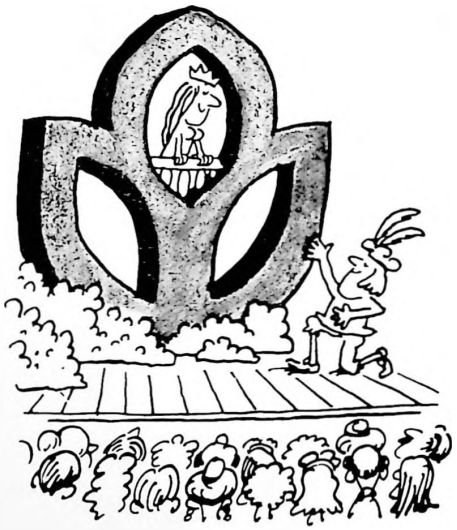
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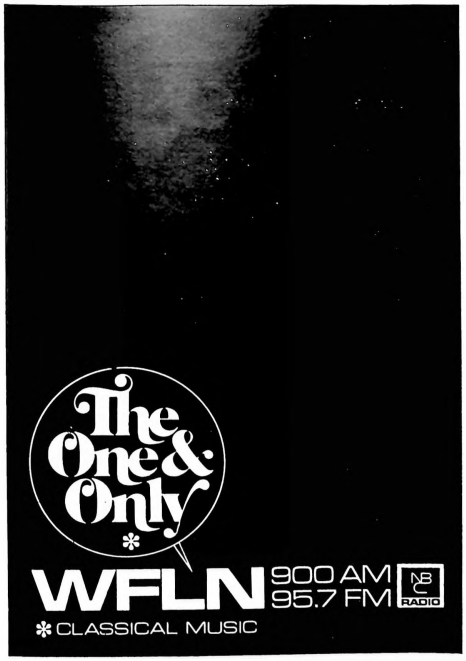
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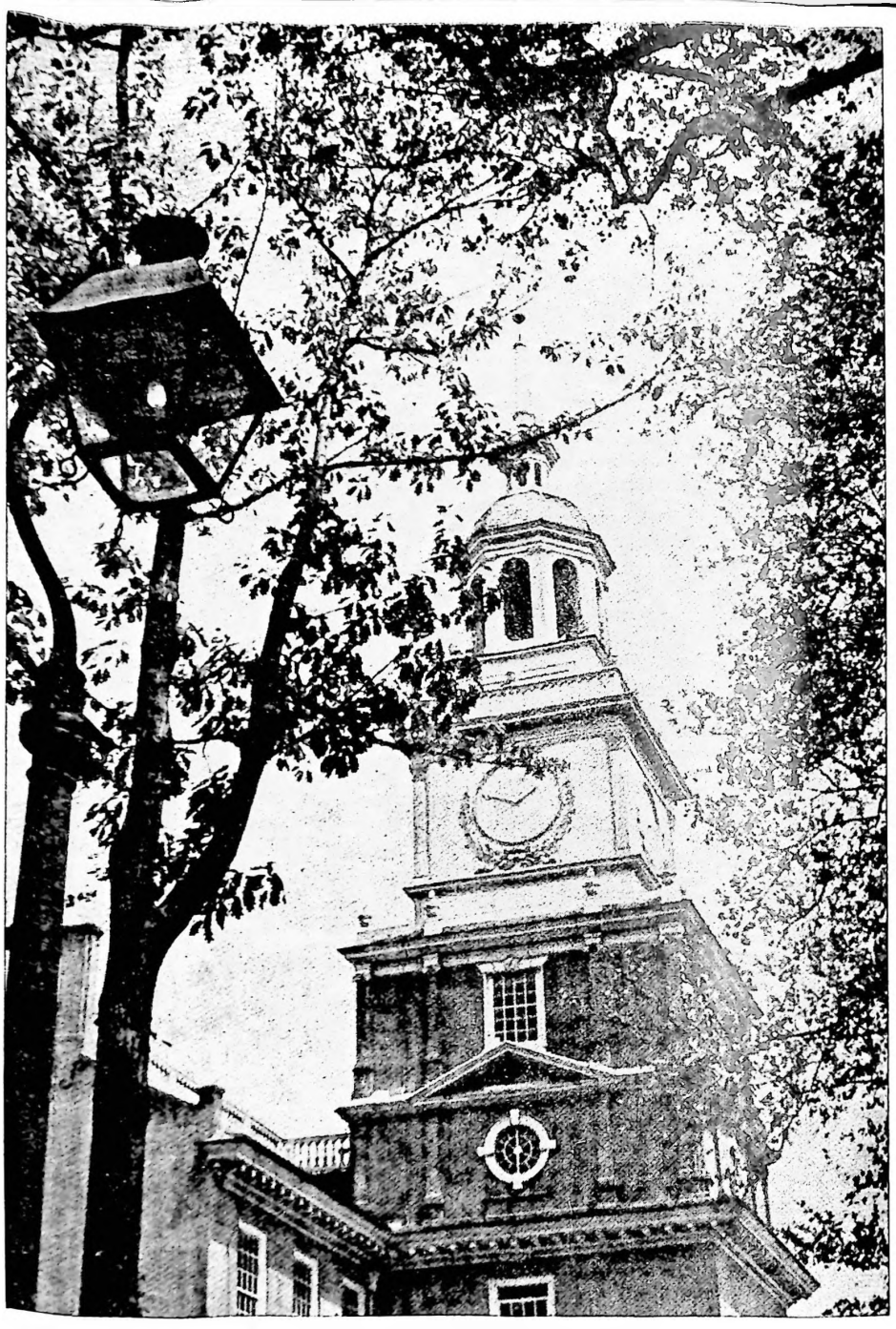
Editorial contributions should be mailed to the Germantowne Crier, 5208 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa. 19144

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Memories of Blue Bell Hill, Germantown (1895-1905)

By Iredell Logan Aucott, 1888–1971

Mr. Aucott taught, after his graduation from the University of Pennsylvania, at the Gilbert School, at Germantown High School and at Olney High, at the Veterans' School (after World War II), and, finally, at Lincoln High. Later, after his retirement from the Philadelphia schools, he went back into teaching, and taught at the Meadowbrook School until he was nearly eighty.

MY PURPOSE in penning these few autobiographical pages is to give my great-grandchildren, yet unborn, a view of a world that has vanished but was my world of boyhood. I shall write what I saw and knew and where tradition or rumor enters the story. I shall be careful to label them so. This is not so much my story as a "boy's story of seventy-five years ago."

First—my family. Both my grandparents—or rather all of them—came from England about the time of the Civil War. My father's father, Joseph, was a weaver of stockings and gloves. He built a little clapboard house on what is now W. Johnson Street—then Nice Avenue—and when established sent for his wife Sarah. She wanted to come on the "America," one of the first steamboats but had not sufficient money and had to take a sailer. The "America" was lost at sea and never heard from. The change of plans made my birth in 1888 possible. The senior Aucotts continued to live on Nice Avenue until sometime after the birth of three boys,—William —my father, Frank and Ernest and four girls Ella, Mary, Emma and Annie. Granny brought with her a baby Delia, a daughter of Joseph by a previous marriage. Aunts Ella, Mary, and Emma were each married twice and Aunt Annie married Delia's widower. Aunt Emma's first husband was Iredell Logan and from him I received the name which so confused people and bothered me on occasion. The Logan part was passed down to my son Robert and to his older son Michael. Fortunately the Iredell will die with me.

When my grandfather Aucott, according to family tradition, was asked where he lived, he said "Blue Bell Hill, it's covered with blue bells."

Nice Avenue branched off at right angle to Township Line, now Wissahickon Avenue—we always knew it as Townshabline—and ended at the Wissahickon woods along the top of the valley leading down to the creek. These virgin woods and the winding rocky creek at the bottom of the valley constituted one of the best playgrounds a boy could have. Wissahickon



IREDELL LOGAN AUCOTT
1898 (about 10 years old)
Sitting on wooden sidewalk in "Blue Bell Hill" (West Johnson Street, Germantown, Philadelphia).

Avenue began somewhere to the north (it ends at Allens Lane in Mt. Airy) and continued south to the unknown reaches of lower Germantown. About a quarter of a mile south, Naomi Ave. left Townshabline and ended at the woods. Below Naomi Ave. Walnut Lane, continued from Germantown, took a similar course. All of these streets in 1895 were dirt roads, dusty or muddy in summer and drifted with snow in the winter. A driver of a two horse dray got stuck in the mud in front of our house. The driver asked me the name of the street and burst into ironical laughter when I told him "Nice Avenue." The "upper settle-

ment"—Nice Ave. and a few houses on Townshabline, was mostly Protestant—Methodists who attended the Chapel and Baptists who travelled out to Price St. in Germantown to the First Baptist Church. The "lower settlement" was mostly Catholic, members of the "Immaculate" Church, also on Price Street. There was no animosity or territorial conflict between the two groups. Elsie Graham, a good Catholic and a wonderful girl, once went around to her fellow parishoners selling chances on an antique plate and gave her receipts to a fund-raising bazaar for the Chapel. There was some sentiment among the good Methodists against accepting the money. How they eventually smothered their consciences, I never knew, but accepted it was. At least once the "lower streeters" gave an Irish picnic in the "Water Works" lot (more about these formerly unmentioned places) and the people of both sections joined in, altho most of the dancing on a wooden stage built for the purpose was in the hands—or feet—of the Irish, old and young, and all of the beer that Ed Leddy provided was consumed by Catholic throats.

Since the Chapel, the Water Works lot and Leddy's Tavern have cropped into this story a little previously, a few words about each is called for. The Chapel, a mission originally of the Germantown Methodist Church, was moved from its original location on Wissahickon Ave., just below Johnson Street—originally Nice Ave.—about 1920 to a vacant lot on the edge of the woods and is now the flourishing Blue Bell Hill Methodist Church at the corner of Walnut Lane and Johnson Street. The only pastor I really knew was the Reverend Charles Albany, who drove over Kitchen's Lane from Roxborough, across the creek, and held services for fifty, more or less, Protestants every Sunday morning and almost every Sunday evening, summer and winter. His old horse and buggy were almost as revered as was the old saint himself.

