist of more than three hundred men and we had no support nearer than Germantown, a mile in our rear. On our charging they gave way on all sides but again and again renewed the attack with fresh troops and greater force. We Charged them twice, 'til the battalion was so reduced by killed and wounded the bugle was sounded to retreat. Indeed, had we not retreated at the very time we did, we should all have been taken or killed, as two columns of the enemy had nearly got round our flank. But this was the first time we had retreated from the Americans and it was with great difficulty we could get our men to obey our orders.

"The enemy was kept so long in check that two brigades (the Second Battalion Light Infantry and the Fortieth Regiment commanded by Colonel Musgrave) had advanced to the entrance to Biggenstown when they met our battalion retreating. By this time General Howe had come up and, seeing the battaltion retreating, all broken, he got into a passion and exclaimed, 'For shame Light Infantry, I never saw you retreat before. Form! Form! It's only a scouting party'."

"However, he was soon convinced it was more than a scouting party, as the heads of the enemy's columns soon appeared. One, coming through Biggenstown with three pieces of cannon in their front, immediately fired with grape at the crowd that was standing with General Howe under a large chestnut tree. I think I never saw people enjoy a discharge of grape before, but we really all felt pleased to see the enemy make such an appearance and to hear the grape rattle about the commander-in-chief's ears after he had accused the battalion of having run away from a scouting party. He rode off immediately at full speed and we joined the two brigades that were now formed a little way in our rear, but it was not possible to make any stand against Washington's whole army, and they all retreated to Germantown except Colonel Musgrave."

Colonel Musgrave and his "Fighting Fortieth" were covering the retreat of the British light infantry and were about to be surrounded when they took refuge in the Chew house. Accounts differ as to the number of men inside the house. One says that "with twenty men he had thrown himself into the roomy interior of the dwelling," another that, "six companies of the 40th under Musgrave threw themselves into the well built structure." It seems that six companies would overcrowd the Chew house but we like to think that it took more than twenty men to keep the Americans out.

General Washington, standing in front of the Billmeyer house, heard heavy firing in the direction of Sullivan's column, which had driven the British out of sight in the fog down the Germantown road, and sent his adjutant, Timothy Pickering, to tell General Sullivan to preserve his ammunition. Pickering delivered this message to Sullivan three or four hundred yards past the Chew house. His ride back to Washington he described in a letter written many years later:

"At this time I had never heard of Chew's house and had no idea that an enemy was in my rear. The first notice I received of it was from the whizzing of musket balls across the road before, behind, and above me as I was returning after delivering the orders to Sullivan.

"Instantly turning my eyes to the right I saw the blaze of the muskets whose shot were still aimed at me from Chew's . . . Passing on I came to some of our artillery who were firing very obliquely on the front of the house. I remarked to them that in that position their fire would be unavailing and that the only chance of their shot making any impression on the house would be by moving down and firing directly on its front (as depicted by the medal). Then passing on I rejoined General Washington, who, with General Knox and other officers was in front of a stone house (nearly all the houses were of stone) next northward of the open field in which the Chew house stood (Billmeyer House).

"I found they were discussing, in Washington's presence, whether the whole of our troops then behind (the reserves under Maxwell and Nash) should advance regardless of the enemy in Chew's house or first summon them to surrender. . . . However a flag was sent with a summons. Lieutenant (Colonel Mathew) Smith of Virginia, my assistant in the office of Adjutant General, volunteered his services to carry it. As he was advancing, a shot from the house gave him a wound of which he died."

The shooting of Lieutenant Colonel Smith angered the Americans and made them more determined to drive the British from the Chew house. The field pieces, six pounders, knocked the front doors open but, after losing half an hour in futile struggle, Washington ordered his men to stay out of range of the house and by-pass it. You will remember that Adam Stephen, coming to Germantown on the Lime Kiln Pike and General Wayne, driving through Germantown on Sullivan's flank, both heard the heavy firing at the Chew house and, thinking that Sullivan was in trouble, both converged on the center. The two columns ran into each other in the fog and, each thinking the other British, fired on each other. This, an indirect result of Musgrave's stand at the Chew house, weakened the American drive and what appeared to be an American victory swiftly turned into a rout. General Wayne said later that, "The fog and this mistake prevented us from following a victory that in all human probability would have put an end to the American war."

Gordon, an Englishman, wrote shortly after the battle: "Had that column—the main column—ad-

vanced without delay leaving only a sufficient corps with a couple of field-pieces to guard the house, the obstacles to success that afterward appeared might have been removed or prevented, and Howe's army have been totally defeated unless their superiority of discipline and bravery could have averted." . . . The British officers acknowledged soon after the affair that it was planned with judgment and executed with spirit and they were at a loss for its not being followed up, unless it was for want of ammunition." Calver adds: "For a while the British considered themselves beaten and it is said that Chester had been chosen as the point to which they would retreat. When the fog rose and the Americans were seen to be retreating the British could hardly believe that the Americans were running away from victory. When or where the retreat first began was never ascertained."

The Italian historian, Botta, wrote: "The principal causes for the failure of this well-conceived enterprise were: the extreme haziness of the weather, which was so thick that the Americans could neither discover the situation nor the movements of the British army, nor yet those of their own; the inequalities of the ground which incessantly broke the ranks of their batallions—an inconvenience more serious and difficult to repair for new and inexperienced troops, as were most of the Americans, than for the English veterans; and finally the unexpected resistance of Musgrave who found means in a critical moment to transform a mere house into an impregnable fortress. To Lieutenant Colonel Musgrave belongs the principal honor of this affair."

