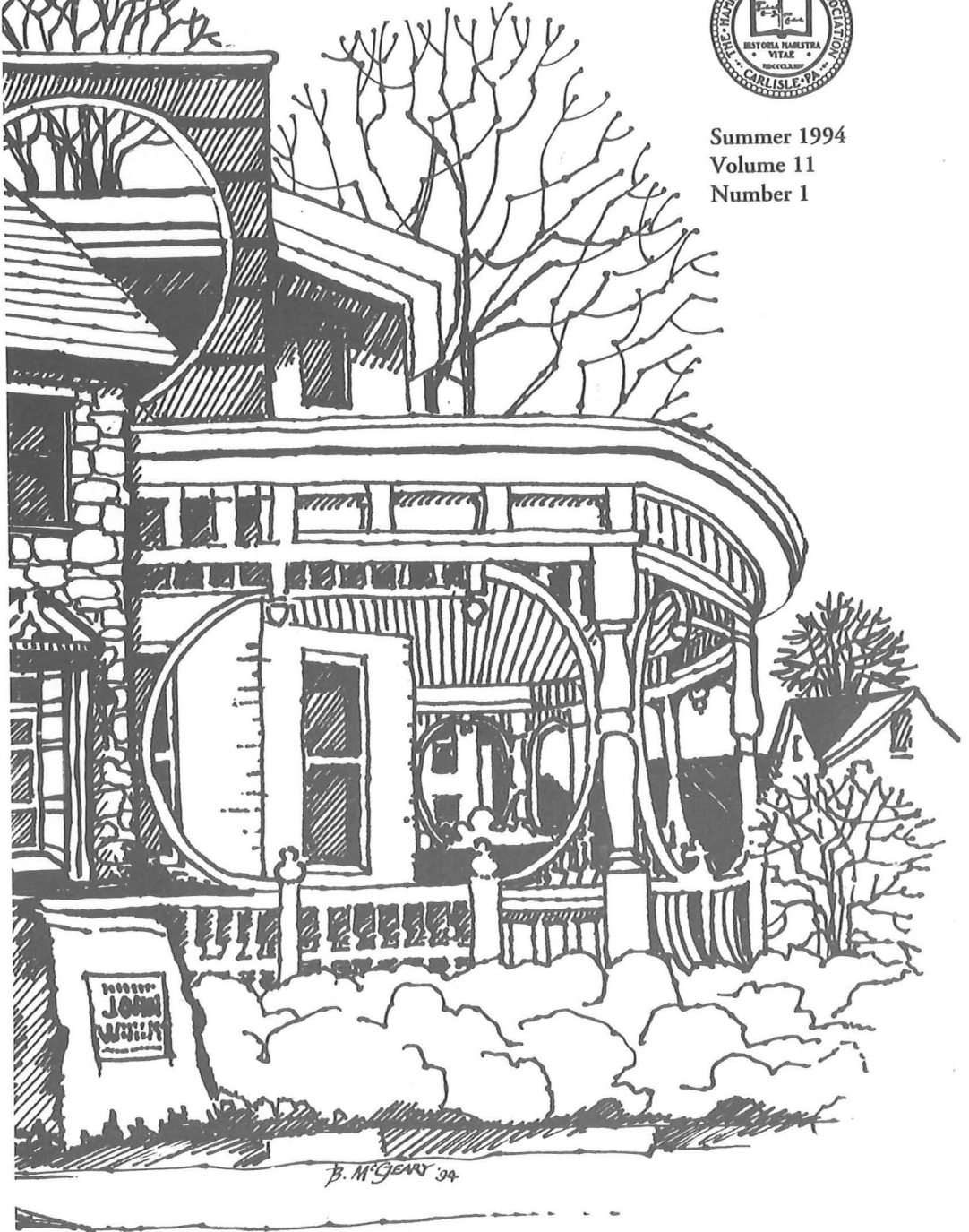


Cumberland County History



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*The Indian Industrial School, Carlisle,
Pennsylvania: 1879-1918*

Linda F. Witmer

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The Ancient and Important Walnut Bottom Path-Road

William T. Swaim

EDITOR'S NOTE

This article takes a fresh look at a section of the ancient route connecting the Susquehanna and Potomac river systems. He focuses on the section which started just east of Carlisle at a trail nexus (which the author found was termed "New Town" in early Presbyterian records) and ends at Shippensburg

A traveler had two choices: via present SR 465 to Mooredale and thence by PA 174 through Centerville and Lees Crossroads or via US 11 through Mount Rock and Stoughstown. The author asserts that the former, Walnut Bottom Road, was the principal route.

Three published works have dealt with routes through the area of Cumberland County which is west of Carlisle. In 1904 a Shippensburg attorney, John R. Miller, wrote *Reminiscences of the Walnut Bottom Road*. Five years later a Carlisle surveyor, John D. Hemminger, published *Old Roads of Cumberland County*. The third author was Dr. Paul A. W. Wallace, who in 1965 published the 227-page *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania*.

Wallace, a resident of New Cumberland, worked from notations on eighteenth century surveys returned to the Penn family's land office and confirmed his findings with intense study in the field. He identified two important east-west Indian routes. The first, Allegheny Path, crossed future Cumberland County from Harris's Ferry to future New Kingstown and what by 1736 was termed "New Town," in the east end of future Carlisle.¹ The second, Conoy Path, crossed the Susquehanna at future York Haven and proceeded via future Newberrytown and Lisburn to Letort Junction, now the east end of Carlisle.

From this point the traveler could go north over Blue Mountain at Croghan's (now Sterrett's) Gap,² west over Roxbury Gap, or southwest. In the last direction two alternatives to Shippensburg presented themselves: the Virginia Path, in 1994 U.S. 11, or the Walnut Bottom Path via Centerville.

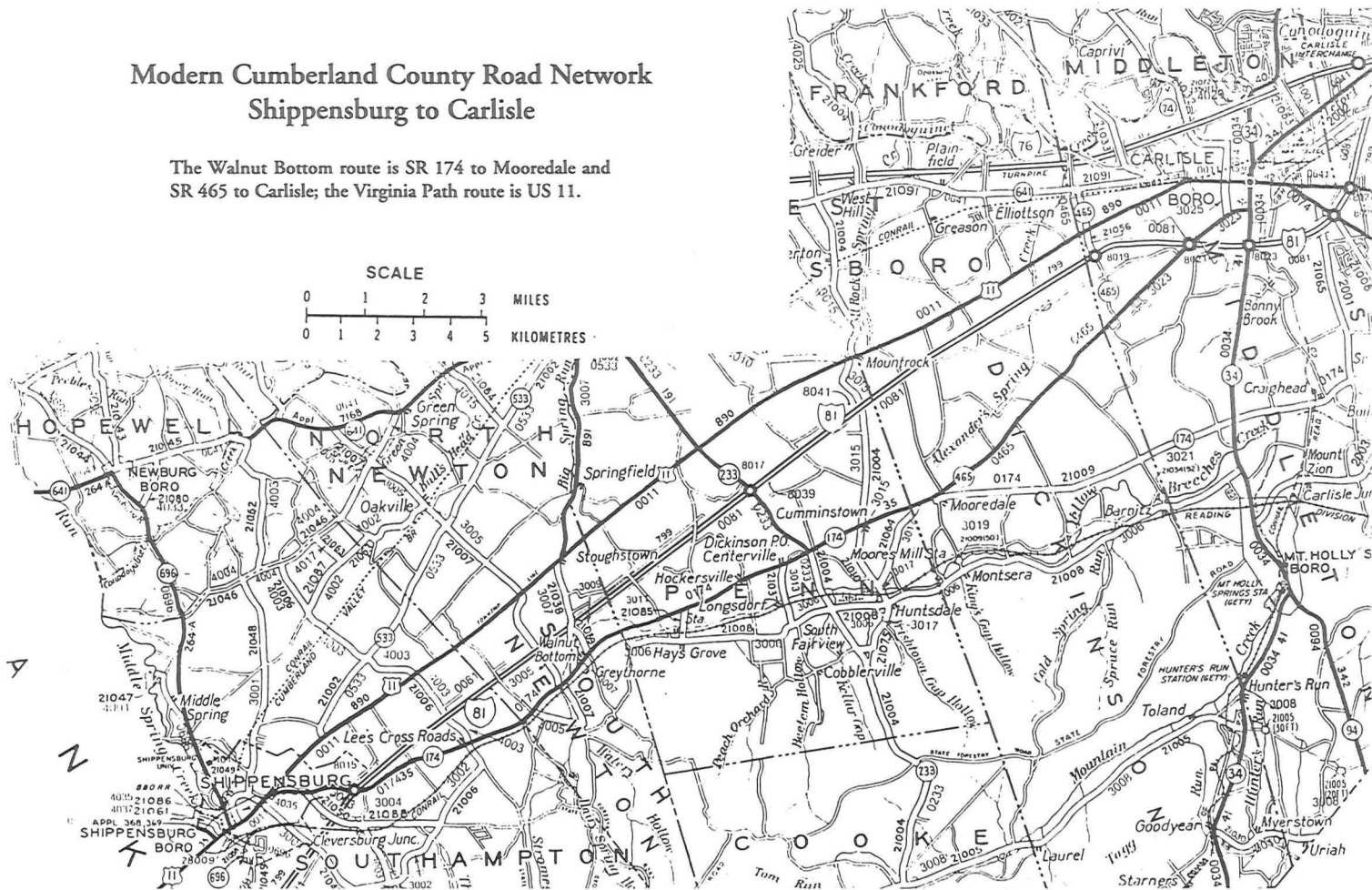
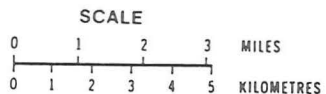
The route of the Virginia path seems to have been governed by an east-west topographical feature which this author christens "Limestone Ridge." Its importance is that it contains no water table and, therefore, could not produce the large number of fresh water springs that otherwise characterize the valley. The consequence was that travelers, for whom frequent sources of palatable water were necessary, shunned the Virginia path which ran at its base and opted for the Walnut Bottom path to the south which offered numerous watering places.

An Anglican Church chaplain in 1758 testifies as to the barren nature of the land at the base of the Limestone Ridge:

Friday, July 20th. Being tired with waiting at Carlisle, set out for Rays-

Modern Cumberland County Road Network Shippensburg to Carlisle

The Walnut Bottom route is SR 174 to Mooredale and
SR 465 to Carlisle; the Virginia Path route is US 11.



Town [now Bedford] . . . A good Road through shallow barren land much broken with Stones & little Hills led us to Shippensburg a small poor town about 20 miles from Carlisle.³

In 1736 Samuel Blunston, Penn family land agent, made the earliest known reference to the routes down the valley in describing a license he issued to Charles McGill: "Where he is already settled at the round meadow on the old waggon road to Potowmac & about three miles Beyond Falling Spring [Chambersburg]."⁴ Blunston, however, was speaking prematurely in calling the path a wagon road, for inhabitants of the land to the north near the Conodoguinet Creek in 1735 objected to the blazing of such a road to the south, saying it would be "hurtful to our Plantations." The plain implication here was that at least by 1735 there were three east-west roads in the Valley.

From the beginning of the historical record there has been confusion as to the names of the two roads. In 1802 a French traveler noted concerning Virginia Road:

From Carlisle to Shippensburg the country continues mountainous and is thinly inhabited, the soil being a very indifferent nature. There is only a few houses to be met on the road and their miserable appearance sufficiently indicates that the circumstances of the inhabitants are far from easy and that the produce of their agricultural labours is at most only sufficient for subsistence.⁵

The stage coaches carried a quantity of water for the passengers. Every two hours the coach would stop, and the driver could yell: "men to the right; women to the left."

WALNUT BOTTOM PATH

From the center of Letort Junction, now the corner of High and Spring Garden Streets in the east end of Carlisle, the Walnut Bottom Path used its own fording place across Letort Spring Run near what became the corner of East Pomfret Street and South East Street. As compared with Virginia Path-Road, for two centuries the one popular southwestern route was the Walnut Bottom, which traversed the southeastern side of the Valley and which had numerous watering places, doubtless including the upper part of Yellow Breeches Creek, which rises, among other places, in the South Mountain mid-way in the Valley. Limestone Ridge did not generate many springs for use on Virginia Path, but the Walnut Bottom route took advantage of water. The effects of the numerous watering places doubtless explain why the stage-coach in 1810 used the Walnut Bottom Road from Carlisle to Shippensburg.⁶

From LeTort Spring Road the Walnut Bottom route via present-day Mooredale was the direct extension of Allegheny Path from the east. Subsequently other diagonal routes from the north and southwest were obliterated within real estate developments that eventually enlarged 1751 Carlisle, but from the southwest Walnut Bottom Road uniquely has been preserved as far eastward as Willow Street, where

streets from five directions meet. To that point the Walnut Bottom Road points toward the corner of South East and East Pomfret Streets. Prior to 1751 it had its own wade-through or log bridge about 135 yards south of the main wade-through, both being enroute eastward to the center of what became New Town, now the corner of High and Spring Garden Streets.⁷

THE GREATER IMPORTANCE OF THE WALNUT BOTTOM ROUTE

Primarily the routes of passageways were determined as the shortest practical distance between destinations. The dominance of destination was described in a 1796 petition in which Edward Shippden IV and his brother, Joseph III, complained to the court at Carlisle that people traveled through their "woodland," which, as patented by their ancestor in 1737, consisted of 902 acres in one tract and near future Shippensburg, on

divers of roads . . . as the same suited the convenience of any and every person traveling thro the same according to the course, rout, or place they were steering to.⁸

The Walnut Bottom route is slightly longer than the Virginia route. The misperception that the Virginia route is more important is a modern error traceable to misinterpretation of the dubious legal name that officialdom at Lancaster attached to the survey of Virginia route as approved by the court in May 1744. In advance and at Lancaster the surveyed route was predicted to become a kind of King's highway for the sixty miles between the Susquehanna River and present-day Marion, which is about half-way between Chambersburg and Greencastle. The route terminated there because of the uncertainty as to the location of the southern border; Maryland claimed the lowest tier of Pennsylvania until the Mason-Dixon Line was surveyed 1765-1767.⁹

The notion that Virginia Road was always the main thoroughfare between Carlisle and Shippensburg probably arose in 1904 when John R. Miller researched both the many tavern licenses and their respective land titles along the Walnut Bottom Road:

. . . the Walnut Bottom Road was not the early or great road. The Great Road passing through Carlisle proceeded by devious ways until it crossed the Big Spring [Newville] and from thence in like tortuous wanderings through Shippensburg, etc.¹⁰

To the contrary, the Virginia Path had not met merely the head of Big Spring Run,¹¹ but in 1774 a short-cut was taken for the surveyed "Great Road" via present-day Stoughstown, which is about one mile to the south of the head of Big Spring Run. As the surveyed route is almost straight, the sixty miles have no "tortuous wanderings" as imagined by Miller. Also to the contrary, not until renovations in the 1930s did "Great Road" become the great road.

