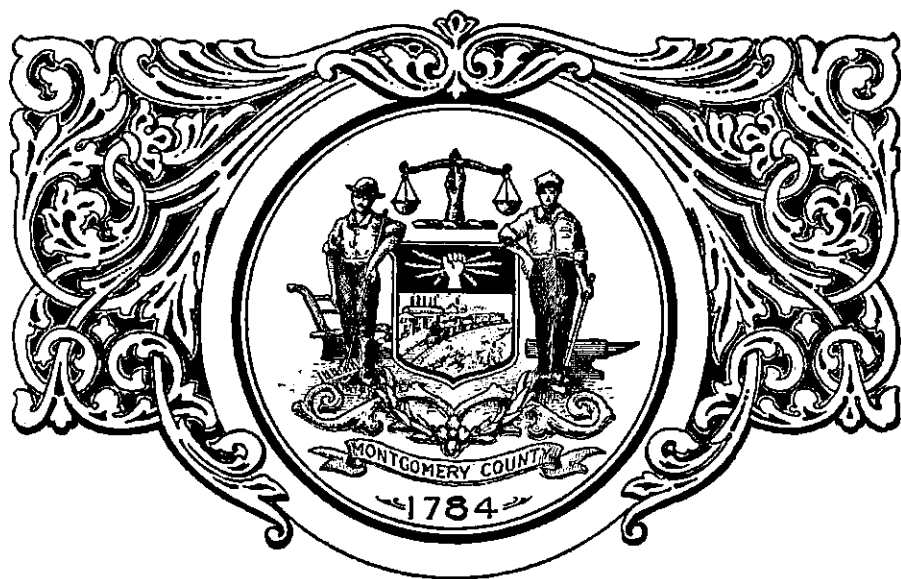


BULLETIN  
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*of*  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PENNSYLVANIA  

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Alan W. Corson's House on the Butler Pike, 1931

# THE BULLETIN

of the

## Historical Society of Montgomery County

*Published Semi-Annually—October and April*

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### CONTENTS

Some Aspects of the Under-ground Railway in the Counties of Southeastern Pennsylvania .....	Joseph Hutchinson Smith . 3
A Brief History and Interpretation of Pennsylvania German Illuminated Writings ("Fraktur-Schriften") .....	Lester K. Kriebel ..... 20
Historical Gleanings South of Schuylkill—II. Surveys and Boundaries .....	Charles R. Barker ..... 33
Early Pennsylvania Clocks and Their Makers .....	Fred C. Sweinhart ..... 42
The Richards (Reichert) Family of Montgomery County .....	Captain H. M. M. Richards 53
Bible Records (continued) .....	64
Reports .....	69

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NOTE—On account of the increased size of the Bulletin, Volume II contains only four numbers instead of six, as in Volume I.

## Some Aspects of the Underground Railway in the Counties of Southeastern Pennsylvania\*

By JOSEPH HUTCHINSON SMITH, M.A.

The getting at the facts and ideas actually underlying the very genuine support given by a large body of people to the activities—not to say the successes—of the Underground Railway is a difficult task. To the meagreness of written record referred to by Professor Siebert, must be added the genuine modesty of the most important workers, the customary avoidance of outward feeling of the majority of Quakers engaged in the work, and the desire not to foster a spirit of indiscriminate lawlessness in a younger generation. All of these factors must be considered by the student of the system, and must be duly weighed and evaluated in connection with each individual known to have been engaged in the work. Beneath the improprieties of an Isaac T. Hopper, the taciturnities of the biographer of Elisha Tyson, of Baltimore, the ministerial zeal of Elizabeth Newport, of Abington township and Philadelphia, the absolute silences of James and Lucretia Mott, the very real modesty of Charles Kirk, of Warminster township, and the private and unrecorded lives of scores of other persons known only by name to the present generation, lay a very real idea of natural human justice and a burning desire to mitigate evils only too obvious at the time. That the efforts of most of these people frequently took an illegal direction, suggesting an analogy with the smuggling of undesirable aliens across the Mexican and the Canadian borders of the present time, or with the only too prosperous trade in illegal liquor, is not inconsistent with the idea that there is such a thing as *equity* which at all times can be parallel with *law* and more or less at odds with it. Anthony Benezet, of

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\*Read before the Society November 21, 1931.

Philadelphia, made a remark very pertinent to this point even before the American Revolution when he cited the same argument, from a letter of Granville Sharp, "in defence of those who think it their duty to protect fugitive slaves." "I showed it to Dr. Rush," he says, "inquiring if we should publish it in the papers, he replied, 'They would knock us on the head if we did.' I believe it will in future be profitably made use of." Later events proved that he was correct in his belief. Isaac T. Hopper used that very method of argument before Judge Rush, in Philadelphia, and won the freedom of an escaping black man by means of it.

The second point which has not been clearly stated in connection with this question, but which is of the utmost importance in conjunction with it, is the very real influence of hereditary training and intermarriage upon the actors in the drama of anti-slavery in Pennsylvania. The names of Lukens, Tyson, and Shoemaker do not appear attached to the early remonstrance of the Germantown settlers in 1688, yet they are all names of the earliest settlers of Germantown and they occur frequently in the records of the Underground Railway. Dr. Hiram Corson has very clearly shown the wide ramifications of the Corson family connected with this system.

To his roster might be added the name of the Paxsons, allied with the Comlys of Upper Dublin township, the Prices, of West Chester, and more distantly John Vickers, of Lionville, in Chester County. The home-center of this generation or two of that family was located within the limits of the present Glenside, and the old house from which they sprang is still standing there. There they were near neighbors and relatives of numerous Tysons, who could boast of having furnished a part of the building material for the construction of Independence Hall in Philadelphia—a not inconsiderable fact after the patriotisms and the viscissitudes of the Revolution had passed them by.

But the chief influence in the compact Quaker communities of that time in the southeastern counties of Pennsylvania was the example, and the preaching and writing, of such men as Benezet, John Woolman, Elias Hicks, Jacob Lindley, of the

younger women—Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Newport, Martha Smith, of Plumstead, in Bucks County, and a number of other widely traveled and conscientious Quaker ministers of recognized standing and unblemished lives. It is a notable fact that, from the time—just two hundred years ago this year—when Ralph Sandiford was about to leave his labors for the slave in Philadelphia, and Benjamin Lay and the young Benezet were about to enter upon theirs in the same locality, to the most heated period of the anti-slavery contest in the thirties of the last age, a continuous line of active propagandists against slavery in all its forms and phases existed within the circle of Quakerism or just without the circle. It is a partial refutation of the commonly accepted theory that the Quakerism of that long period was at best a quiescent faith. Quietism never yet caused the lynching of James Lindley simply because he bore a name which the mob thought belonged to Jacob Lindley. Quietism never made a dying man like Elias Hicks push away a bed-comfort because it was made of Southern cotton. Quietism never stole George Washington's runaway slave in the eighties of the preceding century nor caused the young Isaac Hopper to defy laws, Constitution, and common sense. Quietism never produced Elisha Tyson, nor his disciple Doctor Bartholomew Fussell, who aided about two thousand of his fellow-men to reach Canada when they desired to reach it. The Quakers lost political control of the state of Pennsylvania only a few years before the advent of the Revolution; these men and women to whom there has been reference were the natural result. There was no other practical outlet for their effort. They could not fight, they could not take on an obvious contradiction of duties which involved also the taking of oaths, they could not control the state which their ancestors had come to America with the idea of controlling, their friends the Indians were being forced rapidly Westward in spite of all they could do, they drove the thorn deeper into the irritated side of slavery. There they stood, upholding their ancient ideas of human worth and human liberty, subverting laws when that seemed necessary, hood-winking irate masters, openly transferring thousands of dollars worth of property to

a land where it should be property no longer, year after year, generation after generation, even after the Civil War had first sounded the knell of the whole system of slavery. The national and world-wide significance of what they had accomplished dawned upon their children and grandchildren only after the Civil War had made their cause popular and patriotic. It is mainly to them that we owe what we know of the whole affair.

As one surveys the record of this fantastic system of travel, it sometimes appears odd that any of these abolitionists of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries found time to earn a living for themselves and their families, and it is a sad fact that a number of them impoverished themselves in one way and another to their own permanent detriment. In the main, they were men of substance and standing in their several communities. They were almost entirely owners of land and men of practical affairs. They numbered in their midst farmers, manufacturers of pottery, lawyers, ministers, medical men, editors, poets, lecturers, philanthropists, and a few people of society. Their houses still stand dotted over the countryside and by the roads of the eastern counties of Pennsylvania. One may see them without difficulty. Seth Lukens' large white farmhouse stands near the Springhouse-Sumneytown Pike just within the bounds of Kulpsville; George Corson's quaint dwelling still overlooks Plymouth meeting-house just as it did when the artist Hovenden later occupied it; William Foulke's station on the way to Quakertown has become a country club and boasts a polo field upon its broad acres; Abel Fitzwater's almost palace still stands not far from Port Providence; Alan Corson's house is completely unoccupied and in the first stages of ruin but with the shadows flickering over its white surface in an entirely charming fashion. The houses of the Norristown advocates of a newer order have suffered a more nearly total eclipse. Only one of them is standing or is easily to be traced. Jacob L. Paxson formerly occupied the property now owned by Saint Patrick's Church; Doctor William Corson had his office at 116 East Main Street; Isaac Roberts, Senior, dwelt in three different houses, all of them gone; Daniel Ross' capacious story-and-a-



half frame house with little stable to the side disappeared years ago; John Augusta's barber-shop on Main street nearly opposite the Music Hall no longer exists; Thomas Read's house at 702 Swede Street has lost only the panes of its lower windows.

Far worse than this, it is no longer possible to credit any of the local tales which have been told about the flight of William Parker and his friends from Christiana to Canada after the tragedy of eighty years ago. Doctor Hiram Corson does not substantiate the account given by Jacob L. Paxson; Isaac Roberts, Junior, contradicts Doctor Hiram Corson's two published accounts, and William Parker contradicts all of them and three Chester countians mentioned by Doctor Robert C. Smedley. Furthermore, Grace Anna Lewis, of Chester county, never mentioned within the knowledge of anyone now living the part assigned to her in this same celebrated escape. A clue to the unraveling of this confusion of statements may possibly exist in an as yet uninvestigated remark of that most able colored man, William Still.

As a compensation for these notable *lacunae* in the present map of Norristown, one may travel from Corner Stores in Chester county to the next underground railway station at the site of Daniel Ross' house in Norristown upon a trifle more than ten miles of the very underground railway used between 1840 and the last year of the system. To do this, one leaves the former metropolis of Corner Stores—a commercial center when Phoenixville was a mere milling district—passes the Old Bull Tavern, crosses the Schuylkill at Pawling's, passes the home of John James Audubon and the country mansion of the Wetherill family, leaves Schrack's Corner behind, and arrives safely via the inn at Jeffersonville. It was a route a child could travel safely, and one which a child of eleven almost did travel when a load of slaves had to be forwarded in harvest time. It is an interesting drive by motor, passing at the back of the hills of Valley Forge and for a third of the distance on the very ridge of a water-shed. In the time of the railway the point of greatest danger was the inn at Jeffersonville.

One must not suppose unguardedly that none but Quakers involved themselves in the intrigues of the railway. Two Roman Catholics are listed in Wilmington, Delaware, one Mennonite is mentioned in lower Lancaster county, the upper reaches of Montgomery county furnish the names of a number of Dunkards and of several Episcopalians, and Norristown yields the reverend Samuel Aaron and his especial Baptists. As a matter of fact, all of the Quakers active in the work were almost lost to their own membership as long as that work lasted. Those who hold to the theory of Quietism in the Faith may take note.

If one wishes to study the whole range of the Underground Railway system, which extended in its entirety from the shores of England to the city of San Francisco, one may do so in the thorough but not exhaustive volume of Professor Wilbur H. Siebert. It is entitled *The Underground Railroad From Slavery To Freedom*, and was published at New York and at London in 1898. It is a book filled with excellent illustrations and the fruits of long years of research. Only the concluding sentence in it is open to serious doubt.

A more limited view of the system need be no less interesting. Between the years 1919 and 1931, I was able to collect a number of authentic anecdotes from several of the children or grandchildren of the original workers and an absolutely new fact from a man contemporary with the day of the riot at Christiana.

An "Orthodox" Friend of West Chester, Deborah Windle, told me of her grandfather about whom extremely little has been recorded elsewhere. Her account was interesting as indicating an entirely new route of travel between Kimberton and Lancaster county. Between 1800 and 1820, Thomas Jackson, who lived on the family place near Geiger's Mills, was working in a field with a colored man. Both could see the road for a long way. Suddenly the man threw his implement to the ground and announced that "Massa" was coming. "Bide my time now and I'll get out all right," said he, and he disappeared immediately. Shortly after, a man rode up and asked whether a person of a certain name were working for Mr.

Jackson, and where he was. Thomas Jackson informed the inquirer that he did not know where the man was, but asked how much he would take for him as a runaway. "The master accepted a hundred dollars for his man, for he never expected to see him again." Thomas Jackson received such passengers on the railway from Emmor Kimber, and sent them before daylight to "Canaday." He sent bills ahead, without the addressee's name, telling how many slaves were on the way.

A celebrated station not many miles from, but so far as is known never connected with, that of Emmor Kimber was the station kept by Elijah F. Pennypacker at Corner Stores. A great deal of misinformation has been collecting about the names of both of these men in recent years. The complete facts are yet to appear. Elijah Pennypacker's early public life, his useful services in the legislature and in connection with the Canal Commission of the state, is already well appreciated. He joined the Underground Railway in 1840. He refused a nomination to the Congress of the United States because he had become convinced that it was not his duty to support a government which tolerated slavery. His attitude was the same as that of William Lloyd Garrison, whose *Liberator* first appeared just one hundred years ago, and was not unlike that of the Mahatma Gandhi. He was a surveyor, an administrator of wills, a farmer, and to one of his friends "the most ungrateful public-servant he ever knew." One of his surveys of land was used in the Chester Valley as lately as 1913, and was found to be entirely accurate and entirely adequate to a transfer of land from Colkett Walker to one of his neighbors. The account of him written for William Still by Grace Anna Lewis is considered particularly good. Most of the slaves that passed through his hands came by way of Grace Anna Lewis's and Doctor Edwin Fussell's near Kimberton, many were conducted by Norris Maris who farmed one of the Lewis farms, and most of them departed into the hands of Daniel Ross of Norristown. Slaves usually came in the evening, and more in the Autumn than at any other time in the year for then they could obtain food in the fields of ripe corn which bordered upon the roads. The women and children were

taken away from his barn in a dearborn, and the men were allowed to walk away alone. They always followed the roads. "One evening," says Sarah C. Pennypacker, his daughter, "we were sitting at the supper-table and there came a knock at the door. Father opened it and saw a colored man there. 'Are there any more of you?' he asked. 'Yes,' the man said, and then Father told him to tell the others who were with him to go straight through to the kitchen, and told him to lead them and show them the way—and eight men filed through." The family always saved discarded clothing "for the fugitives." Sarah C. Pennypacker remembers only one serious case, when the masters were so close upon their slaves that Elijah Pennypacker took them away without telling even his wife where he was going. "There were quiet consultations between Mother and Father, there was talk of disguises, and an air of expectancy. Sometime that night father disappeared. He was away all the next day, and the following morning he appeared. Mother and a visitor sat in the front room [overlooking the road], and sewed and sewed, but didn't talk, all the time he was away." Such are the memories of the families of abolitionists who were also members of the Underground Railway.