Wissahickon Ave. on the east side, was bordered by meadows and cornfields and the Thomas Estate, now Clifford Park, part of Fairmount Park. None of us Blue Bellers knew Mr. Thomas, except when called upon to repair the big stables or a green house—I worked on the greenhouse with my father one summer—except Tobe Sibel, who lived in the charming cottage which we called the Gate House and had charge of the extensive gardens. The rhododendrons are still visited every year by thousands of enthralled visitors. Below the limits of the estate was—or is—a dozen or so acres of meadow and woods, sloping down to Walnut Lane and to the Lincoln creek. This was the Water Works lot. The creek had been dammed up and the dam, called the Water Works Dam, gave us kids a grand safe place to fish for catfish and learn to skate. The "Water Works" was a legendary name; no one seems to know its origin. Walnut Lane ran across the Lincoln Creek and the Lincoln Drive on a wooden bridge which for many years gave us our own access to Germantown. It was condemned twenty years ago and was eventually replaced by a very modern concrete span.

Opposite the Water Works lot, just above Walnut Lane, Ed Leddy had his saloon, a place of evil reputation and the cause of many bitter family fights. Nobody of decency was ever seen entering or leaving it. The women of Naomi Avenue "rushed the growler" every payday, carrying a kettle or pitcher for their edification and enjoyment. I don't suppose, looking back, that Ed's place was any worse than most of the hundreds of such places that prohibition put out of business in the country around.

The houses in the village were much alike, clapboards or shingles, each on its fifty foot lot, with a brief stretch of grass and a white picket fence in front and a vegetable garden in the rear. As the village grew we watched new houses built, some even twin houses of brick. Mr. Evans, a gruff man with a red beard, built a large red stone mansion from his profits as a contractor. It doesn't look nearly as large as it once did. When I was still a boy of ten or so, water pipes and later a sewer, then a macadam pavement meant great changes. The inevitable and so necessary back yard privies were done away with; those who could afford it had running water piped into their houses; some even installed bath rooms. When I was about five or six I was given a bath in a wash tub in the kitchen. Every house had its well, most with pumps, altho the Henshaws across the street had a bucket on a rope. The neighbors often took their butter over and Mrs. Henshaw would lower it via the bucket to the natural refrigeration of the well. Otherwise and most times, butter and milk and such perishables were kept in the cellar in a wired cupboard called a safe.

The vegetable garden provided tomatoes and beans for preserving and cabbage for sourkrout. These "canned stuffs" eased the strain in the winter when so many of the men were out of work. The spirit of cooperation when hard times hit is one of my kindest memories. When I was sent over to the Jacobies (Mr. Jacoby was a printer and had a successful business in Germantown) to borrow a quarter or a dime—big money then—I was always treated like a prince. My mother was very careful to send me back to repay the loan as soon as possible. Almost everybody was poor. Several—like my father—had their own businesses—well digging, brick laying, carpentering, etc. and got jobs all over. My dad once had a house to build somewhere in terra incognito so far from home that he was only home for weekends. When he was later appointed a building inspector for the Philadelphia Board of Education with a salary of $1,300 a year we were rich for the duration of his term. One of our neighbors—a German by birth—was a well digger. Once when he was finishing the brick work at the bottom of a well, his two older boys, about 10 and 12, pulled up his ladder and left him howling and cursing in German until his wife found the ladder and replaced it. The sequel to the trick was never dis-

closed, but a heavy leather strap had a part in it. The houses were well kept, only a few were allowed to deteriorate. Flower and vegetable gardens were well cared for, fence pickets replaced and kept painted. The wooden sidewalk was generally in good repair. The grass plots in front or at the side were mowed often. The "lawn" at the side of our house was my job. That fifteen feet of grass with a low terrace seemed like a meadow when I had to cut it. My Uncle Ernie once criticized my job and ridiculed my excuses. I never forgave him. A huge snowball bush stood in the middle of the grass plot and necessitated some trimming around it with hand shears. It is much smaller now than it seemed. I also had to shovel the snow off the board walk in front of the house and around the side of the pump platform, and many times the snow was deep and heavy for an eight to ten year old boy who never did enjoy the beauty of snow. The board walk kept people's feet out of the mud, etc. It was made by laying 3 x 4's parallel and nailing cross pieces of board. Such a walk lasted a long time if kept in good shape. The streets were never ploughed and the horses had some hard pulls when the snow drifted as it so often did.

But snow meant sledding, belly bumping down the side walk or much better, pulling the sled over to Thomas's Hill where Mr. T. kept several cows and horses in pasture. The hill down to the creek was fairly steep and gave an exciting ride from the top, dodging the few trees and tumbling off if there was danger of going into the pool at the bottom. The shallow pool was usually frozen over and covered with snow. This was our swimming hole in the summer. The big treat in sledding time was the long tandem sled that some of the young "lower streeters" had made from two sleds or three with a ten or twelve foot two by twelve connecting, the front sled on a pivot so that it could be steered by ropes or wheel and seating as many of both sexes as could crowd on. Occasionally one of us young ones was allowed on, but usually it was our privilege to push it to start. It started on Wissahickon Ave. at Walnut Lane and went down Wissahickon Ave. crossing Lincoln Drive, and sometimes ending the trip at Rittenhouse Street, a long and exhilarating ride of almost a mile. Everybody took hold of the tow rope and the pull to the top was almost as much fun as going down. Someone was always stationed at the bottom of the hill to warn sleighs or carriages. I never heard of any casualties. Winter also meant skating. The Water Works Dam, later Lincoln Lake, is not very big but to us kids it was immense. Nobody taught anyone to skate. We got skates for Christmas one year in our tens or twelves, learned to fasten them on with a key and straps and just went skating. To be able to cut a figure eight and to skate backwards meant proficiency. Some days only a few would be on the ice and shinney, our name for hockey, was the thing. Any small flat piece of wood was the puck and a curved branch furnished the stick. This was an uproarious and speedy game, sometimes leading to a bruised shin or ankle and very occasionally to a bloody nose. Cracking the whip was also great fun. From time to time we took off our skates and gathered around the fire on the bank. "Chip or skip" was the invitation to gather dry wood to keep the fire blazing. On a few occasions, an elder, usually a father, would gather a half dozen or so kids and walk us down the drive to the Log Cabin picnic grounds where the creek was wide and clear of rocks for a mile or so. Just as rarely we went up the drive to Valley Green where similar conditions prevailed. Both of these were long walks, four or more miles each way, and once in a winter was usually enough, but it was grand skating, usually not too crowded.

Winter, of course, meant holidays. Thanksgiving was always celebrated with a roast chicken, a loin of pork—Gran'ther Hurst often provided the pork—and if things were prosperous, a turkey. Since there was no radio nor television we knew nothing of the football games. Boys from athletic clubs used our street for part of their cross country runs and added a little excitement as they straggled past. We always cheered the poor chap who brought up the rear. One year they ran in a snow storm. My mother could not understand why they were allowed to run in sweatshirts and shorts when they should have been home cozy and warm or at least dressed properly. I never knew where they came from or where they went.

Christmas was the big day. We practised our "pieces" to recite at the Chapel "Entertainment." Stockings were hung "on the mantel with care." There was no fireplace but there was a mantel on one side of the "room," as the living room was called, and Santa always got in and filled them. For several years until she died, Mrs. Logan, Iredell's mother, sent me a bound "St. Nicholas" or a "Chatterbox," beautiful volumes, full of interesting stories, puzzles, games, etc. They would be collectors' items today. I had several soldier's suits—a helmet, a breastplate, and a sword. They never lasted long, since they were mainly cardboard, but were very welcome and appreciated to the end. I was usually brought to the verge of tears at the prospect of finding my stocking filled with coal, the reward peculiar to a year of idleness or "being a bad boy." The "Christmas entertainment" at the Chapel was always well attended and gave the young terpsichorian or the elocutionist an opportunity to shine. Walter Leiver, aged about six, burst into tears at one of the Christmas festivals when after saying his piece "Alexander the Great was great, George Washington was great, Abraham Lincoln was great, but here is a greater" discovered he had left his nutmeg grater at his seat. He ran to his seat, got the grater, and finished his piece amid great applause. My first attempt I don't remember but was told many times of my great success. "I had a little hobby horse. His tail was made of hay. And every time the wind blew, it blew his tail AWAY!" We had a sermon, of course, and before going home

were each presented with a box of candy and most of the time an orange. Our Sunday School teacher usually had a colored pencil or something equally inexpensive for each member of his—more usually her—class. We had no school for a week and spent our time visiting around and admiring our neighbors' Christmas trees. My father once went to choir practice on Christmas Eve—he was the organist and chorister at the First Baptist Church in Germantown where I later went and joined. When he went to the church there were plenty of trees for sale everywhere. When he came out they had been sold. He managed to get two scrawny ones which he took home, bored holes in one and inserted the branches of the other. We had a beautiful Christmas tree. We usually went out to the main street and admired the candles and decorations in the store windows. There were, of course, no electric lights (I was married before I saw an electric-lighted house). Christmas trees tied to poles and strings of laurel were abundant proof of the season.

Not much fuss was made over New Year's Day. It usually meant signs of a not-too-distant spring with the return of the birds and the blossoming and greening of the trees. The blossoms on the trees foretold the harvest of the fall. Cornfields were ploughed and seeded in late April or early May and were soon green with the beauty of the new shoots. We never trespassed on a new field. We knew the destruction a few kids could make. My mother always had her zinnias and marigolds in early and dad had pruned his rose bushes. My parents loved flowers and had them in every space that could be spared from the tomatoes, beans and cabbages. Dad built a cold frame in which he raised violets. The grape vines were also pruned down to almost nothing for the grapes, red, white, and blue, with which he would regale the choir when they made their annual fall visit. I never liked gardening, especially the weeding, but I admired the flowers mother made to bloom. In the meantime our Summer activities were planned and talked about; the picnics at Kitchens' Bridge, the visit in a big hired wagon to the circus, the open trolley ride way up to Willow Grove, the visit to mother's cousins in Andalusia—at least three trolley lines away. Cousin Joe, who I'm afraid was a rather useless ne'er do well, taught me to catch grasshoppers for bait to fish in what I think was the Neshaminey Creek. Aunt Fannie lived on Haines Street in Germantown and had a little candy store. She was a dear soul and lived into her eighties and visited us here in Wyncote not too long ago.