Building on Miller, John D. Hemminger of Carlisle in 1909 also exaggerated the importance of the Virginia route: "This road by reason of its [central] location became the Great Road or highway from which in after years radiated the roads."¹²

To the contrary, the two chief centers in the Valley from which roads now radiate were not along the 1744 survey of Great Road: Carlisle from which sprung sixteen spokes, and Newville, the hub of nine spokes. Along Great Road Shippensburg and Chambersburg together have a total of only a baker's dozen. The survey of Great Road in the vicinity of future Carlisle cut across from present-day Middlesex to the west end of modern Carlisle.¹³

Borrowing from Miller, Hemminger declared concerning the Virginia route:

Over it for more than seventy years was carried the produce of a large and fertile region until the advent of the turnpike roads when in its stead and over the greater part of the route first occupied by this great [sic] Road, was built the Harrisburg, Carlisle and Chambersburg turnpike road, which, for almost a century with payment of tolls, has been open to the public.¹⁴

The modern denotation of the word "turnpike" is heavy traffic rather than toll road. In thus postulating that the then secondary Virginia route has always been a King's highway for traffic down the Valley, Miller and Hemminger had been misled by giving a literal, legalistic, mechanical interpretation to the technical, official 1744 name, "Great Road," as shown here by Hemminger's verbal change "became the Great Road or highway."¹⁵ The literal misdefinition of the technical name as "highway" conveyed the erroneous message that it was the main, principal, markedly superior passageway in the Valley. To the contrary, the only aspect in which it was superior was in its surveyed width of three perches, whereas the court usually specified widths to be two perches.

Miller and Hemminger did not know that the Great Road was named as it was because it served the Great Valley which extends eight hundred miles from Delaware Water Gap to Alabama with successive subdivisions termed Lehigh, Lebanon Valley, Cumberland Valley, Shenandoah, etc. Imaginative authors thus erred in taking "Great Road" to mean merely dominance over the Walnut Bottom Road.

The Great Road, of course, was not "built" in 1744.¹⁶ Most had earlier been an Indian path. May 1744 was only the start of a paper trail, that is, when the court approved a survey. At the time the execution of the order, which legalized the out-erbounds of passageways, was left up to the optional efforts of volunteers living near the proposed road.

The road did not extend "from the Susquehanna to the Potomac," at present-day Williamsport, Maryland, as George Donehoo would have it. The approved survey extended only sixty miles to present-day Merion. The twenty-two miles beyond were outside the jurisdiction of Lancaster County.

Donehoo guessed wildly. He may have wished the Virginia Road to have been "the great artery carrying the very life blood of European civilization," but even as late as his writing in 1930 U.S. Route 11 and Greyhound busses traversed another route, Walnut Bottom Road. For two centuries it had primacy for several reasons.

WATERING PLACES

Chiefly the dominance of the Walnut Bottom route over the Virginia route is established by application of common sense. For traders and travelers the first consideration was a source of drinking water. Places of worship and of habitation were located near springs. Their pulling power is suggested in a 1759 petition to the court in Carlisle for improving the Walnut Bottom passageway "from Carlisle toward Walnut Bottom, from thence to the Springs and from the three springs to Shippensburg for the convanising [sic] of Your petitioners coming to market with their produce. . . ."¹⁸

In contrast to the well-watered Walnut Bottom route, the Virginia path traversed the dry northern base of Limestone Ridge, which begins near Carlisle and extends almost to Shippensburg. The ecology gives evidence of the difference between the two routes. The Virginia path is characterized by thin soil, outcropping limestone and scrub growth. In contrast, the Walnut Bottom route is dominated, as its very name suggests, by water-produced trees.

HAMLETS and VILLAGES

The lesser importance of the Virginia route is also shown by the fact that in twenty-two miles it has only two hamlets, which together have fewer than a dozen houses, Mount Rock and Stoughstown. The Walnut Bottom route, on the other hand, has seven hamlets: Mooresdale, Centerville, Hockersville, Walnut Bottom, Brookside, New Lancaster and Lees Crossroads. The difference attests to the magnetic power of flowing water before the era of faucets.

CHURCHES

In the early 1930s Virginia Road served only one church, which was near the head of Mount Rock Spring Run. By contrast, the Walnut Bottom Road had Dickinson Presbyterian Church at Cummingstown, Centerville Lutheran, Lees Crossroad Methodist, and Huntsdale United Brethren about one mile to the south. Further, in 1800 the Associate Presbyterians had a stone meeting house near Mooredale on what is now Old York Road.

TAVERNS

John R. Miller in 1904 wrote of licenses, location and land titles of taverns along the Walnut Bottom route. Between 1810 and 1855 on the average a tavern was to be found every two miles. The data confirms the large volume of traffic and the relative density of population on this passageway. Three-fourths of the taverns were southwest of Centerville, so-named because half way between Carlisle and Shippensburg. When railroad service became available, the number of taverns dropped by about one third.

RECAPITULATION

In summary, various items of evidence suggest that during the first two centuries of the settlement of the Valley the Walnut Bottom route was more important than the Virginia route. The Walnut Bottom route had the lion's share of everything except outcropping limestone.

TWO WALNUT BOTTOMS

The present day village of Walnut Bottom, which is along the Walnut Bottom Road five miles west of Centerville, now bears a name that it did not have for the first century of colonization. For a century "Walnut Bottom" was the name given to the locale now termed "Cummingstown," a village about one-half mile east of Centerville.

In November 1741 the court at Lancaster received a petition asking for a road (probably only the legalization of an existing lane) from Walnut Bottom towards Lancaster. The court issued such an order 4 May 1742.¹⁹ The route ran from Goldsboro to Lisburn and then "19-1/5 miles" westward to Walnut Bottom. That brings it to Cummingstown.

Confirmation is to be found in a Blunston License of 31 July 1734 to Arthur Irwin for "200 [acres] at the walnut bottom on the Road from Pexton to Potowmac about two miles—Robert Dunnings."²⁰ Dunning's tract was at modern Mount Rock which lay along the Virginia Path. Where was Irwin's tract? Not two miles to the north, for much acreage in that direction had already been awarded. Not to east or west along the Virginia path, or Blunston would certainly have mentioned that feature. The Irwin tract had to be to the south along the present road from Mount Rock to Cummingstown.

The above findings can be substantiated by the Minutes of the Carlisle Presbytery with reference to the origin of Dickinson Presbyterian Church at what became Cummingstown:

An application was made subscribed by James Moore and Joseph Galbraith, on behalf of a number of persons calling themselves the Presbyterian congregation of Walnut Bottom . . . that the Rev. Henry R. Wilson [Sr.] should be appointed to supply them any portion of time which he may be able and willing to give them. Presbytery thought proper to comply with his request.²¹

Thirteen years later the Walnut Bottom group was officially organized, with a board of duly-elected ruling elders, into Dickinson Presbyterian Church, as named for the Township. Presbytery minutes refer to the 1823 applicants as "persons residing near the Stone Meeting House in Dickinson Township."²² Sometime after 1844 the name of the village was changed from Walnut Bottom to Cummingstown in tribute to Charles P. Cummings, minister at Dickinson Church from 1836 to 1844.

John Miller in 1904 mentions the original Walnut Bottom:

We must pass on to the "Walnut Bottom Tavern" about a half mile east of Centerville, known in later years as the Kurtz place. This was a planta-

tion of 414 acres called "Walnut Bottom" willed October 16, 1766 by Thomas Wilson to his two sons, Thomas and William Wilson.²³

Jesse Kurtz prior to 1904 owned a tannery at the Walnut Bottom. It is located near the southwest corner of Walnut Bottom and Mount Rock Roads about one hundred yards from Dickinson Church.

Subsequently the post office gave the name Walnut Bottom to a hamlet five miles to the southwest which had borne five informal names: Freytown, Jacksonville, New Lancaster, Brookside and Greythorn Station.

WALNUT BOTTOM ROUTE NOT FINALIZED

IN 60 YEARS OF USE BY WHITES

Cumberland County Court Road Dockets reveal that the complete present-day route of Walnut Bottom Road was not finalized during the first six decades of colonization of the Valley by whites, 1733 to 1796. After a quarter of a century of use by whites, the first external activity on behalf of that ancient and honorable passageway was not attempted until 1759, at which time the court took no action on the petition.

In 1759 there appeared a local "petition of Wee the Inhabitants of West Pennsborough Township laboring under Great Difficulties for the want of a road being opened from Carlisle to the Walnut Bottom. . . ."²⁴

They did have a road which more or less tracked the Walnut Bottom Indian Path. What they meant was that they needed to have a more direct route from Walnut Bottom to Carlisle.

The petition concluded with: "Your Honors compliance shall lay Each of us in our duty to wish your Honors Wellfare whilst life &c."²⁵ The petition was signed by thirty persons.

Apparently the passageway which had been developed by usage over a period of centuries went by a circuitous route that probably included a section of the Yellow Breeches Creek.

Because of the subsequent silence of the road docket on this 1759 petition, the request obviously died aborning at the court house, apparently because of formal, albeit unrecorded, objections filed by other "Wee the Inhabitants of West Pennsborough Township." An approximation of the 1759 petition was filed nine years later.

In the legalization of the outer-bounds of the ancient Walnut Bottom route the crucial years were 1768 and 1796. In April 1768 a local petition finally stirred up court action.²⁶ The usual number of six men was appointed to blaze the outerbounds of the route from the south end of York Street [now Hanover Street in Carlisle] to a stone tavern, which was probably at present-day Mooredeale, thence to Walnut Bottom, now Cummingstown, and on to a house "at three springs." Here, as elsewhere, the word, "open," did not mean to lay out on paper an entirely new route as shown by the wording that it was to be by: "the nearest and best way to Shippensburg & repair and straighten said old road."²⁷

Their problem was in “coming to market with their produce.” They already had the unsatisfactory ancient Walnut Bottom Path-Road, but it did not fulfill their desire to be able to travel by “the nearest and best way,” hence their alleged “great loss to make our markets.” In order to emphasize their handicaps, some of the petitions, as here, contained exaggerations.²⁸

The court at Carlisle approved the 1768 blazing of outerbounds. For reasons unknown the inhabitants along the blazed route neglected or stubbornly refused to do the optional volunteer work to comply with the court order. For such neglect of duty there was no remedy at law before 1776 because every patent for farm tracts had an addendum of plus “6% allowance for Roads, &c” as a cushion added to the exact acreage that was purchased at the stated price per acre. The court had to rely on obedience to the unenforceable.

THE 1776 CHANGE IN PENNSYLVANIA

During the first four decades of colonization of the Valley by whites under Governors as appointed by the Penn family, the opening of new routes through private property for the use of the general public had not been illegal, nor was it regarded as trespassing because of the cushion of “6% allowance for Roads, etc.” in the patent for each farm tract. To the contrary, in 1776 the constitution of the independent Commonwealth of Pennsylvania fixed the rights of property owners by providing a remedy at law.

A case in point is the 1793 eastward extension by the court of the road from Sulphur Springs, now Doubling Gap, toward Carlisle. The approved route caused inconvenience to one Thomas Butler, who was aggrieved that the newly court-ordered route “runs” through a clear field on his farm “in such a manner as to render part of his lands useless.” Allegedly the cost of new fences would offset proceeds from cultivation of the isolated remnants. Accordingly, newly appointed viewers recommended that “300 perches [almost one mile] of the said road be vacated” and a new route selected.²⁹ The court agreed, but this remedy did not occur until four decades after 1734.

After 1776 township road supervisors could be “ordered to open and clear the same at public expense,” but at the Shippensburg end chaos existed as regards the Walnut Bottom route for two decades after 1776.

HELTER-SKELTER WALNUT BOTTOM ROUTE IN 1796

In the bright light of modern legal definiteness of both sides of roads, it may be surprising to learn that for six decades the outerbounds of the southwestern section of Walnut Bottom Road were indefinite, even in some places helter-skelter as now revealed in Road Dockets from 1796.

The late dubieties were in contrast to the fact that within two decades ten fixed passageways in 1754 radiated from 1736 “New Town” on the east bank of Letort

Spring Run and two new ones from the public square of 1751 Carlisle on the west bank. The only substantial change was that in 1753 the southern few miles of what is now the Sterrett's Gap Road took a court-ordered short-cut of a new route via the present-day Masland Mill.³⁰ In contrast, the uncertainty of the official route of the southwestern section of the Walnut Bottom Road was described by Edward Shippen's descendants as late as in a 1796 road docket.

With the passage of time "a traveled road" could become the permanent route from constant usage. After half a century of dubiety about the Walnut Bottom route near Shippensburg, new viewers reported in 1796:

We have agreeably to the said order run and viewed the several courses and distances . . . and that we are of the opinion that it is not practical to have a good Road on the Ground over which these lines and courses of said Road pass, but that the present traveled Road (which certainly needs attention) will if altered straightened and amended by a much better road, be attended with less expense, and prove of more public use and advantage in the community.³¹

For two Shippen brothers, Edward IV and George III, the problem in 1796 was that they wanted to sell parcels of land near Shippensburg. Two obstacles stood in their way of selling "woodland in the proper divisions of the same into smaller tracts for purchasers": first, uncertainty concerning the legalized route of the Walnut Bottom Road through their property; and, second, the proliferation of passageways of many widths through their "woodland" in a helter-skelter non-pattern. Obviously Edward Shippen I previously should have arranged for fences to be constructed at an early date.