The "Fighting Fortieth," or "Fortieth Foot," was formed in 1717 from four companies of foot from Anapolis Royal in Nova Scotia, and four companies from Placentia in the island of Newfoundland. The regiment was originally known as "Phillips' " after its first commandant, General Phillips. It was named the "Fortieth Foot" in 1751 and, in 1881, when all numbers were dropped from the British army, it was named the "First Battalion, Prince of Wales Volunteers."

During the French and Indian War the Fortieth was in action at the siege of Louisburg and the taking of Quebec. In 1764 the regiment was sent to Ireland where it remained until 1775. It arrived in Boston just eight days after the battle of Bunker Hill, with a total strength of 475 men. The regiment fought in the battles of Long Island, White Plains, Princeton, and Monmouth. In 1783 it moved to Fort George to defend the approach to New York by way of Kingsbridge, then the only means of communication with the mainland. It remained there until the British finally evacuated the city. Lieutenant Colonel Musgrave of the Fortieth had been acting brigadeer and commandant of New York.

This is a brief account of the "Fighting Fortieth" and their Germantown Medal. It seems most fitting that one of the medals should come to rest in the collection of the Germantown Historical Society.

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* In response to our inquiries about the medal he had given us, Mr. Hathaway wrote the following letter:

13th February, 1967

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for your kind letter, and for your thoughtfulness in sending me a copy of the article from *The Home Magazine.* The information about the medal that you have discovered is of course interesting to me and I wish that I could tell you in return something about the history of the example that I have given to the Germantown Historical Society. To my great regret, I can tell you little.

The medal was given to me, a few years before his death, by my father, the late Rev. Harry St. Clair Hathaway, with a miscellaneous accumulation of medals and coins that had come into his possession during the course of his long life. Although he made specific comment at the time about some of the pieces, he did not comment about the Battle of Germantown Medal. Had he known how it came into being I believe that he would have passed this information along to the next generation as represented by me, for he did tell me, for example, that his great- great-grandfather, Mathias Knorr, was born in the Knorr house across Germantown Avenue from Cliveden, on 2nd October, 1777, just two days before the battle was fought.

But whether my father inherited the medal, or whether it came into his possession in another way, I am unable to tell you. I am happy that you have considered the medal worthy of adding to the Society's collections; if it is a rarity, it does better in a well-established institution than in private hands.

In appreciation, I am

Yours sincerely,
Calvin S. Hathaway

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

Mrs. Arthur E. Weil
3912 Netherfield Road
Philadelphia, Pa. 19129
(Telephone: VIctor 3-1067)

Travels Through Baltimore to Washington, D. C. in Company with J. H. Schrader

From the diary of JOHN HERMAN SEYFERT

John Seyfert came to Philadelphia from the Palatinate in 1804. His son, John Herman Seyfert, visited New York and Baltimore early in the 1800's and kept a diary of his travels. His account of a trip to New York in 1824, with notes on the Seyfert family, was published in the CRIER *for September, 1963.*

TOOK passage on the Union Line at Chestnut Street wharf, September 1, 1826, precisely at 12 o'clock meridian. Tide against us. Passed Mud Fort. It has a very dangerous appearance like a serpent or a tiger, concealed, lurking in ambush, his eye riveted on his prey. Dined about 2 o'clock as we passed the Lazaretto. Stopped at Chester and left passengers, Payed our passage, 250 cts. Arrived at Newcastle at 4 o'clock. A tolerable little town. Has a large Steam Boat Hotel and main street with several large stores and looks quite brisk.

Passed no time, took the stage immediately after landing. Passed through Glasgow, a very small town. Good road through a considerable of meadows and woodland. Arrived at Lewis town at 7 o'clock, a small town of about 20 houses. There is a large storage house on the only wharf about three squares from the town.

Took the elegant steamboat Constitution, a large, commodious boat with three cabins surrounded with (birth) hammocks and lounging chairs. The ladies cabin is very elegantly decorated likewise. Dusted and washed ourselves and supped at 8 o'clock on a most sumptuous meal. Payed passage, 250 cts. Reserved our births. Remained on deck to a most lovely evening inhaling the fresh breeze. Company generally very lively and talkative. Went to retirement about 10 o'clock in our hammocks. Could not sleep soundly from the continual noise upon the deck of passengers walking and talking and the jolting of the engine. Rose about 12 o'clock. Walked about on deck to pass the time away. Arrived at Baltimore about 1 o'clock. Wind and tide in favor.

Our curiosity was raised greatly at the appearance of the port, being very dark and gloomy. The streets of the city were illuminated. We got tired of our revery and got in our hammocks again. Napped until about 3 o'clock.

Conducted Miss Robinson to the stage office in Baltimore, on lighted street corner, to go to Washington. Seen her off. Came back on board after walking about through the center market and streets. Remained on board 'til daylight. Went in company with Mr. John Ristein (comb maker) to look for a suitable house. Went to Howard Street at "The Sign of the Wheat Field". Took lodging there. Did not suit us. Walked to several recommended places, all not to our fancy. Came back and took lodgings in South Street near the back of the Exchange. Engaged at 4 $ per week. Called the "South Street Coffee House" kept by Mr. Wm. Brower. Took breakfast, after, walked. Came to the center market which was very plentifully filled with all kinds of animal, vegetable, and mineral. The market is much wider than at Philadelphia. The middle is filled with victualers' meat, very good and about 2 cts. lower than our market. On the east side or wing it is filled with vegetation such as herbs, meal, potatoes, and garden production. On west side, with butter, apples, and peaches, sold at 12 cts. to 18 cts. per ½ peck. Crockery and toys. Muslins at 12 cts. per yard of goods. On the south end of the market there is a large place fronting the wharf, or slip, where it is surrounded with country wagons. In the center, on the pavement, it is filled (in season) with watermelons, corn, apples, potatoes, such as are found in our country market at Philadelphia. In the center of the large market a street cuts through in which there is a fish market, joined by the dock that divides the old and new towns. This market is filled abundantly with all kinds of fresh and salt fish. A large cat(fish) will cost 6¼ cts. Also mackerels, fresh and salted eels, lobster, etc. They bring their produce up the above mentioned slip, about one mile long, leading into the Potapco River.

