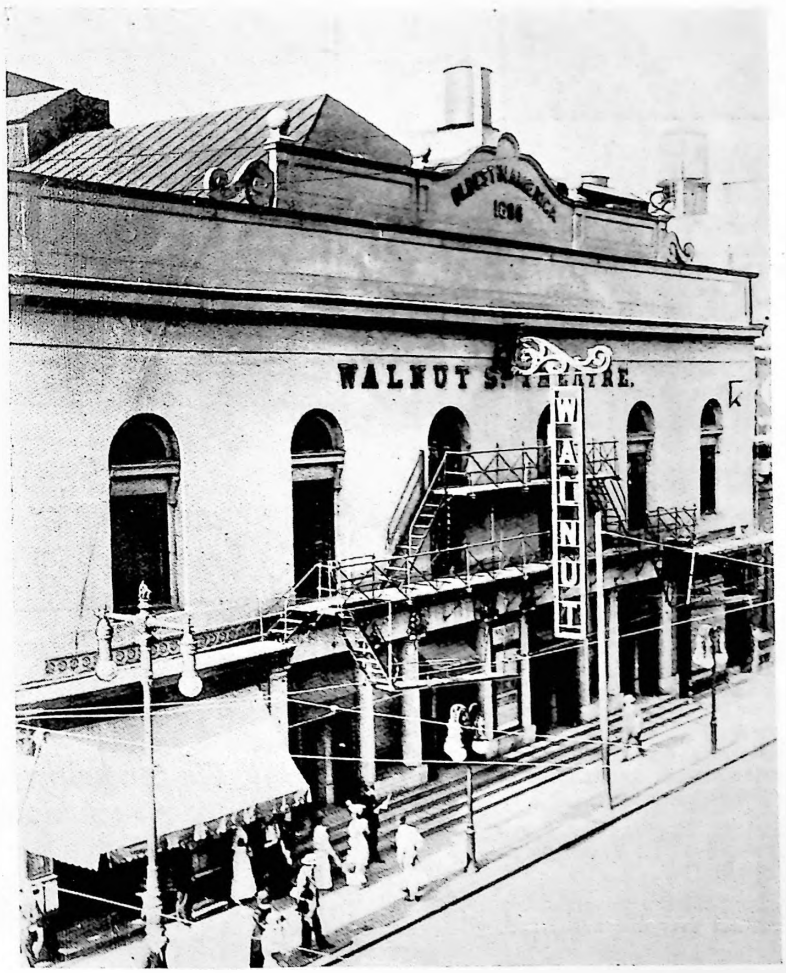
GERMANTOWNE CRIER



WALNUT STREET THEATRE

See Derek Naabe's Article, Page 14

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 1 **FIFTY CENTS** **WINTER 1970**



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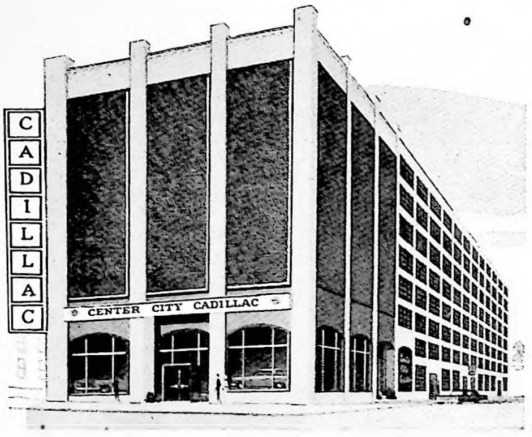
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The Germantown Historical Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to sustaining and promoting the cultural traditions of Germantown—through the preservation of historic landmarks; the maintenance of a museum of relics, a costume museum, and a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

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GERMANTOWNE CRIER



Volume 22 WINTER 1970 Number 1

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Germantown Historical Society
5214 Germantown Avenue
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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, March 19, 1970—8:30 P.M.

Speaker: Robert McLean III

Subject: Philadelphia Bicentennial 1976

Mr. McLean is vice president administrator of the Bicentennial Corporation.

Wednesday, April 8, 1970—1:30 P.M.

Trinity-Lutheran Church, 5300 Germantown Ave. Entrance on Queen Lane

Annual Card Party for the Morris House. Donation of $6.00 may be sent to Mrs. Richard Wilson, 3021 Midvale Ave., Phila. 19129—checks payable to Sabena G. Wilson, Treasurer.

Thursday, April 16, 1970—8:30 P.M.

Trinity-Lutheran Church, Germantown Avenue and Queen Lane, Germantown. Entrance on Queen Lane. Parking on lot west of the church.

Speaker: Charles A. Brower from the Liquor Control Board

Subject: The Role of Alcoholic Beverages in Colonial Times

Thursday, June 4, 1970—7:30 P.M.

Germantown Historical Society Museum, 5214 Germantown Avenue, Gtn. at rear of house.

Annual Garden Party, followed by a meeting in the parish hall of Trinity-Lutheran Church.

Speaker: To be announced.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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

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

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

Mrs. Arthur E. Weil
3912 Netherfield Road
(Telephone: VIctor 3-6089)

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.

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REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

By JUDGE HAROLD D. SAYLOR

THE YEAR 1969 was a good one for the Society. The usual activities were carried on. The Board of Managers met regularly as in past years. The Crier was published quarterly for the 20th year. The membership meetings were held at Aulenback House or Trinity Lutheran Church Parish House as heretofore and the speakers were interesting.

The finances of the society are in good order. Our Treasurer, Mr. Wallace S. Martindale, Jr., has been kept quite busy during the year collecting dues and rents, writing checks, paying tax and utility bills, keeping track of the various checking and savings accounts which the society maintains and reporting from time to time to the managers. There is a great amount of detail to attend to and accurate records must be carefully kept for the separate funds of the society. As the owner of nine old Germantown houses, not one of which is less than 160 years old, the society must keep them in repair, collect rents, etc. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to Mr. Martindale for keeping watch over our finances and handling them so well.

The contract for the reconditioning of the interior of the Clarkson-Watson House at 5275-77 Germantown Avenue, which Mrs. Lawrence M. C. Smith gave to the Society, has been let and work is proceeding. When finished the result will be that the society's Costume Committee headed by Mrs. J. Bradford Ritter will have adequate and properly equipped quarters for its interesting collection. When this house is occupied the Bechtel House at 5226 will likely be occupied by rent-paying tenants.

A new roof is needed for the Baynton House at 5208 Germantown Avenue, which was purchased by the Society over a decade ago. A foundation has given the Society $2000 toward the cost of the new roof, which is now being placed on the house. It is hoped that the $800 additional needed to pay for the roof will be in hand when the bill is presented.

The museums at 5214 and 5218 Germantown Avenue are in first class condition now due to the untiring efforts of Captain Edmund S. Crenshaw, Jr. and Mrs. M. Bacon Bostwick, who has done so much work and contributed funds necessary to place our collection of relics, toys and textiles in those properties and in the Von Trott Annex at the rear of 5208 Germantown Avenue. We are also grateful to Mr. Winters, the caretaker of the Conyngham-Hacker House at 5214, for the considerable work he has done in repairing the interior of that building.

All four houses of the Society at 6043, 6505, 6507 and 6514 Germantown Avenue are in good condition, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Frank J. Olinger, Chairman of the House Committee, and rents are collected regularly from the tenants who occupy them.

The members' meetings held during 1969 were well attended considering the hazards now existing at night on Germantown streets. Interesting talks have been given by well-informed guest speakers whose services were procured by Mr. Henry J. Magaziner, Chairman of the Meetings Committee. Mrs. Alfred M. North, Chairman of the Hospitality Committee, has kindly arranged for the refreshments served after the meetings.

It was pleasant having word from sister historical societies at the meeting of our members on November 20, 1969, at Aulenbach House. Our guest speaker was Dr. Fenton Russell, whose subject was "Triumph Over Pain," the story of the discovery of ether as an anesthetic. Dr. Russell is active in historical preservation in the Goschenhoppen Area of Montgomery County. He introduced Dr. Joseph Peters of the Skippack Valley Historians, who spoke on the need to preserve the fine early Colonial farm buildings in the Skippack region. They are presently threatened by the state government, which plans to build a high dam there to conserve water and provide a large lake in the new Skippack State Park.