Edward Shippen I had been a well-do-do business man in Philadelphia where he had been mayor. He amassed warrants and patents for 10,000 acres in rural Pennsylvania, including in February 1737 a patent for 902 acres at future Shippensburg just four months after patents for Valley tracts became available on October 11, 1736, by the Penn family's purchase of present-day Cumberland, Franklin, York and Adams Counties from the Iroquois Indians of New York state.

When it became public news in Philadelphia that the first husband of Mrs. Shippen was still alive in England, the family moved to Lancaster. As absentee landlords for six decades, the Shippens did not pay adequate attention to the one and one-half square miles which had been purchased in 1737 at and near future Shippensburg. Accordingly, in 1796 descendants tried to clear up the mess at their end of Walnut Bottom Road.

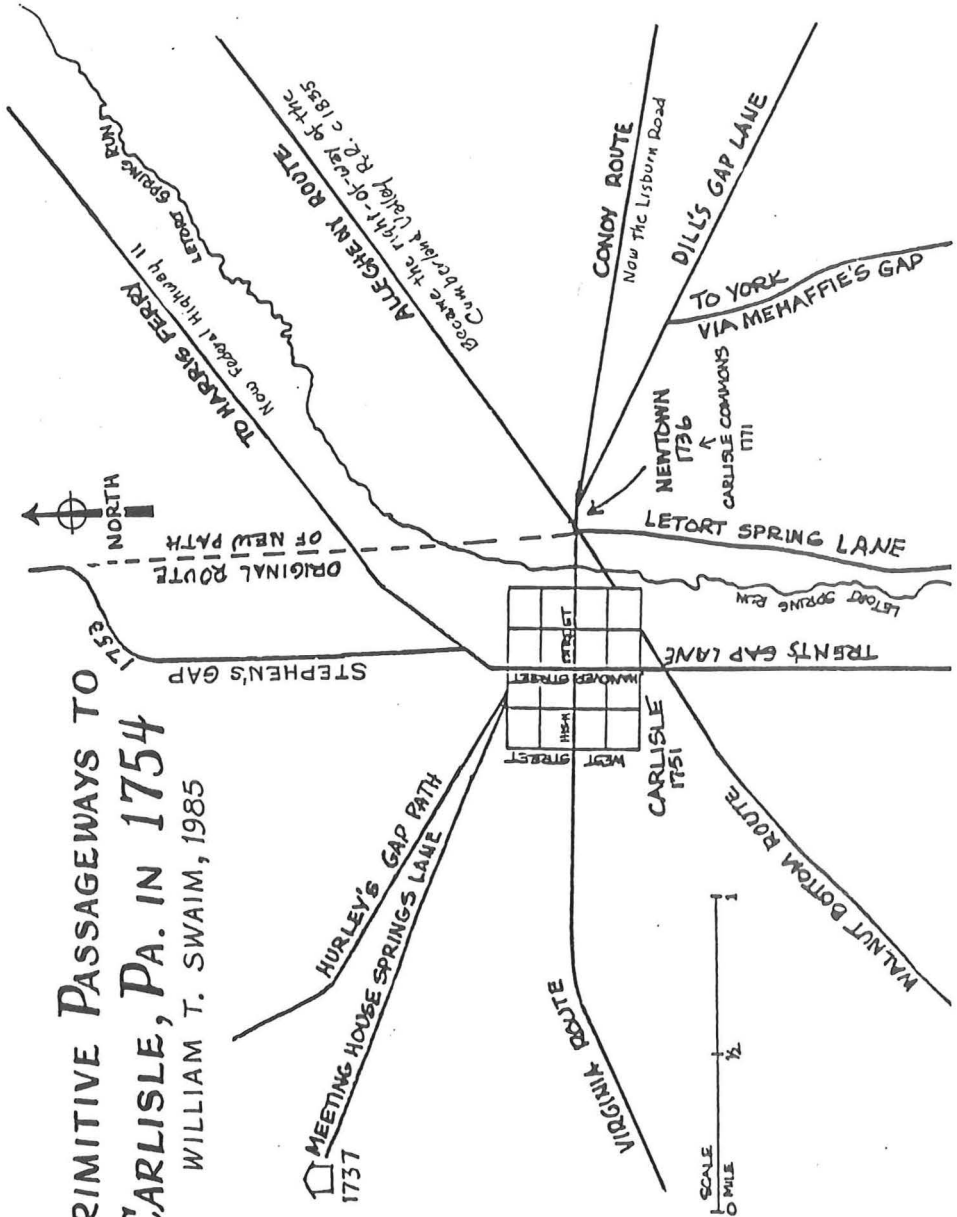
That the outerbounds of passageways were not precise is shown in the 1796 road docket in the words of the Shippen brothers:

And whereas there being a general opening thro the said woods, persons traveling from Carlisle to Shippensburg, traveled where they pleased . . . though generally along one path, a Road which became thro time more beaten than any other parts of said Woods.³²

For such monstrosities as the "general opening" at such a late date the petition put the blame on the former Road Supervisors: "and whereas the former Supervisors

PRIMITIVE PASSAGEWAYS TO CARLISLE, PA. IN 1754

WILLIAM T. SWAIM, 1985



of the Roads have neglected and omitted [sic] opening the first above described Road agreeably to the express orders of the court [1768] for the same”³³ Obviously, the brothers in 1796 did not relish the former legal freedom to create new passageways on private property.

For the Shippen brothers, it was “highly disadvantageous and inconvenient . . . to be in the smallest degree uncertain where the said road was laid agreeably to the said report, and whereby right the same ought to run.” Their goal included having the official route be the one that was “the nearest and best way,” hence the pressing need to “repair & straighten said old road.”

In addition to finalizing the route, the Shippens also wanted to close off at least some of the miscellaneous routes through the property:

Whereas also it is their wish to have opened and to keep open this road as by order of court the same was laid and confirmed, for the use and Benefit of the Community, and to shut up all by ways, paths or roads which have been permitted by them to be open on Sufferance, while the said woods remained open and was accessible to every Passenger.³⁵

Public use of their property for “by-paths, paths or roads” was legal for the citizenry, but from the Shippen point of view it had been “on sufferance,” i.e., without assistance and without objections, which could have been in the form of fences. A “by-way” was a short, somewhat secluded, secondary passageway.

A 1796 Shippen petition to the court claimed that “there is not at present any public Road” on Walnut Bottom route. The exaggeration obviously meant failure to comply with the 1768 court order for legalizing the outerbounds. Accordingly, new viewers were needed:

to view a road from Carlisle to Shippensburg, which was run and laid out in the year 1768 . . . and to determine whether there was any necessity for opening the same (which has been long delayed to be done hitherto) on the ground along which the courses were run.³⁶

In fact the request was that viewers start from scratch and

if they think proper to lay out a road from the South end of York [Hanover] Street [at South] in Carlisle, the nearest and best direction to where the road meets at & comes into the Mount Rock road near the town of Shippensburg, and in the manner least injurious to private property.³⁷

As the vicinity of Shippensburg has many outcroppings of limestone, this use of the term “Mount Rock road” does not refer to present-day Mount Rock. To this day the term is also preserved at the west end of Shippensburg.

Unfortunately for the Shippen brothers, viewers had filed a report on a route that allegedly “would not strike the town of Shippensburg.” New petitioners complained

that owing to some mistake the Road hath not been laid out agreeably to the courses and distances reported to the said court by the viewers, and it hath since been found by the report of persons appointed to ascertain the bearing of the said Road, that by running the courses & distances reported by the original viewers that the same would not strike the town of

Shippensburg, and that in fact it is at present impossible to ascertain with accuracy upon what ground the original viewers intended the said road should be laid out.³⁸

After more than six decades of colonization by whites the official route was such a conglomeration that a local petition stated in 1796: "There is not at present any public Road," which statement meant only that none of the existing competing routes fitted the 1768 officializing of discernible outerbounds of thirty-three feet.

The court appointed six named men "to view the same, and if they or any four of them shall agree that there is a necessity for a road there, that they proceed to lay out the same by courses and distances."

In certain segments the viewers had to choose between alternate passageways. Nearly three decades after the 1768 blazing and court approval, newly appointed viewers reported that two existing roads "frequently cross & intersect each other," doubtless because of local differences in needs. By that time the 1768 white chippings on trees were invisible. The 1796 viewers stated that laying out a proper road "would occasion a new road almost wholly to be opened." Accordingly

the present Supervisors of the Roads for the Township of Shippensburg . . . desirous of complying fully with their duty as such in every particular, not only respecting the making of good Roads but also of making good Roads on the proper laid out ground, labor under considerable inconveniences and suspense on account of the uncertainty of the Ground along which the said laid out Road passes.⁴⁰

In 1796 the Shippens were not the only land owners who were greatly handicapped by the ravages done by helter-skelter passageways on private properties. The brothers' petition stated:

And whereas others who hold lands, woods and meadows, are in the same Predicament uncertain when it is their duty to lay open their ground for the passing through of the said Road so laid out [blazed], which uncertainty operated to their several considerable damages and inconveniences.⁴¹

The Shippens also contended that many of the miscellaneous passageways

are at the same time a great injury to the same in the maner [sic] they run, and also are on ground very unfit and improper for a Road, and no means equal in point of goodness to adjacent ground where it is probable the said laid out road would run.⁴²

CONCLUSION

Cumberland County Road Dockets show that as late as 1796 the exact route of the west end of the Walnut Bottom Road was not known. The above summary shows the documented picture of the helter-skelter, evolving passageways as late as two generations after whites had entered the Valley. The data strongly suggest that indefinite, varied, evolving, changeable, unofficial passageways characterized most of the Valley in the 1740s, including the vast acreage which the absentee Penn family proprietors

had not yet unloaded before the Divestiture Act of 1778 confiscated their land in the Commonwealth. In the early decades the settlers doubtless developed hundreds of miscellaneous passageways of various widths for use by local publics. The absence of the grid pattern shows that the routes were planned locally one at a time.

The history of the continued indefiniteness of the southwestern section of the subject route now reveals for the first time the vast difference between a court order for exact outerbounds and the response by local volunteer men and boys who wielded cutting axes on trees and tree stumps.

By 1797 the court could and did single out "the several Supervisors of the townships" as the persons responsible for construction. The new construction was bringing order out of chaos. In their respective townships, the Supervisors were "directed to open and clear the same at public expense."⁴³ Apparently the election of township supervisors and the tax support of road building originated simultaneously.

At the east end of present-day Shippensburg the eventually finalized Walnut Bottom passageway merged with Virginia Road at a turkey-foot near a now dying spring of fresh water.

Thus endeth the long-term early history of the ancient and important Walnut Bottom Path-Road.

ENDNOTES

- 1 William T. Swaim, "The Evolution of Ten Pre 1745 Presbyterian Churches in the Cumberland Valley," *Cumberland County History* (1985): 3-31.
- 2 Robert Grant Crist, *George Croghan of Pennsboro* (Harrisburg: 1985), 9.
- 3 William A. Hunter, "Thomas Barton and the Forbes Expedition," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography* (October 1971), 95:431.
- 4 See Blunston License Book as reprinted in George Donehoo, *History of Cumberland Valley*, vol. 1 (Harrisburg: 1930), 39-72.
- 5 F. A. Michaux, *Travels to the Westward of the Allegany Mountains in the States of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee in the Year 1802* (London: 1805), 19.
- 6 D. W. Thompson et al, *Two Hundred Years in Cumberland County* (Carlisle: 1951), 108.
- 7 Modern maps show that incoming Walnut Bottom Road points as far as Willow Street directly to the corner of East Pomfret and South East Streets.
- 8 John D. Hemminger, *Old Roads of Cumberland Cumberland County* (Carlisle: 1909), 15.
- 9 William A. Russ, Jr., *How Pennsylvania Acquired Its Boundaries* (University Park: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1966), 12-23.
- 10 John R. Miller, *Reminiscences of the Walnut Bottom Road* (Carlisle: 1904), 3.
- 11 As printed in Hemminger, *Old Roads*, pp. 5-6, 1743 Court Docket No. 1 tells of viewers altering the route so as to go "westward to a fording place on Letort Spring a little to the northward of John Davidson's house; thence about southwest a little to the southward of Robert Dunnings to the former marked road; thence along the same to the Great Spring Head [now Springfield] . . .
- 12 Hemminger, *Old Roads*, 8.
- 13 *Ibid.*, maps as pp. 2 & 3.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 8.
- 16 As per Donehoo's *History* Blunston License Book.
- 17 Hemminger, *Old Roads*, 13.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 13.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 21 George Norcross, ed., *Centennial Memorial of Carlisle Presbytery* vol. 1 (Harrisburg: 1889), 244-245.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 Miller, *Reminiscences*, 22.
- 24 Hemminger, *Old Roads*, 15.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 *Ibid.*, 14.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 15.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 13 & 14. See map above of routes in 1754
- 29 *Ibid.*, 39.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 24-26.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 15.
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 *Ibid.*, 17.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 19.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 20.
- 41 *Ibid.*
- 42 *Ibid.*, 20.



JAMES WILSON from the original painting in the national Picture Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Justice James Wilson of Cumberland County

Lewis E. Lehrman

This paper was delivered as the principal speech at the annual banquet of the Cumberland Historical Society 20 January 1994.

The James Wilson chair on exhibit at the Cumberland County Historical Society is a large, classical Chippendale chair, perhaps too big for all of us, Wilson's cultural descendants, to sit in. For not only was James Wilson a big man physically, he was a big man politically. Indeed, during his time, it may surely be said that he was an oversized American in every significant respect. He was a man of great vision. His were always big thoughts, big ideas, big dreams, for himself and for his countrymen. As Marc Antony said of Julius Caesar, so it may be said of James Wilson that he, too, was an ambitious man for his family, his native state of Pennsylvania, and for his adopted homeland.

Many know, of course, that James Wilson helped to frame the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. But among most Americans, he is less well-known than the heroine of Carlisle at the Battle of Monmouth, Molly Pitcher. There is no question James Wilson has earned his place in American history, though not yet in popular folklore. It is no exaggeration to say that James Wilson was one of the more fascinating of the remarkable fathers of our country. He embodied so much of the extraordinary and the ordinary of colonial life, the dramatic differences and diversity in which these United States were created, the Herculean achievements which still set us apart as the greatest nation of world history.