It is especially fortunate that something of this sort may be added to Doctor Hiram Corson's account of the anti-slavery groups in Upper Dublin, in Horsham, and in Moreland townships, and that two slight inaccuracies in private names may be corrected. According to M. Elizabeth Smith, who was old enough in her youth to remember the later days of the anti-slavery struggle with great clearness, the following Upper Dublin Friends, none of whom are mentioned by Doctor Corson, were very active in the struggle in her father's neighborhood: Rachel Barker, a well-known minister among Friends, and a large and powerful woman, as well as a forceful and outspoken worker; Lucas Paul, Benjamin Riche, and the Girly family. None of those Friends mentioned by Doctor Corson as being doubtful were ever alluded to by her. Thomas and Hannah Quinby Atkinson, who lived between Jarrettown and Upper Dublin meeting, and Mary Lightfoot, were mentioned particularly as being more "open" in their activities. The

Atkinson home was used as a depot for clothing, and as a sewing headquarters for anti-slavery fairs. Most of the other workers also had sewing parties at their homes. Among other little things which went to liven such parties was a trick which Hannah Atkinson invariably played when she insisted upon trying on each garment as it was completed. M. Elizabeth Smith, who was then M. Elizabeth Comly, daughter of John M. and Mary Ann T. Comly, spent a week at one of the anti-slavery meetings [fairs] held in Horticultural Hall, Philadelphia, in company with Mary Lightfoot, and helped to take charge of the table supplied by "The Upper Dublin Anti-Slavery Society." She was about twenty years of age at that time.<sup>1</sup> She remembered that only Charles Roberts, Croasdale Twining, and her father actually harbored slaves in that neighborhood. Charles Paxson, husband of Agnes T. Paxson, sympathized with them but would not harbor slaves. They used to clothe the people who passed through their hands, and to give them food enough to last one or two days before sending them on. Most of John M. Comly's service came before 1847. There were many ways of getting information about the movements of slave-catchers, especially since John Comly drove often to Germantown with market produce, and to other places on business. Two vague stories have been preserved regarding the slaves themselves: a slave Mary stayed with Croasdale Twining while her daughter was kept at John M. Comly's, at another time an older female slave, so ignorant of the relative value of the United States coinage that she threw away as useless a silver piece which had been given to her by a member of the Comly family, stayed with John M. Comly. The next station above the Comly's was located twelve miles farther north—one would like to think that it was the station kept by an uncle of Mary Ann, William H. Johnson, of Buckingham. The slaves were removed concealed beneath bags of wheat in a dearborn, as if the wheat were being taken to the mill of one "Billy" Graeme, miller.

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<sup>1</sup>A comparison of dates and incidents proves this to have been in 1859.

An account of several miles of the road between Wilmington, Delaware, and Downingtown, Pennsylvania, was given to me in a manner peculiarly instructive, because as Mrs. Pyle spoke of it I could see the road coming rapidly over the hills from the south-west, passing across the Baltimore Pike where I had stood, and disappearing as a narrow tree-bordered lane a little way below the old inn. This road was a part of that huge letter C of travel which extended through the country, indirectly, between Wilmington and Philadelphia. It was the way which gathered up with it in its course the other main pathways from the south and west which ran east of the Susquehanna river in the direction of Philadelphia. Mrs. Pennock Pyle, of Hamorton, a daughter of that Joseph Lancaster who was once a keeper of the Pennsbury Inn, situated between Chadd's Ford and Old Kennett meeting-house on the Baltimore Pike, said, "A lot of colored men would come across that little back road from Dinah Mendenhall's, and they would stop and ask directions of my father. They were always on their way to Eusebius Barnard's, the first house the other side of Barnard's crossing [on the Lenape-Kennett trolley line.] Barnard was a rather hard name to remember, and after while they would bring little slips of paper with just the name on it, and would ask the way." She could just remember having seen a party of colored men who had stopped and been directed by Joseph Lancaster, and she had heard her father tell about such experiences in after years to people who asked him about such things. A great many slaves went across that road, from Wilmington and the southwestern part of the Chester county, on their way North. Numbers of these later passed through Kimberton, Corner Stores, and Norristown. Some few of them were switched backward just beyond Corner Stores by Elijah F. Penny-packer, and were sent across the Schuylkill at Phoenixville by the bridge near the older short-ford into the upper end of Montgomery county. Others were switched backward from a point<sup>2</sup> nearer Valley Forge to Charles Adamson's at Corner

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<sup>2</sup>The farm of Lewis Peart, after 1844.

Stores, or to James Wood at Moore Hall, were taken across the long-ford to Port Providence in canoes, were passed through the hands of Abel Fitzwater—just back of Port Providence—and were often sent still farther westward to a Jacobs, exactly on the site of the present station of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Mont Clare in Montgomery county. There they disappear temporarily even to our eyes. Many stations in the upper end of Montgomery county have never been completely investigated. I can add<sup>3</sup> only that William W. Taylor, of Upper Providence township, directed his passengers from a concealment under the bridge of his barn up the road a short distance to Thomas Hopkins' place just west of Arcola.

Owing to the fact that I was directed to George Steele, of Chester county, by a daughter of Joseph Scarlett of Christiana, I can publish what might at one time have been considered evidence too damaging to publish. It is just eighty years since the riot at Christiana, and the direct antipathies of that period are practically all dead. I met George Steele, a man then of nearly ninety years but tall and erect, at Birmingham meeting-house shortly after the close of the war in Europe. In speaking of the riot he said, "I heard the firing, and I was going to Lancaster that morning, and I decided that I would go by the house where the firing was, and try to find out what had happened. And I met two colored men on the road, that did some wood-chopping for me, coming home, and they were highly elated. 'Wictory,' one of 'em says, and they told me about it, and I told them that they were up against the U. S. government now, and all those that had had any part in it had better set out for Canada—and I think they went." "It didn't appear in the evidence at the trials, but Joseph Scarlett told his colored men that the catchers were near, and to take their guns and go." The engaging up-country Dutch accent upon the word "victory" may bring the sounds

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<sup>3</sup>For this bit of information, as well as for others kindly given, I am indebted to Charles Major of Norristown. Miss Nancy Highley of Norristown informs me that Charles Corson took slaves which he had received from Doctor Hiram Corson to Bucks county by night.

of the Christiana Riot a little more clearly to the ears of those familiar with the speech only of Philadelphia.

The most truly humorous thing which ever happened in connection with the Underground Railway was that display of genuine human feeling which could be counted upon almost invariably when an involuntary worker was suddenly faced with the real issues which lay beneath the struggle against slavery. Alfred D. Sharpless, late of West Chester, told me that a year or two prior to 1860 he remembered returning from school and finding about five darkies sitting with their backs to the fence which surrounded his father's property on Dean street, their legs stretched out in front of them, and paying no attention to anybody. When his father came home he questioned them and, after exclaiming, "Why this is no place for you to be sitting," took them into the house. That night he sent them [Alfred thought] to Lionville, a point at which at least two lines of the railway joined before it proceeded to Kimberton. This one act of kindness could have cost the elder Sharpless five thousand dollars in fines alone. No one knows how far these slaves had walked or how far they had to walk before they could begin earning their own livings at the very bottom of the economic scale. It is an easy task to count how much Daniel Gibbons, Thomas Garrett, Doctor Bartholomew Fussell, or William Still owed the United States government on this basis; and how much the *Declaration of Independence* and the preamble of the *Constitution* owed to them. The United States has been indeed a youthful nation; we can but hope that she will gain in wisdom as time passes.

The routes of travel in the eastern end of Montgomery county have never been sufficiently studied, and at this distance from the great period of "storm and stress" that task may well prove to be impossible. A few hints and surmises are not entirely out of order, for the abolitionists of the section were so few and the members of the Underground Railway so much more few that a mistake in identification is unlikely to occur. The Old York Road is the most eastern road in Pennsylvania which can be named with any degree of certainty. Along its length, certainly as early as 1857—and in



one instance as far back as 1837—there lived a number of people known to have been actively engaged in the operation of the railway. These included: Jacob C. White, a member of the Acting Committee of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee, at 100 Old York Road in Philadelphia City; James and Lucretia Mott at "Roadside," just beyond the present city line; near them the country seat of Morris L. Hallowell; in Jenkintown, Doctor Charles Shoemaker; near the present Willow Grove, Croasdale Twining about whom I am able to learn nothing; half way between Willow Grove and Horsham meeting, on the right hand side of the Doylestown Pike, David Newport, Justice of the Peace; and the two colored tenants of David Newport, the only two colored men in Moreland township.

Farther west, and running in a north-westerly direction, the Limekiln Pike which passed through Jarrettown. Near Pittsville on this Pike, there lived the elder Isaac Michener and his wife Martha Thomas Parry—a connection by marriage of Charles Kirk, the traveling companion of Elizabeth Newport, and a station-master in his own right since 1836. Within a few miles of Jarrettown, lived the Atkinsons, the Lightfoots, and the Comlys. There is some published evidence indicating a possible west to east route at this point, but nothing entirely definite.

Farther west still, there was the definite double line from Norristown and from Plymouth Meeting to William Foulke's near Penllyn; from there probably to Quakertown, Bucks county, and possibly toward Buckingham in the same county.

A few miles farther west and north lay the line directly from Chester county to Quakertown, by way of Seth Lukens' farm on the Towamencin Creek, at the edge of Kulpsville. It is not known who brought the slaves from Chester county, but they were taken to Richard Moore's on the southern outskirts of Quakertown, between 1845 and 1853. Before that time and until about 1849, this Kulpsville station was kept by Seth Lukens' father, George Luken, who lived on the Forty-foot Road to Lansdale. It is probable that Seth Lukens' passengers were forwarded most often from the more southerly group

living in Upper and Lower Providence townships in Montgomery county, and it is possible that Esther Lewis sent her first passengers to George Luken rather than over the entire thirty mile journey to Quakertown. There is no known evidence that the Norristown or the Penllyn stations forwarded to Kulpsville.

These lines all focused more or less upon Quakertown, the most important station north of Philadelphia and east of Reading. Here, as is well known, lived Richard Moore, son-in-law of the elder William Jackson, and father-in-law of Isaac Warner, the younger (?), of Hatboro.<sup>4</sup> There is ample published evidence that Richard Moore forwarded slaves southeast to Philadelphia, as well as north to Montrose and Friendsville, but it is with pleasure that I am able to add a bit of local tradition given to me by E. Irene Meredith, the daughter of one of his apprentices. Richard Moore was the only abolitionist of a more pronounced type of which she had heard in that neighborhood, and he took slaves in a Conestoga wagon among pottery which was being delivered.

Of the Friends whom I have mentioned, far the greater number were "Hicksites," that party of the Society at that time being numerically in the majority. It is of interest to examine into the characters of all of these men and women. Richard Moore is known to have been of that uncompromising and righteous type of Quaker known and revered for his integrity; Thomas Garrett is spoken of as a humorist; Edwin H. Coates was thought to have been vain of his own accomplishments among the abolitionists and to have been loquacious regarding his trade; John M. Comly appears to have been a discreet and worthy farmer with just a touch of humor; Elijah F. Pennypacker was of a solemn and determined temper allied to much gentleness and breadth of vision; William W. Taylor was known to be contentious and not dearly loved; Doctor Jacob L. Paxson was a faith-healer, curing "by laying on of hands," an advanced thinker but unsteady;

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<sup>4</sup>This is a part of the published and accepted genealogy of Richard Moore; I am told that it is completely erroneous.

Charles Kirk was among his friends a wit and a teller of amusing tales; William Foulke was "one of the substantial, conservative, respected, neighborhood men of his time;" Grace Anna Lewis was so modest in speaking of her own part in the Underground Railway that no thoroughly good account of her exists: Lucretia Mott is remembered by the children of her one-time hosts and hostesses as a giver of gifts, which the parents thought valuable but which the children did not always keep; Abel Fitzwater, a member of the Dunkard faith, was a "man of means" and of spectacular generosity; David Newport was note-worthy for his sense of justice, and his knowledge of the Negroes gained at Benjamin Hallowell's school in the South; William H. Johnson was known for his learning; and Emmor Kimber for the remarkable penmanship which he taught his daughters, but which he could not use himself. An amusing anecdote is told of Edwin H. Coates, which seems on a second telling to be not entirely at his expense. Saving the pun upon his name, he was a tailor—a maker of those plain Quaker coats which are such curiosities at this day. He had been made a delegate to the World Conference of Abolitionists, and some of his friends had felt obliged to warn him against what they supposed were some of his worst failings. He felt particularly obliged not to talk of his calling. He arrived at the conference, and for a time all went well with him. He spoke so eloquently that at last someone queried, "Mr. Coates, to which house of Congress do you belong—the House of Representatives or the Senate?" Then he confessed, "I belong to neither. I am a tailor."<sup>5</sup>

The brunt of the contest against slavery, as is so often the case in actual warfare, fell upon the children. Witness the names of Elias Hicks Corson, Summer Pennypacker, Thaddeus Stevens Kenderdine, and Simon Cameron Corson. One of Sarah C. Pennypacker's earliest recollections is of her sister

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<sup>5</sup>This excellent tale I owe to Sarah C. Pennypacker, the daughter of one of Edwin H. Coates' best customers. With respect to the two names applied to the youthful Gertrude Pennypacker, "Woolly-head" was a political nick-name of the period.

Gertrude sobbing in the yard of the Public School at Phoenixville because she had been called a "Woolly-head" and a "Nigger-lover." Once Sarah herself fled to her grandmother Adamson's because she had been told that her father had done something for which he might be arrested. At another time, a near neighbor, who was on good personal terms with the family and who at the time was a guest in the house, said that she would like to see all the abolitionists hanged in a line from the Valley hills across to that house.

"In view of all this," says Professor Siebert, "it is safe to say that the Underground Railroad was one of the greatest forces which brought on the Civil War, and thus destroyed slavery." One can imagine the Quaker station-keepers and their Dunkard and Mennonite allies voicing a positive negation, but so the recent verdict of history has been written. Individually, one can hear them agreeing with an English poet of the time of Queen Elizabeth:<sup>6</sup>

"And though it have been thought as true as steel,  
Which people prate, and preach above the rest,  
Yet could I never any reason feel  
To think *Vox populi vox Dei est.*"

A very unusual letter was recently saved from the burning, of which a part may with propriety be quoted:

Schuylkill 3/5/1885

Edwin H. Coates

Esteemed friend

\* \* \* \* \*

We seldom of late years see each other but I frequently think of thee when my mind turns back in review of what has transpired the past half Century. Most of those earnest and loving souls who were active in the memorable anti-slavery movement have passed to another condition of being. Sometimes in my quiet introversions I look back with wonder in view of what we passed through, attending meeting i[n] school houses, and all places w[h]ere discussion of the subject could get a footing, attending conventions, raising funds, and assisting the care-worn fugi-

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<sup>6</sup>George Gascoigne.

tive, a complication and full measure of duty, but those earnest souls which were banded together by a conviction and love of the eternal principles of right and their application to the [human] race without regard to sect or nation were equal to the occasion. The poet says "new occasions teach new duties."