At the head of the center market there is a handsome fountain that flows continually. It is made of marble surrounded with an iron railing and a step to go down about two feet. The water is similar to our hydrant water, warm. People are continually getting water with tubs, buckets, mugs, etc. Came home about 2 o'clock. On the way saw the battle monument.

Afternoon

Came to the court house in Lexington Street near St. Paul St. This building is about one story above the level of the street at Lexington. The cellar, or

front, has the appearance of a fort with battlements around the corners. Toward St. Paul the street rises. It is a brick building mounted with marble edging from the roof down to the eave of the roof. Likewise pilasters. There are borders around the whole building.

The Post Office and Athenaeum in Lexington and St. Paul Street are made in imitation of marble except the foundation story and steps which are made of hewn stone.

Came to the Union Bank in Charles Street. It is a brick building with a most grand symbol of hewn marble on the front of the building, representing Ceres holding a sheaf of grain and Neptune riding in a car; done in most masterly style, projecting out better than half their thickness of bodys. Also other marble ornaments.

Came to Mr. Hupman, No. 2 Sharp Street, piano maker. Pianos made on a new plan. Case much wider, supported with drop claw feet like card tables. Four treadles of brass. Charged 350 $. He entertained us very politely. Came home and took supper.

Came to the theatre to hear the speeches of the candidates. Streets were thronged with people electioneering and betting on individual candidates. After remaining ½ hour, Mr. Thomas got on the steps of the theatre supported by an arch of leaves and national flags with candles on each side to represent a pulpit. He spoke about ¾ hour. The opposite party did all to confuse the speaker by hooting, contradicting, telling him to go down, turn him off, go to bed, not true, etc., while the mob of the friendly party endeavored to applaud and to confuse the other party; together making a most garrulous and surprising noise. Then came Mr. Barny and the mob were somewhat better pleased. I remained there 'til 10 o'clock (they still continuing), came home and went to bed.

Sunday Morning

Came to the city spring in Calvert Street. It is enclosed in a small park shaded by trees. The spring is covered with a domed roof supported by 8 pillars on a small battlement. Two flights of steps lead down about 12 feet. The water is running out of 4 goosenecks set in a marble slab standing perpendicular. The floor and steps are all marble. The water is very cool and good. This spring is at the foot of a hill.

Came to the Episcopal Church in Charles Street. The interior is a most splendid edifice supported by two rows of pillars, eight in each row, of the Roman order, in imitation of variegated marble.

Came from there to the Catholic Cathedral. The place is as yet not completed. On the outside it is a square building. The interior and a dome has two side wings. There are three altars. The principal (altar) has the rays of Aurora in brass guilded on the top and a crucifix. The second is a pulpit and the third is for mass with most elegant sculptured figures. An orchestra, up high in one of the wings, has a most grand effect for singing. The wall is decorated with sundry paintings presented by the Pope of Rome in 1819 and 1821. The principal paintings picture the descent of Our Savior from the Cross and St. Augustine. The building and paintings are executed in the most sublime and costly manner. I never saw the like before.

Came to the Washington Monument. Went up a serpentine step. It has a core or shaft in the middle and 228 steps to go to the cupola on the top of the monument. The base is so broad that it almost forms the size of a house of 1 story with 1 door to enter. On top of that a second offset with windows, then the round shaft commences. It has a capital of the Tuscan order and is fluted between mouldings. There is a basket for to get on the outside of the shaft. It is 3 feet high with a topping of about 25 feet high.

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PHILADELPHIA'S THEATRE HERITAGE