James Wilson, himself, was a study in ironies: He was a successful Carlisle attorney for a rural community who became a cosmopolitan advocate for the Philadelphia elite. He was a university failure, turned constitutional architect, who had the self-confidence to call his handiwork at the constitutional convention "the best form of government which has ever been offered to the world."

Born poor, become rich, James Wilson died poor, but he spent much of his life pursuing wealth and status. Intellectually a dedicated democrat, he was regarded by many of his fellow Pennsylvanians as an arrogant aristocrat. A Cumberland County pioneer, he went off to Philadelphia and the life of the big city grandee, but he never lost his fascination with the frontier. The son of Scots Presbyterians, himself a proud Scotsman, he was well prepared for the plain Scots-Irish settlers in Cumberland County when he came to Carlisle to practice law in 1771.

While he was born of modest Fifeshire farming stock, his aloof carriage, and his patrician bearing earned him the disdain of ordinary Pennsylvanians who thought

him a snob. Apologizing for him, one of his good friends declared there was nothing haughty about James Wilson, for his "lordly carriage" stemmed merely from the barber's attempt to keep his spectacles from tumbling from his nose.

In a major move into public life Wilson took up pen and politics in 1774, just before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War with England. He began his political career as a member of the Cumberland County Committee of Correspondence. He became a great advocate, and an eloquent correspondent, for his country.

His preoccupation with worldly enterprise and material possessions did displease his mother, though, who in the faithful tradition of John Knox and the Kirk of Scotland, had wanted him to become a minister. Wilson's writings show that he did remain a religious man, though some Presbyterians still wonder why he switched from the Presbyterian Church of his ancestry to the Anglican Church of his friends. It was an inconvenience not to have thought to make this change while at home in Cumberland county. In the square at Carlisle he might merely have walked across the street. Indeed, Wilson was a faithful churchgoer. While in Boston in 1793, as a Justice of the Supreme Court, he went looking on Sunday for a good sermon. Instead, he found a good wife which gave rise to a bad scandal. For his new wife, Hannah Gray, was thirty years his junior. She was younger even than some of Wilson's children by Rachel Bird, well-known in Carlisle as his first wife.

His religious upbringing surely influenced his political principles. A sincere morality rang through the rhetoric of James Wilson's speeches. During the debates over ratification of the Constitution he was an early proponent of the Bill of Rights, and an early prophet of the abolition of slavery in America, but the irony is he actually started married life in Carlisle as a slave owner. There, Wilson began the practice of law as an itinerant criminal and property lawyer—riding the circuit through Pennsylvania frontier towns, such as Carlisle, enforcing contracts to repay debts. He ended his professional life imprisoned for indebtedness. Surely, this was an ignominious end for the man whose ambition it was to become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, a job which he personally solicited from President-elect George Washington. In fact, it was Wilson's financial dealings which probably dissuaded Washington from appointing him the Chief Justice, though his philosophical views were certainly similar to those of our first President.

Today, along with President Washington and the first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, one would call James Wilson an economic conservative, a prominent advocate of sound government fiscal policy, while at the very same time we must acknowledge that Wilson was an inveterate practitioner of highly leveraged deal-making and personal deficit finance.

Wilson was also something of an economist, adept at the theory of money and credit. He was one of the early theorists and practitioners of American banking, and a founder of the Bank of North America, but he was also one of the largest speculators in property, even abusing the credit of the very banks he helped to initiate. The immense scale of his far-reaching financial enterprise, his grandiose vision, moves one to say that to the end of his life, Wilson can best be described as an economic fron-

tiersman—a brilliant adventurer living on the edge of an emerging country he did much to create.

Those quick to judgment may find it fitting that James Wilson died a debtor, having just been bailed out of jail in North Carolina at the age of 56, still a sitting Supreme Court Justice. His debts were not parochial. Wilson's real estate deals extended throughout Pennsylvania, and by the end of his life deep into the South as well.

Perhaps one might fairly say that James Wilson never heard about a piece of land that he was not tempted to buy, and equally tempted to finance on credit. However, one can not be too critical of Wilson when one reflects that there continues to this day a tradition, among some Cumberland County farmers, tempting them always to buy more, and more, and more land with the great hope of making it productive and passing it on to their children and to their children's children. Or, at least, that is how Louise, my ever faithful bride, has rationalized my own adventure into the fertile farmland of Monroe Township.

James Wilson had a passion for real property, but his economic interests were not limited to real estate. He owned textile factories and ironworks. Together with his land speculations, they were designed not only to make money, but also to help populate America's frontier. Perhaps today the politically correct might call him a rural developer, but this would certainly be insufficient, for we would easily miss the special genius of the man and his times. Cumberland County during the American Revolution, was a fascinating place. Carlisle was a hotbed of agitation for Independence from England. Strangely, Wilson himself was lukewarm in advocating the dissolution of bonds with the Mother Country. Later, while much of Carlisle, a center of anti-Federalist activity, opposed the Constitution, Wilson became one of its foremost architects.

In this constitutional project, Wilson proved himself a great philosopher of the law. Perhaps more than any other man of his generation, he gave shape to the idea of a federal judiciary with appellate jurisdiction over the state courts. A legislator and judge, himself, he was, along with Alexander Hamilton, a vigorous and successful proponent at the Constitutional Convention of a strong Presidency.

Speaking at the Pennsylvania Convention, which ratified the Constitution, Wilson delivered one of the many erudite expositions of his political thought.

In a characteristic sentence, Wilson declaimed:

. . . when we take an extensive and accurate view of the streams of power that appear through this great and comprehensive plan, when we contemplate the variety of their directions, the force and dignity of their currents, when we behold them intersecting, embracing and surrounding the vast possessions and interests of the continent, and when we see them distributing on all hands beauty, energy and riches, still, however, numerous and wide their courses, however diversified and remote the blessings they diffuse, we shall be able to trace them all to one great and noble source: THE PEOPLE."

This was Wilson's complicated way of saying "God bless America."



A CHAIR once belonging to James Wilson, now in the collection of the Cumberland County Historical Society.

Because James Wilson was the only Pennsylvania member of both the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia and of the state Ratifying Convention, (indeed, he was one of only six Founding Fathers of the country to sign both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution), one might think him to have held the place of honor throughout the Keystone State. It did not work out that way. The representatives of Carlisle at the ratifying convention rebuffed Wilson and the Constitution by boycotting the ceremony where the historic document was signed. This irony was always a mystery until a Mechanicsburg friend tried to explain the "genetic" combativeness of colonial Carlisle. She told me that the Scots Irish, early and prolific settlers of Cumberland County, were so happy fighting the Indians that those Scotsmen who did not keep on going, fighting their way into the Shenandoah Valley, set about fighting with themselves in Carlisle. This friend also confided that she was of old Swiss-German stock, proud of her *Mechanicsburg* birthright; and that her kinfolk, unlike the Scots Irish, would rather farm than fight Indians. (Being neither a Swiss nor a Scot, I leave the arbitration between Carlisle and Mechanicsburg to the Trustees of the Cumberland County Historical Society.)

James Wilson, himself, never ceased to emphasize the importance of public order; but the truth is, his controversial character and opinions managed to provoke two riots, one in Philadelphia when he was home, and one in Carlisle a decade after he left. In Philadelphia he infuriated the radicals with his Tory alliances and, under assault, barricaded himself in his home on Chestnut Street and prevailed over his attackers by force of arms. After Pennsylvania ratified the Constitution, anti-federalists took to the Carlisle square and burned in effigy Cumberland County's most distinguished Federalist lawyer.

One sees in James Wilson, writ larger than life, the conflicts which inflamed the revolutionary generation. For example, Wilson moved to Carlisle because he saw in the frontier an opportunity to advance his legal career. Then he moved from Carlisle to Philadelphia to enlarge the stage of his ambition. There he was comfortable, it seems, as a proud signer of the Declaration of Independence while, at the same time, he was a prominent attorney for Philadelphia Tories accused of high treason.

It has been well-written that those who will understand Wilson best are ambitious immigrants and the sons and daughters of immigrants, for Wilson was, if anything, a powerfully motivated man, energized by the realization that his goals could never be fulfilled in the Scotland of his birth. In his thirties, he concluded that his purposes could never be quite realized in Cumberland County either. Trapped in Scotland between his personal ambition and its rigid class structure, he set out, like generations of immigrants to come, for the New World, where he later found himself caught between the American frontier society he represented in the Continental Congress and the cosmopolitan culture of Philadelphia to which he aspired.

But never let it be said that James Wilson was not a practical man. He was an early practitioner of pork barrel politics, using his influence in the Continental Congress to get the Carlisle Depot located here in 1776. Cumberland Depot became the Cumberland Barracks which, in turn, became the Army War college, the nation's second oldest military installation.

This is not all. Wilson was a great educator, a tutor in Scotland and at the College

of Philadelphia upon his arrival, a legal mentor to the nephew of George Washington by appointment of the President himself, a legal craftsman at the Constitutional Convention, and the its first law Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. A college dropout, Wilson was named one of the first trustees of Dickinson College in 1784, thus having linked himself in Cumberland County history not only with the founding of the Army War College, but also with the origin of Dickinson College.

In today's world James Wilson, academic-lawyer-businessman-politician-philosopher, would be a scandal-in-waiting for the TV correspondents of "60 Minutes," "Prime Time" and "A Current Affair." Congress, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Justice Department and the Treasury Department would all undoubtedly launch separate investigations into his complicated financial affairs. Oprah Winfrey and Phil Donahue would devote talk shows to older Supreme Court justices who court and marry women a generation younger. (Perhaps, they might say, in extenuation, that *at least he married* them, old-fashioned as that might be.) The *Wall Street Journal* would print a front page article unraveling Wilson's complicated balance sheet, and the *New York Times* would report on Wilson's network of well-connected friends, and his attempts to influence Pennsylvania legislation regarding his own land speculation. *People* magazine would round out the coverage with a report on the final days of Wilson's life when, as he himself mournfully recounted, he was "hunted [by creditors] . . . like a wild beast."

But Charles Page Smith, James Wilson's biographer, suggests that one should mitigate, with mercy and praise, judgments of Wilson:

If Wilson was eventually the victim of his ambition and of his greed, he was also the victim of his dreams. We are the legatees of his dream of a united democratic republic, secure under the law in the possession of human rights and dignity. . . . If Wilson's land dream was less noble, it was no less American and no less a part of the future. In Wilson, the spirit that could later be identified as American capitalism surged so strongly that it finally tore him asunder and utterly destroyed him.

It is mete, it is fitting to recognize the legacy of James Wilson, a priceless patrimony. But his legacy is in unique intellectual property, not the physical property he craved. Indeed, Wilson's house at the corner of Pitt and High streets no longer stands. But his blueprint and his hopes for American democracy, and his faith in its future still lives. Thus do we of Cumberland County, assembled here, rightly remember our debts to this brilliant Scotch immigrant.

As we drive home tonight through the valley of the shadows of the North and South mountains we may even faintly hear, the patriotic tones of James Wilson echo across the plain of our beloved Cumberland County, in the glorious hymn which truly invokes the special virtues of the frontier valley he found here. "O beautiful for spacious skies. For amber waves of grain. For purple mountain majesties, above the fruited plain. America, America, God shed his grace on thee.

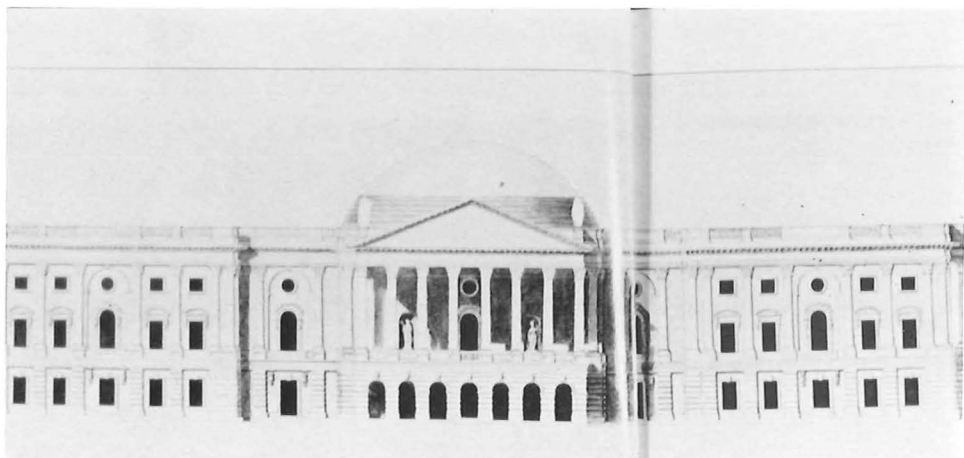
The Capitol and the College: The Latrobe Connection

Susan Fritschler

In 1793 President George Washington laid the cornerstone of the United States Capitol. This event initiated the construction of a building which the statesmen and political leaders of the day hoped would be a grand monument to the democratic ideals of the young nation. To the extent that this first national government building in the Capital City achieved its lofty objective was due to the creativity and vision of Benjamin Latrobe. He served as architect of the United States Capitol from 1803 to 1813 and again from 1815 to 1817.

In 1803 the Trustees of Dickinson College laid the cornerstone of the first building on campus, now called Old West. Latrobe worked on these projects—the Capitol and the College—simultaneously. Although they differ markedly in scale and function, Latrobe’s “special touches” are evident in both.

Benjamin Latrobe is regarded by architectural historians as the first American architect, the first professional who developed a style of his own.¹ He designed a variety of structures—public buildings, private residences and cathedrals in Richmond, Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore—with a variety of appearances. While his contemporaries were either “gentlemen architects” who sketched imaginative buildings but lacked the expertise to construct them, or “carpenter/builders” who could build but not design, Latrobe combined the talents of the artist/designer and practical engineer.



