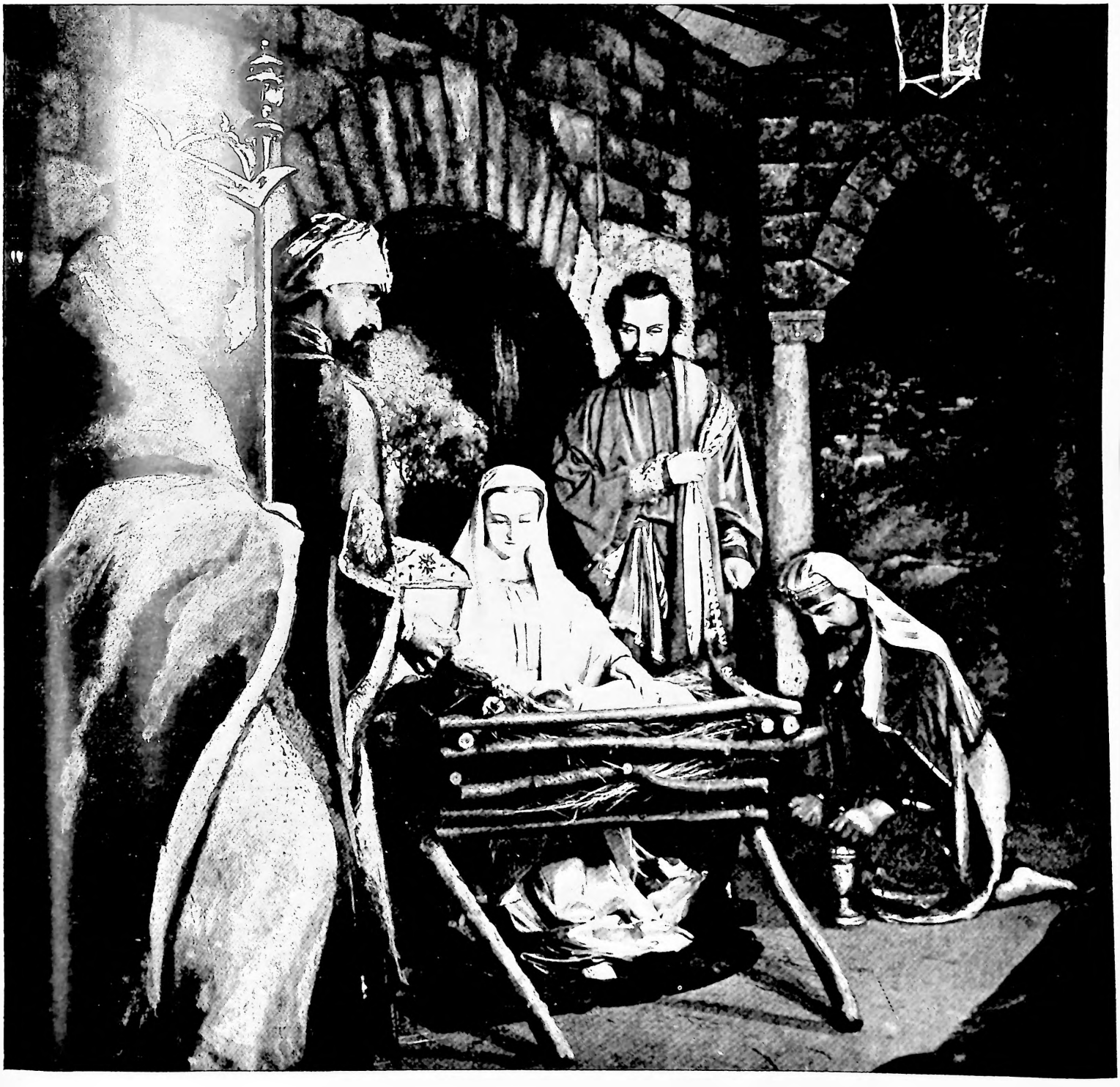
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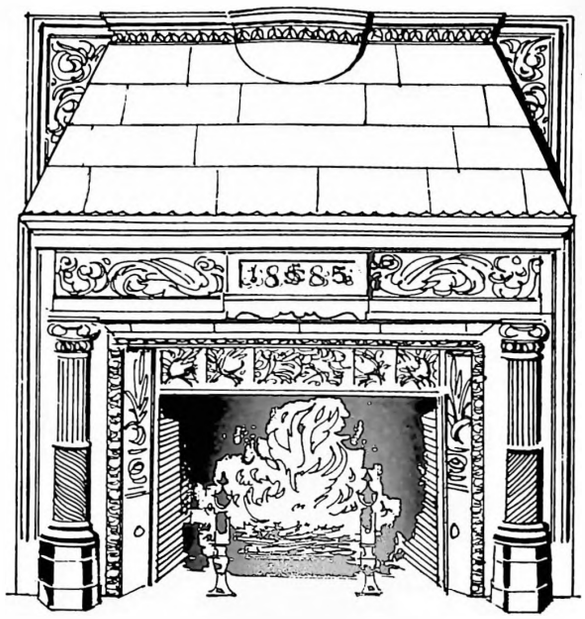
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The Germantown Historical Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to sustaining and promoting the cultural traditions of Germantown—through the preservation of historic landmarks; the maintenance of a museum of relics, a costume museum, and a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

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# GERMANTOWNE CRIER



Volume 19 | DECEMBER, 1967 | Number 4


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# Report of the President

*By* Judge Harold D. Saylor

In the annual report a year ago reference was made to the gift of two historic houses by Mrs. Lawrence M. C. Smith and Charles H. Woodward, Esq. Since then considerable progress has been made in reconditioning those houses for use as museums.

Mrs. Smith's gift, the Clarkson-Watson House, at 5275-77 Germantown Avenue, under the supervision of Mr. Henry J. Magaziner as architect, has taken on the appearance it is believed to have had in 1793 when Thomas Jefferson and Edmund Randolph lived there. More work on the interior is still to be done in order to make it the home of our Costume Committee under the leadership of Mrs. J. Bradford Ritter.

Mr. Woodward's gift, the Howell House at 5218 Germantown Avenue, has been almost completely restored and is now the home of the Toys and Textiles Committee headed by Mrs. M. Bacon Bostwick. The large front room and the room beyond it on the first floor now house exhibits of textiles and the two rooms above them on the second floor contain our toy collection. We are indebted to Mrs. Bostwick for purchasing and presenting to the society cases and shelving for the toy exhibits. And we are very greatly indebted to Captain Edmund A. Crenshaw, Jr. for his work in restoring the interior of the house almost singlehanded. He put in proper window frames, did necessary carpentry work, painted walls, supervised the electrical work and made it possible for the new museum to come into being. Furthermore he arranged for the work of the contractors employed to repair the roof, point the stone work, and paint the outside woodwork. Today the Howell House is in first class condition and is a credit to the society and the community as an attractive example of Germantown's colonial past.

The Society's other houses have been cared for during the year by Mr. Frank J. Ollinger, Chairman of the House Committee. The rents received from the tenants of the four houses not used for museum purposes are more than enough to pay taxes and utility charges and the cost of repairs to those properties. After acquiring title to these houses it was found necessary in some instances to make extensive repairs. Now only regular upkeep is necessary. However, it is hoped that some day soon the Society will have a maintenance fund for all our houses just as we do for the Conyngham-Hacker House. An appeal to the membership for contributions will be necessary.

During the year there have been gifts to our library and to our relics museum which are much appreciated. As usual, our board of managers has met regularly and the meetings have been well attended. Mr. Henry J. Magaziner as Chairman of the Meetings Committee has been successful in procuring able and talented speakers who have addressed attentive audiences on very interesting subjects usually with the aid of color photographs.

The committee for the annual visit to Germantown houses, headed as heretofore by Dr. Gordon W. Venable and Frank J. Ollinger, had another very successful tour that netted a substantial sum for our treasury. The annual excursion led by Mr. Frank Rogers Donahue, Jr. to Pont Reading at Ardmore was held in October and was enjoyed by those who participated.

The chairmen of the Hospitality, Membership, Morris House, Library, Relics and Costume Committees have all done good work for the Society. Their volunteer services are appreciated by all. Our Treasurer, Mr. Wallace S. Martindale, Jr., has devoted a great deal of time and effort to his able management of our finances.

The former editor of the *Crier,* Miss Jane Carl, who did so much to make our quarterly magazine an attractive publication until her retirement over a year ago, died recently after a serious illness. The society is much in her debt for the generous contribution of time, energy and experience she gave to us during her years as editor. As heretofore reported her capable successor, Mr. Edwin Iwanicki, resigned as editor when the pressure of his regular employment made it necessary for him to do so. We are very fortunate in having Vice President John McArthur Harris, Jr. filling the office of editor and chairman of the Publications Committee. He has charge of editing and publishing the *Crier* and handling the booklets and postcards that are for sale.

Mr. Magaziner, Chairman of the Committee for the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion at the corner of Tulpehocken and Greene Streets, reports activity by the group that is so much interested in establishing a Victorian Museum in that fine old house of the 1850's. He and his committee members are entitled to great credit for what they have accomplished to date and should be fully supported in their effort to raise the large sums necessary to complete the restoration and refurbishing of the Victorian house.

We are grateful to Mrs. Almon N. Kidder for her annual report on Germantown happenings which is printed in this issue.

At the annual meeting of the Society held this autumn the officers were re-elected as were three managers whose three year terms were expiring. Mr. Jack Hornung was elected manager to succeed Miss Carl and James C. Humes was elected to succeed Guy W. Moore who had resigned due to frequent absences from the city because of business commitments. We welcome our new managers with enthusiasm.

For the future we look forward to the completion of the Clarkson-Watson House renovation and restoration and its use by the Costume Committee which has been

cramped in the small Bechtel House. We shall continue to do all that we can to avert the loss of old Germantown houses that may be in danger and should be preserved. We hope to build up a maintenance fund or funds so that we can be certain to have income available when repairs must be made. We shall endeavor with the active and most helpful assistance of Mrs. Arthur E. Weil, the Membership Committee chairman, to keep acquiring new members and thereby make our activities more effective in the community.

Your president thanks all officers, managers, and other members for their support in the past and their offer of continued support in the future, they being interested in carrying on in the 68th year of its existence the plans and purposes of the Society which is "dedicated to sustaining and promoting the cultural traditions of Germantown."

HAROLD D. SAYLOR
*President*

## Publications of the Germantown Historical Society

**Magazine**

The GERMANTOWNE CRIER, published in March, May, September, and December, is available at the subscription rate of $1.50 annually.