The Third Chestnut Street Theatre

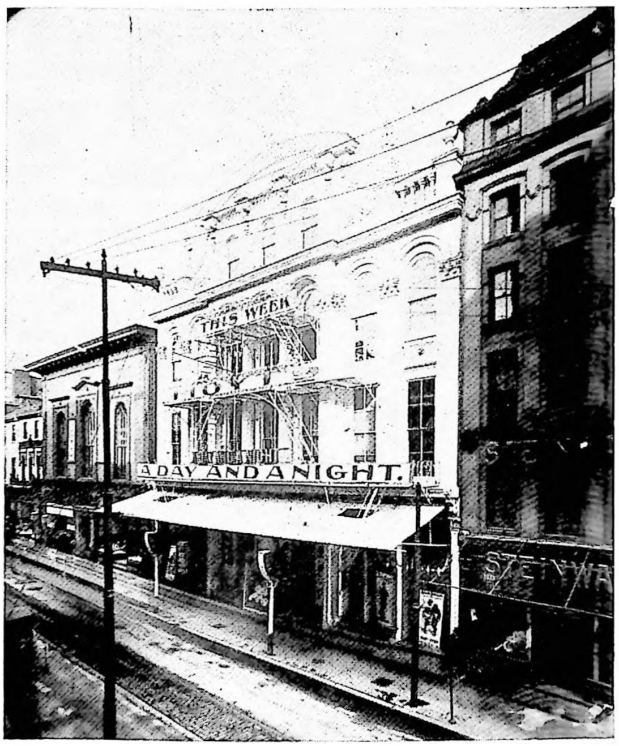
By Derek Naabe

ON MAY 1, 1855, the second Chestnut Street Theatre, located at 605 Chestnut Street and affectionately known as "Old Drury", closed its doors for the last time. Erected in 1822 on the site of the first Chestnut Street Theatre, which had burned down in 1820, now this theatre was to be torn down because it was the consensus of opinion that it had outlived its usefulness. The neighborhood was changing rapidly and it was no longer fashionable to attend theatre performances in such a remote and out-of-the-way section of the city. Another factor which contributed to the demise of "Old Drury" was the erection of the Academy of Music on Broad Street. It was the belief that the Academy would more than fill the needs of the theatre-going public, so after thirty-three years, this great theatrical institution that had housed Warren and Wood and their famous company of players for so long was compelled to close its doors forever.

The Academy of Music had been opened only a short time when it was discovered that the Academy was entirely too vast for the more intimate type of theatrical presentations and a much smaller theatre would be needed to house theatrical productions in this particular category. Needless to say, the "Old Drury" was sadly missed, but by this time the old theatre had been torn down and there was no chance of its ever reliving or recapturing any of its past glories.

One of the foremost theatrical managers during this period was William Wheatley. Wheatley had managed several Philadelphia theatres with some degree of success and it was mainly through his efforts that Philadelphians became interested in erecting a new theatre. In 1862 a row of houses known as "Boston Row" was purchased and torn down to make way for the new site of the theatre. This site was located on the north side of Chestnut Street just above Twelfth. Due to the Civil War, money conditions were a little unsteady, but a leading Philadelphian by the name of William Cochrane took over the project during this critical period, and in the very short time of three months, the Third Chestnut Street Theatre became a reality.

The opening of the new Chestnut Street Theatre took place on January 26, 1863. William Wheatley was appointed the manager and made the opening address. Edwin Forrest was the initial attraction, appearing in the title role of "Virginius." The house had been sold out for the opening night, due to the great interest generated not only in the establishment of a new theatre on Chestnut Street, but by the magic name of Edwin Forrest, who had become by this time one of America's greatest actors and attractions—besides, he was a native Philadelphian. Interest was so great that tickets were sold at auction. One of the active bidders at the auction was a man by the name of "Risley" a speculator. He was not only able to garner five hundred tickets, but caused the management some uneasy moments when crowds stormed the box office, only to be confronted with the sign "Sold out." There is no record of mayhem or bloodshed when people were told that if they were desirous of attending the opening performance it would be necessary for them to purchase their tickets from the aforementioned speculator at a premium. Mr. Risley apparently remained undaunted. After the furor died down, he openly admitted that he had made a clear profit of three thousand dollars.



The Chestnut Street apparently was smaller than the usual theatre of this period although it gave the

appearance of being much larger than it really was. It had three galleries originally, but in later years the third gallery was closed to patrons. The reason for the closing of this gallery was commendable, for it was so steep and the aisles so narrow on the sides, that the descent to the seats caused a temporary vertigo on the part of some of the galleryites, and it was feared that at any moment one false step would find a galleryite bouncing off the gallery guard rail and landing in the laps of the orchestra patrons. While there is no record of any individual ever having made such a dramatic exit, it is quite evident from all reports, that there were some near misses and that the sooner the gallery was closed the sooner the minds of the orchestra patrons could be put at ease. Now, at least, they could more fully concentrate on what was taking place on the stage.

In its early days it was known throughout the theatrical profession as "The Morgue," which was hardly a term of affection or endearment. It was reported to be the ugliest and the most ill-contrived theatre ever erected—not only in Philadelphia, but anywhere. The seats contributed to back aches and the greasy smells reeking up from the kitchens in the cellar were so overpowering at times that the poor patron was compelled to reach for the ever-present smelling salts in order to stave off headaches and general nausea. Why the kitchens were there has never been fully explained. One explanation would be that they were there for the use of the actors, for this was a stock company and they no doubt ate on the premises. The report goes on to state that there were at least a hundred other defects, which they fail to give in detail, but one can only imagine. After all, what can one expect of a theatre erected in ninety days.

The first year was far from being an overwhelming success for Wheatley. Even though such stars as James H. Hackett and Charlotte Cushman were engaged in an attempt to revitalize the box-office, the theatre going public showed a marked indifference toward any of his offerings, resulting in Wheatley's retirement at the end of the year.

William Wheatley was followed by Leonard Grover as lessee for the Third Chestnut Street. Grover was a fairly successful playwright, having authored a farce-comedy, "Our Boarding House," which had proved to be a very stage-worthy vehicle for a number of years. The Western sisters, Lucille and Helen, appeared under Grover's management; Lucille Western's main claim to fame being the first American actress to appear in "East Lynne." It is reported that she had made a quarter of a million dollars out of "East Lynne" before her death in 1877.

Leonard Grover had imported a man by the name of William E. Sinn to be his resident manager, the firm being known as "Grover and Sinn." In 1866, Grover withdrew from the firm and the lessees became known as "Sinn & Co.," a name to conjure with, especially in light of one of their subsequent productions. It was "The Black Crook" and it was at the third Chestnut Street that this now famous musical made its first appearance in Philadelphia. "The Black Crook" was considered extremely naughty and the theatre sensation of the year, in fact for some years to come. In the opinion of the anti-theatre populace the firm of Sinn & Co. was a very appropriate name for a management that had the audacity to present a show so demoralizing to Philadelphians. Evidently the appearance of women in tights for the first time caused most of the furor, particularly when garters were removed and thrown to the gentlemen in the audience. "The Black Crook" was, without a doubt, the most successful show of that period and eventually became one of the milestones in our theatrical history.