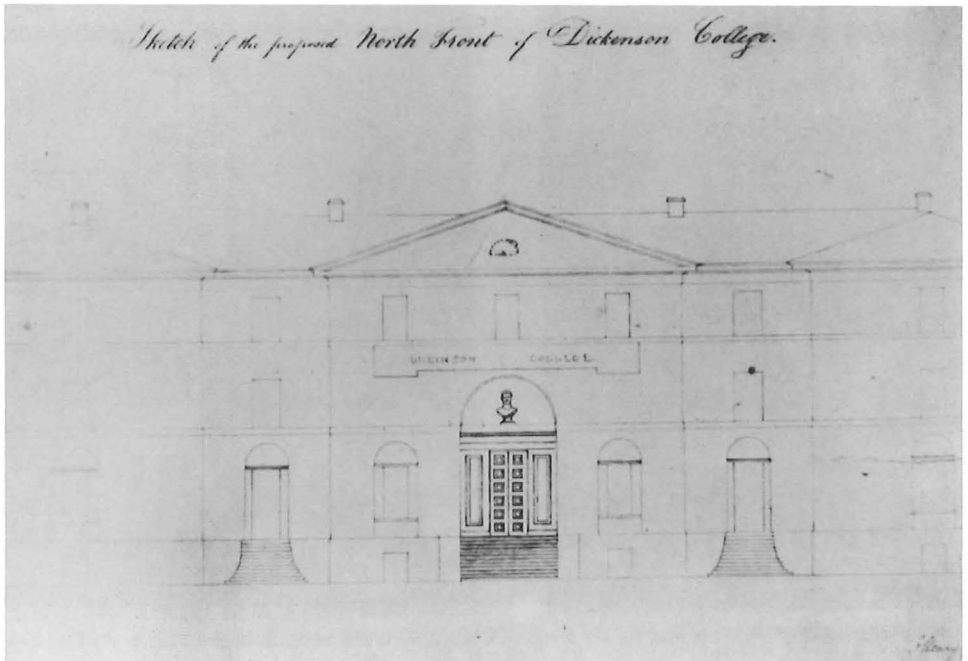
LATROBE'S SKETCH of his plan for the National Capitol. This and other illustrations are in the Dickinson College collection at the Weiss Center.

Latrobe regarded architectural style as something derived from the past, but adaptable to a particular use in the present. In a letter to Thomas Jefferson, he set forth his artistic credo:

My principles of good taste are rigid in Grecian architecture. I am a bigoted Greek in the condemnation of the Roman architecture Wherever, therefore, the Grecian style can be copied without impropriety I love to be a mere, I would say a slavish copyist, but the forms and the distribution of the Roman and Greek buildings which remain, are in general, inapplicable to the objects and uses of our public buildings. Our religion requires a church wholly different from their temples, our legislative assemblies and our courts of justice, buildings of entirely different principles from their basilicas; and our amusements could not possibly be performed in their theatres and amphitheatres. . . .²

He preferred geometric shapes, and combined spheres, rectangles and squares into intriguing designs. He is known for his domes, vaulted ceilings, and rotundas. Importantly, his designs were functional as well as beautiful. Latrobe thought in terms of large structures and grand styles, which led him to use stone, the medium of monuments, instead of the familiar brick or wood.

He was more than an architect and engineer. He was a talented painter, an eloquent writer, and a charming man. He influenced “the look” of America in his day as much as Washington and Jefferson influenced the government. He certainly influenced “the look” of Dickinson College when he insisted that Old West be faced with grey limestone.



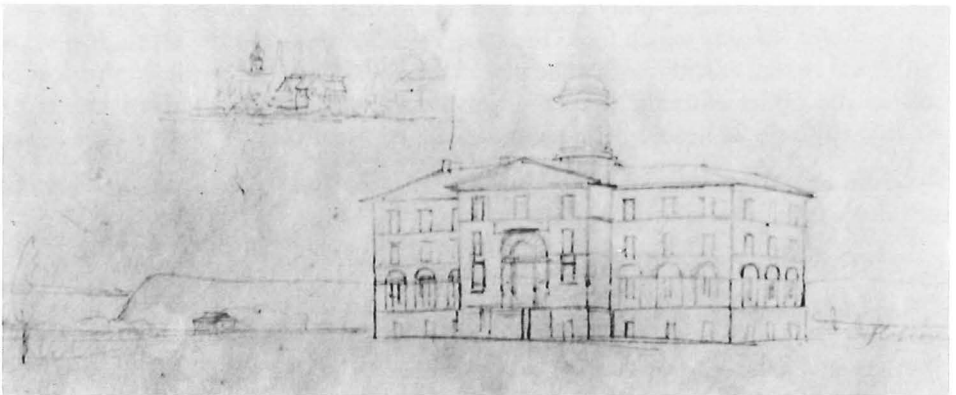
NORTH FRONT as per Latrobe's sketches for Dickinson College

Born in England to a Moravian minister and a native Pennsylvania mother who had re-settled abroad, Latrobe emigrated to the United States in 1796 at the age of thirty-one. After developing a lucrative architectural practice in Virginia, he moved to Philadelphia to take advantage of its flourishing economy and booming business climate. His reputation as a gifted architect was established by two projects, the Bank of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Water Works.

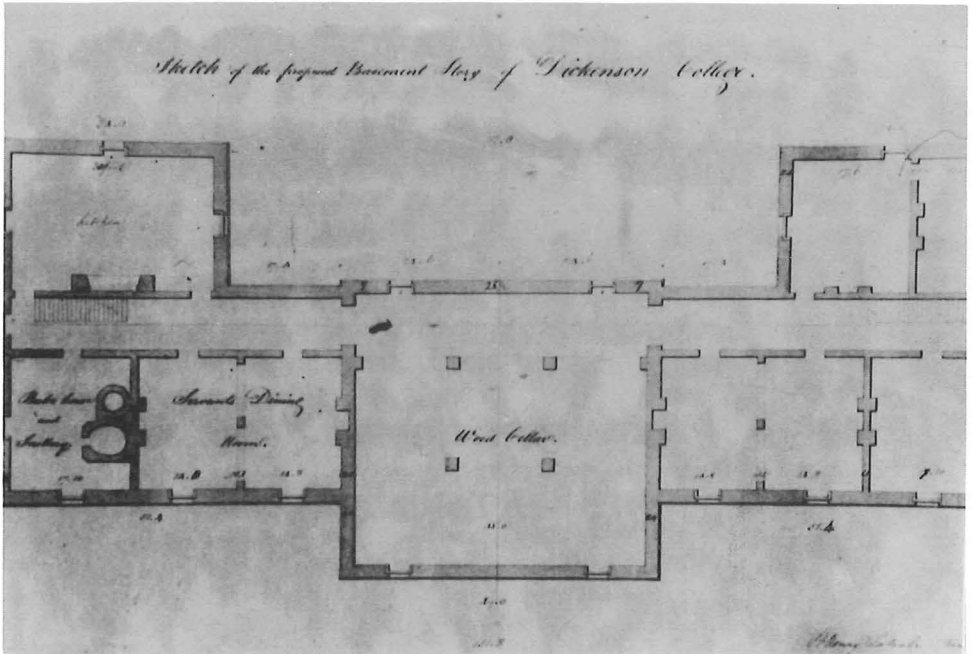
Old West was designed in 1803 as a favor to his good friend and Dickinson trustee, Judge Hugh Henry Brackenridge. When Brackenridge heard that fire had gutted the building which the College had spent four years and its total endowment to construct, he prevailed upon Latrobe to design a new one. The architect began to develop plans and working drawings immediately. Latrobe based his plans on descriptions of the site. He had not been to Carlisle, although he was familiar with the general area because of an earlier assignment from Pennsylvania Governor Thomas McKean to survey the Susquehanna.

The result in Carlisle was a straightforward, functional, yet elegant structure. Latrobe designed a U-shaped building, with the main entrance on the north. The entrance was recessed, to protect it from the wind. He was specific about the exterior materials, recommending, in his words, "the lime stone of your Valley,"³ because it was native to the area and evoked the feeling of strength. He designed the horizontal windowsills and tablets over the north and south entrances to be made of reddish brown cut stone, to contrast with the grey limestone. At that time, stone was used rarely. In fact, Dickinson officials had already purchased the brick for the new building, but instead of using it to face the structure, Latrobe used brick on the inside, as protection against fire.

The original drawings did not show a cupola, but apparently James Hamilton and others believed one was essential for an educational institution and prevailed upon Latrobe to add it. Latrobe designed a cupola after the Athenian Tower of the Winds.



LATROBE'S SKETCH for the south front of Dickinson College.



PROPOSED BASEMENT, by Latrobe, for Dickinson College.

As to the mermaid, the folklore is that a local tinsmith, unfamiliar with illustrations of the triton which adorned the original Tower, converted the god of wind and sea, with its two fish tails, into a mermaid with outstretched arms and bosoms on the front and back.⁴ Although she does not resemble the Greek classic god Latrobe probably envisioned, the mermaid has won acclaim in her own right as a notable example of early American folk art.

For the interior Latrobe designed a tall central chamber, now Memorial Hall, where the entire student body could assemble. Originally this room was a chapel, with a curved balcony which faced the great Palladian doors on the south. Instead of traditional central corridors, Latrobe placed the hallway on the north. In this way he isolated the colder entrance from the classrooms, which were placed on the south where they could be heated by the sun.

When he turned over the working drawings to Judge Brackenridge, Latrobe included a long letter of explanation:

The two aspects, the most unpleasant in our climate, are the North East and the North West. The extreme cold of the North West winds in winter, and their dryness, which causes a rapid evaporation, so thoroughly chills the walls of every house exposed to them, that when the wind, as is almost always the case, changes afterwards to the West and North West and becomes warmer and moister . . . they soon stream with humidity.

The North East winds bring along rain and sleet,—and their violence drives the moisture into every wall of which the material will permit it. The unpleasantness of the winds is aggravated by the suddenness with which the North West commonly succeeds the North East. I have stated these things, which are indeed known to every body, in order to explain a law, which is thereby imposed upon the Architecture of our Country: It is, to reserve the Southern aspects of every building in the erection of which the choice is free, for the inhabited apartments, and to occupy the Northern aspects by communications, as Stairs, Lobbies, Halls, Vestibules, etc.

This law governs the designs herewith presented to you.⁵

The cornerstone for Old West was laid on August 8, 1803, and on November 4, 1805, the first classes were held in the building. On the occasion of the setting of the cornerstone, the *Carlisle Gazette* Reported:

The plan of the building has been furnished by Mr. Latrobe, Surveyor of the Public Works of the United States, and unquestionably the first architect of the age. The donation is considered invaluable as no price can be set on the efforts of the scientific mind. Simplicity and adaptation to the purposes of the Institution are its excellence. As a public building it will do honour to Pennsylvania.⁶

The architect was pleased with his product. He wrote to Henry Clay, "The renovation of Princeton, the College of Carlisle, the Medical Schools of Philadelphia are among the most gratifying exertions of my art . . ." He contributed the blueprints to Dickinson because, as he wrote, "I conceive it to be the interest and duty of every good citizen to promote, *quoad virile*, the education, and civilization of the Society in which he and his children are to live..."⁷ Latrobe traveled to Carlisle, probably in 1813, and made an ink drawing of the College.

Old West was the second academic building designed by Latrobe. He was commissioned to redesign Nassau Hall at Princeton after the original had been gutted by fire in 1802. When hearing of this disaster, Dickinson's first President, Charles Nesbit, wrote to a friend:

We have been bothered by the Trustees to make our College conform to Princeton College. We have now attained a pretty near Conformity to it by having our Building burnt to the Ground.⁹

Old West is one of the few buildings designed by Latrobe which remains intact and substantially true to his original design. In 1963 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Landmarks.

It is a tribute to Latrobe's dedication to his friends and to the cause of education that he agreed to divert his energies from his primary task at the time, designing and overseeing the construction of the United States Capitol, to contribute to a new, struggling college.

The Capitol was a project much more grand in scale but with its own limitations and frustrations. Latrobe was the third architect to tackle this assignment. The first, William Thornton, a physician and "gentleman architect," won a competition to design the Capitol. His plan was in the style and spirit of an enlarged English coun-

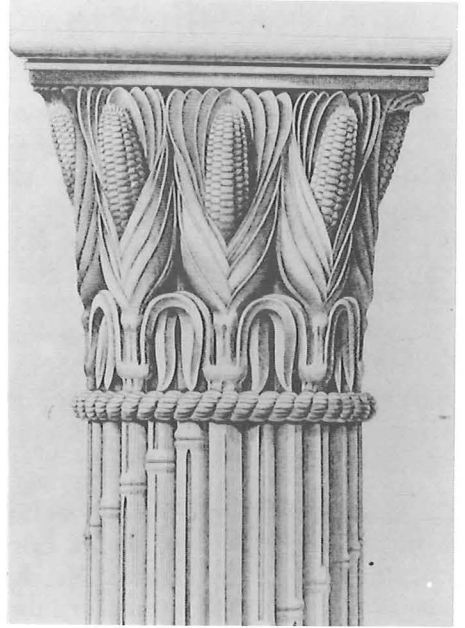


EXTERIOR OF Latrobe's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Baltimore.

try house, developed from sketches he had seen in various architectural publications. His design appealed to President George Washington and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, who responded to its grandeur and simplicity. Soon the shortcomings of Thornton's design, especially on the interior, and his lack of knowledge of engineering and construction methods, became apparent. He was replaced by James Hoban, architect of the President's House, but unfortunately, Thornton retained his office as a city commissioner and his standing among Washington's social elite. Because of his position, he could thwart Hoban's attempts to initiate any changes. Hoban soon gave up in despair.

Little progress was made on the Capitol for seven years. By 1800, as the deadline for moving the national government from Philadelphia to the District of Columbia drew near, only one wing of the Capitol had been completed. The House, Senate, and Supreme Court moved into these cramped quarters. Within two years, the roof was leaking, the plaster was cracking, and fundamental repairs were necessary. Realizing that the project must move ahead, after nine years of mistakes, Thomas Jefferson, now President, persuaded Congress to appropriate \$50,000 to continue. He appointed his acquaintance, Benjamin Latrobe, to assume the position formerly held by Thornton and Hoban.

Latrobe did not have the freedom to conceive of a completely new design, but was instructed to execute Thornton's plan, as approved by George Washington. He was permitted to change the interior design, but Thornton, still an influential figure, was quick to criticize. The House Chamber, the Supreme Court, and the Senate Chamber were products of Latrobe's talent.



INNOVATIONS in the capitals Latrobe designed for columns in the National Capitol.

