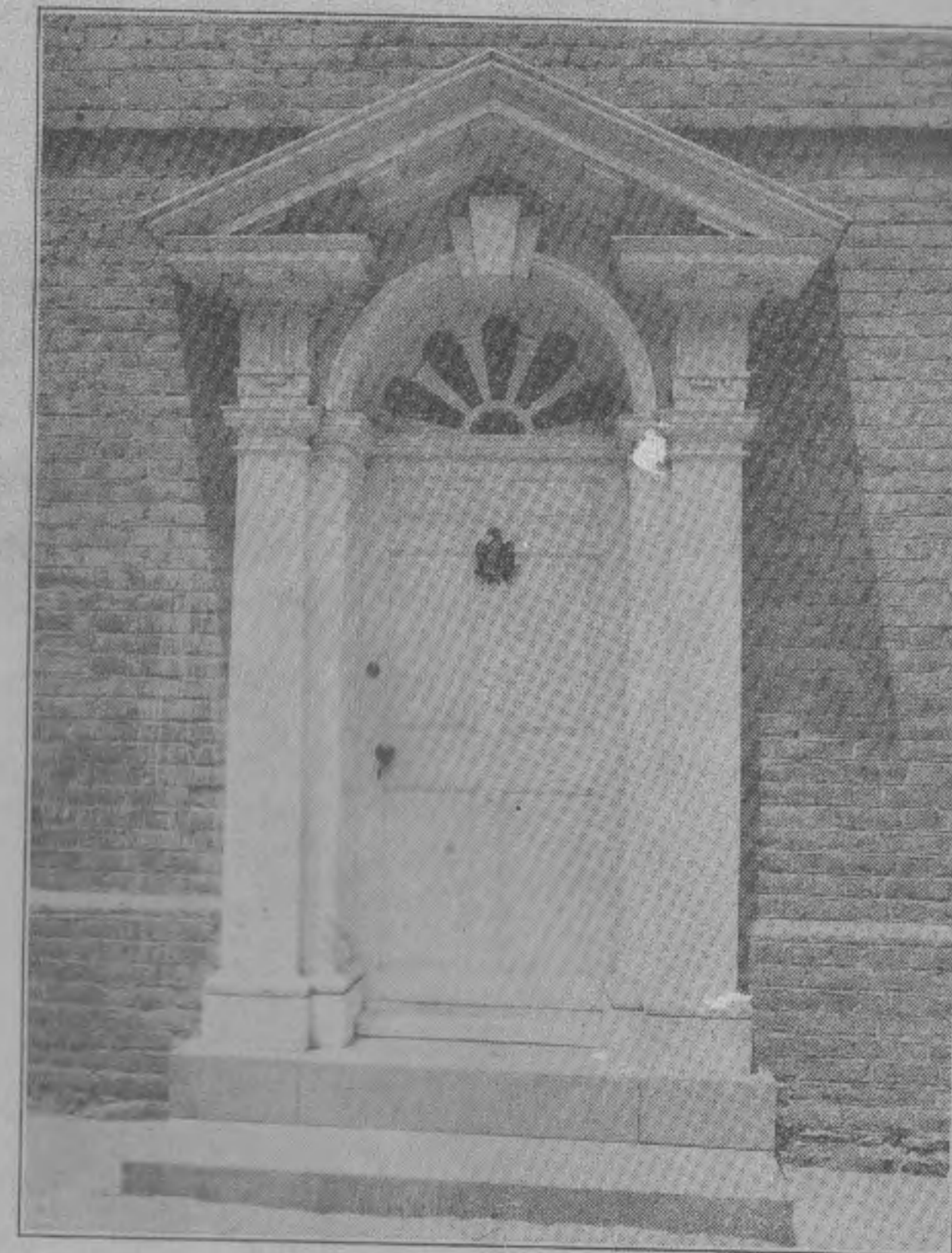


Stories of Old New Castle



Compiled by
ANNE R. JANVIER

Stories of Old New Castle

In the number and variety of names bestowed upon this little town of New Castle, we read the history of the place.