The slave[s] reached emancipation through the necessities of [the] way, they are still much oppressed, and are laboring under serious disabilities, still their condition is much improved. They now have their natural rights and are at liberty (as they will) to rise in the scale of being. \* \* \* \* \*

thy true friend

E F Pennypacker

# A Brief History and Interpretation of Pennsylvania German Illuminated Writings ("Fraktur-Schriften") \*

By LESTER K. KRIEBEL

The fascinating subject, Pennsylvania German Illuminated Writings, has been assigned to me for discussion at the historical meeting this afternoon. Few subjects could be of greater cultural and religious interest, and none has received greater abuse from writers and speakers. To understand properly the subject of our discussion we shall do well to define Illuminated Writings or "Fraktur-Schriften."

## DEFINITION

Any book, document, or page in writing as distinguished from print may be classified as a manuscript or "writing." The term, illuminated writing, as applied to hand colored manuscripts may refer to the ornamentation of the text, such as the decoration of an initial-letter or word in the manuscript, with gold or silver, or in brilliant colors. This art may extend farther to miniature designs on the margin of the page, or a form of elaborate tracery and embellished borders.

The German word "Fraktur" refers to a certain type of design of Gothic letters, the verb form "fractura" meaning to write or make Gothic letters or figures. This form of writing and the accompanying illumination applies, then, to ornaments and other details adapted from the Gothic style and applied to manuscript pages. Thus, our subject, Pennsylvania German Fraktur, represent nothing less than the preservation in the modern age, and the further development, of the ancient and medieval art of illuminated writing.

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\*Read before the Society April 26, 1941.



From Collection in the  
Schwenkfelder Historical Library

This art of illumination in Western Europe had its origin among the Celtic peoples in Ireland about A. D. 521. Thence it reached the Scottish coast through Irish missionaries, from here on to England, and finally to Germany through the great Christian pioneer, St. Boniface of Devonshire, England (A. D. 680-754). He carried with him a highly ornamented book of the Gospels, probably remnants or influences of the Celtic art, made and preserved by zealous missionaries. In Germany the particular type of Fraktur design was created and perfected by Leonhard Wagner (A. D. 1500). He had been a Benedictine Monk in Augsburg about A. D. 1507 and was employed by King Maximilian in the creative design of his beautiful work.

For centuries the manuscripts of Western Europe had their origin and development in the West. However, Oriental designs did creep in at various times, but only through a period of filtration and assimilation.

#### EXTENT

A prevalent use of, and interest in, this art throughout Europe extended during the "Middle Ages" and the Renaissance. Monasteries were the repositories of this beautiful and interesting work fostered and perpetuated by the monks. Bibles, Devotional books, and kindred literature were favorite subjects for marginal and interlinear decoration and embellishments. Only recently has the writer seen a beautiful specimen of such an illuminated New Testament prepared by French Monks during the Middle Ages, on exhibition in the William Randolph Hearst Art Collection in New York City. In Germany the art expanded into the more practical, domestic life of the people and found expression in common household objects.

As Edwin Lefevre explained in the *Saturday Evening Post*, houses during A. D. 1500-1600 were dark and gloomy because windows were few and small. Often these were dimmed by parchment and shutters. Hence these color-loving people painted their homes, furniture, and various domestic objects in gay bright colors to bring cheer and beauty into their daily



life. Later when sheet glass was commonly used and homes were better lighted, even a greater interest was manifest in decoration and color. If homes could not be sumptuous they could at least be colorful. Moreover, this art in the home of the simple Protestant folk took the place of the gorgeous decoration of the Catholic Church established for the enjoyment of its people.

Probably two factors largely contributed to the decline of the art of illuminated writing: First, the prevalent work and interest of the ecclesiastics during the Reformation detracted from this work. Second, the invention and extensive use of printing replaced the manuscripts with their beautiful hand work. Hence this fine art ended approximately at the beginning of the German emigration to America, about 1680. As Henry Borneman so aptly states in his book, *Pennsylvania German Illuminated Manuscripts*, it enjoyed a period of more than a thousand years during which more than thirty generations enjoyed this grand movement. It took several centuries before the art had spent itself.

Its last notable use and practice was made by the Pennsylvania Germans in this country covering a period of about a hundred years, 1750-1850, and probably attained its best expression between 1795-1820. It occupied a conspicuous place in the religious, educational and social life of the people as we shall see in subsequent chapters.

### USE

The illuminated writing or "Fraktur" in this country was characteristically Pennsylvania German. Its best examples came from the period when there had been little or no assimilation of the environment in America on the part of the pioneers.

The beauty was generally limited to objects of utility. Useful things of the household were decorated. These included such objects as chests, barns, butter-molds, waffle-irons, baptismal and marriage certificates, house-blessings, hymn-books, etc.

## MOTIFS AND DEVICES EMPLOYED

The designs employed for decorative purposes in the Pennsylvania German Fraktur work were all symbolic types for the purpose of teaching some beautiful religious truth or lesson. Naturally the artist would use the symbols with which he and his readers were best acquainted. The literature most familiar to them was the Bible. Moreover, its symbols afforded an excellent opportunity to teach fundamental truths as well as to beautify the home. So the artist used the symbols found in the Holy Scripture, and particularly those in the Song of Solomon and in the New Testament. One must remember that early Christianity was very congenial to religious symbolism. The primitive Christian art found in the catacombs near Rome is but one verification of this fact. The Old Testament fairly sparkles with its mystic imagery, and the New Testament affords an indescribable beauty through the lofty lessons of the fascinating parables given by the master Teacher. The most common and outstanding of the symbols employed are: the lily, rose, pearl of great price, corner stone (which the builders rejected; diamond), Virgin Sophia (wisdom), stem of Jesse's rod, turtle-doves, pomegranates, tulip, circle, stars, peacocks, formal geometric designs, etc.

## INTERPRETATION

Thus for the most part the Pennsylvania German "Fraktur" was symbolic or interpretive. The purpose of illumination was to beautify the object of devotion and to clarify its meaning. The design or symbol used was distinctly religious in character. And the purpose of the symbol was to teach, through a visible sign, something that was invisible. The truth intended to be taught through these manuscripts was to be found in the Bible and not in the occult. The symbols that were used typify Christianity and do not have a magical or pagan meaning.

The pictures and designs which were drawn and painted suggest some fact, idea or truth. The aim of the artist was not to produce some pictorial likeness, but some form which would

suggest the thought and teaching in his mind. The artist sought a realism of the heart. Instead of picturing nature and the world of sense he employed images to describe the quest of the soul for the Ineffable. By an underlying faith he raised and sublimated his objects, giving them a new meaning and an abiding value. For him nature became a gate-way to the garden of God. It was through these means the teacher sought a way back to the heart of God. To the artist, nature did not become an intrinsic, beautiful object. He used it for a much deeper and more significant purpose. Nature became a revelation of the deeper qualities of life, a symbolism of things beyond herself. By thus using nature as medium he energized her, and at the same time pointed to the deep realities of another world.

This ingenious work had a peculiar effect upon the uninformed of a later day. It resulted in the obscurity of design and not a photographic reproduction. Hence, it became difficult to identify the meaning and source of the designs and symbols employed by the teacher artists. Consequently the ignorant frequently miss the mark as to the interpretation and source of the material employed. Indeed, some even go so far as to claim that the ingenious religious symbols on the beautiful, Pennsylvania German, red barns are "Hex" marks to drive or keep away witches and evil spirits, because of the superstitious beliefs of the Pennsylvania German people. Nothing could be more remote from the truth concerning the original purpose of these interesting symbols employed to speak a devout and meaningful language. The Pennsylvania German loved color. He used it richly, painting practically all of his barns and stables bright red. His artistic sense and innate feeling for beauty forbade him to leave a whole side of his barn a solid red mass. So he was compelled to decorate his buildings with designs in beautiful and contrasting colors. He did the natural thing, namely, used the designs and symbols which he knew best and which had an intrinsic value and meaning. The very ones he had on his household utensils and manuscripts he employed as decorative barn designs. And, even if the second or third generation has forgotten the

significance of these designs, one may rightfully maintain that the main motive of these nature and art loving people is a sincere desire for ornamentation.

Two factors led to the encouragement of the religious symbols in Pennsylvania German "Fraktur" work. First was the famous theological tradition in which the language, figures of speech and images used from the Scriptures easily adapted themselves to the interpretive art found in the "Fraktur." Second, a prevalent flower hymnology in a large measure explained the designs employed in the illuminated writings. Numerous lengthy hymns had been written by pious, didactic poets emulating the beauty and virtue of flowers such as the rose, lily, the blossoming stem of Jesse's rod, etc. In the latter half of the hymn Christ was likened to, or substituted for, the flowers and their beauty and the virtues applied to Him as the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. This prevalent flower hymnology stimulated many curious, interesting and fascinating designs on the part of artists in "Fraktur" work.

#### CHARACTERISTICS

The Medieval Art had grown out of an age captivated by symbolism and allegory. The early Pennsylvania German Art revealed abstract ideas through primitive technique. That is the designs employed were primitive ones, but they were not executed in a primitive way, indeed quite the contrary. The painters exhibited great artistic taste and an equal intellectual ability. An intelligent study of only a few original examples will reveal this fact in a remarkable degree.

As a rule the artist used little or no perspective in his designs and paintings. At once this gave the impression of a primitive and ancient, but not crude, work. Moreover, he was dominated by a geometrical balance which was quite in harmony with good design. Thus he acquired a directness and simplicity, not unlike the early masters, which is peculiar to all primitively executed arts. The general atmosphere of this work breathed forth a definite character and personality possessing great depth and spiritual meaning. In many respects the designs were symbolic of the struggle of the early

Pennsylvania German settlers to a slowly surrendering nature. Consequently, one must not forget that this art had a vital message for the people of its day.

The Pennsylvania German decorators employed an effective use of shadow behind the designs. This was accomplished by two methods. One method was by gradation of color with the brush. The other was by effective use of "cut-outs" frequently pasted on backgrounds of varying shades. This usage of shadow behind the designs was employed extensively by European decorators. The shadow scheme is lacking entirely in all Oriental influences.

The artists were conscious of the effective use of the balancing of opposites. The effect was striking and pleasing. Hence light and shadow as well as color were employed to balance each other. This fact becomes very obvious in the construction of formal geometric designs, decorative borders, etc., as well as in the symbols and religious characters themselves. The rule of balancing of opposites was well studied in the use of color, design and light.

The decorators also had a thorough knowledge of the use of the primary colors, red, yellow, and blue, which they employed to great advantage. They never used the solid red and black colors which clash. Invariably they toned these colors into a beautiful shade of old rose, a mellow gold, and a dark blue. They also employed a fine use of the complementary colors of red and green.

In composition and construction of the decorative elements the artist had a unique way of avoiding monotony. This applies both to color and design. Large open spaces on the manuscript were avoided. Where small designs were employed to fill these spaces a large variety was introduced. Border constructions varied greatly in color and composition. It is safe to state that there is absolutely no monotony.

#### CHARACTERISTIC SYMBOLS

A favorite design was the heart, inside of which some favorite stanza of a hymn was inserted in decorative design. Frequently on a rectangular page one such heart appeared in

each of the four corners. A favorite Bible verse or several stanzas of a hymn would then occupy the center of the page with elaborate initial decoration and interlinear embellishments. From the heart design often was constructed a tree, vine or fruit, teaching the immortal lesson that out of the heart comes the issue of life. This symbolic figure sometimes took strange fantastic, but beautiful, forms, teaching a truth never to be forgotten.

The basic structure of many designs was a pot of earth, either plain or with elaborate decoration, suggesting the baser elements of nature and man. It represents an origin that was perishable. The design was then built up arising to a finer spiritual form, including the heart design in varying motifs and culminating at the top in a crown of righteousness, symbolized by the circle of perfection, and some form suggesting the Trinity, involving a combination of three objects or figures.

The use of stars provides an interesting subject for study. The five-pointed star stood for personality. The six-pointed star symbolized the star of David, and was used in connection with Old Testament prophecy concerning the coming and mission of the Christ. The seven-pointed star represented the soul. The eight-pointed star still presents an enigma, the meaning of which remains unknown. The nine-pointed star is the symbol of the spirit or perfection. Considerable originality, as well as creative artistic beauty and ability, was employed in weaving these various star designs into the entire picture which was to teach its own unique lesson.

Continuing the interpretation of symbols one must observe that the turtle-dove was a symbol of love and beauty. The peacock, a favorite subject, represented royalty and a kingship of the spirit. Frequently one observes in the Pennsylvania German "Fraktur" work curiously pointed designs, sprockets or radiating lines emerging from objects such as circles. This structure is the artist's method, primitive but effective, of teaching the lesson that all radiation proceeds from the heart. Often the circle of righteousness, constructed as the climax of some design, will possess this radiation.

The tulip is one of the most favorite designs for decorations in Pennsylvania German "Fraktur." Its origin has been traced to Persia, and the name itself is derived from the Persian word "dulband" (turban) and gradually pronounced "tulband." This Eastern flower did not find its way into Western Europe until the middle of the sixth century, when it was received with great interest in Germany, the Low Countries, and England. Its use in art was not prevalent until about the fifteenth century. It is quite natural that the Pennsylvania German artists should have used the tulip as a favorite flower for decoration, especially because its outlines were so essentially simple and so rich in line and color. In the illuminated writings under consideration the Pennsylvania German tulip design has been found as a decoration on about thirty-five different types of objects.

Various forms of the Trinity are expressed in "Fraktur" designs. A favorite teaching was the conception of the Trinity of the lower form of man, and of the higher form of man, finally radiating from the circle of perfection. This concept was woven into intricate and elaborate designs of flowers and figures.

In the later period of illuminated writings crude figures of angels and angel heads appeared. Human figures and animal life are conspicuous because of their almost total absence. The entire artistic construction, thought and teaching centered around the Biblical symbols aforementioned.

A general observation of the work which has been studied and presented reveals a balance of love, wisdom and power, expressed in ingenious and colorful designs. This admirable method of visual education made a lasting impression on the youth of that day which in turn expressed itself in the lives of our worthy ancestors.

#### TYPES OF "FRACTUR"

There are two types of Pennsylvania German "Fraktur." The one is a transparent water-color type painted directly with simple water colors. The other type, and the most prevalent one in use, is the tempera. The color pigment is taken

from berries or vegetable matter, mixed with the albumen of eggs. A substantial base was formed by adding cedar, cherry, plum, or peach gum. This composition was applied while moist, employing the same method of painting in tempera as did the old masters. The colors remain fresh and fast to the present day and are preserved by a rich gloss which will crack and crumble if applied too thickly, as do the old paintings executed in tempera. Quills were employed for the writing of these manuscripts and for the finer design work. All brush work was made in Oriental style, holding the brush upright. Each line and design was constructed with a free swing of the hand, usually away from the body. Shading was produced by exerting various degrees of pressure upon the brush.