Dr. Peters spoke of the passage of the early settlers along the Skippack Creek coming from Germantown by way of the Main Street and the Skippack Road, which was the old name for the continuation of the important highway now called Germantown Avenue.

At the annual meeting of the Society's members in October the officers were reelected with the exception of Mr. Frederick B. M. Cardeza, Jr., who was unable to continue as Secretary due to the pressure of business. Miss Frances Hinton was elected Secretary in his place and Mr. Leonard Denis was appointed Assistant Secretary. Mr. Frank J. Ollinger was elected Vice-President in succession to Mr. John McArthur Harris, Jr., who was unable to continue in that office and as a manager owing to other commitments. The contribution Mr. Harris has made to the society is much appreciated. Mr. Ollinger has done a great deal of useful work in maintaining our properties.

Mrs. Weil and Messrs. Fiechter, Henderson and Rosenlund were reelected as managers and Mrs. Samuel Chew and Mrs. Richard Wilson were elected for the first time as managers of the society.

The Germantown Week Tour, conducted again by Dr. Gordon W. Venable and Frank J. Ollinger as in years past, was again a success. Not only did those who participated in the tour enjoy it on a day of good weather but the Society received considerable income as a result of their efforts and the help of their aides. The Society is

grateful to all who gave their time and energy to the program and also to the owners of Germantown houses who made them available for visiting.

The members of the Morris House Committee, headed by Dr. Venable, the Women's Committee headed by Mrs. F. Edward Atkins, Jr. and the Morris House Hostesses under the leadership of Mrs. Frank L. Monteith are to be thanked for their valuable contribution to the success of the Society's administration of President Washington's House. Mrs. Richard Wilson has succeeded Mrs. Atkins as head of the Women's Committee. We thank Mrs. Atkins for all that she has done for us over the years.

Francis Shunk Brown, III, Esq. has continued his satisfactory administration of the Society's library with the able assistance of Miss Mabel Irle and Mr. Donahue has faithfully performed the duties of Solicitor to the Society, a position which calls for frequent advice and attention to matters of a legal nature.

Mrs. Norman P. Gentieu as Chairman of the Maxwell Mansion Committee has ably led the many members thereof who are devoted to the preservation and maintenance of the interesting Victorian mansion at Greene and Tulpehocken Streets. It is the hope of all parties interested in the project of making the house a Victorian center that some day soon their efforts will be crowned with success and that all that has been done in the past to raise funds with which to pay the rent and maintain the house will be crowned by acquisition thereof and the establishment of the museum.

As in years past, Mrs. Almon P. Kidder, Historian of the Society, has carefully noted events of interest to the Germantown community and has recorded them in her annual account to be found in this issue of the *Crier*.

Mrs. Arthur E. Weil has continued her constant appeal for new members of the Society in her position as Chairman of the Membership Committee, and Mr. Frank Rogers Donahue, Jr., as usual, arranged and conducted the annual tour, this year to old houses in South Jersey.

Mrs. Joanna Schlechter has served well as editor of the *Crier* in succession to Mr. Harris, for whose faithful services in that capacity and as chairman of the Publications Committee we are most grateful.

Altogether it can be reported that the affairs of the Society are in good order. It is most important, however, not to forget that our activities are conducted by only a handful of dedicated members. They are getting older. Younger people must come forward to help them with their burdens and succeed them in office. We need more members of the society. Every man and woman presently a member should help procure one new member so that our efforts in preserving Germantown's heritage of history and houses will become better known and our dues income can be increased. All of us should assist in some way the constant efforts of Mrs. Weil to add names to our membership rolls.

And let us not forget our museums! The numerous objects on exhibition in our main museum at 5214 Germantown Avenue, in the von Trott Annex at the rear of 5208 and the toy and textile museum at 5218 are all quite worth while indeed. They are interesting and well-exhibited. Many classes of school children are shown over these museums by Captain Crenshaw and Mrs. Bostwick. The members of the society should themselves visit there and know what is being done to preserve evidence of our past. When the new costumes museum is open much of the collection can be exhibited in a satisfactory way.

Finally, all of our members who have participated in our 1969 activities are thanked sincerely by the President.

REPORT OF THE RELICS COMMITTEE

MARGARET B. BOSTWICK
Chairman, Relics Committee

THE YEAR 1969 has been a fruitful one for The Germantown Historical Society; so many lovely things have been given to our collections.

Miss Sara Moore, the great-granddaughter of John Christopher Jungkurth, a Germantown carriage maker, gave six silver tea spoons, a key-winder watch, fans, gold banded china, a maple chair, a mahogany desk, and a portfolio of etchings of old Germantown houses.

A pocket medicine case was presented by Mrs. Roy Miller.

Admiral Ernest M. Eller, USN Retired, Historian of the Navy Department, sent many copies of paintings from the Henry Walke Mexican Museum which have to do with the Sloop Germantown. Among them were portraits of Admiral Matthew, who used the Sloop Germantown as his Flagship, and Capt. Lavalette, who commanded the Sloop.

Mrs. Emily Cooper presented a mantel-piece set of three pieces of majolica pottery; also some lovely linen towels and a handwoven bedspread for our textile collections.

From the Germantown Chapter of the N.S.D.A.R. we received, as a permanent loan, three handpainted trays depicting scenes from Germantown; also a celery holder from The Ship House.

Audrey Bostwick presented handcarved doll furniture, played with by her grandmother, Ella G. K. Bacon, about 1882; also two iron toys and a set of small stone blocks.

Mrs. James Wilson, from the estate of her mother, Mrs. Joseph Haines, gave a bread mixer, a hand dry

cleaner, a posse stick for washing clothes, a meat safe, and two toy waffle irons.

Mr. Edwin C. Dreby, 3rd., from the estate of his mother, Nada Anderson Dreby, presented a fine, Lionel Train Station and light standards, nine volumes of Horatio Alger printed in 1900, a History of the United States of 1881 and a David Copperfield of 1892; also three volumes of Godey's Lady Book and clothing for the Costume Committee.

From the estate of Aaron Carpenter we received a bronze fire screen fan, an inlaid mahogany card table, firearms, and a fine grandfather's clock by Thomas Linday of Frankford.

Miss Eleanor Foley presented the day book used by her father, John A. Foley, who owned the Manheim Stables on Germantown Avenue near Coulter Street.

We graciously thank these people for their contributions to our museum.

HAPPENINGS IN GERMANTOWN
October 1968 - October 1969

By PHOEBE CARLILE KIDDER

IT IS always a bit confusing to orient one's mind to the fact we are writing about 1968 for awhile before coming to our current year 1969. Beginning and ending in October as we do, is to conform with the Germantown Historical Society's year.

Generally speaking, October was a very pleasant month. An early day of showers was most welcome as there had been no rain in over a month, and the parched ground needed the moisture before the winter snows.

An early November storm, the first of the season, same on the 12th with snow and high winds, but was of short duration. The sleety snow was heavy enough, however, to cause activities to be canceled that night. Streets were pretty well cleared the next day.

January was a remarkably clear month—rain, yes, but snow held off. Then, remember that morning when we all wakened to a world of ice? And the few intrepid persons venturing out for buses that were stalled? No paper delivery—and most unheard of, no mail. What happened to the Post Office motto? Neither rain nor snow—nor heat— Oh well! On the records, though, it was the driest January in fourteen years.

March certainly came in like a lion and roared around for two or three days, canceling schools and all kinds of entertainment. But unlike the heavy snows of February they did not last as long. After all, March 20th ushers in the Spring!

July's rainfall was the heaviest in 24 years. The torrential, and sometimes almost incessant, rains of the last couple of weeks in July and beginning of August sent foot deep rivers down the streets, with large lakes at intersections where the clogged sewers could not take care of the deluge. The total rainfall for the month was more than double the normal.

HISTORIC HOUSES

The regular scheduled activities go on from year to year in those Historic Houses in which our Society is particularly interested. Mrs. Atkins, who has been an excellent chairman of the Deshler-Morris House Women's Committee, has resigned and Mrs. Richard Wilson is taking her place as Chairman. Mrs. Monteith, who is in charge of hostesses, has had the House "manned" daily, and also when special groups are scheduled to go through. The Christmas Tea last December was, as usual, a delightful affair. The charm of the old House is enhanced by the glow of candlelight and beautiful decorations. The 14th Annual Card Party took place April 14th at the Aulenbach House.