It begins when the mind of man "runneth not to the contrary; this Indian village on the banks of the stream of which Aresapha is the most melodious name and Mackerish-Kitton the worst.

The village they called Tama konck (place of the Beaver) the Indian deed for this is still extant. A few more of the names which meant home to those who dwelt on this point of land, were Sand huken, Grape Vine Point, Windruffe-udden, Ft. Casimir, Ft. Trafaldigheets (or Trinity Fort), Ft. Casimir again, New Amstel, New Castle. The River besides the names mentioned was called the Poutaxat, Lennipi Whittock, the Zuydt or South River, (in distinction from the North River or the Hudson), and lastly the Delaware.

On August, 28, 1609, the first ship winged its way up the river. The Half Moon, with Hendrick Hudson looking for the North West Passage to China—on past this sandy hook jutting out into the great river. The Indians of the Lenni-Lenape tribe were peacefully fishing and plying their canoes. The Half Moon sailed swiftly down again without landing here, having decided that this was no thoroughfare to China. Upon such slight grounds as this hasty trip with two temporary settlements, one at Swaanendale and one at Ft. Nassau, rests the Dutch claim to the whole Delaware River and shores and by this was the claim of Lord Baltimore refuted, his grant calling for land not previously settled.

The Swedes came up the river in 1638. As to when they really landed here there is some doubt. Some historians claim that the Fredenburg established a colony here on Nov. 2nd, 1640, "being 3 Swedish miles from Ft. Christina."

There was almost certainly a hamlet here of Swedes and Dutch mingling and fighting when Governor Petrus Stuyvesant decided to build a fort here to assert the Dutch possession. The Swedes already had one fort above and one below but this was a commanding position and Stuyvesant's efficient eye had been caught by the site when he paid a visit of remonstrance to the Swedish Governor, Johann Printz, at Tinnicum.

He named the fort Casimir, which caused some criticism as Casimir was a Swedish noble. There is a drawing of Fort Casimir by the Swedish engineer Lindström printed in 1702. It is a sturdy little fort built of logs planted far out on the shore; now the river has made in and washed away the site. A marker erected by the Colonial Dames in Delaware marks the approximate spot.

Gerrit Bikker was placed in command and it was fortified with cannon, becoming the centre of Dutch power south of New Amsterdam. Stuyvesant and the Swedish Governor, Printz, had many interviews here, some peaceful, many not. Printz had a romantic life, and was a just and able Governor. De Vries called Printz "the great tub of a man and says he weighed 400 lbs, and took 3 drinks at every meal." He was politic enough with Stuyvesant, but when an inferior remonstrated with him that the Dutch claim was prior, he said "The Devil was first in Hell, but sometimes admitted a superior."

Sunday was a great day in New Castle history. On Trinity Sunday, May 31, 1653, Gerrit Bikker, the Dutchman, saw a great Swedish ship come up the river and anchor in the harbor. On board was the new Swedish Governor, Johann Rising, and Captain Sven Schute. With little opposition they took Fort Casimir in the name of Queen Christina of Sweden, leaving Bikker as he says in his pathetic report "Shutt out almost naked."

They named the fort Trafaldischeets—"Trinity"—in honor of the day.

It was not to be imagined that Petrus Stuyvesant would permit Fort Casimir to slip through his fingers and remain a Swedish fort. He was exhorted by the Directors of the West India Co. to recover the fort and drive the Swedes out of the country. The roll of drums was heard in the streets of old Amsterdam. Bells were rung daily in Holland, prayers were sent up to recover "New Amstel"; five vessels were sent over to retake Ft. Casimir. In New Amsterdam there was "cessation of all work, sewing, mowing, fishing and hunting, no intoxication, or tapping, only prayer and fasting."