Where the little creek at the bottom of Thomas's meadow broadened into a shallow swamp, we built a dam and had a swimming pool. It gave five or six boys plenty of room to paddle around. Some of the lower streeters would join us occasionally. I remember particularly one of the Irish boys sitting on the bank and, when we had all got out, he took off his clothes and went in. He had been sewed into his underwear in the previous fall and his whole body was actually black with the winter's accumulation. An overhanging rock furnished a diving situation but only a few had the courage to leap from it. It was actually only four feet above the water. Raymond Pierce, our only black boy in the neighborhood, gained fame and reputation by actually diving from the rock. On one side of the pool was a swamp full of nettles, a favorite place into which to throw your at-the-time enemy's clothes. He would have to scramble through the nettles naked to get his clothes. Usually some clothed boy would take pity on the victim and rescue his belongings.

My prime summer excitement was our army. The force varied from five to ten, all about 7 or 8 years old. We had no uniforms except pasteboard helmets and Civil War hats from Christmas soldier suits. We carried two American flags, one Civil War sabre and one very sharp rapier which we were forbidden to take from its scabbard. We usually had a drum to the rhythm of which we more or less kept step. Occasionally the general—I was the general—called "halt—salute the flag" which was done, I suppose, rather noisily. We marched from one end of the street to the other and since there was little or no traffic, we could march with no interruption. A woman sweeping the board-walk might stop and admire, or Mr. Spangler, the mounted policeman from Roxborough who patrolled the village, would stop and smartly salute our flags. "You'll die with a bullet in your belly" he once prophesied to the general. During the Spanish War, our enemy, of course was the Spaniards. One day we chased them into a cornfield where they hid in the carefully built stacks of corn stalks. When we could not find any Spaniards we started leaping upon and knocking down the corn stacks. Suddenly, a shout, and a black man who worked the field came rushing at us with a stick in his hand. Thoroughly frightened, we ran and hid in Leirer's privy. There were about six of us. The general, perhaps the most frightened, bowed his head and exclaimed "let us pray." What I said I have forgotten, but we escaped harm.

In the fall, nutting was a favorite pastime. On the edge of the hemlock and oak forest there were groups of chestnut, butternut and walnut trees. A piece of broomhandle about 18" long with a heavy iron nut or a wrapping of wire at the end was used to throw into the trees to bring down the nuts. These we gathered in a basket or bag and took home, spread them on the shed roof and in due time removed the outer casing and cracked the nuts. Chestnut burrs were unpleasant to handle, the others stained our hands, but the harvest was usually good. The chestnut blight left only dead trees standing at about the turn of the century; the other trees were lumbered during the First World War for rifle stocks. There may still be one or two old walnuts standing and possibly giving of their wealth to the kids of today. A lot of good trees were cut down to make way for the Walnut Lane Bridge about 1900. The bridge was finished in 1908.

Return to school usually meant an epidemic of mumps or measles or both. Our family doctor was Dr. Clossen from Chelten Avenue in Germantown. He had a driver for his little carriage who would pick him up at a designated house at an appointed time. We all loved the old man and made him coffee and sandwiches. I vividly remember his falling asleep in our "room" waiting for his driver. He was a homeopath and dispensed his drugs personally. A later doctor, Dr. Davis gave prescriptions and someone had to walk or bicycle out to Poley's drug store at Walnut Lane and Main Street. Dr. Davis was a Sunday School teacher at our Baptist Church and a somewhat aloof gentleman; he let his beard grow in the winter to protect his throat. My brother, William Davis Aucott, eight years my junior, was named for him. Medicines, by prescription or gift, were somewhat of a rarity. The Food and Drug Act had evidently not been made into a law when I was a kid. Mustard plasters, linseed poultices and various liniments for aches and pains were among the common medications. Laudanum and other opium derivatives could be bought at Leirer's grocery store at the corner, or at Magin's at Naomi Avenue. A bit of laudanum on a piece of cotton and rammed into a tooth cavity quickly relieved the pain. It had many other pain removing qualities which the aspirin of today more safely supplies. On the kitchen dresser sat, all winter, a quart mason jar containing sulphur and molasses and a smaller bottle filled with cod-liver oil. These were to be taken regularly each morning by the spoonful. Vitamins, of course, were unknown. Occasionally a peddler went from door to door, selling various sorts of remedies, usually foul tasting and named from the Indian Chief who had "discovered" them. On Saturday nights, at Chelten and Germantown Avenue (Main Street), a "doctor" and his crew gathered a crowd with a musical "concert" of banjo or guitar and then sold or tried to sell miraculous drugs of one kind or another to the gullible country hicks who were hungry for any "curative compound."

Besides the drug peddlers were the umbrella menders who chanted their mission with the cry "Umbrellas to mend, to mend." They carried bundles of metal ribs and rolls of cloth. Sitting on the edge of the pump platform, they would produce a few tools and some wire and do their thing. How much they charged I have no idea, but a quarter was big money then. And there was the scissors and knives sharpener, pushing a light weight, food pedaled grindstone. There was a grey-bearded man who sold cotton thread, and thimbles, etc. Very occasionally a tinker with his soldering iron would mend a few saucepans and kettles. Each itinerant had a different sing-song to announce his willingness to restore whatever needed it. For us kids there was the hokey-pokey man who sold spoonfuls of shaved ice with a sprinkle of flavoring, from the back of a wagon, or the "hot waffle" man, or the man with "hot buttered corn." These men had wagons to carry their products. The horse usually went along without need of guidance. The milk man—or boy—from Carney's or Brady's milk house delivered his milk from an open kettle with a dipper or ladle into the pitcher held by someone of the household. Pasteurization was unknown or never used and flies and bugs were frequent in the liquid. I must not forget to mention the foreign gentleman who carried lace handkerchiefs, doilies, etc. wrapped in an oil cloth which he would spread out for the edification of the woman of the house. My mother often would make a cup of coffee for her visitor and supply a sandwich or a piece of pie. The rare tramp who protested he was not such but an honest man looking for work, usually got something to eat before moving on. There was very seldom any money given to tramps. Old women sometimes appeared in the guise of peddlers of one thing or another and were treated just as sympathetically. There was always part of a loaf of bread available and eggs were cheap. Every woman baked her own bread and baking day meant luscious smells and hot rolls as well as bread. You could buy bread, fairly fresh, at the store. I remember how my sister and I would quarrel over the "nose" of the long pointed "baker's bread."

The Alfred Crease Elementary School was the alma mater of all the boys and girls of the Hill, except a very few who walked out to the Immaculate Conception on Price Street. The school—now used by the Christian School—was a well built and good looking one story stone building of four rooms. The principal, Miss Mary Conway, taught the 7th and 8th grades, usually; Miss Yocum, the 4th, 5th and 6th grades, and Miss Lizzie, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades. If there were enough 4 year olds for a kindergarten class, another teacher would take it on; otherwise the few little ones would be added to Miss Lizzie's load. Discipline was strict. The farmer boys seldom went past the 6th grade and their attendance and interest was perfunctory and disturbing. There were three of us in the 8th grade when we graduated: Sarah Black from Rittenhouse Street, Herman Huttlin, my bosom friend, and I. I was the only one for many years who went on to High School. Miss Conway expected me to get a "scholarship." I didn't know what she meant. What I remember best was the "grammar." We read "Snowbound" and analyzed and practically memorized at least the first part of it. "The sun, that brief December day, rose cheerless over hills of grey." "Sun" is a common noun, neuter gender, third person, singular number and nominative case, subject of the verb "rose." Each word was "parsed" as if it were Latin. I enjoyed that part of my study of English. It stood me in good stead when I came to study Latin in High School. We went to the back of the room to "recite" while the other grades would do "handi-work." Very little paper was used except in the upper grades; writing was done on slates, with slate pencils, which were washed and wiped by some child at the end of school. Sponges for this were easily obtainable but it was much easier to spit on

the slate and wipe it clean with your sleeve. Sarah would hold her big geography book in front of her and lean against the back of the desk to keep her little belly flat. As I was quicker than the others in knowing the answers I was often banished from the room for inattention. In the morning, when Miss Conway rang the big brass hand bell from the door the pupils would line up outside, the boys in their yard and the girls in theirs (there was no communication between the sexes which were separated by a high board fence). Pen knives had cut peek holes in the fence, but the toilet wall was brick and plaster. Several holes were also cut in the floor of the 8th grade room to facilitate tobacco chewing. I tried a "chaw" once but only once. There was very little smoking on the school premises—cigarettes were too dear at a penny apiece. When we had taken our seats, the sashes separating the rooms were thrown up and, lo, we had an auditorium. Miss Conway would read the Bible and then once a week would seat herself at the old grand piano and beat out a march which never varied. The oldest pupils would start the parade, and each boy or girl to the youngest would follow, up and down the aisles and back to their seats. My sister, four years older, as she passed me standing by my seat would always indicate that my tie was crooked. I always preferred a bow tie but did not learn to tie it properly for many years. We had no athletic program or teams. Once in a great while the boys, forewarned of their proper behavior, were taken into the girls' yard for ring games and very gentle ball tossing. This exercise was supposed to make us aware of the opposite sex. Teachers, then, were as blind as I have found them to be many years later.

Kids had birthdays which were often celebrated at birthday parties at home. Presents were always expected. My mother would crochet a cup and saucer, stiffen it with starch or "plaster of Paris" and I would proudly carry it as my gift. I don't suppose the recipient ever valued such a gift. They would be priceless today. We would eat homemade ice cream and birthday cake and make life miserable for the unfortunate mother until she sent us all home.