A Christmas treat took place December 8, 1968 when the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion was lighted up for a Dickens Christmas Party. Mr. Howell Heany, curator of the Rare Book Department of the Free Library, gave readings from "A Christmas Carol" and "Pickwick at Dingley Dell." Wassail and Christmas Cheer were available at the "Blue Lion Tap."

Two field trips were sponsored by the Maxwell Mansion Committee. The first one, in September, took a busload to Harrisburg. Fort Hunter and surrounding historical sites were invited. The second trip, in June, went to Cape May where much of the Victorian architecture has been preserved and is being restored. "Artique '69" drew an interested and large group this year.

Grumblethorpe, at 5267 Germantown Avenue, celebrated its 225th anniversary June 15th with a garden party supper. Unfortunately it rained—so all tables and chairs were fitted into the house. The guest speaker was Mr. George M. Cheston, President of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

This year on May 28th the sun shone on Upsala enough for many guests to play cards on the lawn. The revenue from this annual event goes toward some special project in restoring the Mansion. This year the stairway to the third floor has to be rebuilt.

On the edge of Germantown and close enough to be a part of it, now rests the 1790 log cabin that stood on the grounds of Friends Select School at 16th and Race Streets. It was moved on a Sunday morning in January to its new home at Stenton Park where it may be used as the custodian's quarters. Rather than see it torn down, the Friends Select School Board gave it to the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Pennsylvania.

CHURCHES

Last November a service of dedication took place at The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, on The Oak Road. The dedication of a new organ was conducted by the Right Reverend Oliver J. Hart, retired Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, assisted by the Reverend R. Dunham Taylor, rector of the church. Anthems were sung by the choir. They included an anthem, "Oh Clap Your Hands," written especially for the occasion by Bruce Montgomery, a member of the choir.

The First United Methodist Church of Germantown hosted a "Gypsy Caravan Tour" last fall. It replaced the traditional annual Bazaar. There were booths, to be sure, but set up in different homes in the surrounding area. The combination made it a House Tour as well as a Bazaar.

The Memorial Baptist Church at Wayne Avenue and Queen Lane commemorated the 100th Anniversary of its founding, last October. Special services and speakers were part of the week-long celebration.

EDUCATIONAL

Sugar Loaf, the Chestnut Hill estate of the late Albert M. Greenfield, has been given to Temple University for use as a conference center for urban problems. Besides the dwelling where the Greenfields lived, there are a swimming pool and guest house, a tennis court and general service buildings with living quarters for personnel. The property overlooks the Wissahickon and Whitemarsh Valleys.

For the first time Lankenau School has opened its doors to boys—from pre-school to fifth grade. They plan to make it complete Co-ed College Preparatory in the near future.

Germantown Lutheran Academy is starting its 5th year at the school at Greene Street and School House Lane. Moore Hall will be opened to the pupils and provide additional space for the expanding school.

Germantown Friends School on Coulter Street opened its 125th year with the largest enrollment in its history, 806 pupils.

Springside's new building for the lower school is ready for occupancy this fall. Now the whole school is under one roof.

Stevens School celebrated its first century with a dinner followed by a Centennial Ball at the Germantown Cricket Club last fall. Dancing followed to the music of Gerry Romig's orchestra. The Victorian era provided the theme for the decorations.

The second oldest technical institution in the United States today, in continuous operation, is now located on Mermaid Lane in Chestnut Hill. Spring Garden Institute moved out from the city a year or so ago and is housed in the former Yarway Corporation buildings. It was announced by Mr. Robert H. Thompson, President of the Institute, that the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction had authorized it to award the "Bachelor of Science in Technology" degree, thus making the Institute a full four-year college.

Woman's Medical College has become coeducational after 120 years as an all female institution. Approved by the Board of Corporators, the action took effect immediately in September 1969.

HOSPITALS

The Germantown Hospital Rose Carnival launched its opening activity for its 20th year on March 12th at Cedarbrook Hill Country Club. The Women's Board of the Hospital and the Rose Carnival Committee entertained guests at the annual luncheon, card party and fashion show. The theme for the party was "Flight into Fashion." Members of the Rose Carnival Committee modeled the fashions by leading designers, and Miss Peggy Kane of Delta Air Lines was the commentator. The annual Rose Carnival was held June 14th, 1969.

Germantown Hospital student nurses are the first women to enter LaSalle College day classes on a full-time basis. The courses will be taken three days a week through the first three semesters. The students will receive 35 college credits toward a college degree.

Chestnut Hill Hospital's new $3.3 million wing was dedicated November 3rd, 1968. It consists of a two-story laboratory department, X-ray department, cardiology and physical therapy departments. Main Street Fair, the big money-raising activity for the benefit of the Hospital, was held October 1st and was most successful.

GENERAL INFORMATION

With its succession of names, Germantown Road—Main Street—and now Germantown Avenue, it is the only street to be designated as an historic landmark by the National Park Service. Ceremonies conducted by the Philadelphia Freedom Week Committee took place Monday, June 30, 1969 on the grounds of Loudoun Mansion, 4650 Germantown Avenue. The area covered extends from Loudoun, at Apsley Street, for a 20-block stretch to St. Michael's Evangelical Lutheran Church at Westview Street.

The Germantown Historical Society House Tour took place Saturday, May 17th with 14 houses and gardens open to the public. The day for perfect for it. The Ollinger Garden was a beauty spot to sit in and enjoy the Bell Ringers and greet friends.

Time goes faster than you think. Henry H. Houston, 2nd Post #3 of the American Legion has reached the 50-year mark. What turned out to be the first meeting of the American Legion took place at the American Club in Paris, March 1919, and in Germantown in June 1919. The Post Home is on High Street.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Judge Edmund B. Spaeth, Jr. has been elected president of the Trustees and chairman of the Board of Directors of Bryn Mawr College.

Dr. Henry Wells was the first recipient of the Chestnut Hill Community Association's new Distinguished Service citation. It read, in part, "For outstanding Service to Chestnut Hill as Director of its Association."

Senator Hugh Scott, whose home, when in Philadel-

phia, is in Chestnut Hill, was elected Republican floor leader of the U.S. Senate on Wednesday, September 24th. He succeeds the late Senator Everett M. Dirksen. It is the first time in history a Pennsylvanian is the leader of either party in the U.S. Senate.

At the age of 92 Dr. Catharine Macfarlane passed away at the Woman's Medical College Hospital, where she had served so faithfully for so many years. One of the first to take up the crusade against cancer, she made that her main life work.

A former director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Mr. Henri Marceau, died on September 16th. Internationally known, he was an art historian and architect and at one time served on the Board of Managers of this Society.

The Germantown Historical Society regrets to report the loss, by death, of the following members:

Miss Elizabeth S. Abbott
Mr. Theodore G. Alteneder
Miss Mary E. Buroughs
Mrs. Randall Chase
Mr. William F. Kurtz
Dr. Catherine Macfarlane
Mr. Henri Marceau
Mrs. J. Aubrey McCurdy
Mr. George Muschamp
Mr. Theodore S. Paul
Mrs. Albert W. Sanson.
Mrs. Frank P. Streeper
Miss Katherine M. Wetherstine
Mr. Ira Jewell Williams

RANDOM OBSERVATIONS

Once there was a plum tree. It grew on the land where David Deshler wanted to build his house in 1772. As the legend goes, rather than cut the tree down, he arranged to build his house to one side of the lot. Of course that tree has died long since, but members of Girl Scout Cadette Troop #271, which meets at the First Presbyterian Church, plan to make the Deshler-Morris House their project for the coming year. In June the girls planted a new plum tree as their first project. They are hoping to partly fulfill requirements for the "My Country" merit badge.

The Northwest Community Ambulance Corps now has two new 1969 Cadillac ambulances, thanks to membership dues and donations from grateful users. Their new building was dedicated September 28th.

An article appeared in the West Mt. Airy Newsletter in February stating, "that all evidence of a telephone booth and equipment had disappeared from Carpenter Lane Station." It was replaced later by the Bell Telephone Company. It seems that nothing can be nailed down securely enough.