There were many stars to appear under the Sinn & Co. management, names with the magnetic appeal of a Joseph Jefferson, Matilda Heron, Mrs. D. P. Bowers, Madame Janauschek, but despite all these efforts to keep the theatre on a paying basis, Sinn & Co. reluctantly admitted defeat and in 1869 the theatre management was taken over by the well known theatre manager and equally famous English actress, Miss Laura Keene.

Space, of course, does not permit the detailed recounting of Laura Keene's early theatrical career in America and it would not be pertinent to this article. However, a portion of her life and career does belong to American history, for on the fateful night of April 14, 1865, Laura Keene was playing Florence Trenchard in "Our American Cousin" at the Ford Theatre, Washington, D. C. The assassination of Abraham Lincoln was a drama in which she was compelled to play a leading role, and her own personal experience bears retelling, for this "tragic nightmare" was to have an everlasting effect on both her professional and personal life until the day she died some eight years later, in 1873.

In his biography, *The Life of Laura Keene*, John Creahan states: "A crime which robbed our country of one of its greatest men, a crime which distracted men everywhere, did much to physically ruin a woman of Laura Keene's gentle and entirely feminine composition and yet this woman, with the recollection of that frightful night at Washington ever fresh in her mind, not only lived nearly eight years later, but in those years embarked on some of the most heroic enterprises of her life."

One of the most prominent actors of that period, Stuart Robson, says, "I consider Laura Keene to have been in many respects the most able woman connected with the stage of her time. The life of this gifted lady was strangely unhappy, owing mainly to continuous ill health. The shocking death of President Lincoln was perhaps the primary cause of her death. From the horror of this 'great dramatic situation' Miss Keene never really recovered."

From the New York *Herald*, April 15, 1865: "Prominent among those mentioned in connection with the

incidents of the late tragical death of our worthy President is the name of Laura Keene, the actress. In order to place her right in history, the following facts will suffice: Miss Keene was behind the scenes at the precise time of the shooting, awaiting to come on stage. She was near the place theatrically known as the tormentor. She was on the northern side of the theatre, while the President's box was on the southern side. Miss Keene's position was near the prompter's desk; but as that official was absent calling some of the actors, she placed herself near the point where she could more readily enter upon her part. She was at that time expecting the ingress of Mr. Spear, whose part was at hand, and prepared herself to break his fall as he entered in a drunken scene; but instead of receiving Mr. Spear, Mr. Booth pushed his way suddenly through the side scene, striking Miss Keene on the hand with his own, in which he held a dagger. She for a second looked at him and saw it was another person from the one she expected and instantaneously she heard the cry that the President was shot. The cry was spontaneous among the audience and many of them were making for the stage. Miss Keene went to the front of the stage and addressing the bewildered audience, said: 'For God's sake, have presence of mind and keep your places, and all will be well.'

"Notwithstanding this appeal, the audience was boisterous and while all seemed willing to detect the perpetrator of the great crime, but one made a move to this end. Scarcely had the perpetrator jumped from the President's box to the stage, then he was followed by Mr. Stewart, one of the auditors. As Mr. Booth crossed the stage he met and struck at the carpenter with the dagger he held, and instantaneously made his exit to the rear of the theatre, where his horse was in readiness, and thence made his escape. Miss Keene, after momentarily arresting the panic and consternation in the audience, heard the cry of Miss Harris, saying, 'Miss Keene, bring some water!' Miss Keene responded to the call, made her way, which was rather circuitous, through the dress circle to the President's box, and got there a few moments after the occurrence. There she saw Mrs. Lincoln, in the agony of a devoted wife, uttering the most piteous cries. Miss Keene attempted to pacify her, at the same time offering the good offices in her power; but she was convinced from her observation that human help was in vain. Miss Keene remained with the President until he was taken from the theatre."

Laura Keene, the actress, proved herself in this awful time as equal to sustain a part in real tragedy as to interpret that of the stage. Pausing one moment before the footlights to entreat the audience to be calm, she ascended the stairs in the rear of Mr. Lincoln's box, entered it, took the dying President's head in her lap, bathed it with water, and endeavored to force some of the liquid through the insensible lips. The locality of the wound was at first supposed to be in the breast. It was not until after the neck and shoulders had been bared, and no mark discovered, that the dress of Miss Keene, stained with blood, revealed where the ball had penetrated. The Chief Magistrate of thirty million people—beloved, honored, revered—lay in the pent-up box of a playhouse, staining with his blood the robes of an actress. This moment was one of the most impressive episodes in the history of a country. The President's memory will live forever. The actress—almost forgotten.

After starring in all parts of the country until 1869, Miss Keene leased the Chestnut Street Theatre, and renamed it the "Laura Keene-Chestnut Street Theatre." The theatre was entirely reconstructed in every department, combining all the American and European improvements; a new auditorium with perfect view from the stage and audience, private boxes, orchestra, orchestra stalls and dress circle chairs, decorated with crimson velvet and satin and upholstered with patent elastic sponge. The seats were the largest in America. New chandeliers, with crystal hangings, crayon pictures, pendant shells, trailing vines, natural flowers and ferns gave an air of beauty, refinement and home-like comfort to the house, rarely if ever before known in any American theatre.