Speaking of ice cream—ice was scarce. The ice man with his heavy, dripping wagon would cut and deliver, occasionally, a five-cent piece at the house that could afford it. We boys would jump on the step at the back of the wagon to get the chips of ice left after a cutting. I often went with my cousins, Ernest and Howard, Aunt Mary's boys, who lived opposite to us for a few years, down to the creek with burlap bags to gather icicles from the overhanging rocks. Once we were attacked by boys from Roxborough, and my head was cut by a thrown rock. Like all scalp wounds it bled profusely, and by the time I got home, my head was one mass of blood. My head was washed and spider webs, gathered in George Henshaw's shop (he lived next door) were applied thickly to staunch the blood. I suffered no ill effects what-so-ever. But home-made ice cream was worth all the labor entailed.

My gran'ther Hurst came often to see us. He had long given up his bakery shop and had become night watchman at Button's Mill, opposite where the Germantown High School was built in 1918. Sometimes when I was quite small, mother would push me in the coach to visit her father at the mill and I can remember being lifted to the alarm box and imitating Gran'ther, announce in Cockney English—"Button's Watchman." I also remember a large picture hanging in the boss's office and learning to say, "That's the British lion." (Incidentally my wife's mother worked as a girl in this mill, using a cherry wood table as a cutting board. My father helped to tear down the mill, much later, and used the wide cherry boards to make me a bookcase as a partial wedding present or birthday present. Dorothy, my daughter, has it now.) Gran'ther Hurst had come to the United States just before the Civil War and his stories of the long and stormy voyage thrilled us and frightened us. He went back to England, where mother was born, and brought her and grandmother back with him. Later Uncle John and Aunt Annie were born and soon after, grandmother Hurst died. Mother went to work in a mill when she was eleven and had no more schooling thereafter. But she educated herself, read widely, and learned to play the little organ I remember so well. My father left school early and was learning his trade—carpentering—when he married my mother. They rented a tiny house—still standing, on Nice Ave. where my sister May was born. Shortly after, he built the house, now 631 W. Johnson, where I was born and where May and Bob Greenwood went to live when they were married. Dad learned to play the pipe organ, studied music, and for many years was organist and choir director at the First Baptist Church to which we all belonged. Around 1909–10 Dad built our summer home in Wildwood Crest. My sister Edith was stricken with some kind of palsy and the seashore helped her. She died in 1911, aged thirteen. Dad prospered as a builder in the Crest, and he and mother moved there just before World War One.

To get back: when I was about ten years old we bought (or rented?) and moved to Magin's grocery store, and a new kind of life. The store was mother's job and I helped as I grew old enough. It was a large store and we lived behind and above it. The water supply at 6312 Wissahickon Ave. came out of a large wooden tank on the roof which was filled from the iron pump at the back door. It was one of my jobs to pump the tank full every so often. I used to know how many hundreds of strokes were needed, but I do remember being told to do it quite often. I have no idea how the water was heated for the baths. The indoor toilet was connected somehow with the privy in the back yard to which a grape arbor led between narrow rows of zinnias, marigolds and honeysuckle. I early learned to quote Tennyson, with a different emphasis, "My Lord, how sweet the honeysuckle smells." The danger of pollution of the water supply

by the privy and the manure pit by the stable was ignored. At least none of our family contracted typhoid fever which was more or less endemic in the village and often proved fatal.

I can still see the store as it was in and around 1898. Across the front was a corrugated iron awning—I think it was red—and customers entered one half of a wide double door, causing a bell to ring in the house and my sister or mother or I would hurry to supply the loaf of bread or the can of beans needed. To the right of the door was a glass candy-case with chocolate creams, sour balls, peppermints, etc. neatly arranged in saucers. There were peppermint, hoarhound and lemon sticks, a great favorite at a penny apiece. One of my first jobs was keeping the saucers full for the youngsters who found it hard to choose from the wealth a cent would buy. Waiting on the candy was a good job for me; an older person would become impatient with the "two of them, no, one of them." Behind the candy counter were the shelves holding the canned corn, canned tomatoes, even, later, canned beets, and these shelves needed replenishing too often for my satisfaction. On the floor, leaving little space for feet to stand, were baskets of the fruit of the season, apples, local pears, corn, tomatoes, and further back a huge meat block with ham on it, and strings of bologna and sausages hanging behind it. There was a cutter or slicer, hand worked, of course. There were knives, saws, a cleaver handy for use. Not until Dad built a huge refrigerator did we handle fresh meats, and very little of that. On the floor were little buckets of salt mackerel. When any body ordered a mackerel, the customer was always asked "What else," for fishing a mackerel out of the brine and wrapping it in newspaper always entailed going back into the house and washing the hands. The same procedure was followed on selling a gallon of kerosene or coal oil.

On the left side of the store at the front was a large display window to which little or no attempt to make attractive was considered necessary. One Easter we ensconced a mother hen and her chicks; another time a mother rabbit and three or four young ones were on display. Most of the time an arrangement of the newly packaged goods, just coming into popularity—Quaker Oats, coffee in packages, etc. rather crowded the big white cat who lived in the window. Just inside the window a small space was given over to Sweet Caporal cigarettes or the more expensive Egyptian Straights and, of course, Recruits, the forerunners of the little cigars. Perhaps there were two boxes of cigars and a small choosing of plug tobacco and boxes of snuff. The money drawer was under the counter here. You had to press several different keys to cause it to open to make change. Nearby, under the counter, was a supply of pencils, lead or slate, a few copy books and rulers (foot rulers), which were in fair demand.

On the shelves were boxes of spices, poultry seasoning, special packages of tea or coffee. Tea and coffee usually were stored in large iron or "tin" canisters, black with gold lettering and when someone wanted tea the question always was, "Oolong, green or black or mixed?". Coffee was of one quality and was weighed out, dumped into the vase of the huge grinder and ground fresh by a few turns of the three-foot wheel. Ham, bologna, etc. were sliced as the customer ordered. One old Irish lady, Mrs. Nolan, would drive us frantic by sticking her finger into the boiled ham to see if it was tender with the remark, "Have yez any Hom? I see yez have. And how much is the cabbage?". The bologna, thin and thick, would be carefully wiped down each morning, in case any mould would form during the night. We had a slicer for dried beef which I loved to operate with variations of speed and thickness of cut. I still have a heavy scar which I obtained by failing to stop slicing while I re-arranged the dried beef under the knife. Coffee grinder and meat slicer were, of course, hand propelled. It was many years before the electric machines were invented.

On the floor in front of the counter were the sugar barrel, sacks of flour and bags of salt, sometimes boxes of egg-biscuits, soda crackers and similar comestibles, which almost every customer sampled. On the counter were a few loaves of bread, long, thin and pointed, which were delivered fresh everyday by the Kolb or other bakery wagon. Sometimes, cinnamon buns, sugar or ginger cakes would be delivered; the last named about five inches in diameter and sold for a penny each. There were many more articles of sale occasional or persistent, such as boxes of small dried herring which some of the women provided for their men folk. "My boarders eat them and get thirsty and drink lots of beer. Then they're not hungry for their supper." There were the cereals, oatmeal, loose or packaged Quaker Oats, whole wheat cereals—I remember distinctly when Wheat Biscuits came into our store, and the delight of having them warmed and moist in milk for breakfast instead of the eternal oatmeal.

Three steps led from the store to an open space leading to the house. On the top step stood the molasses barrel. You put the pitcher or jug under the spigot and turned the handle which measured the molasses as it released it. One boy who had forgotten his jug insisted on my using two or three paper bags inside one another. I don't remember ever asking him if he got home safely. It was in this open space at the top of the steps that dad turned a perfectly useless to us "office" into a huge refrigerator that consumed endless quantities of ice but gave space to put meats and perishable goods into over night and Sundays.

We sold no books, magazines, or newspapers and comparatively few patent medicines; many of such were being banned by the health authorities. Wholesalers would call weekly to take orders for staples. One man sold junket tablets and flavorings, etc. There were several with patent medicines "which

were safe." The wholesale grocery man was a great favorite with his pleasing manner and jokes. His two horses and the dray got stuck in the snow one foul day and our horse helped them out. He gave my father a box of wonderful cigars (which dad chewed!).

The store had originally been two connected stores and after we had been there for a few years, we rented that other part, took down the connecting door, and went into the drygoods business. We started off in a small way but when anything in the drygoods and notions line was called for, mother would usually stock it. Women's and children's underwear, men's cotton and "long-woolies" and sacks, bolts of "dress goods," thread and needles seem to me, sixty years later, to predominate. This was mother's realm and if May or I couldn't find the article demanded, she would answer from the back of the house, "Look in a green box around the corner." Chemise or "shimmeys," sometimes corset covers, drawers, both heavy for winter and light flimsy things for summer, black (mostly) stockings sold well. The women were sometimes embarrassed to have me try to wait on them, and mother would be called and laughingly respond with the "open-drawers" request. Handkerchiefs, sunbonnets, men's overalls—white with bibs and many pockets—work socks, darning cotton were not so often called for. Men's hats and caps, neckties and dress shirts were likely to stay on the shelves unsold. High stiff celluloid collars and detachable cuffs were on sale but not frequently sold. When Tom Gaffney or one of his neighboring co-religionists dressed for Mass on Sunday morning, he would put on his Sunday best, go-to-meeting black, heavy wool suit, a white shirt, and a celluloid collar, no necktie, and a hat, usually a derby. Summer weight suits, sport jackets and slacks were unknown in our social realm. If a man, young or old, wore a coat that didn't match his trousers he was poorly dressed. Blue jeans were unknown; overalls, usually white originally, or a patched pair of trousers, with a blue shirt, composed the everyday attire. Nobody dressed up, except for an occasional "party." Boys of my age wore "short pants," long stockings and high buttoned or laced shoes, and long underwear, usually woolen.

When the Blue-Bellers went to Germantown on Saturday evenings, to "spend the money they owe us," they could find a much larger variety at Upper Jones's or Lower Jones's or Rowell's or Allen's which later evolved into prosperous department stores. We bought our suits and hats and shoes at one or another Men's stores along the Avenue. A trip to town via the Pennsylvania Railroad was an expensive treat and seldom indulged in.