The final concert of the year at Pastorius Park was given by the Cardinal Dougherty School Band. It was acclaimed by many as the "best" of the year.

The Fidelity Bank at Germantown Avenue and School House Lane has made extensive renovations to its building. Much research was required to construct it in accordance with the Colonial Germantown renewal plans.

Beginning with the August 6, 1969 issue, the Germantown Courier now has a new look. It is smaller in size and easier to handle.

The Federal Government has finally approved a contract for the Central Germantown Urban Renewal Area. Acquisition of 96 sites has already begun. Renewal plans for the Maplewood Mall will be revised.

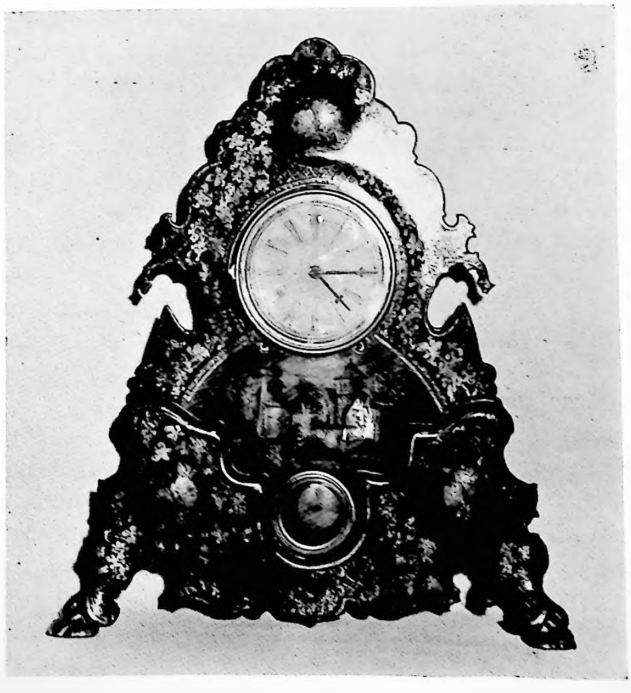
Emlen Arms Apartment at 6733 Emlen Street, with the approval of the Regional Office of Housing and Urban Development, has been sold. It will be completely rehabilitated to provide 175 efficiency and one-bedroom apartments for senior citizens.

The Annual Garden Party of the Germantown Historical Society was held Thursday, June 5, 1969 in the Parish House of Trinity Lutheran Church, Germantown Avenue and Queen Lane. The Honorable Martin J. Moynihan, British Consul-General, and speaker of the evening, quoted lines from his favorite poet, William Wordsworth.

Over on the Jersey side there is plenty of history stored up in the old houses. Our Annual Tour on October 11, 1969 took us to Salem and Greenwich, an area that is always a welcome spot for history lovers.

Germantown cannot claim this item for itself, but as a part of the world. The Lunar landing of the Apollo 11 flight on Manday, July 21, 1969 should be recorded in every history. The three astronauts, Neil A. Armstrong, Edwin E. Aldrin and Michael Collins, performed their mission as scheduled, and those first words spoken by Neil Armstrong as he set foot on the moon will go down in history.

"That's one small step for a man—
One giant leap for mankind."



Tin Clock in the Germantown Historical Societies' Museum

Philadelphia's Theatre Heritage
THE WALNUT STREET THEATRE

By Derek Naabe

The Walnut Street Theatre is unquestionably the oldest theatre in Philadelphia's long and colorful theatrical history. It is, also, believed to be the oldest theatre in the English speaking world that has been continually devoted to the drama. Its history has been varied and hectic, to say the least, and to tell the complete story of this grand theatre would take considerably more space than has been allotted to the writer of this article. On one or two occasions it was destined to be torn down, but fortunately, it was able to resist and survive Philadelphia wrecking crews eagerly awaiting its demise. How it escaped these villains is a hair-breadth story that must be told at some other time. Fortunately the Walnut has no further fears. It is now privately owned and has been declared a National Land Mark.

The Walnut Street Theatre was not always a theatre. In fact, some of its early owners could never make up their minds as to what it was to be. It started out as a circus, then it became a theatre, then a circus, then back to a theatre again. It has been rebuilt and refurbished so many times that only a portion of the outer wall along Ninth Street remains of the original building. How that wall escaped destruction is a mystery that in all probability will never be divulged, as there is no one living today who knows the whole and complete story.

It all began with two French gentlemen; their names, Victor Pepin and John Breschard. These two young men had been operating a small circus through southern Europe before coming to Philadelphia. Why they sold their circus in Europe and decided to make Philadelphia the home of their future destinies is a secret that will always remain with them, I'm afraid. It is pure conjecture on the part of this writer, but they most assuredly must have learned of the success of the New Theatre that had been erected here by Wignell and Reinagle in 1793. They also must have learned that two circuses in Philadelphia had already come to a sad end. Ricketts' Circus, Sixth & Chestnut Streets had burned down in 1799 and Lailson's Circus, located on Prune Street, near Fifth Street, had caved in because of its weighty dome in 1797. Surely the time was ripe for another circus in Philadelphia.

Pepin and Breschard arrived in Philadelphia in 1808. They purchased a plot of ground at Ninth and Walnut Streets and immediately started plans for the erection of their circus. There are no known drawings or pictures of what the original theatre actually looked like prior to 1828, but from the meagre descriptions that survive and an engraving of Rickett's Circus, an adequate picture can be visualized of what the interior looked like at the time. The part of the theatre occupied by orchestra stalls in the modern theatre was devoted to the riding ring. Around this were the boxes and two tiers of seats. The original building was much smaller than the present theatre. It had a dome. It seems that all circuses had to have domes, even though there was an outside possibility that it might cave in at some future time. Early reports were never too optimistic about domes, because it was strongly suspected that they were almost always built too heavy and too large for the building that supported them. This was particularly true of Lailson's Circus when the dome caved in one Sunday morning in 1797. But what is a circus without a dome? and Pepin and Breschard made sure it was quite a dome, for it was eighty feet high and had the distinction of being Philadelphia's first skyscraper.

The opening date of the Circus, as it was originally known, was planned for January 31, 1809, but for some unexplained reason the date was postponed until February 2. Perhaps Pepin & Breschard had second thoughts concerning the general structure of the Circus and delayed opening until further tests had been made. What caused the delayed opening has apparently never been divulged, but whatever the reason, it proved a bad omen for its future success. This Circus lasted for about a year and it was quite evident that it, alone, was not attractive enough to lure the populace to the box office. Changes would have to be made, so in 1811 the stage for theatrical performances was added and the house generally enlarged. For the next ten years the house was known as the Circus and as the Olympic Theatre.

Dr. James Mease, in his "The Picture of Philadelphia" in 1811, gives a very excellent description of the theatre when the additional changes were made. He writes: "The Circus, now the Olympic Theatre of Messrs. Pepin & Breschard, which stands on the corner of Walnut and Ninth Streets, was built in the year 1809. The dimensions, eighty feet on Walnut, by one-hundred feet on Ninth Street. Within, it was circular, seventy five feet in diameter, including the seats, and fifty-four feet including the area of the riding course. Every office connected with the circus was under this roof. Within the present year the building has undergone great improvements and additions, the design of which is, the connection of a theatre with the circus, similar to Sadler's Wells in London, wherein pantomimes, Olympic exercises and such other entertainments as are adapted to this species of Amusement, are represented. The riding course will remain as it is, and from the termination of the amphitheatre, a straight line of boxes proceed, till they intersect the stage. This stage has a spacious front, without the avant scene, of fifty-four feet, equal to the diameter of the

Circus. The orchestra lies between the stage and the riding course, on each side of which is a doorway from under the stage, for the introduction by the riders into the Circus. The additions to the original building make the whole depth equal to one hundred and forty feet.

"The entrance to the circus is by Walnut Street. The pit is on a level with the riding course; the loges, or boxes, are on a level with the stage—a corridor, or passage, communicates with all of them. On this floor are rooms for refreshments; above the boxes are the galleries, part of which is allotted to an upper tier of boxes.

"The performances at the Circus are highly entertaining. The new arrangements will render the exhibitions more interesting and diversified."