#### INFLUENCE OF ORIENTAL DESIGNS

On the surface it may astonish the casual observer to find a strong influence of Oriental designs in the Pennsylvania German Illuminated Writings. The technique in the actual painting was Oriental. The small designs which give the beautifully decorated, colored capital letters their full rounded form, depth, and finished appearance are typically Chinese. The fundamental design of the wave line, in all its modifying forms comes from the same origin. This structure so essential for the beauty, symmetry, and balance in Fraktur is employed more often than perhaps any other design or motif. The original meaning of this ancient wave line presumably indicated everything that juts out of water.

The question naturally arises, whence this strong Oriental influence in the European illuminated art, and, especially in the later Pennsylvania German "Fraktur"? The following historic event may answer this pertinent question in part. The climax of the great Mongolian and Turkish invasions into Europe by way of Silesia, Germany, occurred in A. D. 1240. The decisive battle fought against these invading hordes was near Liegnitz and conducted by the great Piasten rulers with the surrounding Princes and their armies. The defeat of the Mongolian hordes was so decisive they were unable to return to the Orient. Consequently they settled in and around Silesia and gradually became assimilated in that territory. In those



ancient times the armies carried with them the culture and art of their native lands which naturally also was assimilated. Out of this very region came one group of German pioneers who developed a famous school of illuminated writings in Pennsylvania at a later date. Much of the Oriental influence may be attributed to this tragic source.

### THREE SCHOOLS OF PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN FRACTUR

In conclusion, there were three outstanding schools of "Fraktur" in this country. One had its origin in the famous Ephrata Cloisters (founded in 1730), and developed by the brotherhood there. The draftsmanship, composition, and design were of excellent quality, but religious scruples prohibited the use of gay and fresh colors. Only a casual study will enable one to recognize the fine work of this school because of the subdued and sombre colors.

Another school of art was developed by the capable schoolmaster, Christopher Dock (? to 1771), who was brought from Germany to instruct the youth among the Mennonite and Schwenkfelders. His famous work was done at Skippack and Salford where he taught. He was an excellent master in the art of illuminated writing and unrestrained in his use of color. The influence of his art in connection with his school work left a profound impression upon the talented students of his day.

The third famous school came out of the Schwenkfelder group who settled in Pennsylvania in 1734. Its rich cultural background found delightful expression in this art. Unquestionably the leading artist was Susanna Hübner although many other names might be mentioned. This school too was free and unrestrained in its use of color and produced excellent specimens of the now lost art. A large collection of beautiful examples are preserved in the Schwenkfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania.

Only one master remains today who is able to reproduce copies of this interesting art—Mr. John Souder, of Telford, Pennsylvania, a member of the Old Mennonite faith. He has compiled several manuscript volumes of illuminated writings as a hobby during the days of his retirement.

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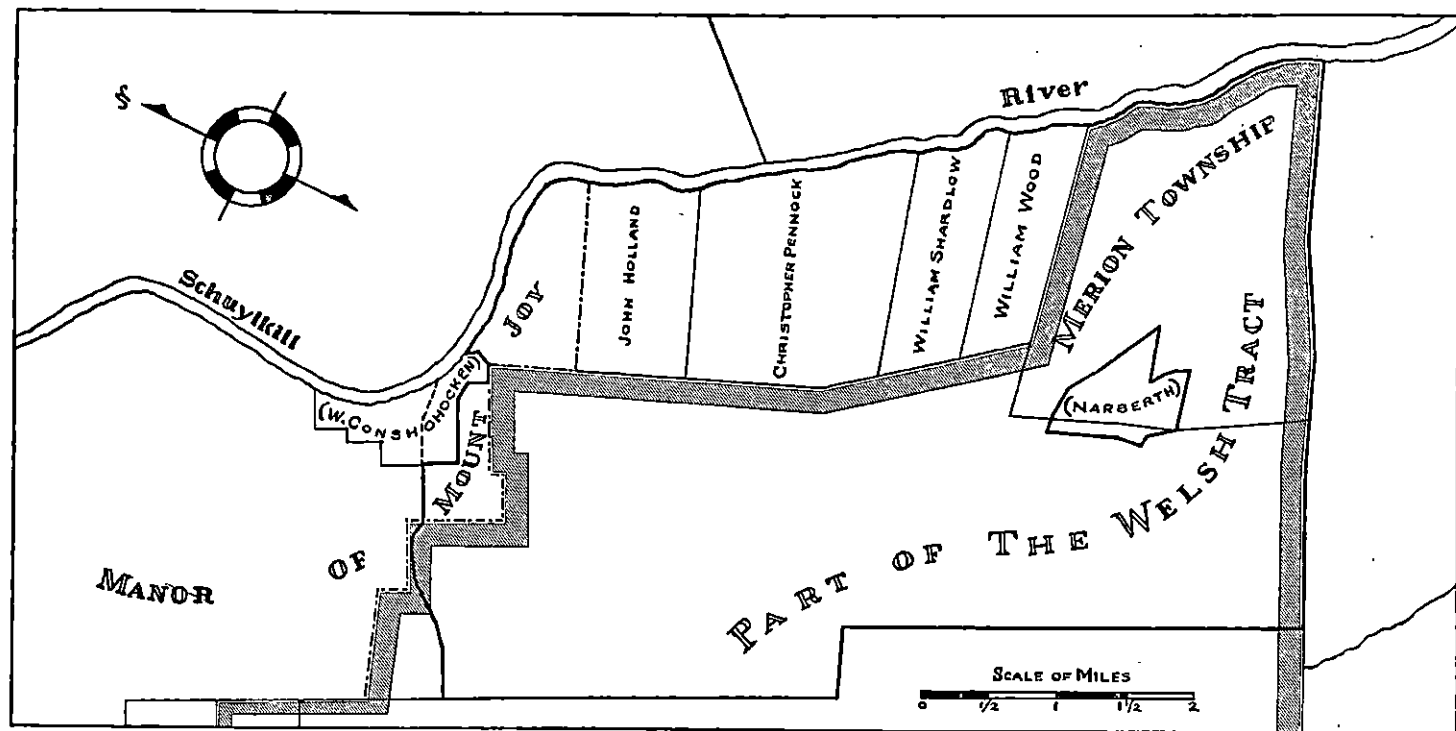
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Through the courtesy of the Pennsylvania Art Program, Index of American Design, a W. P. A. project, the writer exhibited a portfolio of reproductions of Pennsylvania German "Fraktur" along with several original specimens, and a few reproductions by Mr. John Souder.



### LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP

(Heavy lines show present boundaries; dot-and-dash line, the original boundary with Upper Merion; dotted line, abandoned portion of boundary of 1844; shaded line, boundary of Welsh Tract; light lines, other divisions.)

# Historical Gleanings South of Schuylkill

By CHARLES R. BARKER

(Continued from Vol. II, No. 4, p. 329)

## II. SURVEYS AND BOUNDARIES

Having outlined the genesis of the upper portion of the Merions, we now pass on to the lower portion.

Beginning at the extreme eastern end of the Manor of Mount Joy, and extending thence down Schuylkill to West Manayunk, there is a tract of land which was originally sold, not to Welsh, but to English and Irish, purchasers. Measuring approximately three and a half miles in length, by one and a half in breadth, it thus includes about one-fifth of the area of the present township of Lower Merion, and, as we shall see, was excluded from the survey of the Welsh Tract, in 1684.<sup>1</sup>

At the northern end of this tract, which was separated from the Manor of Mount Joy by the line of Spring Mill road, a plot of 500 acres was laid off, in 1685, to John Holland, son of Joshua Holland, of Chatham, county Kent, Old England, mariner, as part of the latter's purchase of 5000 acres in Pennsylvania. Joshua Holland did not cross the ocean, but in 1683 gave his son John a power of attorney to sell 1000 acres "so as the same be a mile distant from the Waterside or River [Delaware] there." The latter came to Pennsylvania, and in 1685 obtained a survey of the 500 acres above-mentioned, which is described as "on the West side of Schuylkill River" and "near Upper Merion." About two months later, he sold it to George Collett, of Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pa. Arch., 2d Ser.; vol. XIX, pp. 14-5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.; p. 545; also 3d Ser., vol. I, pp. 17-8 — Phila. Deeds E 1, vol. 5, p. 370. The reference to *Upper Merion* shows the custom which later became official practice.

The new owner, who was the son of George Collett, of Clonmell, Tipperary, Ireland, seems to have been hopelessly crippled, a year or two later, under a falling tree. He died in 1687, leaving "all he had in this Country," by nuncupative will, to his nephew Nathaniel Pennock.<sup>3</sup> In December, 1697, Christopher Pennock, Nathaniel's father, became also his administrator; and in the following spring, to meet the debts of the estate, sold the whole plantation to Morris Llewellyn, of Haverford township.<sup>4</sup>

Up to this time, there had probably been no settlement on the land. But in 1708, Morris Llewellyn, "the elder," of Haverford, conveyed to Morris Llewellyn, "the younger," of Merion, a *messuage* and plantation of 400 acres of land, which today would be bounded very closely by Spring Mill, Conshohocken and Lafayette roads, and the Schuylkill river. The plantation was significantly called "Indian Fields," and graded steeply towards the river, where it terminated in a sudden slope known later as "Breakneck Hill." Six years later, the elder Llewellyn conveyed the balance of his original purchase to his son Griffith, ancestor of the Llewellyn family of Lower Merion.<sup>5</sup>

Here it may be asked why that part of the township which is so remote from communications that it is the last to be built up, should have been laid out first? The answer is, that conditions have radically changed with the passage of two hundred and fifty years; for while yet no roads had been opened, the *rivers* were the highways, and it was the Schuylkill, on which these Lower Merion plantations fronted, that was supposed to make them valuable.

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<sup>3</sup>A. C. Meyers: "Immigration of Irish Quakers to Pa.," p. 280. — Phila. Admon. Book A, pp. 40-1.

<sup>4</sup>Phila. Admon. Book A, p. 245 — Phila. Exemp. Recs.; vol. VII, p. 170.

<sup>5</sup>Phila. Deeds E 5, vol. 7, p. 75; and D 2, p. 56 — John Levering: Map of Lower Merion, 1851. For special articles on the Llewellyn family and lands, see "Sketches, Hist. Soc. of Montg. Co.," vol. III, p. 206; and vol. VII, p. 68.

Adjoining the Holland purchase on the south was a tract of 1000 acres which appears to have been first surveyed to Christopher Pennock (whom we have already met) for his son Joseph. Pennock's title was confirmed by patent, 1-13-1689/90, when it appears of record that he had, in 1686, bought the *right* from his brother-in-law, George Collett, of Tipperary (another acquaintance of ours), who had himself bought it, in 1683, from Francis and George Rogers, of Corke, Ireland, original purchasers in 1681.

James Claypoole, merchant, of London, who emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1683, thus writes to Francis and George Rogers from London under date 28 1 mo. 1682:

"The Articles for the Pensilvania Compa. are printing, & I hope will be done by next post, and then either Philys Ford or myselfe will send you one, I cannot tell wt. to write you abt. the deeds for Land, but yours will be like mine and others wch, are approved on by men skilled in the law, and as to improving of land there I can say little at present but do find my selfe more and more Inclined to goe."<sup>6</sup>

If one travels along the River road from Young's Ford road to Hollow road, a distance of more than one and a half miles, he traces the Schuylkill frontage of the Pennock plantation, perhaps the largest tract ever surveyed to an individual in Lower Merion. In one corner is Mine Hill; in another, the village of Gladwyne; while Mill Creek, which empties into the Schuylkill near a third corner, flows through the tract for nearly a mile. In the center can still be seen the once noted but now long abandoned soapstone quarry, while the names of Young's ford and Haggy's ford, which once connected the plantation with the Roxborough shore, yet survive in the names of the roads which led to them.<sup>7</sup>

But Christopher Pennock never settled here. In 1686, he disposed of 250 acres of the tract (covering the present site of

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<sup>6</sup>Phila. Deeds H 10, p. 580 — Pa. Arch., 2d Ser.; vol. XIX, pp. 28, 549-50 — Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.; vol. X, p. 192.

<sup>7</sup>B. H. Smith: Atlas of Welsh Tract, Plate 23 — Levering: Map of Lower Merion, 1851.

Gladwyne), and in 1693, he sold the remainder—750 acres—to Morgan David, of Merion.<sup>8</sup> He died in Philadelphia a few years later, when about to make a visit to Ireland.<sup>9</sup> His son Joseph finally settled in Chester county, where descendants of the name still flourish.

Morgan David's family took the name *Davis*. This seems to have led to an unfortunate error on the part of a southern writer who was tracing the ancestry of Jefferson Davis, and who believed he had identified Morgan David as the progenitor. By the time the error was discovered, the book had been published, thus conferring on "Jeff" a Pennsylvania Welsh Quaker ancestry to which he was not at all entitled!

The next tract south of the Pennock property was a survey of 500 acres made in 1684 to William Shardlow, a London merchant, as a part of his purchase of 2500 acres of land in Pennsylvania. Although Shardlow corresponded a good deal with his agents here, respecting his other Pennsylvania lands, he seems to have had little interest in his tract on the Schuylkill, after selling a portion of it, in 1692, through his attorney, John Blunston, of Darby.<sup>10</sup> He never came to this country. By his will, made in 1704, he devised all his lands to his sons-in-law, Joseph Collins and John Wightman. Both these men left wills,<sup>11</sup> but both failed to dispose of the Lower Merion property, and it was not until 1740 that their heirs finally conveyed it to Richard Harrison, of Philadelphia.

The names of the grantors, as recorded, were John Wightman, London, Esq., and wife Rebecca; Catherine Collins, London, spinster; Elizabeth Gary, London, widow; David Jennings, parish of St. John Wapping, co. Middlesex, gent., and wife Sarah; Edward Cowper, parish of St. Ann Soho, Westminster, co. Middlesex, hosier, and wife Mary; and

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<sup>8</sup>Phila. Deeds "I" 4, p. 459; and E 1, vol. 5, pp. 518, 520.

<sup>9</sup>Dr. Geo. Smith: "Hist. of Delaware Co., Pa.," p. 492 — Phila. Mo. Mtg. Mins. (MS copy, Gen. Soc. of Pa.); vol. I, pp. 283, 285.

<sup>10</sup>Phila. Deeds E 7, vol. 9, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup>Logan Papers MSS Div., Hist. Soc. of Pa.

Nathaniel Sanderson, citizen and draper, London, and wife Anna. Probably not one of these persons had ever set foot in Pennsylvania.<sup>12</sup>

Next and last of the English and Irish purchasers was William Wood, whose 500 acres adjoined the Shardlow tract, the line between them beginning at the junction of Summit and Righter's Mill roads, and ending at the Schuylkill at Flat Rock tunnel.<sup>13</sup> Wood did not settle on this land, but on his estate of "Mountwood," in Darby, where he became a prominent man, serving as Provincial Judge, Member of the Governor's Council, and Justice of the Peace for Chester County.<sup>14</sup> After his death and that of his widow, Susannah, their eldest son, Joseph, administered on their estates. In 1689, he was granted a patent for the Lower Merion property, which he sold, the same day, to Catherine, widow of John ap Thomas, who already owned a tract adjoining.<sup>15</sup>

So we see that about one-fifth of the present township of Lower Merion, amounting to perhaps 3300 acres (although laid out for 2500) was surveyed to natives of England and Ireland, who, actuated only by motives of speculation, never came to settle on their lands. In time, the ownership passed largely to Welsh families, who thus became the real settlers.