The opening night, Monday, September 20, 1869, received nothing but praise from the local papers. The *Evening Bulletin*, April 21, 1869, reported: "If the success of the first performance in the Chestnut Street Theatre, under Miss Keene's management, is a true indication of the future, the theatre will be blessed as it never has been before with prosperity and popularity. The house was literally full and there was in the street a large crowd of persons, who, unable to enter, contented themselves with gazing through the doors into the vestibule. Many of those present were attracted, of course, by curiosity to see the improved building and they were completely satisfied. We believe that a new era has begun at the Chestnut, and we are glad of it. Its position always entitled it to rank as a first class theatre. Now its beauty and good management confirm that claim." The *Evening Bulletin* also went on to remark that the seats that had caused so many backaches had been eliminated as well as the offensive odors emanating from the kitchens in the cellar—not to mention the hundred other defects the original theatre patrons had been subjected to.

As a theatrical manager, Laura Keene ranked in her day and time with not only the leading theatrical managers of this country, but indeed of the world. Miss Keene, however, was more than an actress and a manager. She was an enthusiast not only in her profession, but in every branch of the polite arts. She had probably the finest theatrical library in this country, and was more conversant with compositions of all the English dramatists from the Elizabethans down to her own day. No manager, not even Sir Henry Irving, regarded by many as the greatest

producer of plays at the turn of the century, can be said to have delved so deeply into the art of stagecraft as did Laura Keene nearly thirty years before.

Regarding Miss Keene's stock companies: "She always had the best that could be found, whether it be in New York, Baltimore, Washington or Philadelphia," states Charles Walcot, a prominent actor of that period. He continues: "It is a question, indeed, if any English speaking theatre in the world surpassed this woman in the selection of her actors."

Among the actors who practically graduated as stars from her theatres were the following: Kate Reignolds, E. A. Sothern, Stuart Robson, Dion Boucicault, Sol Smith Russell, Joseph Jefferson, Emma Waller, Charles Walcot, Charlotte Thompson, John T. Raymond and there were many more, names that are synonymous with our theatrical heritage.

But despite the wide acclaim Miss Keene received for her acting and managerial abilities, the Chestnut did not live up to expectations, and she was forced to relinquish the house at the end of the season. Why her regime was not a success is open to conjecture. Here was an extremely talented woman, a woman universally loved by the members of her own profession as well as the theatre going public, a newly refurbished theatre housing one of the finest group of players in the country; seemingly, all the necessary ingredients to insure a future of great promise.

Joseph Jefferson, long associated with Miss Keene, both as an actor and a friend, offers a plausible reason for her failure. In a letter to John Creahan, Miss Keene's biographer, he writes: "As an actress and a manager Laura Keene was both industrious and talented, but her judgment in selecting plays was singularly bad; she invariably allowed herself to be too much influenced by their literary merit or the delicacy of their treatment. If these features were prominent in any of the plays she read, her naturally refined tastes would cling to them with such tenacity that no argument but the potent one of public neglect could convince her that she had been misled in producing them."

She was never to manage a theatre again. However, she continued as an actress until her death four years later.

The 1870–71 season found a new manager and lessee at the helm of the Chestnut Street. E. L. Davenport, one of our finest actors, who had received his training in the vigorous school of such thorough actors as Ellen Tree, Booth, Vandenhoff and Murdoch, leased the theatre for one year. Experiencing some degree of success, he managed to extend his tenure at the theatre to three seasons. The Davenports, along with the Jeffersons, Drews, Sotherns and Hacketts, take their place in theatrical history as one of the famous "actor families" in America. Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Davenport not only starred together, but were the parents of nine children, five of whom went on the stage. Most of the children at one time or another were members of their father's company, the most prominent and talented one being Fanny Davenport, who not only played opposite her father on one or more occasions while at the Chestnut but was to eventually become one of the great stars of the American and English stage.

It was said that every one respected Davenport, every one paid tribute to his fine personality, and there was no question but that he was one of our greatest actors, but he never seemed to possess the magnetic appeal of Laura Keene in attracting top rated players to his company. As a manager, he was energetic, liberal in his tastes and very sympathetic to the members of his company, but unfortunately for all concerned, not over serious in his discipline at the theatre. He loved to write notes to members of his company on occasion, especially when he felt it necessary to remind them of some of their shortcomings. One that particularly appealed to me reads like this: "Boys, please don't smoke, and if you love your manager, turn down the gas." One of the last plays he produced at the Chestnut was an extravaganza, adapted by Davenport himself, carrying the title "The Centennial, or what we expect in 1876."

Space does not permit recounting all of the occupants of the Chestnut Street following the departure of the Davenports, but there were many. In 1874 Susan Galton leased the theatre in an attempt to establish comic opera, but she was doomed to failure. In the same season, Joseph C. Foster presented his burlesque of "Lady Godiva" only to be faced with a blighted treasury. In the same year Shook and Palmer brought over their Union Square Theatre Company and played "The Geneva Cross," a play based upon the work of the now famous Red Cross. In 1875 the theatrical sensation of the year was first presented at the Chestnut. It was the now famous "Two Orphans," and it met with considerable success.