On a bright Sunday morning, August 30, 1655, Gov. P. Stuyvesant himself sailed up the river and drawing up in line of battle in the harbor he besieged the fort with 7 ships and 600 soldiers. Lindstrom the Swede has written an eyewitness' account of this affair which is full of unconscious humor.

He says Stuyvesant landed at Strand Point and promised that the garrison of 47 men should march out with honors of war and crowning honor "with bullet in the mouth" but says Stuyvesant "if you go not out, without further dilly-dally, we spare not the child in the cradle." Schute accepted the terms; for

which we are told, all his acquaintances forever "considered him as a shoe-rag."

Gov. Stuyvesant, stiling on his wooden leg, no doubt had his tongue in his cheek as the Swedes marched out "bullet in the mouth" for no sooner were they out, than Stuyvesant demanded "Where go you?" "Ft. Christina" says Schute. "Nay," says Stuyvesant, "it is not so written," and clapped all into prison amidst the laughter of the Dutch. Poor outwitted "Shoe-rag."

Stuyvesant remained here long enough to rename the fort Casimir, and the town, which he laid out with care, he called New Amstel; to be his city on the South River. as New Amsterdam was on the North.

The names of Jacob Alrick and William Beekman are connected with the government of New Amstel at this time. Englebert Lott was a property owner and the first Cordwainer or shoemaker. Very strict rules were made, such as that pigs and goats must be securely yoked. No one could enter or leave the town without license, which irritated the people. No ship could come up the river without permission from New Amstel, though Printz's successor, Pappegoya, once crowded the deck of a newly arrived ship with Indians and sailed past, as the Dutch feared to harm an Indian.

The only road in use at this time was a circuitous route to Ft. Christina and a road to Bohemia Manor laid out by the Bohemian Gentleman, Augustine Herman. This road was called "The Old Man's Road" by the Indians and settlers. A fragment of this road, afterwards called "King's Highway" may be seen preserved on the estate of Mr. Selden Deemer, New Castle.

Soon after Stuyvesant reconquered Ft. Casimir the Indians attempted to take the fort but were unsuccessful. New rules were made that no freeman, especially no Swede, might be in the fort at night "no Indians nor foreigner might look critically at the Fortress." In case any Swede should be thought disloyal he should "be sent away with all imaginable civility."

Stuyvesant's action in taking the Fort roused the anger of Sweden. The Swedish Consul at the Hague complained "that the Swedes had the title to the South River of Florida" so little did they know of Colonial geography. Great were the plans for the new town of Amstel. The town was laid out in streets and lots, Ye Strand Street, Beaver, Otter, Mary St., etc. Clothing, seeds and provisions were given the settlers for the first year. The Broad Dyke and the Narrow Dyke were built with, it must be confessed, grumbling and rioting. In church, Ogle says "he will not make Hans Bloc's Dyke no nor Col Carr's either," but he did.

The first bridge over the Horse Dyke was built; a smith, a wheelwright and a carpenter came, the first mill was built on Chestnut St. by Arnoldus de La Grange in 1681.

A Dutch writer assures the world that "many an epicure will feast on caviare from New Amstel sturgeons."

Stuyvesant was directed to buy up all the land possible between the South and North Rivers. Nevertheless, he was cautioned not to be too zealous in his efforts for New Amstel as its rapid growth might draw settlers from New Amsterdam. New York probably is relieved of this anxiety at present.

By the end of 1657 New Amstel was a goodly town of 100 houses. But in the Dutch records many troubles appear. Swedes and Dutch, jealous of each other and both afraid of the English, for the English were on the lookout for territory.

A man was killed by the Indians in New Castle in 1660, the wife died, leaving a little girl. The town of New Amstel formally adopted her, naming her the "Hope of Amstel or Amstel's Hope," the first mention of care of orphans in early colonial history.