Of a township named either "Merion" or "Lower Merion," there is no trace on Holme's map. But in the angle formed by the Schuylkill river and the line of Blockley township (now City Line avenue), we find a tract marked "Edward Iones & Compa being 17 Families."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Phila. Deeds G 1, p. 222, and H 15, p. 160. (The latter states that both John Wightman and Joseph Collins died *intestate*, but the meaning evidently is, *intestate as regards this property*.)

<sup>13</sup>Smith: Atlas of Welsh Tract, Plate 23 — Levering: Map of Lower Merion, 1851.

<sup>14</sup>Phila. Admon. Book A, p. 93 — Pa. Arch., 2d Ser.; vol. IX, pp. 630, 626, 673, etc.

<sup>15</sup>Phila. Exemp. Recs.; vol. I, p. 276; VII, p. 272.

<sup>16</sup>Thomas Holme: Map of the Province of Pennsylvania.



This was the first settlement by a group of persons within the present limits of Lower Merion. The purchasers themselves arrived in Pennsylvania nearly two months before William Penn, and their tract, to which they gave the name "Merion" (after the county of Merioneth, in Wales, from which they hailed) was probably laid out to them soon after their arrival, being confirmed by a complete survey in 1684. A draught of the original survey, showing the subdivisions allotted to the several purchasers, is on file at Harrisburg, and well bears out the statement made by Edward Jones in a letter to John ap Thomas, that "The end of each lot will be on a river as large or larger than the Dye at Bala, it is called Skool Kill River." Actually, eleven of the seventeen purchasers *were* given river frontage, but the result was that the farm of Rees Jones (also called Rees John William), although between two and three miles long, had an average breadth of only sixteen perches, and a "frontage" of only four perches!<sup>17</sup>

The boundary of Merion township extended along City Line avenue from the bridge over the Schuylkill to a point beyond Overbrook station, P. R. R.; then northwestwardly to a point north of Narberth; then to the Schuylkill, which it met just north of Ashland Heights; and finally, downstream to the place of beginning. Its actual area was about five square miles, and it included nearly all the present borough of Narberth, the suburban section of Merion, Bala-Cynwyd and Penn Valley, and the localities of Ashland Heights and Pencoyd on the Schuylkill.<sup>18</sup>

For a decade or more, conveyances of land within the present township of Lower Merion described it as "*in Merion*" (usually spelled *Myrion* or *Meirion*) or "*near Merion*," or "*between Merion and Haverford*," according as it was, or was not, within the tract surveyed to Edward Jones and Company.

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<sup>17</sup>B. H. Smith: "The Lands of Edward Jones and Company in Merion;" Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.; vol. XXVI, p. 42 and accompanying draught.

<sup>18</sup>Smith: Atlas of Welsh Tract, Plate 23 — Levering: Map of Lower Merion, 1851.

Then, little by little, the name "Merion" came to be applied to all the area north of "The City Liberty" (later Blockley township, now the city of Philadelphia) and between the Schuylkill and Chester county (which then included Delaware county). Then the terms "upper" and "lower" began to be used, at first only relatively. No draught or description of a township named either *Upper Merion* or *Lower Merion*, nor any petition or order for the laying out of one, is known to the writer; but as early as 1714 we have a petition "of some of the Inhabitants of *Upper Merion*, and adjacent settlers and some others of the Inhabitants of Chester [county]," asking for the confirmation of a road; while in 1725 another petition complains that "the Overseers of *Lower Merion* . . . have not Obayed Your Order . . . and we the Inhabitants of *Upper Merion* have no Road to go to Market."<sup>19</sup> Probably from about this time, the boundary between the Manor of Mount Joy and the Welsh Tract, came to be accepted as the dividing line between *Upper Merion* and *Lower Merion*, which it so remained until 1804. Of this, we shall speak later.

In 1684, the great Welsh Tract was laid out. The warrant issued by William Penn for this survey directed Thomas Holme, the surveyor-general, to

"Lay out the said tract of land in as uniform a manner as conveniently may be upon the west side of the Schuylkill River running *three* miles upon ye same and *two* miles backward, then Extend the parallel line with the River six miles and to run westwardly so far as till the said quantity of land be completely surveyed unto them."<sup>20</sup>

This "glittering generality," somewhat characteristic of Penn, was indefinite enough to make any surveyor hesitate. However, the survey was made, and its courses and distances, duly returned, were confirmed, in 1687, by the Commissioners of Property, who thereupon gave warning that any attempt at

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<sup>19</sup>Phila. Quarter Sessions Recs.

<sup>20</sup>Pa. Arch., 1st Ser.; vol. XII, p. 279. (In the original, the words in italics are almost illegible.)

encroachment upon the Tract would be judged "Illegal, Irregular and not according to Proprietary Method."<sup>21</sup>

The eastern end of the Welsh Tract included all of the present township of Lower Merion except a small strip at the north end, and what had been surveyed to the English and Irish purchasers; it included, also, the borough of Narberth; and small portions of the present Upper Merion. With the original township of Merion ("the land of Edward Jones and Company") as its cornerstone, it extended westward across the present Delaware county into Chester county, including within its borders a number of the townships of both counties. Its total area, as surveyed, was 40,000 acres, but actually it was probably much larger.<sup>22</sup>

As already stated, the boundary between the Manor of Mount Joy and the Welsh Tract came to be accepted officially as the dividing line between the townships of Upper Merion and Lower Merion. Numerous records might be cited in proof of this. In June, 1790, the Court of Quarter Sessions received a petition, praying a road "from the Spring Mill [road] (*which divides the Townships of Upper and Lower Merion*) to a recorded road leading to Reese Op Edward's ford." Complaint was made by inhabitants of Upper Merion, in November, 1803, of the great inconvenience of not having a more correct boundary between the townships, whose separation "*took place at an early period* when they were but thinly inhabited." Petitioners further aver that Upper Merion

"is a long narrow strip of land bordering on the River Schuylkill perhaps twelve miles in length . . . and the lower end for about two miles not more than half a mile in width between Lower Merion & the River Schuylkill which increases the burthen of the Overseers of

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 2d Ser.; vol. XIX, p. 14.

<sup>22</sup>See, further, Thomas Allen Glenn: "Merion in the Welsh Tract"; and Charles H. Browning: "Welsh Settlements of Pennsylvania." Thomas Holme's "Map of the Province of Pennsylvania" shows the bounds of the Welsh Tract; a very different map is reproduced in Smith's "Atlas of the Welsh Tract." Neither map agrees with the survey as confirmed in 1687.

the poor . . . and the Supervisors . . . there is a road laid out from Matson's Ford on Schuylkill to Radnor Meeting house they conceive may be a convenient boundary."

In the following May, the jury of view appointed on the case made its return, which was confirmed, and the boundary declared to be a line

"beginning at Mattson's Ford on the River Schuylkill, and Extending along the South side of the Road leading from there to Radnor meeting House, untill the said Line intersects the Division Line between the Counties of Montgomery and Delaware."<sup>23</sup>

That the boundary as thus laid down did not coincide with the present Matson's Ford road, is clearly shown by subsequent events. For more than a mile of its length, the road ran close beside a little stream which receives the drainage from high ridges on both sides. After the passage of nearly forty years, the numerous detours necessary in order to avoid wash-outs and flooded meadows must have all but obliterated, in some places, the true line of the road. In 1842, residents of both townships prayed the Court to have the road leading from Matson's Ford bridge opposite Conshohocken to the Gulph road near the Gulph school house *opened as a township line road*.

A commission appointed for this purpose accordingly made a resurvey, which did not altogether follow the course of the "old road." Two years later, William Davis, of Upper Merion, informs the Court that, in his opinion, it is exceedingly doubtful where the township line or boundary between the townships of Lower Merion and Upper Merion now is, and prays that it be ascertained and established. And at the August Sessions, 1844, the jury reports that it has established the road "as near the division line fixed upon by the commissioners . . . [in 1804] . . . as can now be ascertained."<sup>24</sup>

And so, at last, we have definitely separated Upper Merion and Lower Merion.

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<sup>23</sup>Recs. Quart. Sess. Court, Montg. Co.; Dockets 1, p. 240; 3, pp. 203, 228.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.; Dockets 7, pp. 494, 520; 8, pp. 113, 157.

## Early Pennsylvania Clocks and Their Makers\*

By FRED C. SWEINHART

A study of early clocks is a very appropriate subject to bring before a Historical Society. A clock links the past with the present more intimately than almost anything that has come down from former generations and can almost be classed as a living thing. Early Pennsylvania clocks, the subject of this study, represent a well defined period and are the creation of a limited number of craftsmen, in most instances working alone or with an apprentice, in private residences or small shops. These early clocks should be of special interest to Montgomery Countians, as one of the earliest clockmakers in America, David Rittenhouse, began his career in Norriton township, this county, first as a clockmaker and surveyor and later as an astronomer and public man. He was in fact one of the leading astronomers of his age, as the members of this society are well aware.

Clocks as we know them today, that is, pendulum clocks, run by weight or steel spring, are really not very ancient contrivances. Hugen, a German, is said to have adopted the pendulum to the clock in 1662. This approximately coincides with Penn's advent to Pennsylvania in 1682. It thus appears that the development of the modern clock is co-extensive with the colonization of America. The last of the thirteen colonies, Georgia, was founded in 1732, roughly a generation before the outbreak of the Revolution. Although by this time clock making had reached a considerable development in Europe, evidence points to the fact that it was not very extensive in America.

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\*Read before the Society April 26, 1941.

At the time of the Revolution Philadelphia was the largest city in the colonies, and Pennsylvania was one of the richest and best developed states in industry and agriculture and shipping. Then as now, our iron masters were far in the lead; then as now, we led in textiles. The Pennsylvania cabinet-makers were famed and, led by Rittenhouse, Joseph Ellicott and Seneca Lukens, our clockmakers were not surpassed in America.

David Rittenhouse was born in 1732 and died in 1796. (His life was almost contemporaneous with Washington's—1732 to 1799—and indeed he was much associated with Washington, especially during the latter's Presidency or from 1789 until Rittenhouse's death in 1796.) He is said to have made his first clock at the age of 17 (1749). This was a wooden clock and the records show that he and his brother Benjamin made brass clocks in 1760. The Pennsylvania Historical Society has one of these early clocks. This is a brass face, 30-hour clock in a very crude case. Another David Rittenhouse 30-hour clock, very similar to the above, was owned in the Schwenk family. Joseph Wills was another early Pennsylvania maker, as were Adam Brant, of New Hanover; Jacob Godshalk, Philadelphia, and Augustine Neyser. Their clocks and cases are very similar, 30-hour, 10½ inch square brass dials, plain square-top cases. Undoubtedly these clockmakers were contemporaries, and their clocks the earliest Pennsylvania clocks. We know David Rittenhouse dates, which establishes the date 1750 to 1760, for these clocks, and that, I conclude, is the beginning of clock-making in Pennsylvania. Likewise all evidence points to the fact that not many tall clocks were made after 1840 to 1850, so certainly the scope for this study covers a limit of time from 1750 to 1850 and I dare say all of the early Pennsylvania clocks, that have come to my attention, come within that period. The surprising thing is the amazing rapidity with which clockmaking developed. By 1774 Rittenhouse and Ellicott had made their masterpieces and these clocks are not surpassed by anything in existence today; but more of this later.

It has been reliably estimated that in this period Pennsylvania had 300 clockmakers. It is estimated that the average

clockmaker made four or five clocks a year. Jacob Hage, the second of three generations of Montgomery County clockmakers, is said to have made more than 100 clocks, mostly 30-hour, employing helpers. Jonas, one of his sons, of Springtown, Bucks County, according to family tradition, made 12 clocks during his career. Seneca Lukens, a famous clockmaker of Horsham Meeting, made clock number 79 in 1793, he died in 1829. Joseph Ellicott made clock number 60 in 1774, he died in 1780. Granted 300 clockmakers averaged 30 clocks each during their productive period, that's 9,000 clocks. It is not unreasonable to suppose that 10,000 clocks were made. There certainly were hundreds. It would be very, very interesting to know just how many of these clocks are in existence today. Many were neglected and destroyed, especially 30-hour clocks. Those that survive are widely scattered, but of course a great majority are still in the limited area in which they were made.

The making of the tall clock employed two different craftsmen, the clockmaker and the cabinetmaker.

Two types of clocks were made, 30-hour and 8-day, the earliest clocks were 30-hour. These had small brass dials, about 10½ inches square, later an arc of a circle was added at the top, and to this was sometimes added a segment of a sphere, superimposed with the maker's name engraved upon it, or sometimes the name of person for whom the clock was made. David Rittenhouse embellished the clock which he made for Anthony Wayne with a portait of General Wayne engraved on the segment of the sphere. Painted dials were soon introduced and by far the greater number of tall case clocks have painted dials; and many have a moon and a mechanism to show the day of the month, both very interesting and useful. Early English clocks usually show the day of the month, but rarely the phases of the moon; this seems to be an American innovation.

All these Pennsylvania clocks followed very nearly the same pattern. The variations were mainly in the skill and care and quality of the workmanship. Similarity of plans and parts, etc., leads to the conclusion that there was a common source of material, and it is a matter of record that much of

the material was imported from England, even to the dials. However, other records show that some clockmakers made their own castings and forgings. It is certain that prior to the Revolution there was not a very extensive brass industry in the colonies. There is evidence that wholesalers imported the parts and sold these parts to the clockmakers, who cut the gears and assembled the clocks. The painted dials are invariably of sheet iron, many bear the names of Osborne, Birmingham, and Wilson. Large numbers of dials were made of the same design, they varied in size usually 12, 13, and 14 inches wide. I have previously referred to the 10½ inch square early dials.

The 30-hour clocks are run by one weight, attached to a pulley upon an endless chain. Raising the weight every twenty-four to thirty hours provides the motive power. Many have a date mechanism, few have the moon. (I have seen two 30-hour clocks with the moon.) The eight-day clocks have two weights on cords (originally cat-gut) and pulleys, one weight runs the clock and one the strike. Raising the weights every seven or eight days provides the motive power, each cord in this case being wound on a drum with a key. The eight-day clocks very often are equipped with a moon. In early days this was undoubtedly a great convenience, as many activities were timed by the phases of the moon. Today we have almost forgotten about the moon, with our abundance of lighting, but occasionally the query arises, what is the stage of the moon? I find it a great convenience to consult my clock.