His penchant for Greek forms, geometric shapes, vaulted ceilings, and domes was evident. Latrobe was permitted to change Thornton's plan somewhat, and he arranged the House Chamber into two semi-circles on either side of a central rectangle, topped with a great sky-lit dome. Fluted Corinthian columns flanked the rear of the Chamber. The dome strained the friendship between Latrobe and President Jefferson temporarily. Jefferson insisted on the replica of a glass dome he had seen in Paris, while Latrobe insisted such a ceiling would be unsatisfactory because water would condense on the glass and drip. Against his better judgment, Latrobe conceded to Jefferson, lamenting, "What shall I do when the condensed vapor showers down upon the heads of members . . .?"¹⁰

Latrobe commissioned several pieces of sculpture for the Chamber, including a seven-foot representation of Liberty and a fourteen foot eagle. Latrobe rejected the first sketches of the great eagle, complaining that it looked "too Roman," and asked his friend, Charles Willson Peale, to draw an American bald eagle as a model.

The Senate wing was redesigned and capped with a vaulted, fireproof ceiling. Latrobe replaced the existing entrance with a more accessible, spacious lobby, lined with columns. He deviated from the classical tradition by designing capitals for the columns in the form of ears of corn, a distinctly American touch. Latrobe won high praise for his "corn cob columns" and was so pleased he sent one to Jefferson, who used it as a base for a sundial at Monticello.

The Supreme Court, located directly below the Senate Chamber, was in the shape of a semicircle. The elegant ceiling was designed as a ribbed semi-dome, with radiating vaults which gave the appearance of an overarching umbrella.

By 1811 the essential working parts of the Capitol were finished. His genius was noticed and appreciated by many. President Jefferson praised the House Chamber, saying it was "worthy of the first temple dedicated to the sovereignty of the people, embellishing with Athenian taste the course of a nation looking far beyond the range of Athenian destinies."¹¹ While many praised his work, many condemned it. William Thornton was critical of the great bald eagle sculpture, complaining that it looked like a goose.¹² Congressmen found fault with the acoustics in the House Chamber, a flaw Latrobe himself acknowledged. Representative John Randolph of Virginia quipped that the Chamber was "handsome and fit for anything but the use intended."¹³ Latrobe himself complained about the "noisy echoes, who having no respect of persons, repeated with equal impartiality the speeches of the eloquent, (and) the reveries of the stupid."¹⁴ The critics would not be silenced, and Congress, impatient to turn its attention to other issues, refused to appropriate money to complete the Capitol. Latrobe had no choice but to abandon the project in 1813.

Within two years Latrobe returned to Washington. The British had burned the Capitol, and, at the prompting of Latrobe's wife, Mary Elizabeth, President James Madison asked him to redesign it. Latrobe designed new porticos, terraces and staircases to enhance the exterior. He changed the shape of the House Chamber to improve the acoustics, but retained the columns from the original plan. New sculptures were commissioned, including another eagle, and a monumental "Chariot of History." Today, Latrobe's House Chamber is known as Statuary Hall.

The Senate Chamber was enlarged, giving Latrobe an opportunity to incorporate another rotunda. He replaced the old staircase from the Supreme Court to the Senate with a two-story rotunda topped with a cupola. The glass-covered dome allowed light to penetrate into the center of the building and improved the ventilation. For the capitals of the columns, Latrobe borrowed on an earlier theme and designed a tobacco leaf. He also designed a column with a cotton blossom, but it was not used. This new rotunda, known as the "ornamental air shaft" can be seen in the Capitol today.

For the Supreme Court Latrobe relied heavily on his earlier design but enlarged the dimensions. The result has been described as "a bold conception of the most complete expressive honesty, entirely unprecedented in shape and detail. Nowhere else perhaps did Latrobe achieve so perfectly that complete expression of the integration of form and structure for which he was always seeking."¹⁵

From the beginning of his work on the Capitol, Latrobe had not had the luxury of designing the building as an integral structure but had been forced to consider it in a piecemeal fashion, one room at a time. With the redesign of the most important chambers completed, he began to conceive of the structure as a whole. He drew a Library of Congress with an Egyptian motif, adjacent to the Senate Chamber. He also planned a monumental Greek Doric propylaea or grand entrance to the Capitol at the base of the hill, but it was not constructed.

For the central, great rotunda, commonly considered the focal point of the Capitol, Latrobe created four niches to delineate the vast space. Unfortunately, this plan was not executed, leaving the rotunda as it is today, a cavernous, architecturally uninspired space.

Latrobe's second tenure in Washington ended prematurely, as critics and political enemies again gained the upper hand. He was forced to resign in 1817.

He left all his designs and drawings with President James Monroe despite their strained relationship. This gesture revealed the devotion the architect felt to the project and the country. Most of his plans were executed by his successor, Charles Bulfinch, over the next thirteen years, with only minor modifications.

The fact that Bulfinch, also a noted architect, did not alter his plans significantly, speaks for Latrobe's talent.

Thomas Jefferson recognized his abilities:

Besides constant commendations of your taste in architecture, and science in execution, I declared on many and all occasions that I considered you the only person in the United States who could have executed the Representative Chamber, or who could execute the middle building on any of the plans proposed . . . With respect to yourself, the little disquietudes from individuals not chosen for their taste in art, will be sunk into oblivion, while the Representative Chamber will remain a durable monument of your taste as an architect.¹⁶

Latrobe's biographer, Talbot Hamlin, wrote:

In 1792 Washington wrote to David Steward in Philadelphia that "[T]he public buildings in size, form and elegance should look beyond the present day." Of all the architects who worked on the Capitol, it was Latrobe who most faithfully strove to realize this ideal—and the history of the building since he left it at the end of 1817 proves with what essential success.¹⁷

The Capitol and the College—two distinctive structures with a noble connection.

ENDNOTES

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- 3 Charles Coleman Sellers, *Dickinson College: A History* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 129.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- 5 Hamlin, p. 193.
- 6 Sellers, p. 130.
- 7 Hamlin, p. 193.
- 8 Sellers, "Old West," an ephemeral piece published by Dickinson College c. 1961, p. 2.
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- 10 Hamlin, p. 274.
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- 12 Hamlin, p. 283.
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- 17 Hamlin, p. 456.

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Sarah's Story

Emily Deeter

Sarah Mather Deeter was a prototype for a mid-19th—mid-20th century middle class woman. The daughter of an enterprising couple, she was a good student in school, studied voice, married a singer, kept house and reared a family of five children in Mechanicsburg, a fairly typical, largely middle-class town in central Pennsylvania. Below the surface, Sarah Deeter was a strong, independent woman who was not about to sublimate her interests. She loved her children, encouraged them greatly in their individual pursuits, but did not live her life through them. Sarah Mather Deeter lived her own life.

The first child of Edmund and Jane Mather, Sarah was born in 1852 at the Crabtree Creek Papermill; three miles from Raleigh, N.C. A brother, Aked James, born near Mt. Holly lived only a few weeks and was buried at Papertown, Pennsylvania

Sarah, a student at Miss Woodward's School in Harrisburg, earned good marks, according to report cards from her 16th, 17th and 18th years of age. She was especially good in "English Branches" (writing and grammar) and languages. She later attended Young Ladies Seminary in Carlisle, where the program for the "closing exercises," June 12, 1873 noted that she sang in two duets and one solo, no doubt the beginning of a career as a singer that was to follow.¹

In 1861 when Sarah was nine years of age, her father enlisted in the Pennsylvania Volunteer 84th Regiment, fighting in seven Civil War battles. Earning the rank of lieutenant, he suffered from shell shock and could not work for a number of years following the war. During the war and his disability, his wife, Jane, supported the family by operating a millinery shop in Harrisburg, located at one time at 36 North Second Street. In 1893 Edmund Mather started a business for water appliances and steam fixtures in Harrisburg. He was Harrisburg's water commissioner for fourteen years, creating a water supply system that was a model for the state (He changed from pump to a filter system, initiated water metering and reduced drastically the typhoid fever rate.)

Sarah's first public appearance as a singer was at Professor Ettore Barili's Fourth Grand Annual Concert at Music Fund Hall, Harrisburg, on April 12, 1872 when she was twenty years old. Admission was \$1.00. A program for Inaugural Night for the Grand Opera House on October 13, 1873 gives her top billing. The Harrisburg *Telegraph* wrote: "Miss S. E. Mather, the soprano, rendered several selections in fine style, and was loudly applauded. She has a fine voice which is highly cultivated and is under perfect control."

When she sang at the Floral Concert, in the hall of the House of Representatives, before "a very large and exceedingly select audience," the Harrisburg *Patriot* said, "Miss S. E. Mather was especially favored with applause after rendering the solo arranged for her in the programme. She was encored so heartily that in order to satisfy the audience she appeared and performed the 'Last Rose of Summer' on the



SARAH MATHER DEETER. From the author's collection.

piano, accompanying it with her rich voice in a delightful manner. Miss Mather has had the advantage of a thorough musical education and the high appreciation of her efforts by an intellectual audience proves she has accomplished a grand success.”

JASPER

On April 18, 1874 when Sarah sang in the Grand Vocal and Instrumental Concert given by the Mozart Quartette in Franklin Hall, Mechanicsburg, the name of Mr. Deeter also appeared on the program. Both sang solos, and they, with “Mr. Cruchnell,” sang “Stars of the Night” by Campana. Three and one-half years later Sarah married Jasper Newton Deeter on Thanksgiving morning, 1877.

Jasper Deeter was born in Lewistown Narrows to Jacob and Margaret Baer Deeter in 1847. The family moved to Harrisburg when he was fifteen years old. As a youth he was a newsboy on the trains running west to Kansas. Deeter was private secretary to James McCormick of Harrisburg, worked at Dauphin Deposit Bank, and was vice president and treasurer of his father-in-law’s business, E. Mather Co. until his death in 1917.

While Harrisburg was home to the couple later in their lives, it was in Mechanicsburg they chose to raise their family of five children: Ruth, Lile, Jane, Edmund and Jasper, Jr. the father spent the week at work in Harrisburg and weekends with the family in Mechanicsburg. He was a councilman in Mechanicsburg from 1889 to 1905. The family lived at three locations in Mechanicsburg—on Portland Street, on West Main at Broad Street in a white frame house and across the street at 434 West Main in a large brick house, the latter two homes still standing. Although each family member was a strong individual, the Deeter family was close-knit. The children had great respect and love for their parents. Throughout their varied lives they kept in close touch.

Jasper Deeter, Sr., did not believe in advanced education for women, although he sent his sons to private schools: Edmund to the Harrisburg Academy, Mercersburg Academy and Cornell University; Jasper to Conway Hall and Dickinson College. Ruth, the eldest child, wanted to be a doctor. Her father insisted she work in the family business. She did, but she also successfully raised geese at a farm near Portland Street, shipped them to New York City restaurants and earned enough money to send her two younger sisters through Irving College in Mechanicsburg and herself through the Philadelphia College of Osteopathy.

SARAH

When Sarah Deeter was fifty years old, with three children still at home, she took an unusual step. She “told her family she would no longer be responsible for anyone but herself. A gifted singer, she hired extra household help and paid their wages from money she earned by giving voice lessons. Although she never did routine housework again . . . she remained the psychic center of the household.”² She pursued a variety of interests that led to her being a founder of the Mechanicsburg Woman’s Club, the Shakespeare Club and a gardening club. Interested in enriching the lives of others in

CLOSING EXERCISES

OF

Young Ladies' Seminary,

Carlisle, Pa., June 12th, 1873.

Reading of the Scriptures,

BY THE SCHOOL.

PRAYER.

Essay,—“SIR WM. WALLACE.”

Composed by Miss SALLIE GRAHAM, read by Miss CLARA ELLIOTT.

Music,—DUET—“BOHEMIAN GIRL”—Beyer.

Miss MATHER and Miss MINNIE LANE.

Recitation,—“THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL.”—Lowell.

Miss SALLIE GRAHAM.

Music,—DUET—“THE CONVENT BELLS.”—Blackley.

Miss MATHER and Miss MARY GIBSON.

Essay,—“MILESTONES.”

Composed and read by Miss LAURA SHAPLEY.

Recitation,—“LA VIOLETTE.”—Deschamps.

Miss ALICE LAW.

Music,—DUET—“LE POSTILLION DE LONJUMEAU.”

Miss CLARA ELLIOTT and Miss MAGGIE GIBSON.

Recitation,—“MARCH TO MOSCOW.”—Southey.

Miss MINNIE LANE.

Music,—SOLO—“WAITING.”—Millard.

Miss MARY GIBSON.

Recitation,—“MOTHER AND POET.”—Browning.

Miss KATE IRVINE.

Music,—“INVITATION TO THE DANCE.”—Howitt.

Misses MINNIE and ELLA BURKHOLDER.

Dialogue,—“THE EXAMINATION.”

Misses MINNIE LANE, SALLIE GRAHAM and LAURA SHAPLEY.

Music,—“I WOULD THAT MY LOVE.”—Mendelssohn.

Miss MINNIE LANE.

Essay,—“OUR SCHOOL YEAR.”

Composed and read by Miss KATIE IRVINE.

Music,—SOLO—“ROBERT, TOI QUE J'AIME.”—Meyerbeer.

Miss MATHER.

DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES.

Music,—“PARTING SONG.”

BY THE SCHOOL.

BENEDICTION.

the arts, she believed that women had other interests than raising children, important as that was.

Sarah studied at the Chautauqua Conference Center, New York, for periods during several summers. She learned to paint china (her work was fired at Titzels in Mechanicsburg and a number of her pieces are in the possession of her grandchildren); she attended lectures in the classics, crafts, horticulture; and she attended concerts. An avid letter writer, she regularly received letters from her children, especially her daughters about their work, a conference they were attending, or an issue of their concern. Ruth wrote her mother a twelve-page letter from the National Woman Suffrage Convention in Philadelphia, PA, November 21-26, 1912. "This is a notable gathering and I wish for you and Lile continuously. Momentous questions of policy for the National Woman Suffrage Association affairs are being wrangled. Out of the turmoil there will come, of course, some progress."³ In a letter to her son Jasper, who founded the first repertory theatre in the United States, she asked why he did not write more often. He explained that he communicated daily with twenty-eight actors in the Hedgerow Theatre Company and another forty attending night classes and he had no energy after that to engage in further communication. The Deeters were always direct and not gifted in small talk.