A few weeks before the Fourth of July, a large part of the drygoods store was given over to an extensive display of fire works; packages at 5¢ each of "fire crackers," Roman candles, pin wheels, and large and small "salutes" ranging all the way up to 10¢ each, guaranteed to explode very loudly and murderously. We were careful to warn youngsters not to hold them in their hands. A favorite way of shooting off a salute was to light the fuse, put a tin can over it and run. Occasionally some fool-hardy boy would get hurt but none ever seriously. My Uncle Tom, Aunt Delia's husband, who lived next door on Johnson St., carried powder marks on his face until he died because he looked too soon to see if his salute had failed to light. The favorites of the youngsters—they were cheap—were the torpedoes which exploded when thrown against a stone or brick wall. The Roman candles shot rockets when held in the hand, the pin wheels were nailed to a fence post or a tree and were very attractive as they spun their fire. So many times the candles fizzed and the pin wheels refused to revolve. But that was part of the game.

Another national holiday was May 30, Decoration or Memorial Day. Most of the children took geraniums to school and listened to a G.A.R. veteran tell of his real or imagined Civil War experiences. There was a big parade of the veterans and "The Sons of Veterans" culminating for us, at Ivy Hill Cemetery, where salutes were fired over some of the G.A.R. graves. The veterans were comparatively young men, 60–65 years ago, and made a very good showing in their blue uniforms. They were younger men then than the First World War veterans are now. The geraniums were placed on the graves and many of us kids walked to and from the cemetery to help celebrate.

Of course, we had to have a delivery service. I don't know when Billie, a chestnut roan, joined us. He was not young, but the kindest, most willing, long suffering hard worker that could be, the prize beast of Wm. Aucott, Grocer, as the side of the wagon announced. I early learned to drive and went out on one day to collect "orders" and on another day to deliver them. Aunts and uncles, close church friends, and other customers were scattered all over Germantown, Mount Airy, and Fern Rock. It is difficult to see how the small orders paid for the distance traveled and the time consumed, except that the trips gave Billie his needed exercise and the boy driver received no wages. "Farrie" Murray, the village idiot, longed to go with me and usually did so. He could not talk plainly and could not be trusted to do anything but was company.

One spring, of how many I don't know, Dad hitched Billie to a plough, borrowed, of course, and ploughed the fallow field behind the school house. It was a large field—owner unknown, and went from the back fence of the school to the "little woods" and up almost to the Chapel, behind the Rittenhouse brick houses. He also borrowed a harrow, laid boards on it, and took us kids for a delirious ride over the fresh plowed earth. The whole family cut seed potatoes and helped to plant them in one section of the field and planted sugar corn in the other. It was then I learned to hoe potatoes and corn, and I hated it. What kind of crops we got and whether the "farm" was profitable

I never knew. I learned a lot, however; for instance, with no other potato field in miles, how quickly the potato bugs learned about our patch, and how thick and heavy the weeds came to choke the life out of our spuds and corn. I, every week or so, went out with a bucket and collected the little yellow striped beetles—leptinotarsa decemlinesto—Colorado potato beetle, or as we always called them, "potato bugs". We heard about one frantic farmer who sent for "a way to kill potato bugs" at a cost of $1.00. His reply came quickly, "Put the beetle on a brick and hit it hard with another brick." There just didn't seem to be any effective spray or powder to rid us of the pests. And they could defoliate a potato patch in jig time if left alone. Modern growers have many cures. Hoeing corn, that is pulling the dirt up around the roots and cutting down the weeds, was also a back-breaking job, heart-breaking if there was a baseball game in the upper end of our lot. When a heavy rain and wind storm leveled the corn, I had to have help from Dad to righten the stalks and pound the earth around them to keep them growing straight. But that corn was good and made us many a meal of corn-on-the-cob or fritters.

Besides the grocery wagon we had a carriage—a Germantown carriage, seating five or even six. We used it on Sundays to go to church and occasionally to visit Chestnut Hill Park, way up in Chestnut Hill near Bethlehem Pike. The lake is still there, inhabited by gulls and wild geese. We drove down the drive to Grant's monument where Billy would always circle the statue and take us home. On the Wissahickon Drive there were horse-troughs where we would stop and give the horse a drink. A man was stationed at each one to collect a dime or a quarter for service rendered. We could drive up as far as Valley Green, as you can today. In winter we could sleigh up that far. Signs told the drivers not to exceed seven miles per hour. In the early years of the century, bicycles by the hundreds made for traffic problems.

The carriage seemingly needed a lot of care. Frank Lodge had a repair shop on High Street, near Chew, and I often took the carriage there and rode the horse home. On one such trip mother and I got our signals crossed. I went to Thomas' big grocery store and bought a large bag of coffee beans. When I got to Greene St. the bag gave way and the coffee, running down the horse's flanks so suddenly, scared him. He threw me off and galloped toward home. From somewhere I got a box and gathered up the coffee—plus dirt—and carried it home. Mother had been a little worried when the horse arrived home. But when we thoroughly washed the coffee and dried it, I was commended for losing so little of it.

A Germantown carriage differed from a cut-under in that the front wheels could not go under the front of the body. May was driving to Germantown one day and had just reached the bridge over the Penna. R. R. when a train came under it. The noise and smoke scared Billie, who turned sharply, and the carriage upset. A gardener in the Bayard Henry garden came to the rescue and no harm was done that Frank Lodge couldn't fix.

By selling "Larkins" soap I won a western type saddle and henceforth gathered orders by horseback. Billie made a good saddle horse and seemed to enjoy a gallop over the Gtn. streets. I was warned by the police several times for reckless speed and once at least was threatened with arrest. I had some narrow escapes when my steed slipped and fell on the icy streets but always managed to escape injury. I became quite adept as a horseman. We used to put Billie into the Water Works lot for grazing and I would ride him home after dark. A bar across the entrance gate was supposed to prevent his coming home at the wrong time. One evening I forgot to lower the bar, found him munching the grass way down in the dark of the maple trees, mounted and galloped toward home. The bar suddenly loomed ahead and Billie stopped suddenly and threw me over his head. I was unhurt except for gravel burns on my hands and knees. I sent a picture of me on the horse to relatives in England and gave them the impression that I was a real ranch cowboy and often saw Indians. I never heard from them.



Germantown Carriage

There were so many ways in which the world of 1900 differed from that of '71. Everyone knows how the worlds of science, medicine, and life in general have evolved.

Herman and Sarah and I graduated in 1903. No exercises, no parties, no gifts. If I got a diploma it's long lost. Dad took me to the Central High School. I was awe stricken with the beauty and size of it. After registering he took me to the Bijou to see and hear Dumont's minstrels. I had taken or been given a great stride which led to the School of Pedagogy, teaching and later college. Herman died in his teens of T.B. What became of Sarah I never knew or cared. I wish her well. I continued to help in the store, along with Howard White, a few years my senior and a graduate of Girard College. I have very fond memories of Howard who was much like an elder brother. I continued to ride whenever the

opportunity offered. But my childhood days, so beautiful to look back on, were gone forever. I was blessed with kind, considerate, and loving parents and a way of life that seems now like a dream.

We were a healthy family, as a whole, and with the exception of a few minor accidents, seldom needed a doctor. We never quarreled and seldom were scolded. No one in my family amounted to anything, but we were a happy family.

* * * *

Iredell Logan Aucott died in 1971, not long before his 83rd birthday, in good spirits and of sound mind to the end as, I think, he would most have wished. He won many honors along his way, and was beloved by all who knew him.

By his son, Robert Logan Aucott

HISTORICAL NOTES

From "The Scrap Book" compiled by N. K. Ployd, of Germantown, in 1911.

The Congress of the United States in 1793 met in the Germantown Academy, on School street. Thomas Jefferson and Attorney General Randolph occupied a house which stood on the site of the present National Bank of Germantown.

The historical old Chew house, corner of Main and Johnson streets, is in about the same condition that it was during the battle of Germantown.

Thomas Godfrey, the mathematician and the inventor of the quadrant, was born in Germantown in 1704, where he died in 1749.

Christopher Sower, in 1743, printed the first Bible in America at Germantown. It was a quarto edition, Luther's translation, and was three years in press. He also established the first type foundry in America in Germantown, and was the first to make cast iron stoves.

James Logan, born in Ireland in 1674, died at "Stenton," in Germantown, 1751. Logan, the Indian chief, was named for him. He was a friend of Penn, and one of the first Chief Justices of the Supreme Court of the State.

The assessed valuation of real estate in Germantown in 1809 was $502,118, which yielded a return of $2581. The assessed valuation of real estate in the Twenty-second ward for the year 1894 was about $40,000,000, yielding an income of over $600,000.

In 1789 a resolution passed Congress, then in session in New York, to make Germantown the capital of the United States. A slight amendment caused the resolution to lay over until next session, when Washington was selected.

Germantown was incorporated as a borough town by a patent from William Penn, in England, 1689.

The first protest against slavery in America was made by the German Friends in Germantown, in 1688.

The Mennonites' first meeting house was built here in 1708, on the site of the present church, which was erected in 1770.

The German Reformed Church, on the site of the present Market Square Church, was erected in 1733.

The First Presbyterian Church, on the site of Association Hall, was built in 1812.

St. Michael's Lutheran Church was built about 1742, before a Lutheran church was erected in the city proper.

The first Episcopal church in Germantown, St. Luke's, was erected in 1819.

The Germantown Academy, on School street, was built in 1760.

The Friends erected their meeting house in 1705.

Christopher Sower printed a newspaper in Germantown in 1739.

The Soldiers' National Cemetery is situated on Haines street and Limekiln pike. It is very beautiful and contains the remains of 1700 Union soldiers. Ivy Hill Cemetery, on Mt. Airy avenue, is another beautiful city of the dead. The Haines Street Methodist grave-yard contains the remains of hundreds of the old Methodist families, the Harveys, Harmers, Regers, Benners, Thomases, Keysers, Bowmans, Shrivers, Becks, Fraleys, McCarthurs and Roaches being among the number. Fifty heroes who fought in the Revolution, Mexico and the Rebellion are sleeping in this ancient cemetery.