Nearly all of the seventy past numbers of the CRIER are currently available. A complete assortment of available back issues may be had for $7.50, postage paid.

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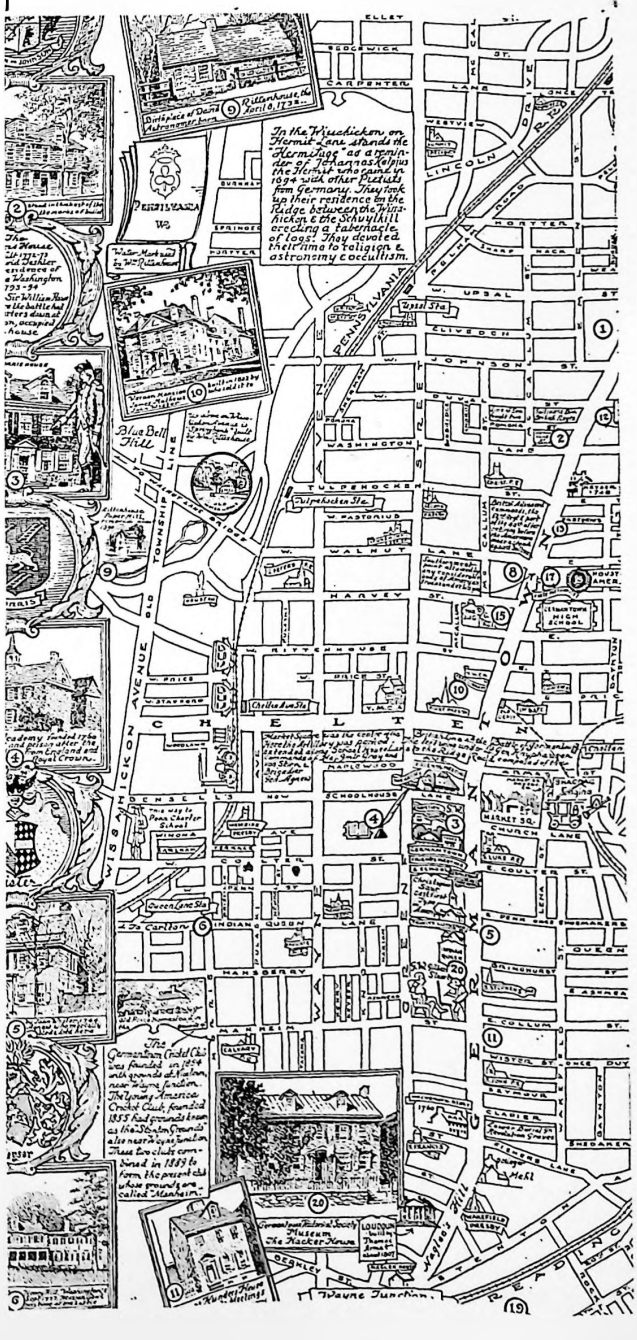
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# HAPPENINGS IN GERMANTOWN

## OCTOBER 1966 – OCTOBER 1967

*By* PHOEBE CARLILE KIDDER

IT is no wonder one becomes apprehensive about the weather. No matter what season of the year there are sudden changes without warning. On the whole, October was a delightful month—clear and balmy, with few showers. Then the pattern varied as the winter started.

The usual exclamation heard in December, "Oh, if we only have a white Christmas" was answered in full measure in 1966. On December 24th those heavy dark clouds opened wide, and left us with 14 inches of snow, to say nothing of drifts of ten feet or more. Strangely enough it was accompanied by loud thunder and sharp lightning part of the time. Needless to say public transportation was tied up a bit, and a month later some of that snow was still with us—thawing in the daytime and freezing at night.

Mid January treated us to most unseasonable, spring-like weather, enjoyed by all. Bulbs in the garden began showing green leaves, and the snowdrops bloomed gaily. Then came a day of heavy rain, ending with thunder and lightning. Temperatures dropped, and all was seasonable once more.

The official announcement in July that the six year drought is over, came as no surprise to those in this section of the country. With the help of St. Swithin, maybe, the daily storms have chased the salt line in the Delaware River right back where it belongs. The countryside is lush with greenness once more.

### HISTORIC HOUSES

One of the highlights of the year was the tour of the old Germantown houses by members of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. On Thursday, October 6th, 18 bus loads of the members visited Stenton, Grumblethrope, the buildings of the Germantown Historical Society, the Morris House, the Germantown Fire Insurance Company, Upsala, and the Chew Mansion. It was a beautiful day for the tour and the members, from all sections of the country, felt well rewarded with the wealth of original 18th Century homes we had to show them.

On a hill overlooking Wayne Junction stands the pillared mansion, Loudoun. Built in 1800-1801 by Thomas Armat, it was lived in by Armat descendents until the death of Maria Dickinson Logan in 1939. It now belongs to the City of Philadelphia. The recently formed committee of ladies, known as "The Friends of Loudoun," has come across many valuable papers and family letters in bureau and desk drawers, and in the attic. These have been turned over to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to be added to the archives of the Logan, Norris, and Dickinson families. The house is beautifully refurbished and ready to receive guests.

A campaign has been on to raise $25,000.00 to restore the neo-classic building at 8217 Germantown Avenue, Chestnut Hill. Rescued from the wreckers by Mrs. George Spaeth and Mrs. Robert Hubby, who felt its architectural interest should be preserved, the drive has gone steadily ahead. It was built in 1856.

The Christmas Tea, held at the Morris House in December, brought warmth and Beauty and cheer to the old house on the Square. A number of its old friends—and new—were present for the festivities. The Morris House Card Party was held April 10th this year, hoping to avoid some of the bad March weather. A Garden Party for the volunteer hostesses was held June 26th at the house. A lovely day to be outdoors. Among the guests was Mrs. Fred H. Jaeger, a descendent of the Deshler who built the house.

The Maxwell Mansion Committee has been active all year. Starting with an Open House in October, they held a Treasure Sale in November to help raise the funds to restore the house. On May 13th they were hosts at their first Victorian Seminar. It was an all day program that included talks by noted speakers, a guided walking tour of Victorian houses, and ended with a dinner at the Inn at Alden Park. Truly an ambitious and very popular day. On July 20th the "World's First Victorian Happening" took place with appropriate entertainment for all.

May 25th proved to be cold and rainy and, for the first time in years, the card party for Upsala was held indoors. Although the guests were fitted in snugly, all seemed to be in good spirits. It was well attended.

The Johnson House has been gay and festive this past year. Celebrations for the Woman's Club 50th Anniversary Year started in October with a Golden Anniversary Tea, honoring the Charter Members of the Club. On April 8th an Open House was held to which heads of the Germantown organizations and friends of the Club were invited. A gold bound book records their signatures. The 50th Anniversary Luncheon, held May 18th at the Philadelphia Cricket Club, closed the gala year for the Woman's Club of Germantown.

### RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL

New pastors have come to two of our prominent churches. The First Presbyterian Church in German-

town has called the Rev. Dr. Aaron E. Gast, Dean of the Conwell School of Theology, to become its Senior Minister. This was effective July 1st.

In Chestnut Hill the Rev. W. Benjamin Holmes of Saratoga Springs, New York, has been called to the Episcopal Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields at Willow Grove Avenue and St. Martin's Lane.

In May, the congregation of Grace Baptist Church laid the cornerstone of their new church building at Johnson Street just west of Germantown Avenue—a dream of many, many years come true. The present church edifice is at 34 E. Sharpnack Street.

A special religious service in the jazz idiom was held in the sanctuary of the First Methodist Church on April 9th. The service was the opening event in a week long Religious Arts Festival presented by the Fine Arts Committee of the Germantown church.

A tutoring project has been underway this past summer in which boys and girls have engaged in tutoring younger children who have difficulties with their reading. In the Wister School area there was much enthusiasm but little available space. St. Luke's Church contributed rooms in its parish house and the Germantown Friends School contributed classrooms. Since last February pupils from the Germantown Friends School have been tutoring second graders at the Wister School two afternoons a week. Saturday mornings, senior high students have been tutoring older pupils at Enon Tabernacle Church. All of which helps to develop a sense of responsibility toward the Community.

During August delegates to the Children's International Summer Village met at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Coming from all parts of the world, the children executed native dances; displayed craftwork from their native countries; and dressed in authentic costumes of their native lands.

The Upsal Day School for Blind Children has added a new building which has doubled the possible student enrollment. Pupils range in age from 3 to 16 years. Volunteers, boys 11 to 16 years of age, helped during the summer on the playground, on field trips, and in the classrooms.

A million dollars in pledges has started the largest fund-raising campaign ever undertaken by any independent school in the Philadelphia area. With a goal of $2.25 million, Germantown Friends School has a big job ahead in the coming 18 months.

Germantown Lutheran Academy is also raising a large sum for its development program. Mr. Albert H. Reddles, Germantown's "Honorary Mayor," is chairman of the drive for $750,000.00. Restoration and improvement of the campus as a place of historical beauty, and as a place for effective education are the objectives.

Awhile back the trustees of the Concord School House issued a plea for a globe showing the world as it was anytime between the Revolution and the 1850's. As yet one has not materialized but a promise of such a globe has come from one of our schools.

In January the world's first Apparel Research Center was dedicated at the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science. Participating in the ceremonies were members of the Philadelphia Men's Clothing Foremen, cosponsors of the unique center with the College of Textiles and Science.

**HOSPITALS**

February, the "Heart Month," was appropriate for the dedication of the Germantown Hospital's new cardiac unit, the largest in the Delaware Valley, and one of the biggest in the nation. There are nine private bedrooms equipped with electronic monitoring devices which continuously transmit data on the patient's heart to a master console in the nursing station. From a seat behind the console a single nurse can keep a constant check on all nine patients by watching the gauges and lights on the console panel and the nearby television screen.

The Main Street Fair, the big, yearly money raising event for the Chestnut Hill Hospital, celebrated its 25th Anniversary in April. The silver anniversary celebration was held at the Bellevue Stratford with dinner, a glamorous fashion show, and dancing, for the benefit of the hospital. Last fall the Chestnut Hill Hospital opened a new Cardiac Intensive Care Unit with its own nursing station and all the latest equipment to care for patients with acute heart disorders.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

A "First" in Pennsylvania is Bell's new electronic switching equipment operating in Germantown. Our Historical Society President, Judge Harold D. Saylor, and Mr. Howard W. Sherry, President of the Germantown Business Men's Association, were guests of the Telephone Company at the dedication of the new switching equipment at Bell's Germantown Central Office, 26 W. Chelten Avenue. The first call over the new system, made by Judge Saylor, highlighted the opening ceremony.