It would be impossible to list in detail the number of plays, musicals, managers, etc., that make up the history of the old Chestnut, within the confines of this article, for I have in my own possession two scrap books that are completely devoted to this theatre. Some of the highlights during this later period will no doubt prove interesting. Our own Francis Wilson made his first appearance as a "legitimate" actor at the Chestnut, and Sarah Bernhardt played her first engagement in Philadelphia at the Chestnut in 1881. In January, 1882, J. H. Haverly, who already had a theatre in this city—The South Broad—leased the Chestnut and in accordance with his custom, coupled probably with superstition, had its front painted white. Nixon and Zimmerman, who had the Walnut Street Theatre and the Chestnut Street Opera House, took over the management of the Chestnut, and controlled its destiny for some years.

In 1905, the Chestnut Street became the home of the Orpheum Stock Company. This stock company proved to be very popular with Philadelphia theatre goers, and deservedly so, for it was the proving

(Continued on page 21)

The Evolution of an Historical Society

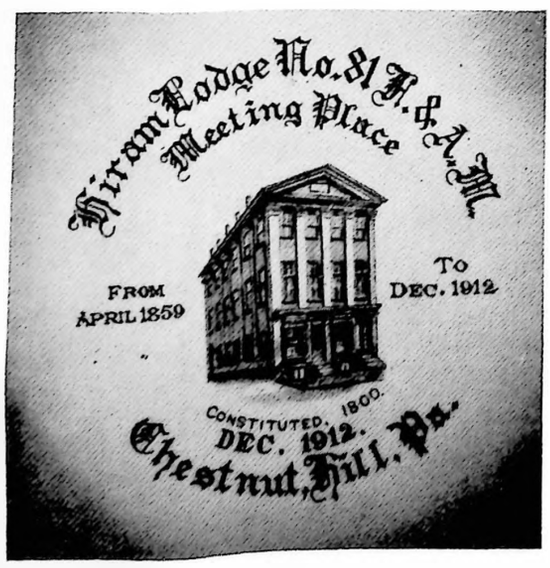
By NANCY HUBBY

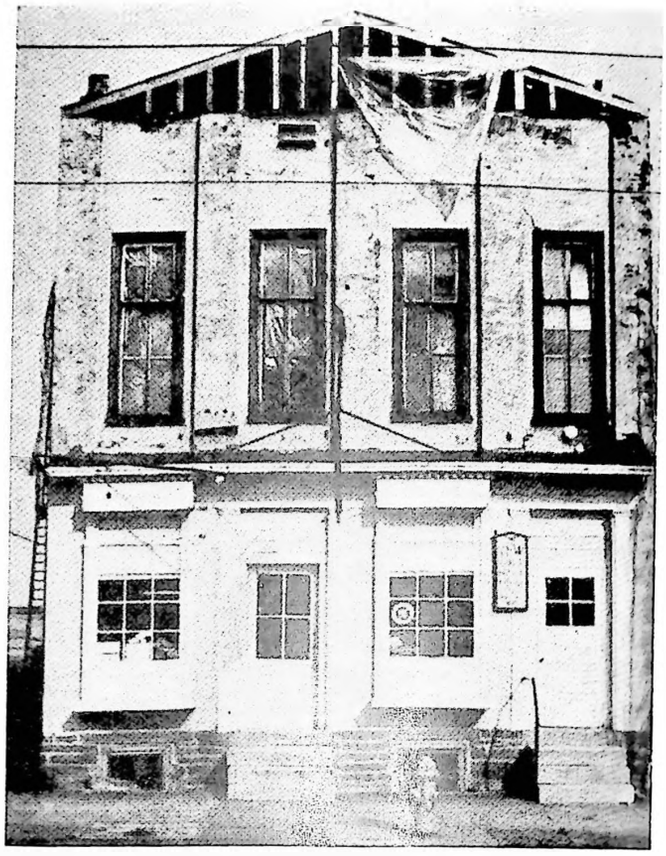
IDEAS often germinate in rocky soil. Just so the newly formed Chestnut Hill Historical Society is the outgrowth of the problems encountered by a small group of individuals who acted in an emergency situation to preserve an early public building.

Hiram Lodge, erected in 1859 by Charles Heebner, is one of the few examples of its type in Chestnut Hill. Neo-classic in style, a graceful pediment crowns a handsome facade composed of pilasters and elongated windows. Originally the first floor was a grocery store. The second floor served as a Public Hall and the third floor was occupied by the Masonic Lodge which had moved from Germantown at Mr. Heebner's invitation. Today the building is owned by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

On October 13th, 1966, the front page of the Chestnut Hill Local pictured Hiram Lodge and reported certain major changes being undertaken by its owners. These included removing the third floor, blocking up several windows and changing the shape and size of others; a flat roof would replace the angled one and a false pediment would be built in front.

Alarmed at the proposed changes, which would irreparably damage the elegant proportions and simple lines of the building, several of us independently wrote letters to the editor of the Chestnut Hill Local. The first letter was published together with an editorial on October 20th. Demolition began the next day and continued throughout the weekend. The editor of the Local, Mrs. William Newbold arranged a meeting on Monday, October 24th. If the building were to be saved action had to be immediate. It was felt, because of the great tradition of preservation in Philadelphia and because of the local interest in maintaining the character of Chestnut Hill, that we would be able to raise the funds necessary to restore the exterior. Within the day support was solicited from





Hiram Lodge as it looks today

all the Historical Societies in the Philadelphia vicinity, the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D. C., the Chestnut Hill Community Association and Development Group, the National Park Service and members of the community who are presently active in other preservation efforts. All were enthusiastic and gracious in offering aid, though several believed that demolition had proceeded so far that restoration attempts would fail. The owners were contacted that evening; they agreed to stop further work until their officers could consider our proposal to raise sufficient money to restore the building with its third floor.