St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Main and Church streets, was organized in 1743. The grave-yard contains the remains of many of the American soldiers who fell in the battle of Germantown.

The Dunkard Church, on Main street, was organized in 1709. The cemetery contains the remains of many of the old-time residents, Peter Keyser, Godfrey Lehman, Judge Lynd and the Fox and Longstreth families being among the number.

The members of the Reger family are interred in the Haines street grave-yard. The grave lot contains an ancient box bush.

Yesterday and Today

CURTIS SISCO IS NEW OWNER OF C. A. ROWELL DEPARTMENT STORE

By HELEN M. COMLY



Photo by Geo. E. Stauffer, Jr.

C. A. Rowell Department Store
Corner of Germantown and Chelten Avenues

ALWAYS progressive, the firm of C. A. Rowell has again taken a step forward.

Mr. Rowell came to Germantown in 1919. He already had a wide business experience elsewhere and had attracted considerable attention in the shirtwaist era when he advertised his store at 1609–1615 West Susquehanna Avenue as "the greatest shirtwaist store in Philadelphia."

When he passed away in 1931 he, by Will, converted his entire estate into a trust known as the "Clarence A. Rowell and Grace Rockwell Rowell Memorial Fund." The income from this fund Mr. Rowell directed "is to be paid annually to certain Germantown institutions." By this action he felt the money he made in Germantown would continue to work for Germantown year after year indefinitely.

An important advance was made by the C. A. Rowell Store in 1934 when a new front was constructed as well as the installation of modern fixtures, cases, carpets and redecorating throughout.

For the past several years many have felt Germantown's shopping district has been slowly deteriorating, including Rowell's.

In January of 1974 a new chapter was begun. Curtis Sisco purchased the name and inventory of C. A. Rowell from Wanger Bros. a Chicago retail chain. He rents the building from the Rowell estate.



Photo by Eugene Amen Ra

Curtis Sisco, President of C. A. Rowell

Residents of Germantown are fortunate to have the new owner in our midst. He also has risen by his own efforts and is conscious of and interested in the unique

historical past of Germantown Avenue and vicinity.

Mr. Sisco was the youngest of twelve children of a Birdsnest, Virginia sharecropper and came to Philadelphia at the age of nineteen after graduating from high school. He spent four years in the United States Army, attended a tailoring and design school and in 1962 joined the Philadelphia Police Department. He was assigned traffic duty in the Germantown business district.

During his tour of duty on the force he won two official commendations, one a Hero Award. He expected to make a career of police work but in 1968, while on highway patrol, he was injured in a motorcycle mishap and as he puts it "an accident changed my life—it forced me out on my own."

While on the force Mr. Sisco spent his off-time serving as a clerk in a menswear store in West Philadelphia and when it came up for sale he purchased it using his modest savings which, with his pension, enabled him to "get started."

His fine record as an officer, his determination and promise in the retail field helped him get a bank loan which was guaranteed by the Small Business Administration. Sisco Menswear did well and nineteen months later he purchased a second store. That also prospered.

In 1972, a group of four stores on Germantown Avenue directly across Chelten Avenue from Rowell's were foreclosed. The bank looked for a purchaser and found Mr. Sisco. In July of 1972, he bought the four stores plus second-floor office space. He opened his third menswear store at 5703 Germantown Avenue and rented out the other facilities. In August, 1973 he sold one of his West Philadelphia properties. Then came the Rowell opportunity.

Mr. Sisco is very positive in what he hopes to accomplish. Quality merchandise is being stocked to continue to attract Germantown residents as well as many from adjoining districts. There is already a new aliveness evident in the entire store. He plans to make Rowell's a community hub, with space for public meetings. Also, to involve himself in Germantown affairs. He knows there is much to be done but feels the section has stabilized and has an unlimited future.

Mr. Sisco was honored by the Menswear Retailers of America as its minority businessman of 1972 and his purchase of Rowell's puts him in a class by himself, according to the United States Department of Commerce's Office of Minority Business Enterprise.



Photo by Geo. E. Stauffer, Jr.

C. A. Rowell Germantown Avenue entrance—partially seen in other view.

Mr. Sisco has three children, two boys and a girl. His wife, the former Artrianna Griffin, who died very recently, was for the past five years Vice President and Secretary of Sisco's Menswear, Inc., C. A. Rowell and C. S. Enterprises, Inc., an advertising firm and holding company for the stores.

His advice to young people "Trust in God, work hard and think big." All three are very important. If you trust in God and work hard, the opportunity will come."

GUIDE BOOK TO HISTORIC GERMANTOWN

This very popular and informative book has been reprinted for the fifth time. It is of course by Charles F. Jenkins, well-known Germantown historian. One page has been added listing changes that have occurred in the area covered since its original publication in 1902.

Copies can be purchased at the Society's Library, 5208 Germantown Avenue (open on Tuesdays) or by sending order to GERMANTOWNE CRIER, 5208 Germantown Avenue, Zone 19144.

Checks should be made payable to the Germantown Historical Society.

Price is $2.00—please add 25c to cover postage and handling.

OLD CHURCHES

By Josephine Ritter

Part 3

Sources:
Watson's Annals
Franklin's Autobiography
John T. Faris, Old Churches & Meeting Houses in and Around Philadelphia
Grant Miles Simon, Beginnings of Philadelphia
Historic Philadelphia, published by the American Philosophical Society
The Story of Christ Church, in Philadelphia.

"And to men's hearts, this ancient place endeared."
—Matthew Arnold.

The Roman Catholic Churches

Of all the thirteen colonies only Pennsylvania permitted members of the Romish Church to worship publicly. The first reference to a mass was in a letter to George Keith in London from an Episcopal minister, John Talbot, of Philadelphia, dated 1708. There is no evidence that at that time there was a house or chapel set apart for worship but Jesuit missionary priests came here from Maryland to minister to the spiritual needs of the few professed Catholics. Among the missionaries was the Rev. Joseph Greaton, who may have come as early as 1720–21. He did not however establish residence here until some time between 1729 and 1733. The precise date of the founding of Old St. Joseph's in Willings Alley between 3rd. and 4th Streets is not known but it appears that the building was completed in 1733 or 34. The sight of a "Romish Chapell" was of great concern to many Philadelphians and particularly to Lt. Governor Patrick Gordon. Some thought it a violation of the laws of England and the Provincial Council discussed it in formal session. Strange as it may seem, the Baptists stood up for the Catholics in the right to worship as they chose. Religious liberty being one of the things granted in Penn's Charter, the Catholics rested their case on that and won.

The first congregation numbered about thirty-seven, Irish and German, for the most part tradesmen or servants. The site of the chapel back of Walnut Street below 4th was on the outskirts of the city. There were few houses west of 4th. St. and to the south lay meadows, Willings Alley being as yet non-existent. Not much is recorded of the first little church. It was probably only 18′ by 26′ or 28′ long in an east west direction. Mention has been made of fine music so there must have been an organ and crimson velvet cushions and gold fringed cloth adorned the pulpit. By 1757 the congregation had so increased that little building was torn down and replaced by one 46′ by 50′. This second chapel continued to serve its members until 1821, when 27″ were added to its length. Germans now outnumbered the Irish and other groups were coming, the most colorful of which and the most tragic were the Acadians. Again lines from Evangeline:

"Under the humble walls of the little Catholic churchyard!
In the heat of the city, they lie, unknown and unnoticed."

Several detailed descriptions of this building exist. The Rev. Jacob Duche, who visited Father Harding in his little Carthusian cell in 1772 called it an "old Gothic Chapel." Thomas Lloyd wrote in 1799 that it was "not in any particular of striking architecture style," while the Rev. Adam Marshall, writing to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, said, "it had exteriorly more the appearance of a stable than of a church." It was a one story brick building having a broken pitched roof supported by arches. Within the keystones of the arches were decorated with cherubs. Thomas Lloyd also described the altar as "neat approaching even to elegance and its ornaments in a style of execution by no means disgracing the state of the arts in our city at the time of its erection." Over the altar hung a painting of the Madonna by Benjamin West. There is a tradition that Seneca Indians converted by the French attended St. Joseph's as well as some negro slaves for whom special services called Evening Hymns were held. Then in the 1790s arrived refugees from Santo Domingo, both white and black.

The congregation having outgrown its quarters, in 1763, it was decided to build St. Mary's on land on the west side of 4th Street at Walnut in part of the burial ground. It was a part of the old Grant from John, Thomas and Richard Penn to Edward, Joseph and William Shippen in 1744. Money for the purchase of the ground, 328 pounds, was donated by eighty-three members of St. Joseph's. A total of 1,315 pounds was subscribed to the building fund by 1763. While most of the underwriters were Irish,

there were thirty Germans and seventeen French. One of the largest contributors was George Gordon Meade, merchant and great-grandfather of the Civil War General. This church was intended to be an appendage to St. Joseph's and in 1765, the Superior of the Jesuits designated it Mission number one. To insure Jesuit control, the deed to the church and lot was conveyed to Father Robert Harding, who upon his death willed it to his successor. An English Jesuit, Father Harding arrived in this country in 1732, labored in Maryland and came to this city in 1750 to succeed Father Greaton. His zeal in promoting the Roman Catholic faith in Philadelphia was almost equaled by his active interest in the civil and social problems of the city. He was one of the subscribers to the Pennsylvania Hospital and a member of the Philosophical Society. As one of the founders of the Society of the Sons of St. George, in 1772, to assist Englishmen in distress, he was probably the only Catholic member. His politics leaned toward the side of Liberty. Jacob Duche wrote of him that he appeared "a decent well-bred Gentleman, much esteemed by all denominations." When he died in 1772 he was truly mourned and his funeral was attended by most of the prominent citizens and clerics of Philadelphia. He was buried in St. Mary's near the altar.