The performances may have been very entertaining, and the "new arrangements" more "interesting and diversified," but it was quite evident that the box office was not made aware of it. The constant change in ownership that took place during the next nine years would lead anyone to believe that success was a very elusive commodity. In the eight year period from 1811 to 1819, the management of the theatre changed hands ten times, and it must be admitted this was quite a record. In 1811, William Twaits managed the house with the Commonwealth Company, and the following year the company made way for McKenzie and Dwyer. Then, in succession, came Twaits and Breschard, Pepin and Breschard, Pepin by himself, Pepin and Company, Pepin and West, James H. Caldwell, James Entwistle, Victor Pepin, and 1819, Pepin and Entwistle. There were some successful seasons, especially during James H. Caldwell's ownership and reign, but it was a foregone conclusion that its failures far out-weighed its successes, and that the theatre had definitely outlived its usefulness. It must be remembered that the Chestnut Street Theatre, with Warren and Wood at the helm, was very strong competition. In 1820, the Olympic Theatre, as it was then known, was closed and abandoned for good—so everyone thought. But the future of the Olympic Theatre lay in the "laps of the Gods" for it was destined to be given a re-birth and an entire new life.

The Chestnut Street Theatre was closed down, and the Warren and Wood Company had gone to its theatre in Baltimore for the Spring Season. On April 3, 1820, Mr. Wood was notified that the Chestnut Street Theatre had burned to the ground. Everything had been consumed by the fire, with the possible exception of a few costumes and properties that they had taken with them to Baltimore. The Chestnut Street Company was now destitute of equipment as well as a home.

Mr. Wood, who owned and operated the Chestnut Street Theatre, along with Mr. Warren, relates in his book, "Personal Recollections of the Stage" that they began again on November 11, 1820, at the Walnut Street Theatre. "The house having been originally constructed only with a view to circus purposes and subsequently imperfectly changed to dramatic uses, required expensive improvements in every part. An announcement was made to the public to the erect that the building formerly known as the Olympic Theatre, and now re-named the Walnut Street Theatre, has lately undergone a complete alteration, and has been converted into a splendid and convenient theatre. The ponderous dome has been wholly removed, and has been replaced by a light and elegant ceiling. The stage has been brought forward several feet, and finished in the best manner for the purposes of the drama. A pit has been erected, which for space and elegance, has never been equaled in any theatre on the continent, the boxes and lobbies have received the most essential improvement. A large and convenient new door has been opened on Ninth Street, by which the audience of the pit may leave the theatre without meeting the other part of the audience, and avoid the delay formerly experienced. William Strickland was the architect."

Every possible provision for safety and comfort had been made, but unfortunately, the company was not very strong. There was very little spirit after the recent calamity, and hopes for the future were not very optimistic. The opening show was "The Poor Gentleman," and Mr. Wood commented that it was a very appropriate title considering their recent loss, and also the fact that the opening of the Walnut proved to be an expensive venture.

An interesting event followed shortly after the opening, the first appearance of Edwin Forrest. Forrest was sixteen at the time, and he made his debut at the Walnut on November 27, 1820. He first appeared in the play, "Douglas" with the following cast: Glenalvon, WOOD, Old Norval, WARREN, Lady Randolph, MRS. WILLIAMS, Anna, MRS. JEFFERSON, and Young Norval, FORREST. He received a somewhat cool reception from his native Philadelphia audience, but it appeared to have no lasting effect on him, for he was bound and determined to make the stage his future career. Mr. Wood was very much impressed with him, and encouraged him to continue his work, which, of course, he did. Edwin Forrest, a Philadelphian, eventually went on to become America's first and greatest actor. He returned to the Walnut in 1871. It was his last appearance in a Philadelphia Theatre. Two circumstances, in all probability, contributed to Forrest's rather inauspicious start; there was a heavy snowstorm on the night he opened, and an announcement had been made that Edmund Kean was to appear the following week.

Edmund Kean first appeared at the Walnut on January 8, 1821 and made his debut in a Philadelphia theatre in the title role of Richard III. "At first he did not make a very good impression; people remembered the inimitable rendering of Richard III, by George Frederick Cooke, but as the play went on the great actor's power revealed itself, and the rapturous applause which greeted the last scene was a final verdict from which there was no appeal. He appeared as Jaffier in VENUS PRESERVED, during his sixteen night stay

in Philadelphia. On this particular night he had been drinking excessively, and began doing strange things. When the audience voiced their disapproval, he became abusive, and was hissed off the stage. He raised the ire of the audience to such an extent that he had to seek safety. A riot ensued, and the lights had to be put out before it could be quelled," report Scharf and Wescott, in their History of Philadelphia.

After Kean's engagement in Philadelphia, Mrs. Allsop, a daughter of the celebrated Mrs. Jordan, of Drury Lane, played a round of light comedy characters at the Walnut. Then came Mrs. John Barnes, the leading heavy-tragedy lady of the Park Theatre in New York. About the same time, David C. Johnson, a native of Philadelphia, made his first appearance on the stage at the Walnut. For some years he published, annually, under the title of "Scraps" a very popular series of comic drawings. The season of 1821-22 found Edwin Forrest returning for his fifth appearance as Zaphna, in MOHAMMED THE IMPOSTOR, LeBasse and Tatin, French dancers and pantomimists appeared three nights in a ballet, and the first elephant that ever trod the boards of a Philadelphia stage appeared as a star of the first magnitude in "Forty Thieves." The above is detailed to give a sample of the theatrical fare Philadelphians were exposed or subjected to during this period. The season closed April 23, 1822, and Warren and Wood ended their lesseeship of the Walnut Street Theatre, to prepare for the opening of their new Chestnut Street Theatre.

Stephen Price and Edmund Simpson were the most noted theatrical producers of their day. They had long been associated with the Park Theatre in New York, and many other theatres throughout America. In 1822 they leased the Walnut, changed its name back to "The Olympic," tore out the pits on which Warren & Wood had spent so much in installing and started giving circus performances. After five years the circus idea seems to have run its course, and the riding ring was torn out and the Olympic became the "Walnut" once again, as well as a theatre.

On September 26, 1827, Miss Louisa Lane, who became the well-beloved Mrs. John Drew, made her first appearance in America at the Walnut. She was seven years old at the time and went on as one of the ill-fated princes in Richard III. Junius Brutus Booth was the star. "The performance of Mr. Booth as Richard," she wrote in her "Autobiography," "made a most powerful impression upon me. His dramatic force and magnetism were like a giant whirlwind, sweeping all before it. I have never seen anyone else in that part who seemed so completely to realize it as he did." Mrs. Drew was an accurate and observant reporter, for the story goes that Booth became imbued with the part that he not only defeated Richmond of the night, but forced the frightened actor over the footlights and chased him out into the street. Fortunately, the fresh air brought Booth to his senses and he returned to the stage to continue on with the play.

Joseph Jackson, in his "Encylopedia of Philadelphia" states: "In the fall of the year 1827 the theatre was remodeled and enlarged and has never since that time reverted to its original purpose, although once or twice a circus performance has been given in the building. Haviland, one of the foremost architects in America, drew the plans for the facade, which, slightly altered, remained until 1920." Mr. Jackson further reports, "Following Joe Colwell, who had succeeded Price & Simpson, the managers or lessees were William B. Blake and John A. Inslee (the latter having formerly been the superintendent of the Almhouse) Samuel Chapman and John Greene. Chapman, Greene and Edmunds, Samuel and William Chapman, Robert C. Maywood, H. H. Rowbotham and Lewis T. Pratt." It appears that they changed the theatre and managers almost as often as they did the shows.

During the period from 1827, when Colwell took charge, until the Maywood, Rowbotham and Pratt management abandoned the reins in 1834, the house was known as the Walnut Street Theatre. It was during the Colwell management that the great English tragedian, Thomas Abthorpe Cooper took his leave of the American stage at the Walnut.