Alrick, the Dutch Vice-Governor, who has been criticised for his severity, did much for the town, he built the first wharf at the foot of Chestnut Street, which street led to the Bowerie, as the great oak wood carpeted with flowers, was called (now Janviers and Rogers Wood.)

His successor, D'Hinoyossa, was very unpopular for his cruelty and New Amstel bore a bad name. It was reported that "the sins and wickedness in New Amstel were so great that all the waters of the great river could not wash them out."

The Dutch rule existed until 1664, Sept. 30, when Col. Nichols, being English Governor, sent Sir Robt. Carr, Knight, with 2 frigates, one of them "The Guinea". They came up the river flying the English Colors to establish English Sovereignty. The people were for yielding at once, they cared little who was king so long as the town was not shelled for it lay at the mercy of the English broadsides. But D'Hinoyossa, Alrick, and Van Sweringen, Dutch officials, threw themselves into the fort and refused to come to terms. The town suffered much from this illtimed resistance. All was sacked and plundered. Soldiers sold into slavery leaving, in the words of Van Sweringen, "not even a nail," everything of value was confiscated.

At this time under these Dutch officials occurred the first criminal case of which records have been preserved, Jansen cut off a finger of Geritt Herman, for which he must pay Herman and work on the fort for 6 weeks.

The Dutch and Swedes, too, were traders more than farmers and spent their energy on fur trading and tobacco export; but they, the Swedes especially, were a fine race. Denkers and Sluyter in their journal speak of the Dutch and Swedish homes

with large families of rosy children, living the pleasant life of work and plenty of the Colonies. They have left their influence of clean heritage upon the life of our community.

THE COURT HOUSE

The Court House in New Castle is undoubtedly one of the oldest State buildings in the Country. Its stately architecture and mellow beauty of color and line attract the attention of even the casual visitor and to those who search for details of history it appears among the noblest of our historic remains.

The east wing was the original Court House and stood alone. It was built about 1675 and as the tablet on the wall (erected by the Colonial Dames of Delaware) will tell you, was the building in which William Penn was received and welcomed on October 28, 1682. "The Welcome" certainly reached New Castle on October 27th and on the next day Penn landed at the foot of the main street and was hailed with acclaim. He was met by John Moll and Ephriam Herman and marched directly to the Court House.

They gave Penn "the key thereof to lock upon himself alone the door, which being open by him again we did deliver unto him, 1 turf with a twig upon it, a porringer with river water and soyle in part of all."

The ceremony was brief but performed in a most solemn manner. Penn made a short address. He certainly spent the night, Oct. 27th, in New Castle but whether on his ship or as tradition says, in the small house nearly opposite the Court House is not certain. Mr. Cooper says in his history, "This tradition carries marks of verity. It was Penn's first visit, of grave importance to him and to the town and it would be strange not to spend the night in consultation with the officials."

In 1669 there had been an insurrection against the English headed by Ye Long Ffinne—who gave his name as Koningsmarck and his ancestry as the noble Count Koningsmarck. He was the tallest and handsomest man in the colonies and he was the accomplice of Armegot Printz "The Proud Lady of Tinnecum." Together they made quite a rebellion, but the Long Ffinne was brought to justice and tried here in the Court House.

It made a stir at the time but his trial must be forever famous, being the first trial by jury on the Delaware—1669. Tried and convicted of "Riotus, Routous and unlawful conduct," he was sentenced to be publickly and severely whipt branded in the face with the letter R and sent a slave to the Barbadoes or some remoter Plantacion. It is related that his arms were fastened to the pillars of the Court House and the courtroom was filled with fumes of burning flesh from the branding—(Scharfs History).



THE COURT HOUSE

King Charles of England having presented this Colony to William Penn, there was a question whether New Castle was included in this grant, so a separate grant was issued of New Castle and 12 miles around it, measured from the city of New Castle. This is the origin of the 12 mile circle the arc of which is the top of Delaware.