Much of St. Mary's history in the eighteenth century is unrecorded. Archbishop Carroll of Baltimore visiting Philadelphia in 1789 thought it "handsome and large." To Moreau de St. Mery, it appeared an "ordinary house with a large door in front and another on the side." Perhaps this was because it lacked a steeple, but in this period of Anti-popery Catholic churches were designed, externally at least, to be as inconspicuous as possible. St. Mary's was the church for the fashionable and the well-to-do. John Barry, George Meade, Thomas Fitzsimmon and Stephen Moylan were some of its members who were in Washington's army. John Adams who attended vespers on October 9th, 1774, wrote in his diary "the scenery and the music were so calculated to take in mankind that I wonder the Reformation ever succeeded." Washington was also among the company at St. Mary's that afternoon. The Continental Congress attended service there on four occasions. First in September 1777, at a Requiem Mass for General Du Coudray, a French officer who was drowned in the Delaware while en route to join Washington. Next on July 4th, 1779, at the invitation of the French Minister Plenipotentiary, the President and Congress heard the chanting of the Te Deum in celebration of the anniversary of Independence. The third time, May 8th, 1780, was for a Requiem Mass for Don Juan de Miralles, a Spanish agent, who died at Washington's headquarters in Morristown. A witness wrote of this "I found there not only papists but Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Quakers, etc. The two chaplains of Congress were amongst the rest. I confess I was pleased to find the minds of people so unfettered with the shackles of bigotry." The last time was on Sunday, November 4th, 1781, when a mass of thanksgiving was celebrated for the victory at Yorktown. The Congress and the Supreme Executive Council of the Assembly of Pennsylvania were present by the invitation of the Minister of France.

The congregation of St. Joseph's was made up largely of simple but devout people, the exception being Joseph Bonaparte, who having a winter residence in Philadelphia, had a pew there.

The cemetery in which St. Mary's stood was expected to serve for a very long time. The yellow fever epidemics had not been foreseen. In 1793 alone two hundred and eighty-one persons were buried there. The three priests, Fathers Fleming, Graessl and Keating, worked night and day serving the sick of all faiths. One after another they fell ill and called upon Dr. Rush. Only Father Keating survived to resume again the duties of the Parish.

Late in the 1700s two other Catholic churches were established. In 1788 a number of Germans seceded from St. Mary's for linguistic reasons and built Holy Trinity Church at 6th and Spruce Streets. The other also an offshoot of St. Mary's, was St. Augustine's, completed in 1801.

St. George's Methodist Church

In the shadow of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge stands St. George's, the first Methodist Church in Philadelphia. This was not the first place of worship for Methodists but it was their first church building. Methodism had its beginning when George Whitefield came to this city in 1739. This edifice, on the southeast corner of 4th and New Streets was begun in 1763 by Dutch Presbyterians on land acquired from Dr. Shippen. The membership was poor and according to Dr. Franklin consisted mostly of recent emigrants. They overextended themselves moneywise and when they failed to receive recognition from the German Reformed Synod they named the church St. George and applied to be taken into the fold of the Church of England. This too was denied, so in 1769 the building which had thus far cost 2,000 pounds, was sold at auction for 700. Joseph Pilmoor, under whose direction the Methodists obtained it, wrote in his journal "While the public auction was in progress a gentleman's son who was non compis mentis stopped in the auction room and bought it. His father wanted to be off the bargain but could not without proving the insanity of his son. Rather than to attempt this, he was willing to lose 50 pounds by the job." "Thus," continued Pilmoor, "The Lord provided for us, our way was made plain and we resolved to purchase the place which we did for six hundred fifty pounds." The name St. George was kept though it was not in Methodist tradition. The building was nothing but a shell eighty-three by fifty-two feet. Permanent improvements were soon under way and the church fathers had the good taste to use St. Paul's as a model for the chancel and pulpit. In the beginning it was lighted by candles and heated by charcoal stoves and

footwarmers. The candelabra and footwarmers may still be seen.

Joseph Pilmoor was an able man who served the cause of Methodism here, and in Ireland and Scotland. After two years in England he returned to Philadelphia and entered the ministry of the Episcopal Church of which until 1784, Methodism was a part. He became rector of St. Paul's, the foster mother of the Methodists and is buried under the chancel. He dedicated St. George's on December 3rd, 1769. On December 8th, he held intercessions, the beginning of the New Year's Eve watch night service.

Francis Asbury is the father and patron saint of the Methodists. In 1771 at age twenty-six, being a travelling preacher he volunteered and was accepted by John Wesley to come to America. This, while receiving little notice at the time, proved of great importance. Out of it came, through the leadership of one man, the largest protestant denomination in the United States and by his circuit riding plan the new country was made aware that God was in the wilderness as well as the settlements. Francis Asbury's first sermon in the new world was delivered from the pulpit of St. George's, where he served as pastor from 1771 until 1774 at which time he resumed travelling from place to place, preaching as he went. In 1784, he was consecrated the first Bishop of the Methodist Church. He died in 1816 and many things used by him are preserved at St. George's.

History says that General Washington wrote to Robert Morris asking that $50,000 be sent so his starving and ragged soldiers at Valley Forge might be paid. Morris went to the homes of his friends, calling them from their beds, and collected the money. He told them he had just come from an all night prayer meeting where prayers were offered that God would open the hearts of the people to furnish money for the troops at Valley Forge that the army might be saved. Evil days were to come. When the British occupied Philadelphia the church was used by them as a school for dragoons and it was not unusual for an officer on horseback to ride up the front steps into the church. Later it served them as a hospital.

After the war it was quickly restored and continued to serve its community. It was from St. George's that the African Methodist Church got its start. In 1784, Richard Allen, who had bought his freedom two years before, was licensed to preach there and in 1816 he became the first Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

St. George's prospered through most of the nineteenth century. It had begun with a membership of one hundred which increased to over 3,000 but in 1925 the changing neighborhood caused it to drop to 111. Then the building itself was threatened. The Delaware River Bridge in the name of progress was demanding right of way over the land on which the church stood. Demolition seemed at hand. However through the efforts of Bishop Thomas B. Neely, a native Philadelphian and dedicated groups interested in preserving historic sites the powers that be were convinced that St. George's Church should be spared. The engineers shifted the plan by fourteen feet so the church still stands and has become a shrine for all Methodists of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, housing many relics of its distinguished past.

The story of its churches is the history of Philadelphia. Every sect has contributed to the making of a great nation. Without religion and the strong men who upheld it this country would never have attained its high place among the nations of the world.

This is the final part of Mrs. Ritter's very interesting article "Old Churches." Editor

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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, Business and Family	10.00
Annual	7.50
Junior (under 18), Teacher, or Librarian	3.00

Interested persons are cordially invited to obtain further information by writing to the chairman of the Membership Committee, Miss Ann Naile Phelps.

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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.

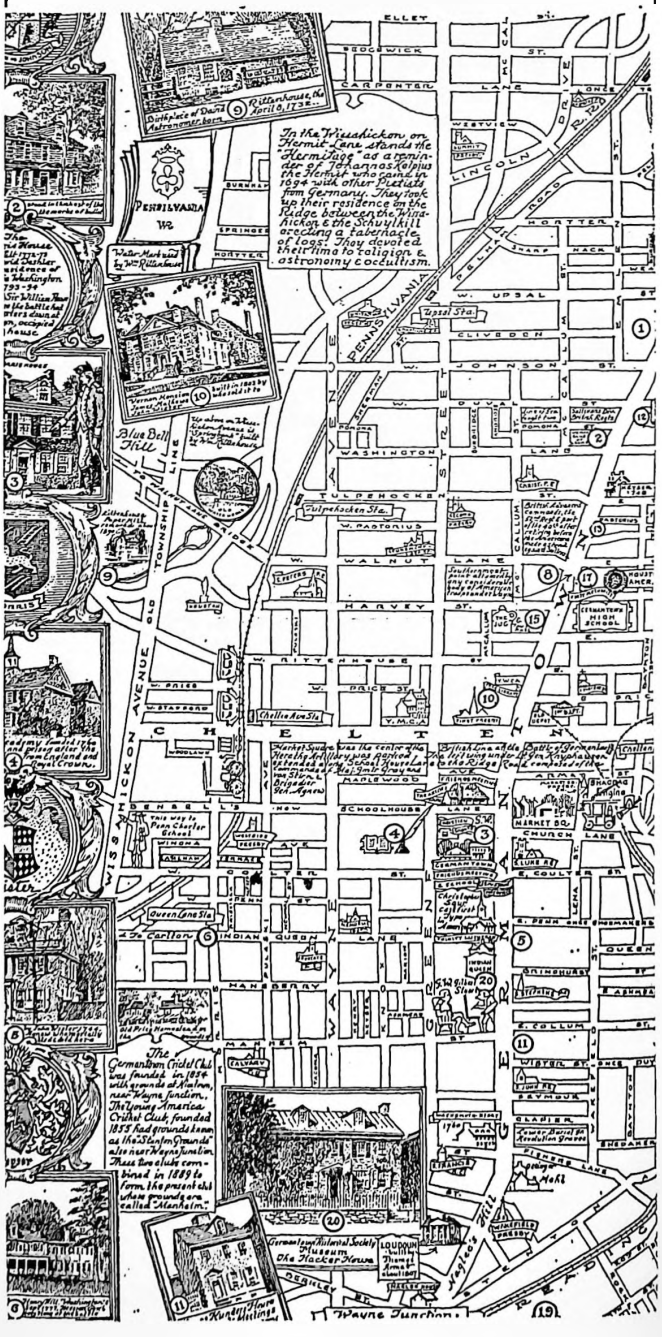
Size 19 by 25 inches
Price: Black and white, $5.00
Beautifully hand-colored, $30.00

The map may be ordered from:

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Add 25 cents to cover postage and handling



REMINISCENCES

By WILLIAM H. EMHARDT

Interesting Budget of Jottings Concerning Men and Things



THE OLD BARR HOUSE
Which formerly stood at the intersection of Main street and Chelten avenue.

CHELTEN avenue was opened about 1855 westerly from Germantown avenue to Plank road (now Wayne avenue), through the farm occupied by George Barr, which extended from Germantown avenue to where Morris street now is. The Barr house was on Germantown avenue, about the centre of Chelten avenue, a board fence extending to Channon's house, where Trower's building now is.