Germantown Week, marking the 284th anniversary of the founding of Germantown, was May 14th to 20th. Sponsored jointly by the Germantown Community Council and the Business Men's Association, a full week of activities was scheduled. As has been customary, a tour of Germantown houses took place the end of the week, May 20th. Twelve houses were open to the public. They were houses of all periods. The tour was sponsored by the Germantown Historical Society. It was a very successful week.

The new library, nearing completion at the William Penn Charter School, will be named the John F. Gummere Library, honoring the present headmaster who will retire in June, 1968. His successor will be Wilbert L. Braxton, now assistant headmaster.

**PEOPLE IN THE NEWS**

Mr. Paul A. Alexander has been named the new Executive Director of the Germantown Boy's Club, succeeding Harry G. Shoff. He has been on the staff of the Boy's Club for the past 20 years.

In March, the Rev. Dr. V. Carney Hargroves, minister of the Second Baptist Church of Germantown, celebrated his 35th anniversary as minister of the church. A special morning service was planned.

Our report would not be complete without Dr. Catherine Macfarlane's name on the list. The many awards and honors bestowed upon her go through the year. In April the Soroptimist Club of Germantown honored the Doctor's 90th birthday with a dinner at The Inn, Alden Park, to which special guests were invited, and a gala evening was enjoyed by all.

The Elizabeth Blackwell Award of Hobart and William Smith Colleges was bestowed upon Dr. Macfarlane on September 8th. The gold medal of the award was established in 1958 to commemorate Elizabeth Blackwell who graduated from Hobart, then Geneva College, as the first women in America to receive a medical degree. It is given annually for "Outstanding Service to Mankind." Dr. Macfarlane is the only recipient of the honor who was born during the lifetime of Dr. Blackwell.

Mr. Edward J. Thomas, chairman of the Board of Managers of the Germantown Savings Bank, was elected president of Colonial Germantown, Inc., at its annual meeting in October.

Mr. Craig Ahlberg has been named the new Executive Director of the Germantown Community Council.

The retirement of Captain Fred W. Dohrman of the 14th Police District, took place in November after 24 years of experience in the Philadelphia Police Department. He was honored by a testimonial dinner held at Alden Park Banquet Hall on November 1st.

Mr. William H. Sleep, superintendent of the Whosoever Gospel Mission for the past 30 years, died July 1st after a long illness.

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr. Henry H. Bagger | Mrs. John C. Hummel |
| Miss M. Jane Carl | Mrs. John Edward Hutchinson |
| Mrs. John C. Decker | Mrs. William S. Logan |
| Mr. Samuel Emlen, 3rd | Mr. Oscar E. Mertz |
| Mrs. Charles Fearon | Miss Hattie K. Milnes |
| Mrs. Carl W. Fenninger | Mr. Grant M. Simon |
| Mrs. Thomas S. Gates | Miss Edith M. Smiley |
| Mr. Ralph A. Gibbs | Mrs. Arthur T. Smith |
| Miss Martha Hallowell | Mrs. Clarence G. Stallman |
| Mrs. Flagler Harris | Mrs. John E. Taeffner |
| Mrs. Robert M. Hogue | Mr. George Woodward, Jr. |
| Mrs. Edward Hopkinson | Mr. D. Robert Yarnall |

**RANDOM OBSERVATIONS**

Job opportunities for Youth Program in Germantown has named Harry B. Watts its new director. His job is to find part-time work for the area's junior and senior high school students, 14 to 18 years old, and to set up orientation programs for the young people applying for the jobs.

While digging the foundation for a new kitchen at the rear of 5217 Pulaski Avenue, George Houston came upon a flintlock pistol which was in two pieces. When put together he realized he had a gun made, probably, before the Revolution. Captain Edmund A. Crenshaw went to see the pistol and confirmed it may have dropped from the hand of a fallen Redcoat.

A "Twenty-two Hour Civil Defense Shelter Management Course" was set up in the bomb shelter in the basement of Town Hall last July 21st. Senior nurses from Germantown and St. Joseph's hospitals, and a few Civil Air Patrol officers took part. The object of the course was to teach those present how to deal with any of the many situations that arise in a disaster. The instructor was Stephen LeBoutillier, Civil Defense Director for northwest Philadelphia.

The Germantown Music Society made its debut October 23rd at the First Methodist Church. The chairman of the group is Miss Mary Emma Brewer, choral director for Germantown Friends School, who needs no introduction to music lovers in Germantown. The Society offered a 12-concert program for 1966-1967 to the people of the Delaware Valley.

We are told those who travel Walnut Lane between Germantown Avenue and Greene Street are riding on illegal paving. The City plans to remedy the illegal paving this fall, so another street will be torn up for six weeks!

Germantown House, Inc., a community-based, nonprofit corporation, was organized a year or so ago. Its main objective is to acquire and rehabilitate old houses for sale or rental. Dr. Robert D. Anderson is President and Mr. Thomas Langford, Jr. is Vice-president of the organization.

The Germantown Urban Renewal Project has made progress this past year. The main cause of dissension at this point is the proposed Rittenhouse-Belfield bypass which would extend from Wissahickon Avenue, along Rittenhouse Street, over to Belfield Avenue at a cost of $2.5 million. On September 6th and 8th, two full days, public hearings were held before City Council's Committee on Municipal Development and Zoning, at City Hall in order for interested organizations and individuals to present their views for Council to consider before acting on the project.

No announcement of approval of the project has come as yet, but it is expected, and there will probably be changes in the original by-pass plans.

The Annual Garden Party of the Germantown Historical Society was held June 1st. Refreshments were served in the Garden of the Society and later the guests went to the Parish House of Trinity Lutheran Church for a most interesting and informative talk by Miss Penelope Hartshorn, architect for the Independence Hall Restoration.

The Annual Tour of the Germantown Historical Society took us to "Pont Reading," the residence of Mr. and Mrs. David B. Robb. "Pont Reading" was built in 1683 by David Humphreys, and Mrs. Robb is a direct descendent of Daniel Humphreys.

As we go to press, so to speak, destructive floods in Texas, the aftermath of hurricane Beulah, and snow falling in New Hampshire, make us think it best to batten down the hatches before winter is upon us.

# TWO POEMS

*By* MARTHA D. TOURISON

## A TRUE CHRISTMAS TALE

I came with loads of Christmas trees
All white with frosted snow,
My branches broken on one side
I hoped would never show.
The vendor placed us in a line
And sold each one but me
Alone and left all by myself
Where not an eye could see
When daylight waned and hope was gone
I heard young voices say—
"There's just one left, We'll take it home
As no one's here to pay,"
They said I made a lovely tree
All glittering and bright.
Un-heard, I whispered—"Thanks to you
Who saved my Christmas night."

## MY SILENT FRIEND

The spinet closed and silent now that I
Have left untouched since tuneful girlhood days.
Just one soft chord my stiffened fingers try
As some remembered tune my heart relays.
Long-dormant inspiration comes to life,
And slowly, surely do I play again,
The melody that calmed through stress and strain
The lilting song with lingering refrain,
Some golden magic swells within my heart
And waves its wand across the yellowed keys.
Dear silent friend we've been too long apart;
We shared the joys of fondest memories.
And now all waxed and polished you shall shine,
Beloved, long-neglected friend of mine.

# THE FURNITURE OF LOUDOUN

By Amelia N. Farr

*This is the second article on recent developments at Loudon. The first article, by Sarah A. G. Smith in the* Crier *for September, 1967, tells how the project was started and gives a general picture of the findings and the problems involved. In this second article, Amelia Farr describes some of the more important pieces of furniture and sketches the family history of the various owners. The perspicacious reader will be impressed by the time and labor involved in acquiring the information for such an article.*

LOUDOUN is a magnificent, solidly-built house. The beauty of the original building is still retained in spite of two later additions. It is lighted by many beautiful windows which give the impression of space and elegance.

As with any large house occupied by many generations, each generation left its mark on Loudoun, marks which have survived to show good taste and great wealth. Each period is represented by the best of its kind.

Loudoun has known happiness and sadness. This we know from the diaries and letters left by the family. The information that was accumulated and kept intact was a very interesting part of the bequest of Maria Dickinson Logan. The gift of Loudoun was unparalleled as it gave the people of Philadelphia records of a complete way of life for a family from 1801 until 1939. No one suspected this and for almost thirty years after the death of Maria Dickinson Logan, Loudoun slept quietly on Naglee's Hill. In October of 1966 "The Friends of Loudoun" opened Pandora's Box.



**HEPPLEWHITE CARD TABLE**
**C. 1790**
**Property of Thomas Armat**

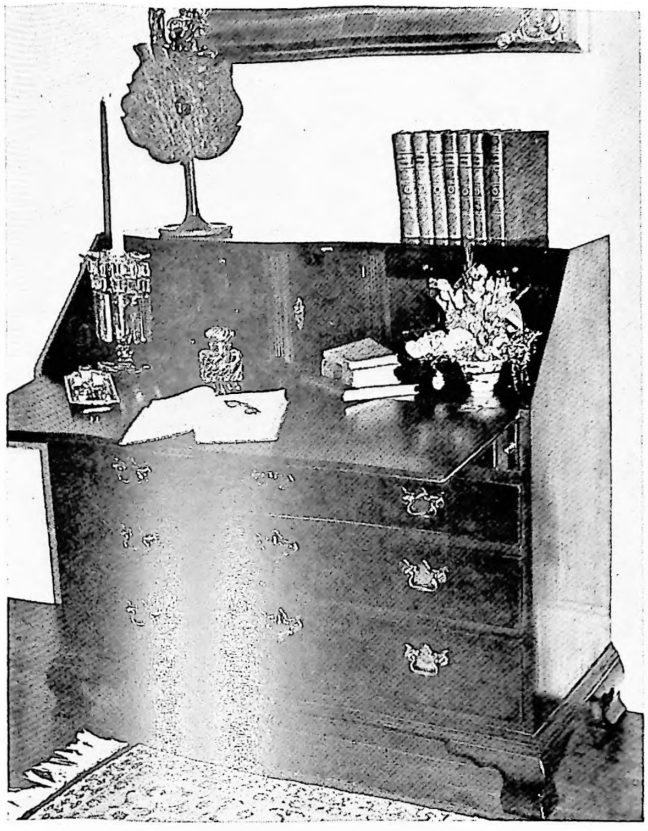
The loft and attics bulged with a collection of letters and manuscripts. An unbelievable number of inventories identified almost everything.