Francis C. Wemyss, an English actor, whose career was followed chiefly on the American stage, took over the theatre and re-named it "The American Theatre." and in keeping with its name, made attempts to make it as American as its title. The act drop was repainted by W. Russell Smith, well known American painter and the new curtain bore a reproduction of Trumbull's famous painting, "The Battle of Bunker Hill." An advertisement in a Philadelphia paper, dated August 19, 1835 states: "A splendid drop curtain by W. Russell Smith, representing the Battle of Bunker Hill; each figure eight feet in height. A key has been engraved, for the accommodation of the public, by which figures of the celebrated individuals who bore a conspicuous part in the glorious battle, will be readily distinguished and the likenesses have been carefully preserved, from Trumbull's universally admired picture." Francis Wemyss, in his journal, further describes Russell Smith's first Philadelphia work in detail: "Well did he (Russell Smith) execute that work—each tier of boxes was decorated with paintings representing some celebrated battle in the history of the United States; around the dress circle were placed medallions of the heads of the Presidents; around the second tier, the heads of celebrated Generals and around the third tier, the heads of naval heroes: between each medallion and its corresponding painting, was a large, burnished gold star, the whole forming, on a pink ground, the most pleasing interior I ever saw. I have seen them more gaudy, but never one so chaste and beautiful."

In the operation of the Walnut, Wemyss was financed by Louis A. Godey, publisher of Godey's Lady Book, and others. It was a great success, by the end of three years Wemyss had cleared $40,000. Newspaper accounts testify to his financial success, praising not only

Wemyss and his company, but his scenic artist as well. One newspaper reports: "The artist, Mr. Smith, is really a man of genius, and his works display such excellencies, both in respect of invention, colouring and knowledged effect, as must give him a high place among the professors of his delighted art."

A spread eagle, measuring twenty feet from tip to tip, was carved and hung over the proscenium arch. The eagle remained there until recent years.

Wemyss operated the house for approximately ten years. He was without doubt one of the theatre's most successful managers. Among the actors who appeared under his management were Junius Brutus Booth, James Sheridan Knowles (a successful playwright, but as an actor, had little talent), "Jim Crow" Rice, A. A. Adams, Edwin Forrest and William E. Burton, a great theatre personage and publisher of Burton's Magazine.

Mr. Joseph Jackson states: "There was great rivalry among the Philadelphia theatres in those days, rather greater than the present generation has witnessed, although the methods of theatrical managers are much the same as then. When the Chestnut Street Theatre was announced to be under the management of Miss Maywood, daughter of Robert Maywood, who was really the directing head of the enterprise, the managers of the Walnut Street decided to meet the opposition by putting the name of Miss Charlotte Cushman on the bills as Manager. These probably were the first instances in this country of "Actress-Managers," and from all that can be learned of the experiments, they must have been regarded more or less as jokes."

Lady managers thus were introduced in 1842. Even though Charlotte Cushman was nominally head of the theatre, she set a precedent along with Miss Maywood. Later, of course, Mrs. John Drew became owner-manager of the Arch Street Theatre, followed by Laura Keene, who in later years became owner-manager of Chestnut Street Theatre, located at Twelfth and Chestnut Streets.

Charlotte Cushman's short career as Manageress was notable for at least one event of some importance to the history of the stage. In April, 1843, for the benefit of the real manager, Edmund A. Marshall, Miss Cushman appeared for the first time as Romeo, a part she later played to the Juliet of her sister, Susan. John Vanderhoff played Mercutio and has left a valuable impression of Charlotte Cushman's attempt: "I lent her a hat, a cloak and sword for the second dress and I believe I may take credit for having given her some useful fencing hints for the killing of Tybolt and Paris which she executed in such masculine and effective style, the only good points in this hybrid performance of hers. She looks neither man or woman in the part, and her passion is equally epicene in form. Whatever her talents in other parts, I never yet heard any human being that had seen her Romeo who did not speak of it with painful expression of countenance, more in sorrow than in anger." Charlotte Cushman, regardless of this early opinion, went on to become one of America's greatest talents. Her name is synonymous with theatrical history.

Shakespeare was the favorite theatrical fare of Philadelphians. The hardy theatre goer loved to make comparisons between the leading stage luminaries of the day in their portrayals of the Bard's famous characters. Richard III headed the list. It has been computed that from 1835 to 1841, Richard III was performed eighty-three times on the stages of the various Philadelphia theatres (Walnut, Chestnut, Arch, Pennsylvania and National). No other play approached the record of Richard III. Its nearest competitors are Othello, with fifty-seven presentations and Hamlet with fifty-three. It is to be remembered that at this time in the history of the Philadelphia stage, even the most popular new play (London Assurance, for instance) never ran for more than two or three weeks—this was a record performance.

In the fall of 1855, Rachel, the famous French tragedienne, began an engagement at the Walnut. A spell of freezing weather had set in. Her parsimonious brother refused to pay the costs of heating the backstage area of the theatre and on the morning after her first performance Rachel was stricken by pneumonia. It was soon obvious that she would not be able to continue her performance in Philadelphia. She was never able to regain her health fully, eventually she was forced to return to France, where she died, three years later, in 1858. In the early days it was very difficult to heat theatres, especially the back stage area. The management attempted to take care of the heating problem in the front part of the house, but it was definitely up to the reigning company to furnish the heat in the area they occupied. Here were "two separate worlds."

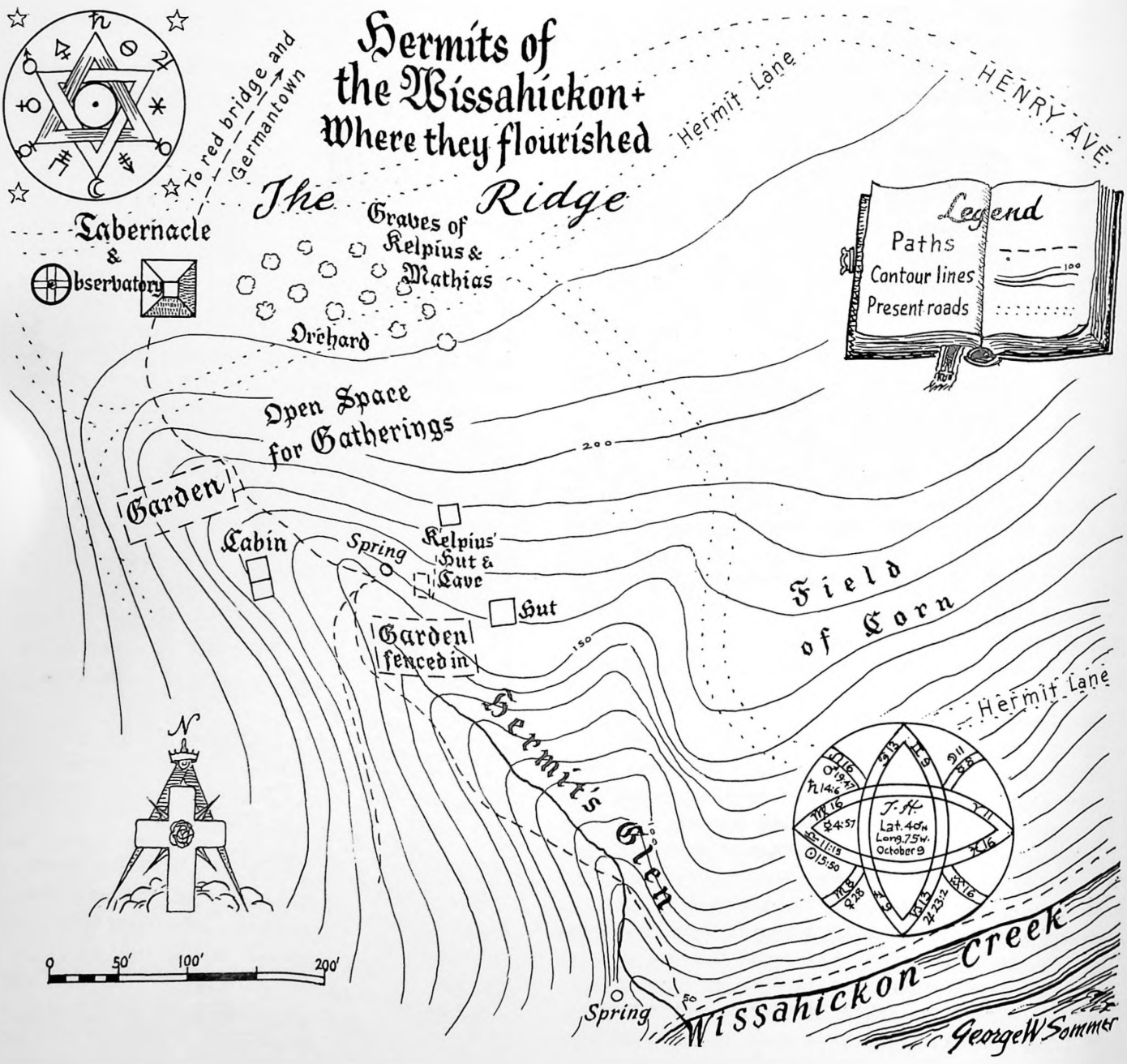
In 1857, Mrs. David F. Bowers attempted the management of the Walnut and continued in it with some success for nearly two years, when Mrs. Mary Ann Garrettson took over the management. Mrs. Garrettson was the most successful of the several women managers, and she remained there until 1865. The property then was purchased by John S. Clarke and his brother-in-law, Edwin Booth. The property belonged to the estate of Mr. Clarke until 1920.