Barr's barn was on ground in Chelten avenue in front of the First Presbyterian Church, with a spring on the northeast end of it. The walls of the barn were of stone, and the mortar was of clay and straw. The spring was later used by Piscator Langstroth for a large fishpond. The front wall of the First Presbyterian Church is built on top of the spring, Portland cement and large stone having been used for the foundation.

A large pear and apple orchard was on the Barr farm, which supplied all the boys and others in the neighborhood with the fruit.

Where the Trower building now is lived Joseph Channon, who manufactured the celebrated Germantown lampblack in the rear of his dwelling. In 1869 the Channon property was sold to the Germantown Saving Fund, which erected the present Trower building and occupied by them until 1883, when they removed to their present site at School House lane and sold the other property to John S. Trower.

At the foot of a large chestnut tree on the Barr farm was another large spring, which was utilized about 1863 by the Germantown Skating Park, situate about Rittenhouse and Morris streets eastwardly. The Chelten Avenue Station of the Pennsylvania Railroad was built on this spring.

The rear end of this farm was used by the residents for a "Horse Heaven." Dead animals were hauled there for the crows to eat. The lot adjoining, eastward from Pulaski avenue, between School lane and Chelten avenue, was known as "Coulter's Horse Heaven," or Seven Acre Lot.

From Pulaski avenue to Township line, on Chelten avenue, was known as Stokes' Apple Orchard. The boys would get apples by the three-bushel bag to make cider for themselves.

On the Barr farm, on the present site of the Presby-

terian Church, George Barr had a large cider press, which was worked by horse power.

William K. Fry owned the premises to the south of the Barr farm. His home was in the present Potter & Seymour building. Where the Conner building now is he had a one-story frame tin shop. He refused to sell the site of the tin shop, giving as a reason that his sleeping apartment was in the attic of his dwelling, and the erection of a building on that corner would intercept his view of the Main street to Tulpehocken street. His property extended on the south side of Chelten avenue to nearly Wayne avenue.

Wayne avenue was originally laid out as a plank road. The road was planked on both sides, with a ridge of earth in the centre. This road started at Tulpehocken street, running thence to Manheim, thence to Pulaski avenue, thence to what is now Seventeenth street, thence to the Lamb Tavern road, near the dog pound, and thence to Broad street at the Punch Bowl Tavern. Plank road had four toll-gates, one at Rittenhouse street, later moved to School House lane; one at Manheim street and Pulaski avenue, kept by —— Kooker for many years; and one at Seventeenth street and Westmoreland avenue, kept by Martin Ulrick, who is now living at Tullytown, Bucks county, with his family. He was born October 19, 1819.

A horse car road was built from Chelten avenue depot immediately east from the First Presbyterian Church, along Chelten avenue west to Plank road; then followed the line of said road to Lamb Tavern road thence to Broad street past the old Punch Bowl Tavern to Broad street, thence to Columbia avenue, connecting with the Tenth and Eleventh streets road. Later this road was used for a dummy road, but, not proving a success, the tracks were finally removed.

About 1859 or 1860 Benjamin Langstroth purchased all the ground on the north side of Chelten avenue, from Germantown avenue to what is now Morris street, and erected most of the residences which adorn that street on the north side.

Chelten avenue on the east side was not opened until some years later, but prior to 1860 the house on the site of Chelten avenue was owned by Jesse Large, whose farm extended east to Morton street, through which Chelten avenue east was opened. Next on the north was Kitty Bowman's home, which extended to and included the alley next to Reiber's saloon, and extended east to the railroad.

In the 60's there was a small one-story brick building on the north corner of Germantown and Chelten avenue, about 15 by 25 feet, occupied as the Germantown Post Office.

The corner of Price street and Germantown avenue was where the steam cars to Germantown stopped. No depot building nor pavement twelve feet wide on Germantown avenue in those days. On the inner side was a small turntable, used to turn the engine and tender. Although small in comparison with the locomotive of to-day, the turntable could not hold engine and tender at one time. The only shed for passenger cars was about opposite Bowman street. It was a very primitive affair—a few posts covered by boards, commencing about six feet from the ground, and roofed over. A board walk parallel with Price street on the south side of the railroad, about two hundred feet long, led to the cars. The waiting room was in a tavern on the south side of the board walk.

The next building on the south was Krahl's fat and candle factory. The candles were tallow moulded and dips. At that time there was neither gas, coal oil nor electric light. Penny dips, fluid lamps or whale or lard oil lamps were the only light.

Water was obtained from wells and cisterns. Later, however, the Fallens invested money belonging to the Queen of Spain to establish a water works. They made a reservoir on Paper Mill run or Crab Creek, between Walnut lane and Washington lane, near the Township line. A pumping engine on the east side pumped the water to a tank or stand pipe erected on a lot at the east corner of Tulpehocken and Wayne streets, which forced the water to the reservoir on Allen's lane, Mt. Airy from where the town of Germantown was supplied with water.

Wingohocking creek had a number of dams along its course. Belfield avenue between Church lane and Shoemaker's lane, or East Penn street, is on the site of Mehl's dam, which was used to run the mill of Jacob Mehl, next to the Rock House on Penn street. The next dam north was south of Chelten avenue, east from Morton street, and was called the Tumbling dam. Next north was Jaggar's or Kelly's dam, north from Chelten avenue and Magnolia street. A race course led from this dam along Morton street to supply the Sheffield Mills, situate on west side of Morton street, near Church lane. These mills were destroyed by fire on July 11, 1850.

In 1850 there were very few streets in Germantown. The north and south streets were Germantown avenue, Wissahickon avenue and Stenton avenue, formerly called Township line. The easterly streets were Washington lane, Methodist lane (now Haines street), Centre street, Church lane, Shoemaker's lane, Duy's lane and Fisher's lane (now Logan street).

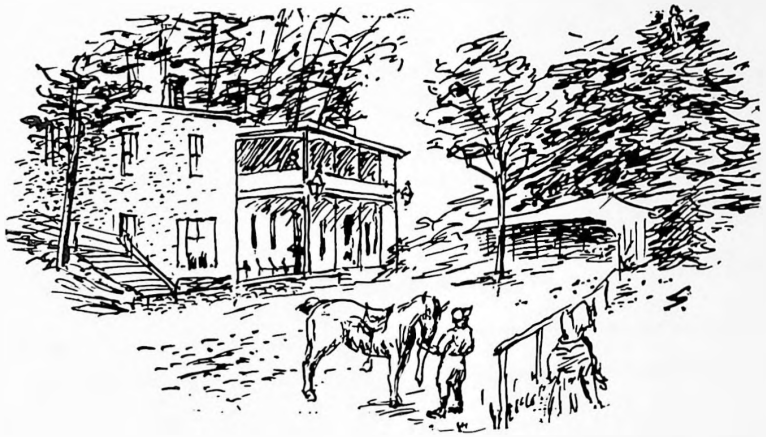
On the west side were Franklin street, Washington lane, Walnut lane, Roop's lane (now Harvey street), Poor House lane (now Rittenhouse street), School House lane, Indian Queen lane and Bockius lane (now Manheim street).

On the property from Wayne avenue to Wissahickon avenue and School House lane to Queen street there were not more than six houses.

From Morris street to King street, between Coulter and Queen, was Coulter's swamp lot, where the boys used to shoot reed birds. Meadow larks and woodcock were also often shot in that neighborhood.

Gardette's and Blight's woods were the hunting grounds for squirrels, flickers and robins.

At the corner of Queen street and Wissahickon avenue was Coulter's dam, on the Limekiln lot.



Indian Rock Hotel on Wissahickon

SEVENTY AND SEVENTEEN

Ye look askance at wrinkles,
  Ye flout at locks of gray,
And miss the tint on cheek and lip
  That Time hath swept away;
Yet oft a sacred beauty
  Within the heart is seen
That appertains to seventy
  More than to gay seventeen.

One knows what's worth pursuing,
  The other can't discern,
One knows what's worth possessing,
  The other has to learn,
And the cost of such experience
  Is heavy oft I ween,
'Tis the heritage of seventy
  But not of gay seventeen.

One dreams that flattery is truth,
  And Cupid is not blind,
The other finds even gratitude
  Is rare among mankind;
And so it skills to save itself
  From disappointments keen,
And seventy years are wiser found
  Than beautiful seventeen.

Call not Old Age unlovely,
  Nor deem its precepts stale,
Nor say it lingers all too long
  Within this shadowy vale;
It hath some hidden treasure
  Despite its furrow'd mien,
And seventy years may happier be
  Than were the gay seventeen.

If God ordains you longer
  In this fair way to stay,
Give thanks for His permission,
  And smiling hold your way;
Nor overlook the duties
  That cluster round the scene,
For seventy hath its mission here,
  As well as gay seventeen.

May 10th, 1864.

From an old newspaper clipping

COME TO MAXWELL MANSION ON SEPTEMBER 21st

The Maxwell Mansion will give their Annual Craft Show and sale on the grounds at Greene and Tulpehocken Streets on Saturday, September 21st.

10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.—No admission charge.

Over twenty craftsmen, potters, weavers, jewelers, etc. Demonstrations of craft techniques. Also small antiques, plants and garden bulbs. Outdoor cafe.

* * *

Interviewer: "Do you believe that the younger generation is on the road to perdition?"

Octogenarian: "Yes, sir; I've believed that for nigh onto sixty years!"

* * *

Always listen to the opinions of others; it probably won't do you any good, but it will them.

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TO OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

The Germantown Historical Society will hold its second Wine Tasting Party on Sunday, September 22, 1974 from 4:00 to 7:00 P.M. in the Museum's garden at the rear of 5214 Germantown Avenue—**rain or shine**.

Last year's party was well attended and comments have been most complimentary. Do come this year and bring your friends.

Please make check payable ($1.50 per couple) to Germantown Historical Society and send **promptly** to 5214 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia—19144. Attendance must be limited to 150 persons.

Cards will be sent to members as usual.

Publications of the Germantown Historical Society

Magazine

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

Nearly all of the past numbers of the CRIER are currently available. An assortment of available back issues may be had for $10.50, postage paid.

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