Thomas Armat, who built the house, brought with him his eighteenth century furniture including two beautiful, dome top chests that are of special interest. They have hand-made handles and hinges and apparently were both made by the same cabinet maker. The larger of them proves that Thomas Armat came from Loudoun County, Virginia, as it is lined with newspaper—the *Richmond Gazette* of 1766.

A beautifully-proportioned, slant top desk, circa 1780, was owned by Thomas Armat. Made of mahogany and highlighted by willow brasses, it is a delight to the eye. A mahogany Hepplewhite table of the Federal Period, completely covered with the dirt and grime of years, was refinished and is now a beautiful drop-leaf table with inlaid legs. An eighteenth century table with a marble top was found in the cellar. It is now refinished and is quite charming and unusual. The federal card table and Eglomise mirror in the dining room are listed as Armat pieces. In the upper hall there is a beautiful example of an eighteenth century, mahogany, chest of drawers with the original brasses. This also belonged to the Armats.

Thomas W. Armat, the son of the builder and therefore the second generation in Loudoun, married Anna Yates in the year of Our Lord, 1788. Anna diligently prepared her sampler which, today, we have hanging on the wall. To her belonged the lovely Sheraton sewing table with finely reeded legs and lions-head drawer pulls.

The Thomas W. Armats had one daughter, Jane Caroline, who married her cousin, William Armat, of Baltimore. They had two daughters, Anna and Fanny. William Armat died while Anna and Fanny were still very young and, in 1828, their mother, Jane Caroline, married James J. Skerrett. Mr. Skerrett seems to have



**THOMAS ARMAT'S DESK**
**Chippendale**
**C. 1780**

brought some furniture to the house as his Sheraton side-board and knife boxes with the Skerrett monogram were given to Stenton by Maria Dickinson Logan in 1912.

In the 1830's the Skerretts made several trips to Europe and collected many Italian paintings and books which, blended with the furniture of the Empire Period, made a decided change throughout the house. Neo-classic mantles replaced the early ones and great mirrors in ornate gilt frames made the drawing room seem larger.

Two fabulous brass ormolu chandeliers were imported from France. The Empire chairs in the dining room were found scattered throughout the house. The two arm chairs were found in the attic with the original seat covers carefully wrapped. These covers were of red silk with a gold medallion and bordered with a red and gold braid. This original French braid is now on the chairs. We found it neatly tucked away in a trunk in the attic.

The dining room table, according to a diary of Anna Armat, was made for her mother in 1838. It has two leaves, each twenty-two inches wide so that when they are used the table is 100 inches in length. Anna Armat's harp and music stand, that stand in the drawing room, were imported from Paris. They were brought "by packet" in 1838.

A large rosewood table with an inlaid marble top was made by a Philadelphia cabinet maker with marble brought from Italy. What a "fun piece"—a way to recapture a trip by just remembering where each piece of marble was acquired.

In 1846 Anna Armat married Gustavus Logan. Again a change. Victorian was fashionable so Victorian they had; sofas, settees, desks, stuffed chairs, carved chairs, arm chairs, and side chairs, and tables with marble tops of different colors. The four, carved, Belter armchairs are quite handsome.

The Gustavus Logans had six children. Two of them, J. Dickinson Logan and William Armat Logan, died when quite young. The others, Albanus, Fanny, Maria, and Jane, lived at Loudoun with their mother and step-grand father. J. J. Skerrett, their father, was absent. Skerrett died in 1875 and in 1876 Gustavus returned to Loudoun and remained there until his death.

Gustavus Logan had a brother and two sisters. One sister, Mary Norris Logan, who never married, died in 1886. She divided her estate among her brother's four children so, from her house at 1130 Arch Street, came more priceless eighteenth century furniture; chairs, tables, chests, mirrors, and paintings. The three early Queen Anne chairs are magnificent, a matching pair





**PORTRAIT OF MRS THOMAS ARMAT**
**and**
**GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER FANNY**
**18th Century Marble Top Table**



**PHILADELPHIA CHEST**
**Property of Thomas Armat**

and a third, distinguished by a shell carving on the cabriole legs. They have all the markings of a Philadelphia cabinet maker, with the applied moulding around the slip-seat. These chairs are described in Horner's *Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture.* They probably descended from the Norris family. The construction of an early, walnut, Chippendale chair indicates that it too is a Philadelphia piece. There were also a Hepplewhite chair with a beautiful shield back and four, very sturdy, solid, windsors, signed by Letchworth, a well known chair maker of the period.

The mahogany chest, with bail handles and ogee feet, was bequeathed to Albanus, another mahogany chest with oval brasses, to Fanny. The Maria Dickinson walnut chest with original brasses, was made in Wilmington by Zita Ferris for John Dickinson (a signer of the Declaration of Independence) who gave it to his daughter. It was subsequently bequeathed to Maria Dickinson's granddaughter, Maria Dickinson Logan.

A chest-on-chest is literally that. Maria Dickinson Logan describes how cabinet maker, Thomoson, concocted it: A John Dickinson chest with a Thomas Armat chest on top of it, then a bonnet top added. The original brasses of the lower chest were copied and used on the upper part. It is quite a piece of mahogany —very big.

We have also, from Mary Norris Logan, a walnut linen chest having eight drawers behind two panelled doors. It has very early brasses and carrying handles on each side.

The tables from the Arch Street house are many and beautiful. A mahogany, cabriole leg, Philadelphia drop-leaf is superb. Two Sheraton card tables of mahogany stand in the hall after spending many years in different attics. Another Sheraton drop-leaf with beautiful, reeded legs and an oval brass pull, now stands polished and shining in the dining room.

The four Philadelphia looking glasses are handsome and were, probably, made by Elliot. The earliest is of walnut with a gold liner and medallion. Three of them have been resilvered; the fourth one, in the hall, is in its original state.

This covers the most important pieces of Mary Norris Logan's bequest.

Through inheritance came James Logan's back-stool, a very early piece. The frame is of walnut with a beautiful stretcher and slipper feet. How many there were we do not know but another one is in Winterthur.

In 1773 Thomas Tufts made furniture for Deborah Norris at the time of her marriage to Dr. George Logan. This included the basin stand beneath the portrait of Deborah Norris Logan in one of the bedrooms. This was lent to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1935 for their exhibition of Philadelphia furniture.

A Pembroke table with Marlborough legs was found in the attic. No mention is made, anywhere, of this

lovely thing. We do know, from a list of articles and the bill, that Thomas Tufts made a breakfast table for Deborah Logan. We do know that he was famous for his "block feet." Is this the table? Did he make it? This we will try to discover.

With all the inventories available there is still much to learn. Aside from the known Logan pieces the others are probably Norris and Dickinson so the treasures at Loudoun are from prominent families and well-known cabinet makers.

At some future date we hope to give you other articles on the paintings, china, and books of Loudoun.

**APRIL MEETING**

April 18, 1968—8:30 P.M. Members of the Germantown Historical Society will be the guests of the Tower Fellowship and the Green Tree Fellowship of the First Methodist Church of Germantown. The meeting will be at the church at the corner of Germantown Avenue and High Street, in Pilling Hall. The well-known ornithologist, Joseph N. Cadbury, will give an illustrated lecture on birds.

# Jane Carl

The *Germantowne Crier* wishes to convey its inexpressible sense of loss in the death of Jane Carl on August 13, 1967. Her skill in journalism and her devotion to the *Crier* will be sadly missed. Those who knew her will appreciate that her friendly enthusiasm was a pleasant feature of any work that she undertook.

The *Germantowne Crier* made its first appearance in January of 1949. John W. Jackson was Editor and Katherine Richardson Wireman, Art Editor. Mrs. Wireman continued as Art Editor, and later as Chairman of the Editorial Committee, until 1962 when the May issue shows that Jane Carl was Editor and Mrs. Henry Wireman, Editor Emeritus. Jane Carl continued as Editor until September, 1966, when Mr. Edwin Iwanicki became Chairman and Editor.

During her editorship the *Crier* prospered, benefitting greatly from her many contributions. That she had the time and energy to prepare so many articles while she had a full-time job with the Bell Telephone Company is a cause for amazement and admiration. Characteristically, her first contribution was an appreciation of Katherine Richardson Wireman, her editorial predecessor. Subsequent articles cover a wide range of subject matter as indicated by the following titles:

"It was the Last House . . . . . Sept., 1962
"Charles Walter Cook" . . . . . Dec., 1962
"The Hatfield House" . . . . . May, 1963
"No sound of Bells" . . . . . Sept., 1963
"Deshler Chest-on-chest
Travels to Baltimore" . . . . . Dec., 1963
"Don't Tuck Your Tucker Away" . . March, 1966
"Four Conversation Pieces" . . . . . May, 1966
"A Victorian Social Butterfly" . . . . . May, 1967

This is not a complete list but should suffice to indicate her devotion to the *Crier*. She had agreed to prepare an article on the Centennial for the September, 1967, issue but was too ill to follow it through. In a telephone conversation two days before her death she said that she would have the article ready for the December issue. She had a long fight with ill-health but never gave in. We salute her.



**TREASURED YEARS**

*By* Elizabeth Reeves Humphreys

And should one never let the heart
Turn backward, never let the mind
Conjure up the tenderness
That made the world seem rainbow-lined?

Never feel the wonderment
Of love transcendant, deep and high,
Weaving one life with another,
Making an eternal tie?

Ah, yes, let the heart remember,
Let the mind turn backward, too,
And live again those treasured years
Beautiful as dawn-touched dew.

# THE STUDY CLASS OF GERMANTOWN

By Anna Mattern

ALTHOUGH the newspapers of the day failed to report it and the various histories of Philadelphia and Germantown have made no record of it, it is an established fact that in the latter part of 1895 a "Study Class" was organized by some of the ladies of Germantown. A vague story has come down through the years which says that earlier that same year a lady from Germantown traveled in the "mid-west" where she visited a city which had just such a study class and she brought the idea back to Germantown.

In spite of the fact that the local papers of 1895 did not print anything about The Study Class, *The Germantown Guide* faithfully reported much of the news that interested the local residents of the area. A few items will give the reader an idea of the tempo of the times and some of the problems, solved and unsolved:

"A new dormitory will soon be added to the headquarters of Fire Truck H, Seymour and Main Street. The men are obliged to sleep on the first floor of the building, near the horse stalls and the addition will provide a very desirable improvement and convenience."