Sarah Deeter traveled occasionally, sometimes with her husband and father, sometimes with her daughters. Wherever she visited—the Caribbean, the west, southwest, New York City—she recorded observations, about weather, sights of interest, local people, and always about flowers. Her notes included sketches of flowers, their Latin names, etc. Around 1910 the Deeters built a large stone summer cottage on Mountain Road in Summerdale, at the foot of Blue Mountain. (It was destroyed in 1970 when Route 81 was constructed.) The four-acre property accommodated a large formal garden with many sections and a cutting garden. "Her gardening techniques were pretty much self taught, but as her experience grew she attracted other gardening enthusiasts and was always well versed on the leading trends of the day."⁴ Roses were her specialty. She hired local people as part-time gardeners. One, John Gingrich, a railroad engineer taught them about horticulture, sometimes reading Shakespeare to them as they worked and always offering refreshments. A bond developed between the Deeters and the Summerdale workers and their families that lasted many years. On a Sunday afternoon it was not unusual to see as many as fifty people come to visit the Deeter garden. Sarah or another family member would give them a tour, naming each plant or tree by both English and Latin Names. Long before the word "ecology" became popular, Sarah Deeter practiced it. She never used artificial fertilizer, and the only chemical she used was kerosene. She was happiest during the summer months at Summerdale where she later built a small house for herself near the stone cottage.

RUTH

Ruth Alice Deeter, born in 1878, began her career as a doctor of osteopathy by starting the Osteopathic Sanitarium in Rose Valley. She later became the first woman osteopathic physician in Harrisburg, building a large practice that included many charitable cases. The latter would sometimes offer her, in return for treatment,

lessons in art, swimming, ballet, piano for her three nieces. "She was almost always cheerful, self-assured and never retiring."⁵ Well respected among fellow osteopaths, Ruth Deeter also had good rapport with some medical doctors, very unusual in a period of extended animosity between the two professions. If a patient needed medical attention, she referred that patient to a particular MD. If surgery was required, she was present in the operating room. Dr. Deeter was actively involved in founding the Osteopathic Clinic on Chestnut Street in Harrisburg. She was a vice president of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Association and president of the Harrisburg Osteopathic Association and Auxiliary.

Always interested in music (when she lived in New York she was also soloist at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church), "the physician shared a lifetime love of the theater with her brother, Jasper, who was a close friend of Eugene O'Neill."⁶ Ruth Deeter helped to establish the Harrisburg Community Theater in 1926. She was a board member and acted in and directed HCT productions occasionally. Her last theater project before her death in 1944 was directing Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*.

Her hobby was fixing up her small house and barn on Mountain Road in Summerdale, several miles from her mother's cottage. She called it "my mansion" or "my chalet." The chief focus of her entire life was caring for others, family, friends, and patients, and an early evidence of that was putting her sisters through college. She burned herself out.

LILE

Lile George Deeter Harwood, born in 1880, while quite competent, was the quietest of the sisters. Her education beyond Irving College included studies at the Fanny Farmer Boston Cooking School, Teachers College/Columbia University (an MA degree), and Dickinson College. She helped edit the second edition of the *Fanny Farmer Cook Book* and taught at a United States government Indian School in Indian Territory, now the state of Oklahoma. From 1908 to 1925 she established and operated the Domestic Science Kitchen, at 211 Walnut Street, "a widely known, moderately priced restaurant."

Her career also included managing the James and Donald McCormick home at Front and Walnut Street, Harrisburg and being dietitian for the Seiler School. For a number of years she was secretary and treasurer of E. Mather Co. Jasper Deeter's second daughter learned to balance books early in her life. At one point a set of books balanced, except for one penny. Her father made her work at it until she found the error. She did, but it took most of one night.

On one of Lile's travels she went to London with her sister Jane, who was guest of honor at a gathering of 5,000 Girl Guides. In a letter to her brother, Jasper, Lile said,

We were presented to HRH Princess Mary [after 1910 Queen Mary]. She is head of Guides here and wears their uniform with a purple cocade in her hat and an extra yard of gold rope on her shoulder. She walked about as we all did, inspecting the work of the kids. Jane, with her usual assur-

Grand Opera House

GEORGE KUNKEL,
BUSINESS MANAGER.

INAUGURAL NIGHT!!

Monday Eve'g, October 13, '73.

MISS S. E. MATHER, - *Soprano.*

A. P. TUEPSEK and W. KNOCHE, Pianists.

The *HARMONIC SOCIETY,*

MR. L. H. KINNEARD, *Leader.*

Prof. WEBER and ORCHESTRA.

PART FIRST.

1. OVERTURE—TANCREDI ROSSINI.
WEBER'S ORCHESTRA AND W. KNOCHE.
2. DEDICATION ORATION. BY A PROMINENT CITIZEN.
3. CHORUS—THE HEAVENS ARE TELLING HAYDN.
HARMONIC SOCIETY AND ORCHESTRA.
4. DUET—Violin and Piano. VERDI.
MESSRS. W. WEBER AND W. KNOCHE.
5. SOLO—Soprano—COME E BELLO DONIZETTI.
MISS S. E. MATHER.
6. QUINTETTE—STABAT MATER ROSSINI.
MESSRS. WEBER, CRUIKSHANK, JUST, NEWMAYER AND KNOCHE.

PART SECOND.

1. CHORUS—NOW TRAMP O'ER MOSS AND FELL. . BISHOP.
HARMONIC SOCIETY.
2. DUET—Violin & Piano—FANTAISE MELODIQUE. SINGELIE.
MESSRS. WEBER AND KNOCHE.
3. SOLO—Soprano—WAITING MILLARD.
MISS S. E. MATHER.
4. QUARTETTE—Vocal—SERENADE MASON.
MRS. SEES, MISS CROFT, MESSRS. HYERS AND COATES.
5. VALSE BRILLIANT—LA PETITE COQUETTE. ZICKOFF.
WEBER'S ORCHESTRA AND W. KNOCHE.
6. CHORUS—"Glory and Love to the Men of Old" GOUNOD
HARMONIC SOCIETY AND ORCHESTRA.

SEIG, PRINTER, HARRISBURG.

MISS SARAH MATHER sang a Donazetti number at the opening night of the Harrisburg Grand Opera House.
Author's collection.

ance, suggested that she visit America just as her brother had. We were surrounded by lords and barons and ladies etc, who all seemed human.”

Lile was married to Carlton Harwood, a carpenter, and they were later divorced. She died in 1951.

JANE

The first job of Jane Deeter Rippin, born in 1882, was teacher in a one-room school house (still standing at South Market Street, Mechanicsburg, and Winding Hill Road. Next she became assistant to the principal of Mechanicsburg High School. In 1908, with her sisters' encouragement Jane embarked on her career in social work, becoming assistant superintendent of Children's Village, an orphanage and foster home in Meadowbrook, followed by supervisor of case workers of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. She married James Y. Rippin, an architect, in 1913. A year later she was appointed chief probation officer for Philadelphia, responsible for the probation work of five courts—domestic relations, petty criminal for unmarried mothers, juveniles, miscreants and women's court for sex offenders. When her father heard her salary for the job was to be \$5,000, he, believing women should not earn such a large salary, suggested she decline the job. Rippin disagreed and accepted the position. She instituted social and psychological examinations and opened the first multipurpose municipal detention home for women offenders.

Reflecting her strong belief in alternatives to traditional incarceration, the women's building served as a dormitory style prison. Keenly aware of women's and children's needs, Rippin installed day nurseries in courts dealing with families.⁹ After a visit to the courts in Philadelphia, Theodore Roosevelt said of her that she was the kind of public servant for whose existence not only Philadelphia but the whole United States should be thankful.

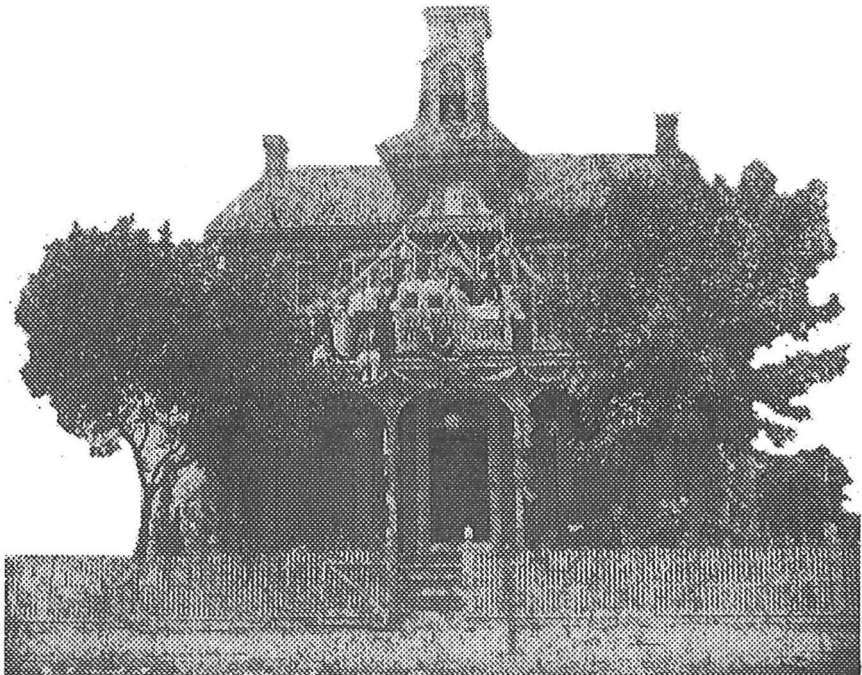
In 1917 Rippin was asked by the War and Navy Department's Commission on Training Camp activities to supervise the women and girls near military camps in the southwest. She organized communities around the bases to fund and sponsor centers with programs for girls and women which offered alternatives to delinquency. Rippin, concerned about delinquency, called for a study of its causes and how to combat it. The study's recommendations became a major part of the rationale for organizing the United Service Organization (USO) in 1941.

While in the southwest Rippin became interested in the potential of a young organization, Girl Scouts, Inc., to offer wholesome activities for adolescent girls. She became national director of the organization from 1919 to 1930. A leader with a strong sense of vision accompanied a skill in how to achieve it, she established an environment for the organization's growth from 50,000 to 250,000 in her tenure. Rippin knew how to raise money and from whom to get it. She is credited with starting the annual cookie sale. A major concern of hers was the necessity of a collaborative attitude between staff and volunteers. She developed a national training program to accomplish that goal and built a camp—Camp Edith Macy—in Westchester County, New York, to house the training program which is still operational. Rippin was a hands-on leader. She led her own scout troop while national director and visited councils and troops across the United States.

During her tenure in scouting she became friends with Mrs. Herbert Hoover, then president of the Girl Scouts. Rippin's scrap books contain letters from Hoover and place cards from dinners she attended at the White House.

An evaluation comes from her grand-nephew, Edmund Deeter Crawford, of Harrisburg: "I see Aunt Jane as a fiercely independent woman in a time when it was not popular to be so . . . bucking the trend because it was the right thing to do. What my generation tried to do in the '60s was made possible by people like Jane who took the chance in the '10s, '20s and '30s."¹⁰

In 1931 Rippin embarked on a third career—journalist. She became director of research for women's news for the Westchester County Publishers, a chain of 50 papers serving the county. She excelled in balancing attention to current issues of women with traditional women's activities. A favorite pastime was gardening at her home in Ossining, N.Y. In 1936 she had a serious stroke that left her partially paralyzed and aphasic. With her usual determination she learned, again, to recognize letters and words, to write and to speak. She returned to work, the same position, and continued as a leader in the Westchester community until she suffered a final stroke in 1953. At her death former president Herbert Hoover said, "I have known Mrs. Rippin for over 30 years. She has contributed greatly to our country over all these



DEETER HOME in Mechanicsburg. Author's collection.

years. She was a great lady and a loyal friend.”¹¹

EDMUND

Jasper and Sarah Deeter's fourth child, Edmund Mather Deeter, was born in 1886. His life was the most traditional of the five children. He attended Mechanicsburg school's, graduated from the Harrisburg and Mercersburg Academies, and went to Cornell University, Edmund was called home from college to help run the family business, E. Mather Co., when his father became ill. The business would soon change from selling plumbing and heating appliances to automotive equipment. He had one of the first cars in Harrisburg, a Stanley Steamer. In 1912 he married Martha Ann Foltz. In 1924, with four children, Edmund and Martha re-located in Camp Hill to raise their children "in the country." They said they would return to Harrisburg when the children were grown. They never did.

Edmund was active in automotive trade associations, holding office at times. He was active in the Chamber of Commerce, as a member of its military liaison committee, worked with officers at the area military establishments. Deeter was a founder and officer of the Exchange Club and a long-time Rotarian. He was a director of Dauphin Deposit Trust Company from its founding as a public bank in 1922 and was president of the bank's Market Street branch board at the time of his death. He chaired a meeting of that group the day of his death in 1958.

Another music lover, he had a good baritone voice and sang in the Brahms Club (which later became the Choral Society), the Harrisburg Scottish Rite Consistory Choir, the Zembo Chanters and the church choir: St. Luke's Episcopal in Mechanicsburg and Pine Street Presbyterian in Harrisburg. Paul Beers wrote: "A who's who of Harrisburg names who have been a part of [the Choral Society]: McCormick, McFarland, Bailey, Boyd, Boas, Dull, Calder, Deeter, Rutherford . . ." ¹²

Edmund had strong family loyalty. He and Martha extended their family to include a couple of her relatives during several periods in which they experienced difficulty. He helped his parents, sisters and brother when they needed him. One of his customs was to lunch with his mother several times a week, discussing current events, changes in the area—new highways, buildings, businesses, etc. Another custom, in summers, was driving his daughters and their friends or other campers who needed a ride to Pine Grove Scout Camp in Cumberland County.