The case was a thing apart from the clock and was so considered by the early owners. The clock was complete in itself, the case was merely a fine place to hang the clock. To illustrate this point I quote from the will of Jacob Schwenk, this county, dated June 2, 1849, "I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Mary, two bedsteads with bedding, stove and pipe, *clock and case*, and one cow, etc." Some early clocks were hung on wall brackets, awaiting the convenience of a case. I have a 30-hour Adam Brant that certainly was made before 1800, which never had a case. I am inclined to think, from the simplicity and similarity of the cases, that David Rittenhouse and Joseph



Wills, and other early makers, made their early cases. As the cases became more elaborate, it is certainly true that they were made by real cabinetmakers. David Evans made a case for Dr. John Ewing, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, the works were by David Rittenhouse. In 1788 he made a case for David Rittenhouse's daughter upon her marriage, the works were by Benjamin Rittenhouse. Thomas Affleck (1740 to 1795) made a case for the last clock made by David Rittenhouse. Edward James, 1741 to 1798, made a case for a clock by William Houston, this clock is in the Pennsylvania Museum of Art. I dare say there was always close collaboration between the clockmaker and cabinetmaker, and it is certainly true that after 1800 in most instances the clockmaker sold the clock and case complete.

When these clocks were made, of course the primary consideration was to acquire a timepiece, the case was incidental. Today with our homes so well equipped with watches and clocks, our tall clock is primarily looked upon as a piece of furniture. If you have a fine case, you have a fine clock. The early cabinetmakers certainly did create some beautiful pieces of furniture. Styles in clock cases followed the designs of the leading schools of cabinetmaking, Chippendale, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton, but of course there were many variations and many crude examples were created. The clock case is one of the few pieces of furniture that is not subjected to wear, such as a table, chair or bureau, or chest, etc. It is indeed treated with great deference. How many times have we warned the children, "Don't touch the clock," or warned the one who does the cleaning, "Don't move the clock." At the same time the clock case is one of the most complicated pieces of cabinet work, as practically all the operations of cabinetmaking are employed, moulding, mortising, dovetailing, turning, mitring, inlaying and carving. It is not unusual for a clock case to show ten or twelve different mouldings. It was really an opportunity for a cabinetmaker to employ his finest art and many really beautiful cases were made. The broken arch or scroll top seems to have been the favorite with the Pennsylvania cabinetmakers. The Quaker cabinetmakers made the bonnet top.

Various woods were used, Philadelphia cabinetmakers usually used Mahogany as in their other furniture, country cabinetmakers used Walnut and Cherry, Cherry was a favorite wood. For the 30-hour clock many Poplar and some Pine cases were made, these were usually stained with India Red, to simulate Mahogany, and sometimes they were painted. There are a few Applewood (a fine cabinet wood) cases, and I have seen Curley Maple and one Butternut (White Walnut), a very fine soft wood. The height of the case was determined by the length of the cord required to run the clock eight days, or chain in the case of the 30-hour clock, usually the 30-hour clocks were the tallest. Apparently eye-level or a little above was sought as the most desirable height. The width of the cases was determined by the width of the dial, 12, 13, or 14 inches. Quite a few have come down to us with the feet knocked off or the scroll cut off to accommodate low ceilings; these can be restored, if properly done, without destroying their charm.

With the advent of the Yankee shelf clocks, beginning about 1825 and thereafter (they were peddled by wagon from house to house, for 10, 15 or 20 dollars each), the Pennsylvania cabinetmakers were gradually put out of business. It seems that there were none here who had the initiative or vision or inclination to compete with the Connecticut clockmakers, and by 1850 the Pennsylvania clockmakers had practically disappeared. Shelf clocks by that time so completely dominated the clock business that tall case clocks fell into disrepute and were relegated to storerooms, attics and kitchens, and many were neglected and destroyed. Revival of interest in tall case clocks, now under the name of "Grandfather" clocks, is said to have begun with the Centennial Exposition in 1876, and has continued to this day. Those who have clocks that have come down in the family can be justly proud of them and those who are fortunate enough to acquire a good clock and case, at a reasonable figure can consider themselves lucky.

Before the revival of interest in Grandfather clocks many of them were sold for a song, \$5.00 or \$10.00 for a 30-hour clock, \$25.00 to \$30.00 for an eight-day clock. As late as the close of the last century a good clock was more often sold for

less than \$100.00 than for more. From the beginning of the century until 1930, the sum of \$200.00 or \$300.00 was not unusual to pay for a good clock. Well-known makes and fine cases in many instances brought more. Today a good 30-hour clock should be bought for \$100.00 to \$150.00 and a good eight-day clock from \$150.00 to \$250.00.

It is a matter of interest to know what our great grandfathers and grandfathers paid for their clocks. John Hoff was a leading clockmaker of Lancaster County, 1740 to 1816, and his ledger is extant. I quote three entries:

June 25, 1805	James Knox bespoke a 8 day clock for 50 dollars to be done again fall	
Jan. 11, 1806	To clock he took away today 18/15/0	
Jan. 8, 1806	Christian Graybill To 1 8 day clock 17/5/-	\$46.00
March 31, 1806	Jacob Hershey, Manor Twp. Bespoke an 8 day clock 14" dial moon for 46 dollars to be done in 2 weeks	\$46.00
May 7, 1806	To clock took away 17/5	

(Note the rate of exchange 13½c to the shilling, \$2.66 to the pound.)

William Fraser was an apprentice and journeyman clockmaker under Samuel Parke, in Philadelphia, 1814 to 1821. Thereafter he moved to Lancaster County. He sold clocks only, for \$32.00 to \$35.00. Cabinetmakers received \$15.00 to \$20.00 for the cases.

Jacob Bachmann, a cabinetmaker of Lancaster County, made cases only. His custom was to make two cases for which the clockmaker paid him one clock and he then made a third case and had a clock and case to sell.

There is an appraisal of the estate of Henry Lewis Montandon, of Lancaster, on record, dated July 29-30, 1802, here are two entries:

To, 2—8 day clocks £24 (\$32.00 each); To, 1—8 day movement £6 (\$16.00).

John Bechtel, druggist, Schwenksville, has a George Hagey clock in his store, which was bought by his grandfather in 1831, and the price is understood to have been \$50.00. His father bought this clock at his father's sale in 1879 or 1880, for \$35.00, this was considered a high price at the time. The clock is in about perfect condition and has been running continuously since the original date of purchase 1831 (110 years). This is a 14 inch clock with an alarm, the only one I have seen, this was probably a late innovation.

There is a clock made by Samuel Breneisen, Reamstonen (Reamstown), near Reading. He was one of the last makers, 1840 to 1860, and a very good one. This clock shows the original cost mark \$80.00, rather a high price. David Rittenhouse made his masterpiece in 1774, this clock was priced at \$640.00.

From these references it seems reasonable to assume that the average eight-day clock and case originally sold for around \$50.00, of course special order clocks undoubtedly cost more.

The clocks of forty-five different makers have come to my attention in my preparation of this article, not counting many clocks that do not bear the maker's name. I have already referred to several makers, it will be interesting to examine the list.

All evidence points to the fact that David Rittenhouse (1732 to 1796), Adam Brant, Augustine Neyser, Joseph Wills and Jacob Godshalk, were the pioneer Pennsylvania clock-makers. They all show 30-hour and 10½ square brass faces of similar design and construction, and date about 1750.

The Solliday family of clockmakers.—There were at least three generations of clockmakers in this family and they probably made more clocks than any other Pennsylvania clock family. I have seen clocks of six different members of the family and I am sure there were others whose clocks I have not seen. It is said that some of these makers were farmers, plying the clock trade in the Winter and slack seasons. The name was spelled variously and the list includes:

John Solede, Sumney Town, one of the earliest.

Jacobe Salede, Bucks County

Jacob Solliday, North Hampton

Benjn. Solliday, Bucks County (sometimes marked B.C.)

Danl. H. Solliday, Sy-Town (Sumneytown)

George Solliday, Montgomeryville

Frederick Solliday

John Nicholas Solliday

All these were clockmakers more or less closely related. All together the family probably accounted for several hundred clocks.

The Hagey family of clockmakers.—There were three generations of Hageys, grandfather, father and sons, and include the names of grandfather Samuel Hege, Franconia, who made upward of: one hundred one-day clocks, some eight-day. Father: Jacob Hege, Lower Salford Twp. (some clocks marked Hage), said to have made 100 clocks, employing helpers. Sons: George Hagey, John Hagey, Jonas Hagey.

George Hagey, Trappe, was probably the most noted of the Hageys, and continued to make clocks until about 1850. The brothers, Jonas Hagey, Springtown, Bucks Co., and John Hagey, Philadelphia, made but very few clocks.

Joseph Ellicott, Buckingham, Bucks Co. (1732 to 1780), a famed maker.

Lukens family, father and son. Seneca Lukens died in 1829, lived at Horsham Meeting. Isiah Lukens, the son, Philadelphia.

Soloman Parke, Philadelphia, 1791

Soloman Park & Son, 1806

Soloman Park & Company, Philadelphia, 1808 to 1821

Soloman Park had the largest clock manufactory in Pennsylvania and employed many workmen of different nationalities, German, French and Swiss. Business was apparently discontinued in 1820-21.

William Kulp, Lower Salford

Thomas Lindsay, Frankford, a contemporary of Seneca Lukens

Soloman Yeakle, North Hampton, Cy.

John J. Zuber, Upper Hanover

Daniel Oyster, Reading

Daniel Scheid, Sumney Town  
 Samuel Jefferies, Philadelphia  
 William Houston, Philadelphia  
 Samuel Breneisen, Reamstonen (previously mentioned)  
 John Norton, York Town (York)  
 Jacob Griger  
 John Kline, Amity Twp., Berks Co.  
 Daniel Heffley, Berlin, Somerset County  
 (The Author's Grandfather's clock 1831)  
 Jedediah Weiss, Bethlehem  
 George Fix, Reading  
 Josiah O. Beitel, Nazareth  
 Thomas Voight

(Clock in the Pennsylvania Historical Society Philadelphia, made for Thomas Jefferson, Monticello, after he left the presidency.)

Benj. Norris, New Britian  
 Benj. Morris, Reading  
 John Heilig, Montgomery Co.  
 Thomas Joyce, Philadelphia  
 Frederick Dominick, Philadelphia  
 Christian Bixler, Philadelphia—Reading and Easton  
 Jacob Moyer, Skippack  
 David Seip, Bucks County  
 William Bevens, Norristown  
 Mich'l. Bush, Easton

Benj. Rittenhouse, brother of David Rittenhouse (Clocks marked Phila. Co. & Worcester Twp.)

Jacob D. Custer, Norristown (1805 to 1872)

Joseph Thomas, Norristown and Penn Square, was an early President of Montgomery National Bank.

This completes the list. You will note that these makers represent a very limited territory, notably Philadelphia, Montgomery, Bucks, Berks and Lancaster Counties. This bears out my contention that these clocks remain largely in the communities where they were made. Note the absence of any representation from Chester County. Where are the Chester County clocks? Lancaster County had an especially fine lot of makers,

and there were clockmakers in all of the early-formed counties, which includes fifty of the sixty-seven counties of the State. It can almost be said that their number was legion, but by 1850 the grandfather clocks were all made and the industry had practically disappeared.

These clocks have now all run into the third generation, some four and five and six generations, with very little deterioration and should continue to be a service and pride and pleasure for many more generations. As one gentleman said to me, "My father wound this clock every evening after supper. I do the same and I hope my eldest son will appreciate it enough to carry out the tradition."

## The Richards (Reichert) Family of Montgomery County\*

By CAPTAIN H. M. M. RICHARDS

As a subject which has not yet appeared amongst the excellent publications of the Historical Society of Montgomery County, I have felt that it might prove to be of some interest, and be of some genealogical value, were I to present certain data concerning this family, one of the oldest in the county, and one of some little merit.

It follows that the limited space allotted me will prevent such being done "in extenso," therefore, I trust I may be pardoned if I confine myself, largely, to the branch of which I am but a small part.

The progenitor of the family, in this country, was John Frederick Reichert, the son of a German army officer, born in the town of Augsburg, Germany, in 1679.

As he was one of the originators of the Swamp Lutheran Church, and the family records show that he settled in the unbroken forest, it would seem to bear out the belief that he came over with Daniel Falkner in 1700, or, at the least, not later than 1703. He purchased 150 acres of land in New Hanover township, of our present Montgomery County, for £30, from John Henry Sprogel. The deed, executed in the City of Philadelphia, is dated May 24, 1720, but this is no indication of the time of his settlement, as deeds were frequently not placed on record until long after the actual purchase. The price paid would seem to show that he was a man of means even upon arrival.

When he first occupied the land the whole district was wooded; there were many Indians and no roads save the paths of the forest.

In the Spring of 1728 occurred the only engagement with

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\*Read before the Society April 27, 1929.



the Indians which ever took place in Philadelphia county. A band of Shawnees led by a so-called "Spanish Indian chief," on their way to join the Delawares in a war with the Flatfeet, attacked the German settlers near Falkner Swamp, and committed many depredations, until finally repulsed. Some five settlers and several Indians were wounded. A petition for aid was sent the Governor on May 10, 1728, signed by seventy-seven persons, among whom was Johannes Reichert. A military company was formed and a nearby mill used for defense purposes, possibly that in the proximity of the present Pennypacker's Mill.

At first Reichert and his neighbors were obliged to carry their grain to the nearest mill, which was on the Perkiómen Creek, some ten or twelve miles distant, probably the flour mill of Hans J. Heide,<sup>1</sup> erected about 1730, near the Pennypacker fulling mill, erected 1755. Later a white mare was procured by several of them and used for that purpose.

Upon arrival Reichert stopped under a large white oak tree, and there erected his first shelter, which we may presume to have been the ordinary log cabin. This gave place to a two-story frame dwelling, in existence 1853 and later, known in the family as "The Old Place," which stood one mile south of the Swamp Churches, to the left of the road that leads to Pottstown, about one-quarter mile past the Lutheran parsonage.

He quickly prospered, became a man of means, and was prominent in his vicinity. He became a naturalized subject of Great Britain on September 25, 1740. His wife's name was Anna Maria. Of her nothing more is known save that she was born 1685, died March 18, 1756, and was buried at New Hanover.

His death occurred in 1748, and according to the Swamp Lutheran Church records, he was buried on September 22, 1748, aged 69 years.

In conformity with the requirements of the Penn Proprietors, the name became anglicized to Richards at an early date.

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<sup>1</sup>Hans Joest Heydt—See Historical Sketches, Vol. IV, page 118.

He had issue as follows:

a. Hannah Richards, b. 1713; d. (in confinement) Feb. 7, 1746; m. George Schoener.

b. Caspar Richards, b. 1715; d. Mar. 15, 1774.

c. Matthias Richards, of this record.

2. Matthias Richards, b. Jan. 9, 1719; d. Mar. 28, 1775.

He was a farmer and scrivener; a most useful and educated man of his day, ranking superior to the generality of his neighbors. He was prominently identified with religious matters, being one of the Building Committee of the Swamp Lutheran Church, 1767.

Becoming quite wealthy, he enlarged his patrimony by the purchase of a piece of land near Herrington, on the "Swamp Road," in Douglas township, whence he removed and kept a public inn, then a most honorable occupation.

About 1748 he married Ann Margaret Hillegass, b. Aug. 15, 1726; d. Jan. 6, 1773; daughter of John Frederick Hillegass, who was an uncle of Michael Hillegass, the first Treasurer of the United States. With his wife he now lies buried in the graveyard of the Swamp Lutheran Church.