"The Women's Christian Association of Germantown has announced that the free bath houses for women and children are now open. A few years ago the Association built an addition to its home back of Market Square, with an entrance on Mill Street, and fitted it up for this special purpose with every convenience and comfort, and with particular regard for the children who attend without care-takers."

"Persons residing on the outskirts of Pulaskitown complain of the incursion of squads of small boys who break window panes and appropriate to themselves whatever their hands can be laid upon."

"Work on the new bridge at the Falls of Schuylkill is so far advanced that an immense travelling crane and tramway with which to place the steel girders in position is being fitted up. The false work to support the west span is completed, and a siding has been built that extends from the Reading Railroad to the River road at the bridge approach."

"The Market Square Progressive Association will hold its monthly meeting next Tuesday evening in the chapel of the church. In addition to the usual service a lecture on "The Future of Electricity" will be delivered by Prof. Edward J. Houston."

The advertisements in *The Germantown Guide* indicate that a thriving civilization existed in this part of Philadelphia at that time. William Berger, Florist, with his shop at Main Street and West Chelten Avenue offered fresh mushrooms daily. Thomas McNally, "Common-sense Horse-shoer," advertized his services and James S. Jones advised the public that his store stayed open until 10:00 o'clock on Saturday evenings. Robert Cherry & Sons advertized in January of 1895 a sale of shoes: "Women's shoes for $2.00—were $3.00 and $4.00. Also Women's shoes, Most all shapes—$1.95—worth $3.00."

It was no new idea in 1895 that the ladies should meet together for purposes more serious than sociability and tea. A long tradition in the city dictated that mission works were best handled by the ladies and their wish to teach and help others naturally blossomed into organized societies. The names given to these societies usually told all. For instance, "The Female Domestic Missionary Society for the Support of the Gospel in the Alms House and Vicinity" came into being in 1816. It is worthy of mention not only because of its name but because it still exists in this year of 1967, corporate Seal and all! As *The Germantown Guide* reported in 1895, the Women's Christian Association was active at Market Square and at that time, too, on the north side of the square a group of ladies were still managing a library which had had its twenty-fifth anniversary just prior to that year.

Recorded history for The Study Class begins in 1897. In that year the program for the year of study was first printed for the members of the group. A copy of this program, as well as one for each year from then until the present, is preserved in the Library of the Germantown Historical Society. We know that the following ladies were members then: Mrs. Audenried, Mrs. Dallam, Mrs. Field, Mrs. Knight, Miss McClellan, Miss Penrose, Miss Rankin, Miss Riegel, Mrs. Riegel, Mrs. Robinson, Miss Rumney, Mrs. Simonin, Mrs. Smith, Miss Stone, Miss Shoemaker, Mrs. Shoemaker, Mrs. Tilge and Mrs. Thomas. Unfortunately the program did not include the whole name of anyone until 1909 and few of the surnames appearing on the first list reappear then. Mrs. David E. Dallam, Mrs. G. Blight Robinson, Mrs. Ellis C. Shoemaker, Mrs. I. M Simonin, Mrs. Henry F. Tilge and Mrs. J. Frederic Thomas were listed in 1909 as well as Miss Stone who was again not further identified except for the stated fact that her address was 40 West Walnut Lane. We just assume that the above named ladies were the same as those listed in the first program.

The earliest copy of the Constitution and By-Laws for The Study Class on file is not dated but one can assume it to be the original. According to this little document, membership was to be limited to twenty-five members with a President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer who was charged with the duty of keeping "accurate account of all receipts and expendi-

tures" as well as keeping the minutes. When the Constitution was revised in 1933, added to the duties of the Secretary-Treasurer was the requirement that she present an annual report of finances. Since the dues were at first $1.00 a year and $1.50 by 1933, her task couldn't have been too hard. However, during the earliest years of The Study Class there were fines to take into account:

"Unexcused absence from Class . . Fine, 25 cents
Lateness to Class . . . . . Fine, 10 cents
Failure in Quotations . . . . . Fine, 10 cents"

The regular meetings of the class at first were to be held on each alternate Wednesday of the club year. In 1933 this schedule was officially changed to the first and third Wednesdays of each month of the club year. In 1960 the schedule was again changed and now, except for the month of October when two meetings are held, The Study Class meets only once a month during the club year.

Other rules and regulations were made. The Constitution states that "Each member shall perform the duties assigned to her. If she resigns after the program has been printed, she shall still be responsible for her paper." Other admonitions appear in the programs but not in the Constitution. In 1902 the program stated, "The Programme Committee earnestly asks the members to remain until the close of the meeting." By 1908 this statement was enlarged to read, "The Program Committee earnestly requests the members to be punctual and to remain until the close of the meeting." In 1912 both the fines for tardiness and the request for punctuality were dropped from the printed program. The Study Class had come of age.

If The Female Domestic Missionary Society mentioned above couldn't put its name and purpose into a nutshell, The Study Class could and did. The organization is and does just what is says. It studies. No nonsense like coffee and cakes detracts from the main purpose of the meetings. That was tried by a gracious hostess to the class one day. Eyebrows were raised but nothing was said and of course the delicious refreshments were enjoyed. But the lady tried it a second time and this caused real consternation. I believe a committee called on her. But the class dearly loved the offender and her mistake was quietly corrected and never mentioned in public.

Of course there must be light moments for a study group and so some happy entertaining is done. Sometimes there is a picnic at the end of the study year and at that time the Secretary reads a resumé of all the papers presented during the past year. Then there's an annual meeting in April. A paper is read in the morning and then the luncheon is served. Afterwards comes the annual business meeting. The December meeting is also a party time with a luncheon. This meeting has been held at the Sedgeley Club, the Alden Park Manor restaurant or a near-by club. After the luncheon a program or paper is presented by one of the members or perhaps an outside speaker is invited to come. This is The Study Class's Christmas Party and nobody misses it who can possibly arrange to be present. The custom of holding a special meeting like this started in December of 1944 when the club celebrated its Fiftieth Anniversary. Ever since then the December meeting has been a celebration.

But the ordinary meetings during the club year are devoted to study and in the early years every meeting was planned as a classroom period. In the 1897-'98 club year the theme for the study was "French History of the XVII Century." At each meeting three ladies were assigned subjects to report on and the meeting ended with a current events discussion. For instance, at the first meeting of the year on November 2, 1897, the program was planned as follows:

"Reading of the Constitution by the President
Quotations from Richelieu
Character Sketch of Richelieu, Mrs. Tilge
Louis XIII, Miss Stone
Thirty Year War and
Peace of Westphalia, Mrs. Simonin
Current Events"

The second meeting of the year had this program:

"Quotations from La Rochefoucauld
Character Sketch, La Rochefoucauld, Miss Rankin
Boyhood of Louis XIV, Miss Knight
Mazarin, Miss Rumney
Current Events"

By the end of the club year forty-two separate reports had been prepared and presented, many quotations learned and many current events topics discussed. Besides a paper on a given subject, each of the twenty ladies then in the class was assigned a current events topic or area to keep abreast of. These topics included New Books, New Inventions, Politics in the United States, New Pictures, Drama, South America, India, Japan, Russia and most of the European countries. Africa and China were not covered.

In 1899 this above heavy schedule was changed. The subject under study for the year was "Literature of the Eighteenth Century" and at every other class meeting Mrs. M. E. Leicester Addis came to give a lecture. And only "Literary Current Events" were covered at the end of the meetings. This was the only year in the long history of The Study Class when an outside lecturer was used by the group.

After the 1899-1900 club year no current events assignments were made and by 1904 only two instead of three papers were programmed for each meeting. The ambitious schedule followed by the ladies in their early years of study evidently had to be abandoned. The group just couldn't live up to the high standards set by the founders of The Study Class. But the Program Committee made amends by including long lists of books of reference in the printed programs from 1903 to 1908 and the lists were knowledgibly compiled.

The subjects studied over the seventy-two year span that The Study Class has been in existence have been many, varied and impressive. All of the countries of Europe, the islands around the world, the great rivers, the great cities and the great travelers of the world have each received attention. Phases of history and biographies of many people have been studied and the arts and cultures of the centuries have been covered, too. One year, 1908-'09, when the subject for the year's study was "Survey of the United States, 1870 to 1908," the ladies actually ran the gambit from arts (all of them), through many aspects of government, geography and labor movements to Trusts and Corporations—all in that one year.

The Fiftieth Anniversary year, 1944-'45, was the last year when two papers were scheduled for each meeting. The simpler program with only one paper to be presented has continued down to the present day but a greater burden rests on the shoulders of each member. She must now prepare a much longer and more detailed paper. The challenge has been accepted. Each paper shows the wide reading and careful planning that must go into the preparing of such presentations. These papers have been the source of great pleasure to the gathered members of the class. Knowledge and the light touch of humor always shine through and the literary abilities of the authors delight and surprise the audience anew at each meeting. So The Study Class has become increasingly enjoyable as the years have gone by and the membership of the group has remained faithful for the very good reason that the meetings are pure pleasure as well being "worthwhile."

There is a spirit in The Study Class that has been passed down through the years. Perhaps it's the daring to accept the challenge of study. To put into careful words the things learned and to create thereby a finely finished work is not always easy but when it is done everyone can share the victory. Each new member feels this spirit and the records show that this feeling must have prevailed over the long years of the class's history. The names of the members reappear year after year on the "class lists." A few have had their names listed for over fifty years. Except for the year 1918, when the membership quite understandably dropped to seventeen, the class has maintained a roll call of twenty-five members or very close to that. Attendance at the meetings has been high, too. The class has been known to go to one of its members for meetings when that member couldn't come to them.

Bound together by mutual interest and admiration, the membership of the group continues to look forward to its meetings in the near and even distant future. With a spirit like that to back it, The Study Class was bound to survive the exigencies of the passing years and to stand ready for the years to come.

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# BOOK REVIEW

**LITTLE CHARLEY ROSS: The Shocking Story of America's First Kidnapping for Ransom**

*by* NORMAN ZIEROLD

Publishers: Little, Brown & Company 1967

The legend of Little Charley Ross is the legend of Germantown.

It is compounded of police blundering and inadequacy, political maneuvering, newspaper jostling and lack of ethics, and selfish entrepreneurs. It almost seems to parallel the case of the kidnapping of the Lindberg boy.

When four-year-old Charley Ross was kidnapped on July 1, 1874, it was the first kidnapping for ransom in the United States. The bungling efforts of many groups and individuals, vying with each other for the glory of finding him, resulted in the most frustrating and ineffectual attempts at rescue ever recorded under similar circumstances.