He was a hardworking father. He went through some tough experiences, the depression and the 1936 flood which all but wiped out the family business. It took six years to overcome that loss. He had an engineers mind; he needed to know how things worked. In normal conversation technical facts would appear¹³

Like all the Deeters he had a deep affection for his family but was not demonstrative. "When we gathered for Sunday dinner at 2:00 p.m., he always had a jacket or sweater and tie, and sat at the head of the table, the head of the family. We also had to be dressed and we knew not to do any carrying on, at the table or in his presence."¹⁴In a letter to his daughter he said:

I shall always remember my mother crying for hours when each one of us left home. Ruth first to go to New York to study. Then Lile to Boston

Cooking School, then Jane to Philadelphia. It was always the same thing. She really loved us all dearly and it hurt her to see us leave home but she would not in the world have asked us to remain. So it is with me and your mother. We may not show it but each time you leave we do feel as you do . . . Then we look ahead and see the future for you, then we adjust ourselves to the change.¹⁵ Edmund was a very unassuming person. At his death at age 72, his daughter Jean remembers that "his sudden death was devastating to us. We got so many letters of condolences which showed us how greatly he was admired in the community . . .

In speaking of his grandparents, Edmund and Martha Deeter, Edmund Deeter Crawford said "they had certain expectations of behavior, manners and demeanor. As much as I may have not liked that atmosphere back then, I am a better person for it now, and I know that was their intent all along."¹⁶

JASPER, JR.

Jasper Newton, Jr., born in 1893, struck out on his own at age seventeen. He was just seven years old when his mother announced "her independence." Perhaps that planted the idea in his mind. He headed for Chautauqua, New York, where he worked as a short order cook and waiter, studying in his free time. He declined to enter the family business; his interest was in the arts, particularly theatre. After four months at Chautauqua he repaid the family housekeeper, Mabel Webber, from whom he borrowed the \$10 to leave home. When borrowing the money from her, he said, "If you don't loan me the money I'll steal it from my mother's house money." Though Jasper bore the family resemblance he stood out from the others. In fact he stood out wherever he was. He had the ability to separate himself from the pressures of society. He was an early nonconformist and truly did not care what the other person thought. Jasper's hair was uncombed, his face unshaven, his clothes rumpled. He thought it a waste to worry over something as superficial as appearance. He did what he wanted to do. While there was a selfish aspect to that, he would spend hours helping someone who would come to him with a problem, and a lot of people did.¹⁷ A niece said, "When we were growing up and someone would ask 'Are you related to Jasper Deeter,' we were ambivalent about whether to admit the relationship, because he was so different from everybody else." As conforming adolescents, trying to deal with this nonconforming family members, it was not always easy.

Jasper came to love Shakespeare early in life. A family tale is told that his mother read Shakespeare to Jasper while Edmund would be outside rolling the clay tennis court in their house at South Broad and West Main Streets. Jasper had a passion for theatre. His life in the theatre encompassed acting, directing and teaching. Testimony from his students, colleagues and critiques underscore his success in all three areas.

His early acting was with the Chautauqua circuit, and he acted and directed with the Provincetown Players on MacDougal Street, Greenwich Village, New York City, where he became a friend of Eugene O'Neill. Deeter acted in a number of his friend's plays. He played the part of Smithers in *The Emperor Jones*.

The play called for a black lead, but until then no Negro had ever played a major role in an American tragedy in New York. O'Neill expected it to

be played by a white man in black face, but Deeter argued that Charles S. Gilpin, a Negro, be cast. Gilpin made a success of it and the American theatre broke the color barrier."¹⁹

In 1923 Jasper Deeter founded Hedgerow Theatre in Rose Valley, near Philadelphia and labored intensively to build his dream, a real repertory theatre company. The venture began with several actors; their first production was George Bernard Shaw's *Candida* "Since then Hedgerow has offered one hundred original productions and hundreds of classics . . . an impressive list of performers moved from Hedgerow into the force of American drama—John Beal, Richard Basehart, Van Heflin, Ann Harding, Harry Ballaver . . ."²⁰

When the company was at its height in the mid-1920s and early 1930s it would have fifteen plays active in its repertory. An actor could have a lead in an Ibsen work one night, be ticket taker the next, have a part in an O'Neill play the next night, and be cook at Hedgerow House where the company lived the next night. Jasper Deeter always wanted to produce plays that made people think. He continued working full-time at Hedgerow until 1959. After that his energy was directed at teaching only.



SARAH MATHER DEETER in the front yard of her garden at Summerdale. Author's collection.

He could have had a Hollywood career, he told a nephew, but Hollywood could not tell me as director exactly where my authority started and where it stopped, so I made no deal with them.

Deeter's final performance was on July 30, 1967, at the Harrisburg Community Theatre. It was a one-man event in which Deeter, who knew Eugene O'Neill and his brother Jamie well, focused on the relationship between the two brother. "He chose to do it by reading excerpts from two O'Neill plays that demonstrated the relationship *Beyond the Horizon* and *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Reading the scripts with the aid of magnifying glasses, Mr. Deeter occasionally stepped out of character to comment on the scenes.²¹ He died in 1972.

The unusually accomplished lives of Sarah Mather Deeter's five children were an unwritten testimony to the strength, talent and purpose of their mother's life, although she never would have sought any testimony to it. Her motto for life was to fulfill your responsibilities, find ways to be true to yourself, and pursue your own interests seriously. Quite apart from her children's achievements, her life's record illustrates her unusual independence in the midst of a climate of conformity. A biographer of her daughter, Jane, referred to Sarah Deeter's "declaration of independence" at age 50 "an unusual step for an upper-middle class Victorian woman famed for her gardens and hospitality. . ."²²

Sarah Mather Deeter lived a very unusual life that ended October 22, 1942.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Program in author's collection.
- 2 Barbara Sicherman and Carol Hurd Green, *Notable American Women* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1980). Hereinafter Sicherman and Green, *Notable Women*.
- 3 Correspondence in the author's collection.
- 4 Interview with Edmund Mather Deeter, Jr.
- 5 Interview with E. Jean Deeter.
- 6 Harrisburg *Sunday Patriot-News* 20 February 1983.
- 7 Harrisburg *Evening News* 6 July 1951.
- 8 Correspondence in author's collection.
- 9 Sicherman and Green, *Notable Women*.
- 10 Interview with Edmund Deeter Crawford.
- 11 New Rochelle *Reporter-Dispatch* 4 June 1953.
- 12 Harrisburg *Evening News* 26 November 1980.
- 13 Interview with Edmund Mather Deeter, Jr.
- 14 Interview with Albert B. Crawford II.
- 15 Correspondence in author's possession.
- 16 Interview with Edmund Deeter Crawford.
- 17 Interview with Edmund Deeter, Jr.
- 18 Interview with E. Jean Deeter.
- 19 Harrisburg *Patriot* 1 June 1972.
- 20 Obituary in New York *Times* 1 June 1972.
- 21 New York *Times* 30 July 1967.
- 22 Sicherman and Green, *Notable Women*.

What's In a Name?

Wormleysburg

William A. Cornell

The building of the first Susquehanna River bridge from Harrisburg to Cumberland County brought about the beginning of the first west shore community, Wormleysburg.

When Cumberland County was established in 1750, the west shore for "five or six miles back from the river" since 1736 had already been reserved by the Penn family for the use of the Shawnee Indians. However, the Indians moved on to the west.

At the time of the American Revolution, a French Engineer wrote of the site of Wormleysburg, "There is a small plane 200 to 300 feet between the shore and the mountain. This plane extends for nearly a mile above the [Harris] ferry."

When the Penns decided in 1770 to sell those lands, the site was bought by the not yet legendary John Armstrong of Carlisle, who sold it to John Montgomery, who, in 1790, sold "about 100 acres more or less" to John Wormley, Jr. His German immigrant father had built a still-existing house on his 283 acres west of Erford Road.

The junior Wormley set up a ferry to Harrisburg in 1793 from the site of the present Ferry Street. The street extended west up the "mountain" to meet the Carlisle Pike at the Twelfth Street of present day Lemoyne.

Wormley also operated a saw mill, a grist mill, a blacksmith shop, and a tavern. In 1809 he bought an additional seven acres south of his property from the Kelso family which operated the Harris ferry farther south.

The *Carlisle American* ran an announcement on August 3, 1815, that Wormley had laid out "A VERY HANDSOME TOWN, CALLED WORMLEYSBURG; situate on the west bank of the Susquehanna river, between his ferry and the Harrisburg [Camelback] bridge, which is now erecting over said river." He listed his address as "Wormleys Ferry."

The development was of ninety-one lots 25' wide from Ferry Street south to Black Ash Lane (now Houck Street) facing Front and Second Streets, divided by River Alley. This was to be the basic village of Wormleysburg of East Pennsborough Township for the next seventy-eight years. Logging and lumber businesses thrived along the river with the Wormley, Kelso, Erb and Kilhoffer families buying and selling logs and lumber and developing businesses and real estate. A farmers market operated at the present site of the borough hall on Market Street.

Many of the buildings were of Cumberland County logs, as was illustrated in 1993 when a shop was dismantled at 316 South Front to expose a log tavern built by Jacob Kilhoffer in 1817. In 1893 the village was extended north to Pine Street by the Berghaus estate, adding 155 similar sized lots.

The expanded village was incorporated as a borough in 1909. Operating its own school system in its English Tudor style elementary school building, it paid tuition

for secondary students who took street cars to Lemoyne, Enola or Harrisburg high schools. The West Shore District, after the Jointure, sold the building to a medical center. There is no school house in Wormleysburg.

In 1928 the area north from Pine to beyond Edna Streets with over 360 twenty-five foot lots which had been developed by E. M. Kershey was annexed. The plain in that area allowed for a Third Street.

He had dedicated the river bank to the City of Harrisburg, which was later deeded to Wormleysburg. All the river bank north of the Gingerbread Restaurant belongs to the borough. There had been some private homes east of Front Street near Market Street that were destroyed by the floods, and the lots were sold to the borough. The riverbank north of Edna Street to the Conodoguinet Creek was deeded to the borough by Eliza Wright in 1939 while the area was still part of the East Pennsboro Township.

There have been twenty-five floods in Wormleysburg since 1786, with the worst recorded at 32.57 feet in 1972. The next worse were 29.23 in 1936, 26.8 in 1889 and 24.6 in 1865. Normal river height is about three feet.

Following petitions from East Pennsboro residents in 1952, Wormleysburg passed an ordinance to annex 1,000 acres north to the Conodoguinet Creek and west to 21st Street. Also included was the area south from Houck Street through the "bottleneck" to Lemoyne's Third Street. Following an extended law suit from the township, Wormleysburg reduced its claim to east of Erford Road and agreed to give up the western part of the "bottleneck" to Lemoyne in exchange for the Pennsboro Manor development with its one-acre lots. Riverview Heights developed with 1950s suburban homes, apartment complexes and the county's highest condominiums, Waterford.

The country homes of Leon Leighton in Pennsboro Manor and the Haldeman/Wright/Rupley Yverdon mansion were featured in the Historical Society's *Architectural Survey*.

Wormleysburg doubled its area with its last annexation but comprises only one square mile of area. Its 1990 population was 2,847.

To relieve traffic through the "bottleneck," the Camp Hill by-pass was completed through Wormleysburg's Walnut Street to the river in 1936. In 1952 the new by-pass from Twenty-first Street replaced Wormleysburg's Olive Street to cross the Harvey Taylor Bridge and provided additional access to routes north.

The postal delivery has a confusing history. In 1876 a Wormleysburg post office was opened in a grocery store near the bridge, where residents of the area could get their mail. Subsequent post offices operated in the same manner until 1953, when door-to-door mail service was operated from Lemoyne. The Riverview Heights residents have kept their Camp Hill addresses.

Wormleysburg has always been basically a residential community with residents working first at riverbank lumber and river coal businesses, and later at the Enola railroad yards, factories and the expanded State offices in Harrisburg. Surprisingly, over

one hundred businesses operated in the borough in 1993, including those on Mumma Road and the headquarters of the Harsco Corporation on Poplar Church Road.

Descendants of the Wormley family lived on the southeast corner of Front and Ferry Streets for generations, but in 1994 there were no Wormleys in all of Cumberland County. However, in January, 1993, Mark Wormley of Redondo Beach, California, visited the site of his forebears and wrote borough officials "It was a great moment."

Because of its spectacular view of the river and Harrisburg, the borough adopted the slogan "A Capital Reflection."

Notes on Sources: The above facts are based on various county histories, the ordinance book of the Borough of Wormleysburg, the published works of Robert G. Crist and research by the author.

Book Review

The Indian Industrial School Carlisle, Penna: 1879-1918. By Linda F. Witmer. Illustrated, 166 pp. Carlisle: Cumberland County Historical Society. \$29.95.

Linda Witmer's chronicle of the Carlisle Indian School makes one feel that he was really there and knew some of the students personally. The story begins with the journey of seventy-two shackled Indian prisoners to St. Augustine, Florida in 1875 under Richard Henry Pratt, the transfer of most of them three years later to Hampton, Virginia, and the establishment of the Indian Industrial School at Carlisle in 1879. Pratt served with distinction as Superintendent of the school for twenty-five years.

Richard Pratt was a man with a mission, the mission being "civilizing the Indian by total immersion." He was called by some "the Red Man's Moses," by others "an honest lunatic." Probably both appellations carry a measure of truth. At a time when most white Americans considered Indians still a savage foe, Pratt respected them and sympathetically wanted to help them survive in the white man's world. In all his years as Superintendent, he battled an opposing and dilatory Indian Bureau, which favored reservation schools rather than the remote school at Carlisle.

By the turn of the century, opinion had shifted. Many Americans by then championed the "noble redman," and Pratt's ideas were considered by many to be wrong. Finally, in 1904, after a publicized verbal attack on officials of the Indian Bureau, Pratt was relieved as Superintendent.

The office of Superintendent changed hands a number of times in the years after Pratt, as changes were made to appease the Indian Bureau. The industrial and academic programs deteriorated, and increased emphasis was placed on athletics, especially football. Indian culture was recognized and fostered for a time, but the school was in decline, as Western senators scrutinized non-reservation schools.

In the end it was the War Department which finally closed the school. The facility was needed to serve as a base hospital to take care of soldiers wounded in World War I.

In the early years the age at which some of the students came to Carlisle was quite tender, as young as four years, and the enforced remoteness from home must have been hard. Both Captain and Mrs. Pratt became personally involved with the students, developing with them a parental relationship. One surviving graduate reported few school memories "that are even marginally negative." Another reports being "always glad that I went there."

To say that the book is profusely illustrated would be an understatement. It is filled with photos of interesting students and events. —C. L. Siebert, Jr.

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