Until 1876 the theatre remained a stock company house, and in that year George K. Goodwin became the manager. Goodwin died in 1882 and other managers followed, prominent among them, Frank Howe, Jr. Since that time the Walnut has played traveling shows. The Kirafly spectacles were seen here. Lawrence Barrett, Joseph Jefferson, John Sleeper Clarke, Sir Charles Wynham and Lydia Thompson are other stars who have been seen during that period.

In 1920 the theatre was purchased by J. P. Beury and he immediately set about rebuilding the Walnut. Had it not been that the lot was as small as could be used for the purpose, none of the original structure would have survived, but owing to an old ordinance for the widening of Walnut Street, to have removed the old walls would have necessitated placing the new walls back about eight

or ten feet. Therefore, the whole interior was removed, but neither the roof nor the walls were dislodged. An entire new interior of steel construction was inserted and a very modern playhouse installed in the century old walls. The new Walnut Street Theatre, manager by C. C. Wanamaker, was formally opened December 27, 1920, with George Arliss in "The Green Goddess" (Joseph Jackson in his Encyclopedia of Philadelphia).

The Walnut has most assuredly taken its place with the great theatres of the world, both past and present. It would be an almost impossible task to enumerate the many famous theatrical personages who have played a part in its theatrical heritage since that opening day in February, 1809. Suffice it to say, this venerable lady of Walnut Street has enshrined herself with lasting memories, and it is sincerely hoped that her future protectors will be as kind to her as her guardians of the past have been.







The above cut might be classified as Mr. Sommer's trademark. He requested it to be placed at the beginning of all his "Crier" articles.

GEORGE W. SOMMER - MEMORIAL

THE GERMANTOWNE CRIER has the tragic duty to report the death of George W. Sommer on October 29, 1969. Readers of *The Crier* will appreciate that, as Staff Artist, his illustrations added much of interest. His frequent articles on a variety of subjects were always most welcome.

Those of us privileged to work with George Sommer during his later years find it hard to reconcile his mellow, smiling personality with his adventurous youth. After the First World War he became involved in the "Trouble" in Ireland; so much so that on one occasion he found himself captured as a spy and facing a firing squad, to be saved by a last-minute reprieve. Following this, he made his way on foot across Europe, the Near East, India, and China. He was living in Japan when a severe earthquake reminded him of the beauties of life in these United States and he took passage to Seattle. He intended to walk home from there but his mother's severe illness caused him to complete his two-and-one-half-year odyssey on the train. He always traveled on foot and alone because he wanted to "get to know the people."

We shall forever regret that George Sommer left no written account of his trans-European, Trans-Asian walk. He never spoke of it. The few details given herewith were supplied by his sister.

Professionally he was a commercial artist. He worked at the Philadelphia Navy Yard from 1940 until his retirement in 1964. He illustrated literature for the Philadelphia Traction Company and many books, including the *Guide to the Wissahickon* compiled by Frances Ballard and Marion Rivinus.

He was always an outdoorsman. He was a member of the Comstock Society and a devoted worker for the Boy Scouts. One of his scouts, Edwin Iwanicki, became editor of *The Germantowne Crier* and persuaded George Sommer to act as Staff Artist.

Last spring, when George was starting his article "Revisiting the Hermit's Glen," we visited the Kelpius Cave to photograph the surrounding and then lunched together at Valley Green. This was George doing what he liked best. One does not forget such experiences.



By GEORGE W. SOMMER

See George W. Sommer—Memorial, in this issue of *The Crier*

IF THERE is one, legendary spot in the Wissahickon Valley that attracts the most widespread interest it is this ravine south of Henry Avenue, for here, in the earliest days of Philadelphia, a band of devoted mystics, who had fled from persecution in Europe, strove for communion with God "in the wilderness" and renunciation of earthly values. They occupied the whole area but a great "tabernacle," on level ground above the glen, was the landmark of their faith where they lived, summer and winter, for fourteen years.

John Kelpius, their frail, unworldly leader, was the good genius who could combat stubborn minds and fuse them into a brotherhood full of faith in God and love for man. Wrote Whittier, "He saw the visions man shall see no more."

Could their excess of pious zeal have charged these groves? If any place becomes sanctified by the character of its tenants, this ground should qualify and affect a sensitive visitor. These well-worn paths, this spring and cave, the primeval oaks and pines on the surrounding hills; all were familiar to those men nearly three hundred years ago. The perceptive visitor will grasp the "Spirit of the Place."

Marion M. Rivinus gave us a fine, comprehensive report on these mystics a few years ago.[1] However, their detailed activities and accomplishments have always remained obscure, in spite of evidence existing as writings on, and by, these Pietists. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to reconstruct a credible account for our readers.

Let us suppose that in examining the wall of Kelpius' underground study a small casket came to light. In it was found one of his many letters to German brethren giving some account of the events of a day in the life of the secluded colony.

September 18, 1705
Dear and Faithful Fellow Champion Deichman:

In your last letter, which I received with joy, you inquire about our life here. Well, our Mr. Schirmer has said that we will probably find the Devil in Pennsylvania. But Mr. Lange observed, "You will also find the dear Lord Jesus there." Therefore I kiss the Father's hand that has led me into this desert, as into a chamber. We have indeed often been brought near to the gates and coldness of death and we are still near them as David dreamed so often.

However, there is much to be done and we are well occupied, though with silence and meditation. In the saal of the forest Tabernacle there is a service morning and evening with music and singing. Everyone is invited for hymns and prayer. Scripture verses are critically examined and anyone may offer his opinion in the discussions. We cordially receive many visitors.

Outside my cell are little children who are educated in a schoolroom in the Tabernacle, there being few teachers in Germantown. Some we keep with us for a beginning, otherwise there will be only mending and patching of old people. Now they are being taken through the woods for further instruction in the works of The Almighty. At times Dr. Witt will cast a nativity to enlighten us on one's character.

[1] "The Mystics of the Wissahickon." Marion M. Rivinus. Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 21 (May, 1958).

The native Indians are often nearby. We have converted some as Christians, while examining them. If they are indeed descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, we find them keeping the Sabbath and their wise men practicing mystical rites. From them we have discovered more uses of plants and nostrums for food and curing distempers.

Yesterday was an eventful one, for we were honored with a conference consisting of seven dignitaries from around Philadelphia; friends of William Penn, who was often here. The day was spent in discussing philosophy and morals, and they inquired into theosophy. I regard with wonderment the long, prickly, rough sack in which I am clad. For we are living on strange soil, exiles from paradise, travelers in this world, nowhere secure. I have become hardened in this wilderness that I can possibly endure corporal punishment, though undeserved.

Like the disciples who journeyed to Emmaus, several brothers have just left for a short, one hour journey to Germantown, there to take or receive any letters. They will likewise answer calls for religious services and visit friends who know of our needs. We advise these to disregard any differences in their creeds and to form a

united church. A rule we follow is to make no trade, barter, or do any work for gain. We try to look after the spiritual welfare of the general community, while perfecting ourselves in that inner communion that works silently in the soul. It is the period of the moon to divine where water is to be found with the proper hazel withe and ceremony, so they may accomplish this.

The wilderness here supplies us with many necessities, as John the Baptist realized, and we cultivate corn and other edibles. Two large gardens and an orchard provide us with staples and simples. Woodcutters and hunters come to us from the hills. One cabin contains the wherewith to fashion homespun cloth and footwear. There is a hut for the chemic and hermetic arts, also a small press for the preparation of our spiritual texts.