Mr. Zierold has written a detailed, comprehensive story about Little Charley Ross. His research into the details of the day-by-day search for Charley is remarkable. Even the kidnappers' letters are fully included in the book.

How the kidnappers were finally traced and identified makes an exciting detective story; though, in the minds of many, there are still doubts whether they were really the guilty ones. This question will never be answered, for they died before they could be captured or Charley found.

What happened to Charley Ross? No one knows.

Germantowners will recognize many of the locations in the book, although some seem incorrectly situated. But it is a bit of Germantown history and a fascinating mystery that is a Germantown legend.

*Germantown Historical Society* Mabel E. Irlé

NOTE: See also "WHERE'S CHARLEY" *by* LORETTA HRYCKO *Germantowne Crier,* May, 1963.

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*Memorial History of Philadelphia—From its First Settlement to 1895,* by John Russel Young (2 (2 vols.).

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Old Postcards of Germantown (about 65).
Public Ledger Almanac, 1895.
*The Dutch Country,* by Cornelius Weygandt.
Index Volume to Site and Relic Society's Publications Nos. 1-10.
*Germantown—A Story of the Revolution,* an article from *The Ladies Garland (1839),* A magazine devoted to the life and services of Ben Franklin with some of the proverbs of Poor Richard—Published 1905, by the Towle Mfg. Company.

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Picture of Caspar Wister, M.D.
A memorial preserved on the Minutes of the Monthly Meetings of Philadelphia relative to the great sickness which prevailed in that city in the summer of 1793.
An account of the decease of Annabella Elliott Cresson.
The Boston Gazette and Country Journal—March 12, 1770.
Scrapbook of Annabella Bonnyman (1731).
Other items relating to Germantown.

Gifts of **Miss E. Whiteman** and **Mrs. Margaret Kent:**

Family Charts, Magazine, and genealogical material on Ellison-Bullus Families.
Tin-types of members and their families of Division A., Feb. 1869.
Several Deeds to Germantown properties.

*German Prayer Book and Hymnal,* printed in Germantown by Michael Billmeyer—1800. Gift of **Ruth Bard Allsbock.**

Maps of the Wissahickon Valley and an old Philadelphia Newspaper. Gift from the estate of **Eleanor Simmons Feninger.**

# THE GREAT SICKNESS OF 1793

*A Memorial preserved on the Minutes of the Monthly Meetings of Philadelphia, relative to the great Sickness which prevailed in that city in the summer of 1793.*

*From the copybook of Charles Caleb Cresson; presented to the Germantown Historical Society by Dr. H. Curtis Wood, Jr.*

AMONG the many Calls & Warnings from one time to another extended to the Inhabitants of this City by the Almighty Creator and ruler of the Universe in order to draw the attention of the people to himself and awaken them to diligence in the momentous Work of their Souls' Salvation, may with great propriety be kept in remembrance the late, awful visitation by a pestilential Disease which hath carried off the stage of time many of our friends and fellow citizens and we judge it expedient to preserve some account thereof on Record that future generations may be informed and led to commemorate the Judgements & Mercies which have been manifested towards us; more especially as there were included among the many who have been summones from time to eternity in and near this city a considerable number of our Brothers & Sisters whom we loved and esteemed for the uprightness & innocency of their lives and their labors in the cause of Truth & Rightousness. These as well as the pious and religious of other denominations we hope are removed from the perils & dangers of this probationary State to a place of Rest and Peace in the heavenly Kingdom.

The sickness made its first appearance about the beginning of the eight month last year. Opinions are various as to the manner of its introduction, whether it was brought from abroad or originated in this city.—This inquiry may not appear material to such who have been enabled to look to the great first cause "Shall there be evil in a City & the Lord hath not done it." saith the Prophet;—these were led to believe it was the divine Hand put forth for the humiliation of the People who in times of ease & Prosperity had too much forgotten the great Author of their Blessings and departed in heart and conduct from his divine law for the progress and nature of the disorder was such as to confound the researches of human Wisdom making advances against the skill of the Physician and the power of medecine carrying off numbers of various ranks and ages notwithstanding all endeavors for their help.

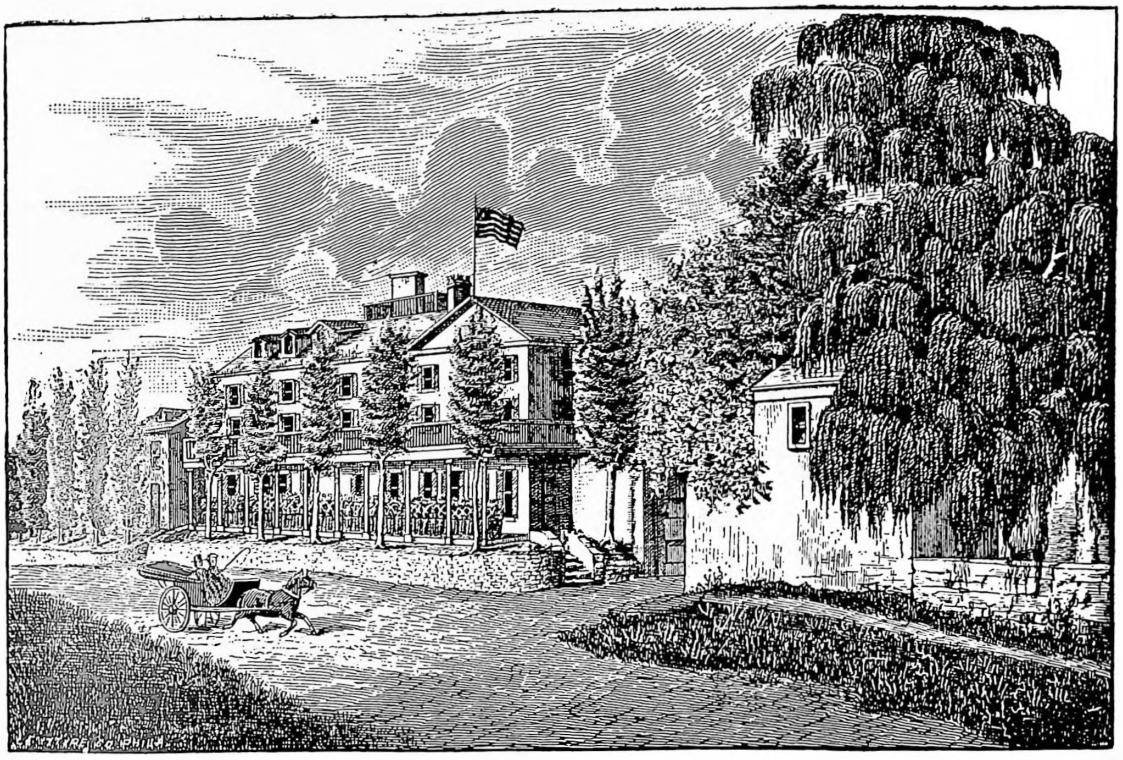
That the Disease was pestilential & contagious there was no reason to doubt as several families were mostly removed by it; the infection spreading from house to house & by reason of the local terror which accompanied it, necessary assistance could not be procurred for many of the sufferers.

It increased gradually through the Eight & the Ninth months, till near the middle of the Tenth month when it appeared to be at the height—about one hundred dying of a day for several days. Many of the inhabitants had removed out of the city —a few of whom deceased but in general the disorder spread but little in Country places.

Truly awful and afflicting was the situation of those who remained in the City owing to various causes—very little intercourse was held between the families of the sick or others—so that needful assistance was hardly attainable—the infected were in some instances almost deserted in their departing Moments, even by their nearest relatives, and interrments were hurried in an unusual manner from prudential motives.—Business of most kinds was much suspended; these and other reasons not easy to be enumerated, concurr'd to render the Calamity distressing beyond expression and had a tendency to humble the loftiest minds, inasmuch as there seemed no security for any from present danger. —Notwithstanding what is before mentioned as to the deficiency in attention to the infected in general there were many instances wherein the force of friendship and filial and parental love prevailed over every discouragement and the assistance & sympathy which Christian Charity demands were afforded; in some of which cases preservation was eminently experienced.—Divers of those who deceased were remarkably favored in their solemn, closing moments with Calmness and humble resignation to the divine Will, to the comfort of beholders.

# MOUNT AIRY

*By* J. McA. Harris, Jr.



**"I am indebted to the courtesy of Franklin B. Gowen, Esq., for the preparation of the accompanying valuable engraving of Mount Airy College, once the residence of Judge Allen. The square building of stone, surmounted by the flag, was the Judge's country abode before the Revolution. The long buildings left of it were added when the property became a college under Mr. Constant, a Frenchman. The building farther to the left was the home of Sebastian Miller, the great-grandfather of Franklin B. Gowen. It was torn down by his father, James Gowen, about 1845. The sketch from which the above picture was made was taken in 1828, when the institution was under A. L. Roumfort and called "The American Classical and Military Lyceum." This was demolished by James Gowen in 1848 or 1849, who bought the place in 1846 from the estate of William Rogers, who had made it his country residence for several years.**

**From: Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill**

**By Rev. S. F. Hotchkin p. 363 (1889)**

**MOUNT AIRY**

The Chief Justice lived on the top of this hill
A place of beauty with land to till
A kitchen garden with broad, fat fields
And crops of all that the good earth yields

A famous farm where men learned much
Of the ways of God with seeds and such
A farm where he studied things that grew
When he tired of the Law and the things men do.

For the Judge was wise in the ways of men
He'd made a fortune time and again
He'd brought a new city from babyhood
To lusty youth and his work was good

But the city in summer was not of the best
And he needed a cooler place to rest
So he built Mount Airy on the top of this hill
And that is the name we give it still

What happened two hundred years ago
Is something that only a few men know
Of Chief Justice Allen our memories wane
But we still have Mount Airy and, still, Allen's Lane.