They had issue as follows:

a. Christina Richards, b. May 6, 1749; d. Sept. 26, 1778; m. Nov. 13, 1770, Philip Federolf.

b. Elizabeth Richards, b. Mar. 29, 1751; d. Oct. 12, 1821; m. July, 1774, David Burkert.

c. John Richards, b. Apr. 18, 1753; d. Nov. 13, 1822, buried at Swamp Lutheran Church; m. 1st, May 2, 1775, Sophia Heebner, b. Feb. 17, 1755; d. Nov. 19, 1800, daughter of John and Anna Heebner; m. 2nd, Feb. 16, 1801, Mrs. Catherine Krebs, daughter of Philip Koons, and widow of Michael Krebs. She died without issue.

He was a scrivener and progressive farmer; carried on storekeeping for about twenty years, and was an iron-master, though not giving personal superintendence to the work; appointed, June 6, 1777, Justice of the Peace for Philadelphia County, then quite a distinction, which position he retained practically all his lifetime; Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Montgomery County upon its organization, Nov. 1,

1784; member of the 4th Congress, Jan. 18, 1796—Mar. 3, 1797, as a Whig, successfully contesting the election of James Morris; Pennsylvania State Senator, 1801-07; member of the Pennsylvania Convention on the Federal Constitution of 1787; during the Revolutionary War one of the magistrates before whom citizens were required to take the oath of allegiance to the American cause; member of Lodge No. 8, Free and Accepted Masons, one of the oldest in Pennsylvania, which derived its existence, June 24, 1766, from the Patriot Grand Lodge, or "Ancients," formed Jan. 24, 1764; it met near the Valley Forge Encampment of 1777-78, when it was attended by many Continental officers including Washington; a man of influence and wealth; a faithful official and an enterprising citizen.

d. George Peter Richards, b. July 22, 1755; d. Oct. 21, 1822; m. Magdalena Schneider, b. Sept. 27, 1758; d. Oct. 16, 1822; daughter of Henry Schneider, of the Swamp, and wife Catherine, born Reinert.

He was a prominent and influential man; a farmer, surveyor, scrivener, and part of his time, a storekeeper and in the iron business.

During the Revolutionary War he was Major of the 6th Battalion, Philadelphia County Militia, Apr. 3, 1779; on Oct. 4, 1779, he was chosen by the General Assembly, a Sub Lieutenant of Philadelphia County, and commissioned as such Oct. 16, 1779, with the rank of Lieut. Colonel, also on Mar. 29, 1780; subsequently a Justice of the Peace, both while he lived in Berks County (Dale Forge and Furnace), and in Pottstown, Montgomery County.

e. Matthias Richards, of this record.

f. Anna Maria Richards, b. Jan. 17, 1762; d. Apr. 17, 1816; m. June 1, 1779, Dr. George Frederick Beitenman, b. Aug. 17, 1754; d. Sept. 16, 1826; son of George Frederick Beitenman and wife Margaret, born Gilbert. He was a European German and Lutheran, a regular bred and skilful physician; Captain 3rd Class Militia, Nov. 26, 1781.

3. Matthias Richards was born Feb. 26, 1758; d. Aug. 1, 1830.

About one year after his father's death, while still a youth, he went to Reading and became apprenticed to Mr. John Rightmyer to learn the saddler's trade.

When, in 1777, the British threatened Philadelphia, although not eligible for military service, because of his age, he volunteered and became a private in Col. Udree's 2nd Battalion, Berks County Militia, and with it served from Aug. 5, 1777, until Jan. 5, 1778, when the troops went into winter quarters at Valley Forge, participating in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown.

On April 18, 1780, he married his first wife, Maria Missimer, b. Apr. 27, 1759, sister of Henry Missimer, of near Pottstown. He then moved on the Swamp Road, leading from Reading to Philadelphia, just in Montgomery County, one-half mile below Boyertown, where the line divides it from Berks county, his barn being in the latter county. Here he kept an inn, also farmed and followed his trade of saddler.

Shortly after his first marriage he was elected, in 1780, major of the 4th Battalion, Philadelphia County Militia, of which Anthony Bitting was Lieut. Colonel.

He lived with his wife but a little over one year, when she died, Aug. 20, 1781, in giving birth to a son, who died eight days afterwards.

On May 8, 1782, he married his second wife, Maria Salome Muhlenberg, b. July 13, 1766; d. Mar. 13, 1827.

She was the granddaughter of the justly renowned Col. Conrad Weiser, who as Head of the Indian Bureau of the Province of Pennsylvania, shaped not only its destiny but, indirectly, that of our entire country, and, indeed, the whole world; and who, as Lieut. Colonel in command of the 1st Battalion of the Pennsylvania Regiment, guarded the entire frontier along the Blue Range, and prevented the encroachment of the savages into the lower counties.

She was the daughter of the equally celebrated patriot and divine, the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, D.D., so justly known as the Patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America.

In addition, she was the sister of the following, amongst others:

a. John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, a Major General during the Revolution and a close friend of Washington; Vice-President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania; in 1785-87, Vice-President of the Commonwealth; member of the 1st, 3rd and 6th Congress; elected U. S. Senator, Feb. 18, 1801, but resigned a few months later; June 30, 1801. Supervisor of Internal Revenue for the State of Pennsylvania; July, 1802, until death, Collector of the Port of Philadelphia.

b. Eve Elizabeth Muhlenberg, wife of Rev. Christopher Emanuel Shulze and mother of Governor John Andrew Melchior Shulze.

c. Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg; member of the State Legislature, 1780-83, and its speaker; trustee of the University of Pennsylvania, 1779-86; in 1787 a delegate to the State Convention to consider the Constitution of the United States; member of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Congress, and the First Speaker of the United States Congress.

d. Margaretta Henrietta Muhlenberg; wife of the learned Lutheran divine, John Christopher Kunze, of New York City.

e. Gottlieb Henry Ernestus Muhlenberg; the eminent divine and botanist of Lancaster.

For a couple years after his second marriage Matthias occupied his home near Boyertown, then removed to Reading, in the Spring of 1802; and, with his wife, now rests in the Charles Evans Cemetery.

For some forty years, at various times together, he served as a Justice of the Peace; he was Associate Judge of the Berks County courts, 1791-97; Inspector of Customs, 1801-02; member of Congress, 1807-11; Collector of Revenue in 1812; Clerk of the Orphans' Court in 1823.

They had the following issue:

a. Henry Muhlenberg Richards, b. Mar. 7, 1783; d. Dec. 20, 1822; m. Apr. 26, 1809, Elizabeth Otto, b. Nov. 27, 1789; d. June 5, 1877; daughter of Dr. John Augustus Otto, who was son of Dr. Bodo Otto, Senior Surgeon in the Revolution.

He was, for a long time, Deputy Surveyor General for Berks County; auditor, 1813-16; Clerk of Quarter Sessions, 1821-22.

b. Mary Catharine Richards, b. May 28, 1785; d. Feb. 17, 1866; m. Mar. 21, 1816, Isaac Myers, b. Mar. 1, 1787; d. May 15, 1864.

He was a Lieutenant in the 16th U. S. Infantry, War of 1812, at the battles of Fort George, Canada, May 27, 1813, Stony Creek, etc.; Adjutant, 1st Pennsylvania Regiment, 1814-15.

c. Matthias Swaine Richards, b. Feb. 7, 1787; d. May 11, 1862; m. Margaret Myers, b. Oct. 6, 1785; d. Nov. 18, 1858.

Deputy Surveyor General for Berks County, 1823-37; Justice of the Peace, 1827; Associate Judge of Berks County Courts, 1829-46; appointed, April, 1833, by the Governor, a commissioner to organize the Philadelphia and Reading R. R. Co., and for many years, a manager of it and various railroads in the anthracite coal regions; an active organizer and director of and in many local activities, banks, etc., and always highly respected for his great ability and strict integrity.

d. Margaretta Henrietta Richards, b. Aug. 17, 1789; d. Nov. 28, 1861—single.

e. John Christopher Richards, b. May 28, 1791; d. June 3, 1791.

f. Charles Richards, b. June 10, 1792; d. April 30, 1823. Deputy Attorney General for Berks County, 1821-23—No issue.

g. Elizabeth Richards, b. Feb. 20, 1794; d. Feb. 23, 1872; m. Apr. 24, 1817, James Farmer McElroy, b. Jan. 24, 1787; d. Apr. 16, 1839—No issue.

He was a captain in the 16th U. S. Infantry, War of 1812, from April 9, 1812, to June 15, 1815.

h. Charlotte Francisca Richards, b. Jan. 19, 1801; d. Mar. 6, 1867; m. Nov. 6, 1827, George Washington Oakeley, b. July 21, 1807; d. June 2, 1874, son of Robert and Maria Oakeley, of Philadelphia.

i. Maria Salome Richards, b. May 30, 1802; died in infancy.

j. John William Richards, of this record.

4. John William Richards, b. Apr. 18, 1803; d. Jan. 24, 1854.

He studied the languages, principally, under Dr. John Grier, of the Reading Academy; read theology under Dr. Henry Augustus Muhlenberg, his first cousin, from May 4, 1821, to Sept. 21, 1824.

Licensed, Sept. 22, 1824, to preach, as a candidate of Theology, in the now venerable Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, and ordained as Pastor, by the same, on June 3, 1828, in Trinity Lutheran Church, Reading, Pa.

On Nov. 6, 1825, he was unanimously elected as pastor of the congregations at New Holland, in Lancaster County, and vicinity, where he remained until Apr. 29, 1834, when he was called to be pastor of the Augustus Church at Trappe, which pulpit had been occupied by his grandfather, Dr. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, who, with his wife, and son, General Peter Muhlenberg, lie buried in its graveyard.

Here he was married to his wife, Miss Andora Garber, on May 21, 1835, who was b. May 21, 1815; d. May 26, 1892.

She was from another old Montgomery County family, the daughter of Henry Garber and Susanna, born Paul, who lived in their beautiful homestead, "Garwood," some two and a half miles south of Trappe.

In response to a providential call, on Apr. 10, 1836, he became the pastor of St. Michael's Church at Germantown. In all his changes he was guided by what he regarded as a clear indication of the will of Providence, and always carried with him the love and greatest respect of his parishioners, from whom he parted with mutual deep and sincere regret.

In 1843 he was elected Secretary of the Ministerium, and unanimously re-elected for the two following terms when no longer constitutionally eligible.

On Nov. 16, 1845, he became pastor of St. John's Church at Easton, when, on Nov. 1, 1850, he finally accepted a call to Trinity Church at Reading, having previously refused the same three times.

On May 27, 1850, he was elected President of the Ministerium, and unanimously re-elected to the same office for the two following years.

On August 6, 1851, the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by Jefferson College.

His sudden death was a great shock to his family and the entire church. He was universally lamented and beloved.

The issue of himself and wife were as follows:

a. Adelaide Susanna Richards, b. Dec. 26, 1836; d. Oct. 31, 1915; m. Oct. 2, 1882, Jacques Van der Beak Craig (his second wife), b. Dec. 22, 1817; d. Aug. 8, 1884; son of Joseph Craig and wife Maria, born Van der Beak—no issue.

He was a prominent iron manufacturer and business man of Reading. He built the beautiful Lebanon Valley R. R. bridge over the Schuylkill River at Reading, which was destroyed during the railroad riots of 1877, also the Askew bridge on North Sixth Street.

b. Andora Elizabeth Richards, b. June 9, 1839; d. Sept. 17, 1889; m. 1860, John McKnight, b. Jan. 8, 1838; d. Dec. 20, 1882, son of David McKnight and wife Elizabeth, born Hiester.

He was a prominent business man of Reading; in the Civil War, Captain 42nd Regt. P. V. M.

c. Matthias Henry Richards, b. June 17, 1841; d. Dec. 12, 1898; m. June 14, 1866, Sarah Maginley McClean, b. Dec. 1, 1841; d. Sept. 30, 1920, a daughter of the Hon. Moses McClean, of Gettysburg, and wife Hannah Mary, born McConaughy.

He graduated from the Reading High School July 3, 1856, one of the four members of its first class; from the Pennsylvania College at Gettysburg, Pa., with highest honors, in 1860, and from its Theological Seminary in 1864, having, previously, for a short time, been a tutor in the college.

While a tutor, upon the invasion by the Confederates, in 1863, he enlisted in Co. A, 26th Emergency Regt. Pennsylvania Volunteers, was made a corporal, and took part in the battle of Gettysburg with its accompanying campaign.

His life work was as the Professor of English Language and Literature in Muhlenberg College, Allentown, from 1868



until his death, save for a short period as pastor of a congregation in Indianapolis.

In addition he gave the public schools in Allentown the benefit of his ripe experience in educational affairs; he did a vast amount of literary work; made many public addresses and preached many sermons.

In June, 1889, his "Alma Mater," Pennsylvania College, honored him and itself, by conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

He died universally lamented. A very large concourse of clergymen, professors, students and citizens, paid their respect to his memory on that occasion.

d. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg Richards, b. Aug. 16, 1848.

He graduated from the Reading High School in 1864, and from the U. S. Naval Academy, at Annapolis, Md., in 1869, with highest honors.

In 1863 he participated in the battle of Gettysburg and its campaign; served under Sheridan in 1864; in 1869-70-71 saw much active service throughout Africa and Europe; at Tunis, Africa, in 1870, to avert a threatened outbreak against the Christians; actively identified with the operations of the Franco-German War of 1870-71; the Communistic Outbreak and Carlist Insurrection of the same period; in the Revolutionary Outbreak at Panama of 1873; with the Yaqui Indians and Tiburon Island Savages in 1874; served throughout the Spanish War in the West Indies under Sampson, and volunteered for active service during the World War.

In 1893 he was appointed, by Governor Pattison, a member of the commission on "Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania, prior to 1783." His exhaustive work on the "Frontier Forts of the Blue Range" has become the standard authority on that subject.

On April 27, 1918, appointed, by Governor Brumbaugh, a member of the Advisory Commission for the Preservation of Public Records, and, on June of the same year, he was appointed a member of the Pennsylvania War History Commission.

There was conferred upon him, on June 16, 1910, by Muhlenberg College, the degree of Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.)

After his active military service he was, for many years, in the iron business, holding the position of Treasurer and Director in the large American Iron and Steel Manufacturing Company until absorbed, in 1916, by the Bethlehem Steel Company, when he retired.

Without solicitation, or desire, on his part, he was urged to become Treasurer of the City of Lebanon to which he finally consented in 1918, serving, most acceptably, until the expiration of his term of office in 1920. He is actively identified with many local activities; is a member of many military orders, historical and genealogical societies, in this country, England and France, and is the author of numerous publications of an historical and genealogical character.

He was married Dec. 26, 1871, to Miss Ella Van Leer (von Loehr), daughter of Branson Van Leer and Drucilla Turner, his wife.

She traces her descent, on the paternal side, from Werner von Loehr, Patrician Mayor of Mayence, Germany, 1521, and on the maternal side, from many distinguished English lines.

# Records from Bibles in Possession of Historical Society of Montgomery County

## BIBLE OF EZEKIEL RHOADS PRICE

### MARRIAGES

Ezekiel Rhoads and Lydia Zimmerman was Married December 21st, 1810.