You grieve that time must be expended upon the necessities of life. Does it seem to you that our cause has life in a strait? We can perfectly serve God in this life. We should not be afeard of lions nor of bears, nor of serpents, nor of any animal; but step on their necks in the power of God believing that they can harm no one but him who is afeard of them.

We only long for the revelation from out of the heart of God. To die in this pleasant wilderness is to grow lively. Poverty maketh rich. As Jesus has said, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." So I endeavor to persuade those who would leve to seek an easier existence in the world. "Hold fast that which thou hast," as John wrote to the city of Philadelphia in Asia. "To him that overcomes I will give to eat of the tree of life." Therefore we rejoice and are of good cheer, because we know the complete victory will finally be of God and the lamb, therefore ours.

From my hillside retreat, the Laura, in Rocks burrow,

Your sincere though unworthy friend,

J. K.

Should it be possible for anyone today to evaluate the achievements of these hermits, it is clear they did not succeed in the firm Pietist expectation that the millenium-end of the world would take place in the year 1700; nor in the belief that some, the elect, would be transported bodily to heaven at the end of life; nor that, in the wilderness here, they could receive a revelation from heaven; nor that they would be given the power to go into the world performing miracles and converting whole cities. They did not succeed in uniting all the German sects into one church. They did not find the Indians a remnant of the Lost Tribes of Israel.

At the death of Kelpius, the colony disintegrated and the members scattered. A few are buried nearby.

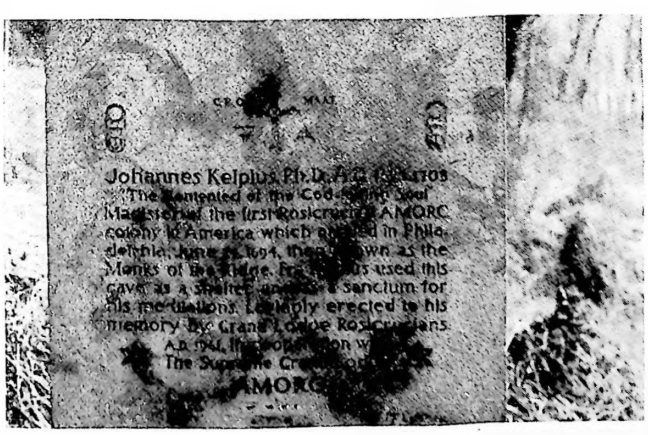
But before pronouncing this effort a failure, consider:

Kelpius' undertaking became a center of light through a large, rude, heterogeneous population to which these learned men gave educational, medical, astrological, and divining services freely. They took an active, energetic part in early Germantown affairs, assisting the churches with services, sermons and music. By letters Kelpius contacted all separatists throughout this country and abroad, giving advice and instruction. Though losing members, they attracted many new disciples from nearby or from Europe.

As pioneers, they instituted the first Rosicrucian lodge in America, the first astronomical observatory, first botanical garden, first charitable institution for children, first ethnological study of the Indian, first oil painting (By Dr. Witt), and first use of the printing press for the preparation of spiritual literature. They enriched the lives of many children; improved the lives of many Indians. Finally the effect of the truths they taught is still evident in the tales and legends wherever the slightest trace of Pennsylvania German is found.

Their primary purpose was to put into practice their mystical and occult dogmas and, by prayer and meditation to reach the highest degree of holiness. In this, we may be assured, they did make progress.

Perhaps the world would welcome a man such as John Kelpius, devoting his life to communion with God and the brotherhood of man.



Tablet at the entrance to Kelpius' Cave



Exit of Kelpius' Cave
Picture photographed from the inside looking out

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by J. McA. Harris, Jr., Ph.D.

600 JAHRE STADT KREFELD

Erlebt von den Generationen
einer Familie

By A. H. Gläser

There is much data available on the English-speaking years of Germantown history and we are all more or less familiar with it. The earliest years, from 1683 to about 1775, may be thought of as the German-speaking years and are much less familiar. Helma Gläser's book,

600 Years of the City of Krefeld
As Experienced by
The Generations of a Family

brings out the fact that much data on the German-speaking years is available and should be studied by present-day, English-speaking historians.

Readers of this history of Krefeld will be impressed by the rigors of life in early Krefeld and the difficulties with which our ancestors contended before coming to America. Miss Gläser mixes the narration of historic facts with vignettes of the contemporary life in a dramatic way that makes good reading.

Franz Daniel Pastorius, Jacob Telner, Derrick and Abraham op de Graeff, Garret Hendricks, and others whose names are known to the student of early Germantown, appear as live characters and the reader gets much closer to them and their problems.

In the book there is a picture of the first high-rise apartment house built in Krefeld. Under the picture we read (translation):

The New Krefeld
The first high-rise apartment house "Philadelphia-house"
Completed 1955
Builder: Peiner, Architect
In memory of the 13 Krefeld families who founded the Community of Germantown in Philadelphia, Kronprinzenstrasse has been changed to Philadelphiastrasse. In Philadelphia there is a Krefeld Street (State Archives)

Serious students of Germantown history are inevitably confronted with the German language. Helma Gläser's book is in German and it is to be hoped that an English translation may become available. In the meantime, a copy is available in the library of The Germantown Historical Society.

Copies may be obtained by writing (in English) to:

Miss Helma Gläser
415 Krefeld
Dahlerdyk 51
Germany

The book has 317 pages with numerous illustrations and a bibliography. The cost is about $5.00, including postage.

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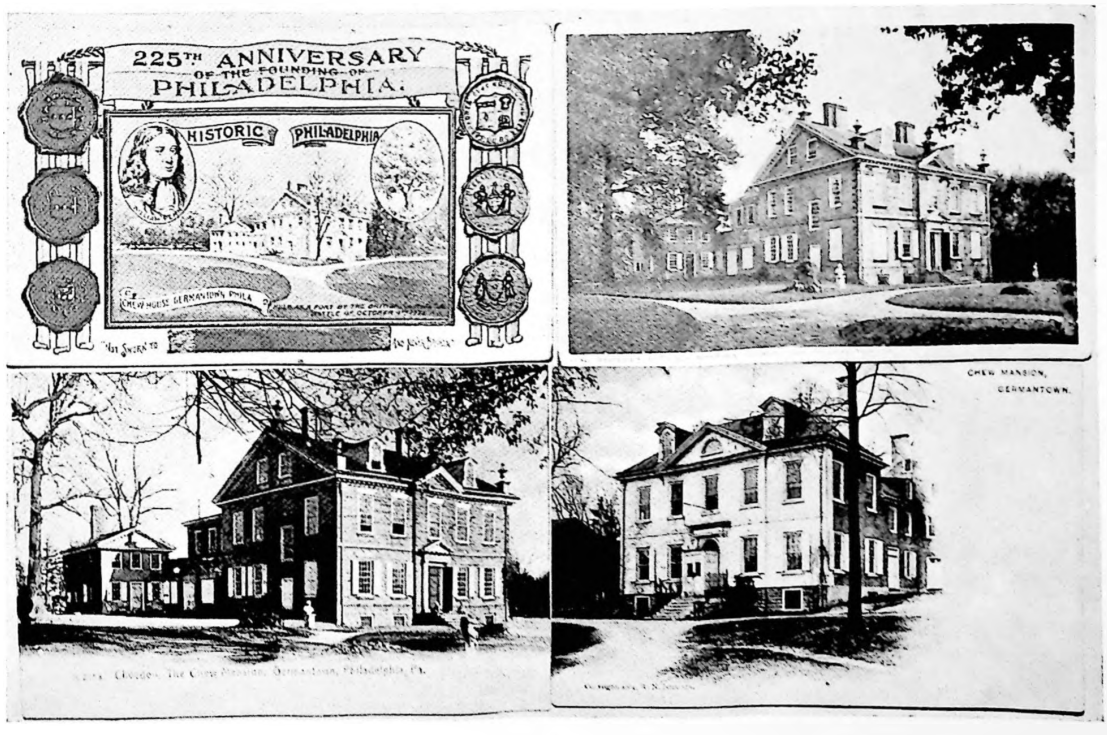
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