*THE Germantown Historical Society has been concerned with Germantown and the newly-created Chestnut Hill Historical Society will be concerned with Chestnut Hill. The intermediate area, Mount Airy, has received some attention in the* Crier *but seems in danger of being neglected. Our attention has been recalled to this situation by the recent announcement that the Lutheran Theological Seminary is to be moved to University City in West Philadelphia. The Seminary's present site in Mount Airy is of unusual historic interest and it is hoped that this article will give the reader some idea of the events and people involved.*

Following traditional precepts we must start at the beginning when Mount Airy was a primeval wilderness and the land of the Unami (or Turtle) Tribe of the Leni-Lenape (or Delaware) Indians. They granted the land to William Penn by the treaty of July 14, 1683, and received as compensation:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 150 | Fathoms of Wampum | 15 | Guns |
| 15 | Blankets | 15 | Coats |
| 3 | great Kettles | 15 | Shirts |
| 15 | small Kettles | 60 | yds Duffils |
| 30 | yds sroud waters | 6 | drawing Knives |
| 20 | Gimlets | 7 | pr shoes |
| 15 | pr stockings | 15 | pr scissors |
| 15 | combes | 15 | Axes |
| 15 | Knives | 15 | Tobacco Tongs |
| 30 | Barrs of Lead | 31 | Pounds of Powder |
| 15 | Aules | 18 | small glasses |
| 10 | Boxes | 6 | Capps |
| 3 | papers of Beads | 1 | paper of read lead |

It will be recalled that William Penn acquired the charter of Pennsylvania from Charles II on March 4, 1681, as repayment of a loan to the Crown made by William Penn's father.

Penn granted a large tract to the Frankford Company which was formed by Jacob Van de Walle and others. An early map by Holmes shows what is now Germantown, Mount Airy, and Chestnut Hill, as the property of Jacob Van de Walle and Company and names it German Township.

A survey was made in 1687 and a patent granted for 5,700 acres. On December 2, 1687, fifty-five city hereditary holdings, totalling 2,750 acres, were laid out in Germantown. The owners of these holdings divided the remaining 2,950 acres by lot on April 4, 1689, and established three separate villages. The nearest to Germantown, containing 884 acres, was called Kriesham (Cresheim), then Sommerhausen, 900 acres, and farthest from Germantown, Crefeld containing 1,166 acres. Sommerhausen extended from Mermaid Lane to what is now Chestnut Hill Avenue and from Stenton Avenue to the Roxborough Township line. Crefeld extended from Chestnut Hill Avenue to what is now Northwestern Avenue and from Stenton Avenue to the Roxborough line.

The lots varied in size from 50 acres to 200 acres and were long and thin. Those in Somerhausen had their long axes at right angles to the Germantown Road but, strangely enough, those in Crefeld were located with the long axis paralleling the Germantown Road so that many of them did not have access to that main highway.

It is evident from the foregoing that the subject of our immediate interest came into civilized existence as Kriesheim (Cresheim). According to Watson (Annals, Vol. II, p. 18):

> All the settlers in Cresheim built on the Cresheim Road before settling a house on the Germantown Road through Cresheim. There is an old map, made in 1700, in, which all their residences and barns at that time are marked.

The Cresheim road referred to started at Allens Lane, as it does now, and followed the Cresheim Creek almost to the Devil's Pool where it met a prolongation of Wissahickon Avenue.

Until about 1710 there were only about a dozen houses in what is now Chestnut Hill and travellers from Plymouth had to pass through the "wilds of Germantown" on their way to Philadelphia. In 1741 there were sixty taxables in the area of Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill.

In Thompson Westcott's History of Philadelphia we read how Cresheim became known as Mount Airy:

> In 1750 William Allen, afterwards Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, bought of Mathias Milnes and wife, a lot of ground containing twelve acres to which he added, two years afterward, by purchase from William Rittinghausen and wife, twenty-one acres more. The situation was on the east side of the main road from Germantown, above the village and in Cresheim. Upon that portion of the tract bought from Rittinghausen, a large, fine stone house was built by Allen, which was somewhat remarkable in contradistinction to the country houses of the time, from the fact that it came out to the extreme limit of the main road and even went beyond it, having a porch upon the road in the manner of an arcade through which the foot passengers might walk at any time. To this seat Allen gave the name which is now given to the neighborhood—'Mount Airy.' The property remained in the possession of the family until long after the revolution.

William Allen, the creator of Mount Airy for whom Allen's Lane was named, was an incredible character. The story of his life is practically the history of Pennsylvania during the fifty years preceding the revolution. Historians believe that, had he not been a Tory, he would have been as well known to posterity as any of his contemporaries, Benjamin Franklin included.

William Allen was born in Philadelphia in 1704. The son of wealthy, Scotch-Irish, Presbyterian parents who appreciated the value of a good education, he was sent to England in 1720 and started to study law at the Middle Temple. He later studied at Clare College, Cambridge, and, in 1725, started on a tour of continental Europe which he afterwards referred to as "My travels to France, etc."

In 1727, his father having died, he returned to Philadelphia to administer the estate and to start a career of political service to the city of Philadelphia and the Province of Pennsylvania that lasted forty-nine years.

In 1728 William Allen married Margaret, the daughter of Andrew Hamilton, and, the following year he loaned money for the purchase of the land on which his father-in-law built the Pennsylvania State House (Independence Hall). He represented the city in the Pennsylvania Assembly until 1739 and served a term as Mayor in 1735. He was Recorder from 1741 to 1750 and, in 1750 at the age of 46, became the Chief Justice of the Province. He was Chief Justice until 1774 when he was succeeded by Benjamin Chew.

During the French and Indian War Allen opposed the passive Quaker policies in the Assembly and actually underwrote the Proprietary's tax so that the province could have adequate defenses. He became the leading representative of the interests of the Proprietary and more and more in opposition to Franklin in the Assembly. He always stood for the rights of the colonies and opposed the Iron Act of 1750 and the Revenue Act of 1764. He caused the Stamp Act to be postponed for one term of Parliament in 1774 and shortly before the revolution he supplied the Pennsylvania Council of Safety with cannon shot produced in one of his iron furnaces. In the final show-down, however, he could not agree to colonial independence and remained loyal to the crown. It should be remembered that in 1776, William Allen was in his seventies and at the end of a brilliant social, political, and business career. It is not difficult to understand that he was too old and too tired to get involved in a war with the mother country.

Some authors say that Judge Allen died in England but it seems more probable that he died in Mount Airy, on September 6, 1780. His will was proven on September 16, in Philadelphia, too soon after his death if he had died in England.

It would seem that the political activities mentioned were sufficient for one man and for one lifetime but not so in the case of William Allen. The revenues from his political offices were entirely given to charities and he found time to devote to business activities that made him the richest man in the province of Pennsylvania. Based on the large fortune left him by his father, the firm of Allen and Turner made enormous profits during the French and Indian War trading under flags of truce. These proceeds were put into a rum distillery, a copper mine, several iron furnaces, South Sea Stocks, local real estate, and loans at interest. Judge Allen owned 30,000 acres of land in New Jersey and a "great grant" on the Lehigh River on which the city of Allentown was founded in 1765.

William Allen's association with Benjamin Franklin is interesting. They were fellow lodge members and jointly supervised the first Philadelphia census, taken in 1749. About this time William Allen procurred the appointment of Franklin as Deputy Postmaster General of the Colonies and furnished his bond. When Franklin's Philadelphia Academy was started, Allen was a trustee and made the largest single contribution of £75. He persuaded the city corporation to make a large grant and tried to get the use of Whitefield's Tabernacle. However this building was not ready so on January 7, 1751, the first classes of the Philadelphia Academy (Later the University of Pennsylvania) were held in a warehouse on Second Street, a building owned by William Allen. All four of his sons attended the Academy and he was a devoted trustee until the year before his death.

During the first half of the eighteenth century Philadelphia Presbyterians were divided into two groups, the "Old Side," or conservatives represented by the Rev. Francis Alison and William Allen, and the "New Side" led by Gilbert "Hell Fire" Tennent. The two groups united in 1758 to become the leading religious body in Philadelphia. Allen was a founder of Francis Alison's Presbyterian School which opened in New London, Pennsylvania in 1743. The school was later moved to Newark, Delaware, then part of the lower counties of Pennsylvania, to be "conveniently far from the profligacy and vice of the metropolis." In 1770 Allen obtained a charter from the Penns for the Academy of Newark which we know today as the University of Delaware.

In 1717 the Philadelphia Synod set up a Pious Fund for the relief of the widows and orphans of Presbyterian Ministers. In 1754 the Rev. Francis Alison suggested the adoption of a Scottish plan under which a minister contributed £2 or £3 per year to a fund from which his widow would receive £5 per year. On this basis the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund was started in 1759 under the management of William Allen. In 1761 the Pious Fund was put under the same management and the combined assets soon reached £11,000. Similar funds were established by the Moravian and Episcopal Churches shortly thereafter.

William Allen's contribution to education in the province of Pennsylvania was tremendous. Besides playing a major role in founding the Universities of

Pennsylvania and Delaware he stimulated the whole province by his interest in cultural things. In these early days there were two types of secondary schools, the more practical English School favored by the Quakers, and the traditional Classical, or Latin, School. William Allen sent his four sons to the Quaker school but brought the Rev. Francis Alison, "the finest classical scholar in the colonies," to Philadelphia and helped him establish the New London School. One of the more cogent reasons for the establishment of the Philadelphia Academy was the concern of men like Allen who had been educated at Cambridge and thought classical training in the "gentlemanly studies" should be continued in America. Alison said that with backing such as Allen's, classical learning "became reputable even among those who formerly gave us the nickname of Letter-Learned-Pharisees."

In 1759 Allen sent his son John and his nephew, Colonel Joseph Shippen to Leghorn and a cultural tour of Europe similar to the tour that he, himself, had taken in 1725. With them he sent a promising young artist named Benjamin West. West studied in Rome for four years supported by Allen, Samuel Powell, Governor Hamilton, and Joseph Shippen. Later he went to London to become the favorite painter of George III and to succeed Joshua Reynolds as head of the Royal Academy. For many years Allen maintained a checking account for Benjamin West so that a "man of such genius should not lack for cash." Benjamin West appreciated Allen's support and sent him many "objets d'art' for his collection in Mount Airy. In 1771 the painter Copley from Boston, visited Judge Allen's collection and, for the first time, saw paintings from the old world. With this inspiration and the Judge's encouragement Copley went to Europe.

In 1754 there was a meeting at Judge Allen's home, Mount Airy, at which the erection of six, German Charity Schools was planned. At this time about three-fifths of the settlers in Pennsylvania were German. They spoke no English and constituted an unabsorbed element that worried the English-speaking part of the community. The six German Charity Schools were to furnish free education in English for the Americanization of the Pennsylvania Germans. The two largest German groups, the Lutherans and the Reformed Church, gave enthusiastic support but the various Quietist sects, numbering about 35,000, were not included in the plans and their most vocal member, Christopher Sower of Germantown, for ten years, printed propaganda against the charity schools in his *Pennsylvanische Berichte.* The group supporting the schools ran a rival German press, the *Philadelphische Zeitung,* but the Germans gradually united in opposition and in 1759 the idea was abandoned. This was not the first time the Germans had resisted an ecumenical movement. Count von Zinzendorf, a Moravian, had tried to unite all the Germans, who had brought with them "all the Religious Whimsees of their country," into a "bland kind of pan-German, Protestant Church."