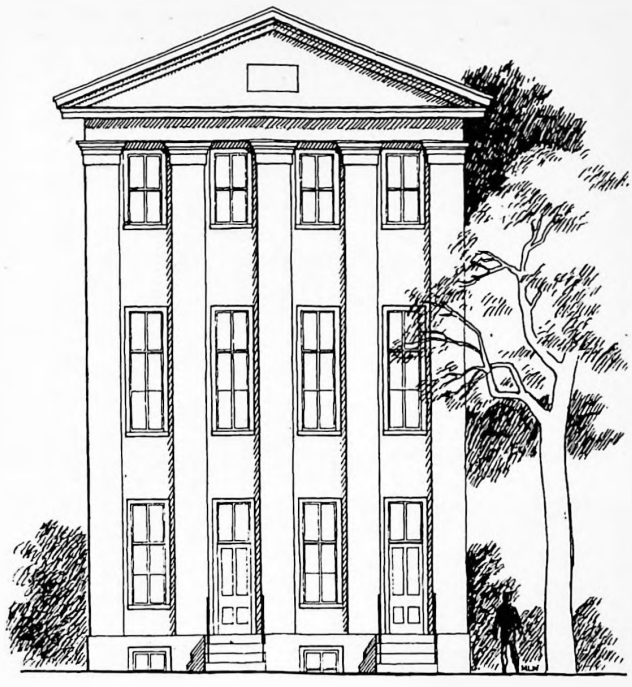
Having thus broken ground, the project was suddenly swamped with problems. The owners had to be convinced that the community would be interested in aiding them in the restoration of their building. Likewise other members of the community had to be convinced that the restoration was worthy of their support. This was made more difficult by the condition of the building. For at least fifty years it had been in such a state of disrepair that most people failed to notice it at all or, if they did, considered it an eyesore rather than a potential asset to the community. Its exterior stucco was crumbling, the window sills and sashes had rotted, the tin roof was in such bad condition that part of it had blown off. Also of immediate concern was the raising of a sufficient sum of money to assure the owners that we could raise the balance needed to complete the restoration and also to assure their contractor payment for stoppage of work. Only on this condition would they consent to stop demolition. As the project was not the outgrowth of a recognized organization, potential

donors were understandably reluctant to support it. One enlightened individual was interested, however, and with the cessation of demolition the project took root and seemed to shoot up. Another donor generously offered to pay for architect's drawings and fees and several others pledged substantial amounts. An architect was hired, as well as a lawyer; drawings were started and negotiations began in an effort to work out a reasonable distribution of costs between owners and contributors. The National Trust opened a special account for donations to Hiram Lodge. At the end of a month we had raised more than half the amount needed through more than 425 contributions, ranging in amount from fifty cents, from a five-year-old boy, to several thousand dollars.

Pervading all this was the problem of effective communication within very limited time. The Chestnut Hill Local was invaluable in keeping its readers informed of our progress. A committee was formed to aid in publicity and solicitation of funds. Hundreds of personal letters were written and mailed and many days spent telephoning and creating posters. Over ten thousand form letters were sent to those on the mailing list of the Chestnut Hill Local, due to the cooperation of the Chestnut Hill Community Association. Yet it became apparent that personal contact was crucial in ascertaining the nature of the obstacles besetting us and in breaking them down.

This realization strengthened the idea that a permanent body was needed which could anticipate future problems. Such a group could initiate a survey of historic buildings, have the means to promote and oversee preservation efforts, and carry on active educational and research programs. This group would be deeply involved in implementing sound, imaginative plans. It would create, not just preserve.

Until last week Chestnut Hill was encircled by historical societies but lacked an organization dedicated to its own historical requirements. The incorporation of the Chestnut Hill Historical Society is the first flower of a growing idea. It is young and vigorous, still awaiting the ripening of its first fruit. We hope that it will bear abundantly.



Hiram Lodge as it should look

Pictures courtesy of the *Chestnut Hill Local*

Those interested in becoming members may contact

Mrs. George Link Spaeth
15 Laughlin Lane
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19118
Phone CH 2-3285

or

Mrs. Robert Hubby
8318 Seminole Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19118
Phone CH 2-1599

The Germantown Historical Society has provided help and advice for which we are very grateful.

The Third Chestnut Street Theatre

(*Continued from page 19*)

ground of some of our finest actors. It was here that Lottie Briscoe, George Barbier, William Ingersoll, and our very own Mae Desmond "trod the boards." Miss Briscoe, eventually became a star with The Lubin Motion Picture Co., here in Philadelphia; George Barbier became a well known film star in Hollywood and William Ingersoll gained fame as one of the leading stage stars.

A book could be devoted to the career of Mae Desmond and her husband, Frank Fielder, for their stock company was, unquestionably, one of the most popular and successful acting companies, not only in Philadelphia, but in America. The Orpheum Theatre in Germantown was the home of the Mae Desmond Stock Company for a period of four years, beginning in 1918. From the Orpheum in Germantown they went on to other theatres in the Philadelphia area with ever increasing popularity, and are now, at the present writing, continuing their success with Mae Desmond Children's Theatre. Here again is another famous acting family where all the members are active participants in the theatre. In fact, one son, Richard Fielder, has gone on to greater fame as a writer and producer in Hollywood.

The Chestnut Street Theatre closed its doors for the last time, October 18, 1910. It is now just a memory, but it will always be an important part of Philadelphia's theatrical history, and I am sure, if E. L. Davenport could possibly have left one of his famous notes, it would have read something like this, "Boys and girls be kind to us; please don't turn the gas jets down all the way—let a little flame remain for remembrance' sake.

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