Wm. Z. Rhoads and Sarah T. Scheetz was Married April 22nd, 1858.

Wm. Z. Rhoads and Elizabeth Coulston was Married Dec. 13th, 1860.

### BIRTHS

Hannah Rhoads Daughter of Abraham and Ellioner Rhoads Was Born May fourth, 1734.

Ezekiel Rhoads son of Abraham and Ellioner Rhoads Was Born Janiary thirteenth, 1737.

Jacob Rhoads son of Abraham and Ellioner Rhoads Was Born December the fourth, 1738.

Margret Rhoads Daughter of Abraham and Ellioner Rhoads Was Born May fifth, 1742.

Hester Rhoads Daughter of Abraham and Ellioner Rhoads Was Born September ninth, 1744.

Ross Rhoads Daughter of Abraham and Ellioner Rhoads Was Born the ninth of May, 1747.

Marcy Tyson Daughter of Cornelius and Barbara Tyson Was Born November the Twenty-Seventh In the year 1740.

Ellione Rhoads Daughter of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born the Twenty Second of October, 1762.

Abraham Rhoads Son of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born September the fifteenth, 1764.

Elizabeth Rhoads Daughter of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born December the third, 1766.

Margret Rhoads Daughter of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born April the fourteenth, 1769.

Lidia Rhoads Daughter of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born February Twenty first, 1771.

Barbara Rhoads Daughter of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born, Janury the twenty Second, 1773.

Hannah Rhoads Daughter of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born December the first, 1774.

Anna Rhoads Daughter of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born March the fourteenth, 1777.

Ezekiel Rhoads Son of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born September the tenth, 1779.

Joseph Rhoads Son of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Was Born July the Twenty Second, 1783.

Lydia Zimmerman Daughter of William and Susanah Zimmerman was born February 3rd, 1788.

Mary Rhoads Daughter of Ezekiel and Lydia Rhoads was born August 5th, 1812.

Susanah Rhoads Daughter of Ezekiel and Lydia Rhoads was born July 21st, 1815.

William Rhoads Son of Ezekiel and Lydia Rhoads was born June 21, 1818.

Elizabeth Rhoads daughter of Ezekiel and Lydia Rhoads was born November 23rd, 1821.

Ezekiel Rhoads, son of Ezekiel and Lydia Rhoads was born February 15th, 1825.

#### DEATHS

Susanah Rhoads departed this life June 1st, 1820, aged four years, ten months, 10 days.

William Mattson Departed this life February 13th, 1870 (?) aged Sixty nine years one month 13 days.

Elizabeth wife of Ezekiel Rhoads Departed this Life September 4th aged forty five years and one month and 2 Days.

Ezekiel Rhoads departed this life June 22, 1876, aged fifty one years four months and seven days.

Elizabeth Rhoads departed this life Oct. 23rd, 1871, Aged Forty nine years & Eleven months.

Mary daughter of Ezekiel And Elizabeth Rhoads was Born January 7th, 1851. Departed this Life October 13, 1875. Aged 24 years, 9 months and 6 days.

Margret Castner Daughter of Ezekiel and Marcy Rhoads Departed this Life September 30th, 1809, Aged about 40 years.

Marcy Rhoads Wife of Ezekiel Rhoads Departed this Life September 18th, 1811, Aged about 71 years.

Hester Rhoads departed this life June 29th 1812 aged 68 years.

Ezekiel Rhoads senior departed this life January 2, 1813, aged 76 years and 8 days of age.

Rosannah Rhoads departed this life July 31st, 1818, aged 71 years.

Elizabeth Fara departed this life March 28th 1824 aged 58 years.

Barbara Rhoads departed this life March 23rd 1836, aged 63.

Hanah Shaw departed this life October 23rd, 1838, aged 64.

Anna Rhoads departed this life December 26th, 1856, aged 79 years, 9 months & 12 days.

Ezekiel Rhoads departed this life on the morning of the 21st of March, A. D. 1845, aged 65 years, 6 months and 10 days.

Lydia Rhoads Wife of Ezekiel Rhoads departed this Life in the evening of the 12th Dec. A. D. 1847. Aged 59 years 10 months and 9 days.

Sarah T. wife of Wm. Z. Rhoads departed this life on the morning of Sept. 30th A. D. 1858. Aged 37 years.

Elizabeth C. wife of Wm. Z. Rhoads departed this Life at six o'clock in the morning of April 9th, 1870. Aged 58 years, 2 months, 15 days.

Wm. Z. Rhoads departed this Life on the evening of the 9th October A. D. 1872 Aged 54 years 3 months and 18 days.

## HOFFMAN FAMILY BIBLE

## MARRIAGES

Esther R. Hoffman was Married to Samuel Sibley in the year of our lord December 24th 1850. By the rev. thomas Winters.

## BIRTHS

Esther R. Hoffman was born July the 24 in the year of our lord 1831.

Margaretann Hoffman was born December 3 in the year of our lord 1832.

Thomas P. Hoffman was born October 2 in the year of our lord 1834.

Emanda Hoffman was born October the 3 in the year of our lord 1837.

Lemuel Hoffman was born may the 29th in the year of our lord 1842.

John Hoffman, Sr., was born the 28th of October in the year of our lord 1798.

Ann Hoffman was born July 21st, 1809.

Esther H. Potter was born January 12th, 1863. Daughter of John E. and Margaret A. Potter.

## DEATHS

Esther R. Sibley Departed this life March the 7th in the year of our lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty five, 1855.

Esther H. Potter Departed this life December 13th Tuesday morning at half past seven in the year of our Lord One Thousand eight hundred and Seventy, 1870.

John Hoffman, Sr., died Nov. 17th, 1880, (Wednesday afternoon Quarter to 3 o'clock) in the 83d year of his age.

Ann Hoffman died July 1st, 1885, Wednesday Morning at 5 O'Clock, aged 76 yrs. the 21st of July.

Thomas P. Hoffman Died Sept. 29th, 1900, age 66 years.

Amanda Hoffman Died Oct. 27th, 1901, 64 yrs. of Age Oct. 3d, 1901.

Lemuel Hoffman died Mar. 23d, 1915, in His 73d year.

Margaret Ann Potter died Sept. 26th, 1918, at Drexel Hill, Delaware County, Pa., Age. 86.

The wedding certificate of John Hoffman and Ann Price, April 8, 1830, is pasted in the Bible.

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## WISMER FAMILY

### IN AN OLD GERMAN BOOK OF SERMONS

Barbara Wismer was born the 9th of March, 1766.

Joseph Wismer was born the 23rd of July, 1752.

His wife Barbara was born 9th of March, 1756.

Elizabeth was born the 8th of December, 1782.

Barbara was born the 13th of June, 1785.

Caterina was born the 23rd of January, 1787.

Ester was born the 12th of January, 1791.

Henrich was born 11th of March, 1792.

Henrich was born the 10th of March, 1794.

Joseph was born the 9th of April, 1797.

Jacob was born the 23rd of February, 1799.

Mary or Maria was born the 15th of December, 1801.

Dianna was born the 10th of May, 1805.

# Report of Recording Secretary

REBECCA W. BRECHT

The three regular meetings of the Society have been held during the past year with President Fegley presiding at each one.

At the annual meeting February 22, 1941, these officers were elected:

President .....	Nelson P. Fegley, Esq.
First Vice-President .....	S. Cameron Corson
Second Vice-President .....	Charles Harper Smith
Third Vice-President .....	George K. Brecht, Esq.
Recording Secretary .....	Rebecca W. Brecht
Corresponding Secretary .....	Ella Slingluff
Financial Secretary .....	Annie B. Maloney
Treasurer .....	Lyman A. Kratz
Librarian .....	Emily Preston

## TRUSTEES

Franklin A. Stickler  
Mrs. A. C. Jones  
Catherine Preston  
Nancy P. Highley  
H. H. Ganser

The trustees in their annual report made special mention of the good work done by our librarian, Emily Preston, in taking care of the books, pictures and relics from the Estate of Dr. Willoughby H. Reed.

At the meeting of April 26, 1941, Lyman A. Kratz reported for the Committee on revision of By-Laws of the Society. Mr. Kratz read the By-Laws in full, noting suggested changes and the By-Laws, as presented, were unanimously adopted.

Mrs. Stuart Molony, Chairman of the Essay Contest Committee, presented the successful contestants, who in turn read their essays before the Society. First prize to Mary Ann Gehress, Jenkintown High School, Subject, "The Settlement of Jenkintown."

Second prize to Ellen Bartleson, Eisenhower High School, Norristown, Pa., Subject, "Dawsfield."

Third prize to Jack Miller, Collegeville-Trappe High School, Subject, "A History of the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel."

Fourth prize to Augusta Hall, Eisenhower High School, Norristown, Pa., Subject, "Norriton Presbyterian Church."



The following papers were presented during the year:

"Outing at Ambler, Pa., May 25, 1940" by Herman T. Lukens; "Portraiture," by Mrs. Stuart B. Molony; "Schwenkfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania," by Dr. Elmer E. S. Johnson; "Some Phases of the Battle of Germantown," by Dr. E. C. Sohl; "Greetings from State Historical Commission," by S. K. Stevens; "Books About Montgomery County," by Kirk Bryan, Esq.; "Old Clocks," by Frederick C. Sweinhart, and "Fractur Work," by Rev. Lester K. Kriebel.

## Report of Corresponding Secretary

ELLA SLINGLUFF

### NEW MEMBERS

John P. Arnold

Ellen Bartleson

Irma A. Hammond

### DEATHS

Abby Wager

Dr. Mary P. H. Hough

### RESIGNATIONS

Elinor Brecht

Mrs. Raymond M. Jaunich

Jessie B. Read

## Report of Librarian

EMILY K. PRESTON

The following books have been added to the library:

Rust of Virginia, by Ellsworth Marshall Rust.  
Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858, by Albert J. Beveridge. 4 vols.  
The Molly Maguire Riots, by J. Walter Coleman.  
Washington in Lincoln's Time, by Noah Brooks.  
Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Vol. I.  
Lloyd Family, by H. W. Lloyd.  
History of Perry County, by Silas Wright.  
Memoir of Henry Armitt Brown, with Four Historical Orations.

Life and Military Career of Winfield Scott Hancock, which also contains sketch of Hon. Wm. H. English, by Hon. John W. Forney.  
 History of Erie County, 1884.  
 History of Clearfield County, by L. C. Aldrich.  
 History of Centre and Clinton Counties, by John Bair Linn.  
 Men of Mark of Cumberland Valley, Pa., 1778-1876.  
 History of Susquehanna County, by Emily C. Blackman.  
 Guide to the Manuscript Collections in the Historical Society of Penna., compiled by Paul Bleydon.  
 Wilderness Chronicle of Northeastern Pennsylvania, by S. K. Stevens and H. D. Kent.  
 Just Among Friends, by William Wister Comfort.  
 The Keelboat Age on Western Waters, by Leland D. Baldwin.  
 Eminent Women of the Age, by James Parton, Horace Greeley, etc.  
 Men of Our Times, by Harriet Beecher Stowe.  
 The Bible in Iron, by Dr. Henry C. Mercer.  
 History of the World's Columbian Exposition.

In pamphlet form:

Grand Consolidated Vigilant Society—Golden Jubilee.  
 Cave in Eastern Pennsylvania, by Charles M. Wheatley.  
 A Woman in Steel—Rebecca Lukens (1794-1854), by Robert W. Wolcott.

Manuscript:

Captain James Armstrong, Penna. Line, Continental Army, and his brother, Lieut. John Armstrong, Penna. Line, Continental Army, by Caldwell Woodruff, M. D.  
 Diaries of Susan Yerkes, 1853-1855; 1873-1882.  
 Copy books of Anna Yerkes.  
 Montgomery County Loan Certificate to John B. Moyer.  
 Bond of George W. Jacoby to Commissioners, 1867.  
 Affidavit of John Snyder and Christ. Zimmerman as Assessors of Worcester Twp.  
 Order to pay James Mahoney for digging foundations for Perkiomen Bridge.  
 Bill—Isaiah Wells to Morris Jones, 1803.  
 Bill—John Righter, Assessor.  
 Certificate of election of Jesse Bean, 1800, by James Shannon and Stephen Porter, Judges.  
 Certificate of Isaac Gerhard, captain, that Abraham Hunsberger's name was never on his list, 1810.  
 Letter from Samuel Aaron to John Freedley concerning purchase of land, 1843. Draught of the land on back.  
 Draught of lots at Main and Barbadoes streets, by Laurence E. Corson, 1840.

Marriage certificate of James W. Davis and Ell Louisa Maloney, Dec. 25, 1848.

Collection of about 100 deeds for land in Norristown and surrounding townships.

Ambler Family Chart, descendants of Joseph Ambler and Sarah German—9 generations.

Curios:

Crayon holder used in drawing classes at Keswick Institute.

Instruments used in making hammered brass work, and piece of the work. Doll.

Votes for Women pin.

Piece of wood from the sounding board in St. John's Church, Richmond, Va., in which Patrick Henry made his "Liberty or Death" speech.

Tin type album.

Hat of the Hibernian Society, 1752.

Fan.

Beaded bag.

Checker board—leather cover.

Curling stick.

Instrument for making hooked rugs.

Tatting shuttles.

N. G. P. buckle and buttons.

Buttonhole cutter.

Sewing holder in form of bird.

Autographed fan—wood.

Watch pocket.

Cane of Archibald Thompson.

Scarf.

Boa Constrictor game.

Photographs and pictures:

Great Valley Presbyterian Church, Old.

Railroad Arch Culvert, near Hamburg, Pa., of South Mountain and Boston R. R.

Birthplace of David Rittenhouse (2).

Reproductions of Currier and Ives Lithographs (12).

Carriers' Annual Greetings (Several).

White's Great Cattle Show.

Professor and Mrs. Sunderland.

Mrs. Mary Sower—Early private school teacher.

Conversational Club.

Dinner to survivors of the Young American Base Ball Club, 1870-74.

*The Historical Society of Montgomery County* has for its object the preservation of the civil, political and religious history of the county, as well as the promotion of the study of history. The building up of a library for historical research has been materially aided in the past by donations of family, church and graveyard records; letters, diaries and other manuscript material. Valuable files of newspapers have also been contributed. This public-spirited support has been highly appreciated and is earnestly desired for the future.

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons, whether residents of the county or not, and all such persons are invited to have their names proposed at any meeting. The annual dues are \$2.00; life membership, \$50.00. Every member is entitled to a copy of each issue of *The Bulletin* free.

Historical Hall, 18 East Penn Street, Norristown, with its library and museum, is open for visitors each week day from 10 to 12 A.M. and 1 to 4 P.M., except Saturday afternoon. The material in the library may be freely consulted during these hours, but no book may be taken from the building.

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### *To Our Friends*

Our Society needs funds for the furthering of its work, its expansion, its growth and development. This can very nicely be done through bequests from members and friends in the disposition of their estates. The Society needs more funds in investments placed at interest; the income arising therefrom would give the Society an annual return to meet its needs. Following is a form that could be used in the making of wills:

I HEREBY GIVE AND BEQUEATH TO THE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA, THE SUM OF .....  
..... DOLLARS (\$            )