The count stayed in Germantown with John Bechtel, a Lutheran, in the house now occupied by the costume museum of the Germantown Historical Society. John Bechtel supported the Count but Muhlenberg, the Lutheran leader, and Christopher Sower opposed it and, to make a long story short, von Zinzendorf was unsuccessful. John Bechtel became a Moravian and went to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, with von Zinzendorf. Fortunately Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the head of the Lutheran Church in America, a man of vision, was determined to use the language required by the people. He used English in his church services and translated orders of worship and hymns into English. He anticipated tragic consequences for the Lutheran Church in America if it did not use the English language. He was the friend of such men as John Penn, William Allen, the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, and James Delancey, the Chief Justice of New York. He often consulted Benjamin Franklin and on several occasions Washington was a guest in his house. Obviously he knew all the right people.

In spite of his great interest in things cultural, William Allen, at least at first, opposed the establishment of a theatre in Philadelphia. On December 3, 1749, he notified the city corporation that "certain persons intend to make a frequent practice of acting plays which would be attended with mischievous effects." The Corporation imposed such strict limitations that in February, 1750, the players moved to New York.

In 1753 William Allen retired from trade, left his town house on Water Street, and went to live in his country house, Mount Airy. Here with his wife Margaret he entertained lavishly and lived the ideal life of a Country Gentleman. In 1770 he wrote;

> Very few persons in this country have made more experiments in the farming way than I have and in this latter stage of my life my Books and my little Farm are a great part of my amusement.

In his diary, Daniel Fisher describes a visit to "Mr. Allin's Country Seat" on May 26, 1755.

> I went again this morning to wait on Mr. Allin as I had intimated in my letter. I purposed to do but he not coming to town that day, and the servants behaving somewhat cherrlishly answering me very shortly when I civily inquired when their master was expected, that they did not know, and having asked one among several whom I saw coming from Mr. Alin's door whether he was then come to town, he civily said the servants had informed him Mr. Allin would not be in town that day, but was expected on Wednesday morning, from whence I concluded that was a secret I was not to be let into; yet as I was determined on seeing him I took my horse after dinner and rode over to what is called his Country Seat which I found about 8 or 9 miles distant on the top of a hill at the further end of a village two miles in length, called Germantown, from the number of German weavers and others settled there. The house was small, built of stone, as are most of the Houses

thereabouts; stands close to a large, much frequented road which often occasions the Dust to be very troublesome. The spot, doubtless from its elevated situation, must be as healthy as any thereabouts, but to me it appeared very naked, much exposed to the sun and bleak winds. A small Portico, facing the south east is a good contrivance and to my thinking the very best about the house.

My reception here was more gracious than I expected for he took me by the hand and invited me to seat myself in the Portico and asked me what I chose to drink. I preferred Small Beer being almost choked with the dust raised by the wagons, etc., I met on the road and a large Tankard of very good was brought to me, after which he quickly let me know that it was not in his power to do anything for me, but informed me of Mr. Osborne's being in town, and recommended my return with him to Williamsburg, saying it would be a fine opportunity. I desired to continue somewhat longer hoping he would not be offended at my calling on him sometimes to inquire whether something might not intervene in my favor, to which he politely replied he should always be glad to see me.

He afterwards walked me into his Garden, consisting of Edibles only, which seemed well manured and in as good order as a garden upon a hill could be. He pointed to a field of Clover adjoining the Garden, of, as I should guess, about eight acres, which he, and I too, considered as a fine improvement, tho I should doubt its long continuance in the scorching heats and so high a situation; he staid me to drink tea with his lady, a daughter of the late Governor, Mr. Hamilton, which I did not know till I unluckily in relating (at their asking) my observations of what I had seen, gave the preference to the "Proprietor's garden" which I could perceive was not overpleasing, tho they no otherwise manifested their dislike than informing me of that circumstance by saying that the generality of People who were judges, thought Mr. Hamilton's garden greatly superior to the Proprietaries'.

After tea I set out for Philadelphia, but perceiving my horse was ready bridled when called for and looked extremely thin and faint, I stopped at an inn in Germantown to feed him and came to Philadelphia before it was dark.

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Extract from the Diary of Daniel Fisher, May 26, 1755 Pennsylvania Magazine, Vol. 17 (1893) p. 268

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The Judge's kitchen garden and, particularly, his "Colly Flowers" were famous. His agricultural studies resulted in associations with John Bartram and with John Penn's gardener, James Alexander. With the Judge's encouragement, Alexander shipped American flora to England, to Gronovious at Leyden, and to Linnaeus in Sweden.

Enough has been written to convince the reader that from 1753 until 1780, the presence of Judge Allen made Mount Airy a busy and famous place—probably more so than Germantown.

In Vol. II, p. 33 of Watson's annals we read:

> The first carriage of the coach kind they (the country people) ever saw or heard of belonged to Judge Allen who had his country seat at the present Mount Airy College. It was of the phaeton or Landau kind having a seat in front for children and was drawn by four black horses. He was, of course, a very opulent man, a grandee in his generation. Such phaetons cost £400. The country seats then were few. - - - There were three or four earlier carriages in Philadelphia, viz. Norris, Logan, and Shippen's. Governor Keith's carriage, when he lived at Graeme Park near Hatborough, was a wonder to the country people.

The Judge's coach, driven by an imported, London coachman, or "Whip," must have been an impressive sight on the Germantown Road. However, since the road did not become a turnpike until 1804, the Judge's rides to the city must have been far from comfortable.

The Allens had four sons and two daughters. In 1766 the older daughter, Ann, married John Penn who built the magnificent mansion Landsdowne for his bride. The other daughter, Margaret, in 1771, married James de Lancey, the Chief Justice of New York.

In their book *Rebels and Gentlemen* the Bridenbaughs have written of Judge Allen:

> Here speaks the true country gentleman. Gifted, intelligent, and humane, honest, generous, and affable, William Allen was a credit to his community and well deserves to be remembered as a leading patron of the arts and sciences and first gentleman of Pennsylvania.

In closing his story one can only wish that William Allen might be better known and more appreciated. After all there is a statue of George Washington in Trafalgar Square.

*Note:* Our story does not stop at the death of Judge Allen in 1780. A second article will be devoted to the people and events associated with Mount Airy during the nineteenth century and the more recent past.


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

Mrs. Arthur E. Weil
3912 Netherfield Road
Philadelphia, Pa. 19129
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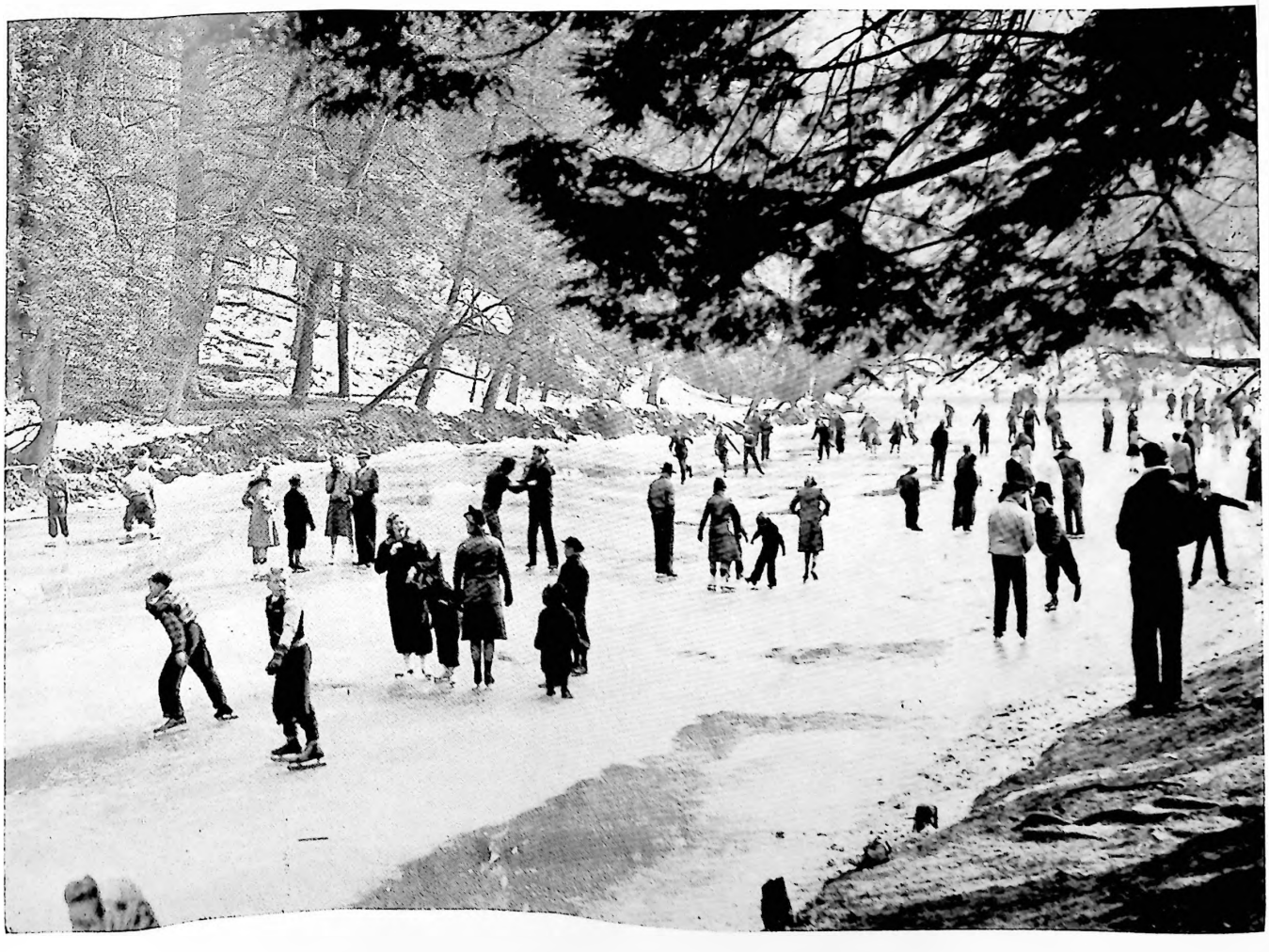
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