What is this 12 mile circle? What its history? This is not the place to tell of the intricate history of that Arc. Suffice it to say that in 1701 it was marked out from "Ye Horse Dyke" by Empson and Pusey—again surveyed by David Rittenhouse in 1760, this time by order of Lord Hardwicke, Chancellor of England, who decided that the centre should be the Court House.

New Castle at this time (says A. B. Cooper) was the seat of government and the only well known town in Penn's possessions the only town well and accurately known in England. It was therefore inserted as the given point around which to run the circle to determine the northern boundary of the three lower counties. In 1763 Mason and Dixon re-surveyed it and did not vary one inch in the survey. To continue with the Court House:

The centre building was erected in 1701 and the west wing was enlarged and made fire proof about 1840. Until 1777 when the State Capitol was removed to Dover, this was the State House and the scene of many famous trials, afterwards the County Court House until the Courts were moved to Wilmington in 1880, since then it has been used for City purposes and for the schools.

This Court House was not only the State House of the three lower Counties on Delaware, but in connection with Pennsylvania, the General Assembly often met here. Many stirring words have echoed from these walls,—no doubt our separation from Penn was bitterly discussed here; our repudiation of Lord Baltimore's claims was here more than once the subject of acrimonious dispute. A fiery letter signed "A Freeman" was distributed July 7, 1774: "Shall we now be inactive and silent! Forbid it Liberty; let Humanity forbid it. You are earnestly requested to meet at the Court House on Wed., June 29. Let none be absent who have a regard for their Country." It is impossible to mention the innumerable thrilling events which have taken place under this roof. Here our State was named in August, 1776. Here was the case tried which caused impeachment proceedings against Chief Justice Chase. Here were several exciting trials at the time of the Civil War, but now only city cases are tried here.

The name of the town was now New Castle, says Knickerbocker "as it never was new and had no castle"; but it was probably named from the English Statesman of that day.

In May, 1672 "Ye town of New Castle was incorporated as a Balywick." Governed by Capt. John Carr and six assistants.

Wm. Tom being one, "that ye English laws according to the desire of the inhabitants be established in ye towne." Capt. Carr regulated the laws and evidently thinking that strong drink was a disturbing element, he allowed only 3 Tappers or retailers and one guilder a can (38 cents) was the price for strong liquor. Edmund Cantwell was Sheriff, he lived on Ye Strande, was a surveyor and laid out many lots. The Dutch and English being at war and the English having reverses, the Colonies echoed this by again changing rulers in New Castle, but after a few months of Dutch rule, the English by treaty, 1674, again gained possession of New Castle and held it until the Revolution.

Many of our records were lost and burned after 1700, perhaps the English did not keep the items as did the careful Dutch. Some records had perhaps been better lost. Gov. Gookin under Penn who gave a piece of silver to Immanuel Church, was certainly an impulsive character, one record tells us that because the Supreme Court at New Castle did not act to please him, "he sent for one of the Judges and kicked him." Apologies that "his physician knew of his weakness in his head" perhaps soothed the Judge.

On March 22, 1765, Parliament passed the Stamp Act. The news was sent to the Colonies from Boston. On May 30, John Hughes was announced as "Distributor" in Delaware. He publicly denied having received any stamps, but it was known that a large quantity had been shipped to him at New Castle. The stamps arrived on the "Polly" but Hughes in a panic refused to receive them. New Castle was ready to tar and feather him and to destroy the vessel and so the Polly sailed away to another port. The following letter which was sent up and down the river is of interest showing the feeling of the times.

TO THE DELAWARE PILOTS

"We took the pleasure some days since of kindly admonishing you to do your duty, if perchance you should meet with the (Tea) Ship Polly; Capt. Ayers, 3 decker, which is hourly expected. We have now to add that matters ripen fast here and that much is expected from those Lads who meet with the Tea Ship. There is some talk of a handsome reward for the Pilot who gives the first good account of her. How that may be, we cannot for certain determine, but all agree that Tar and Feathers will be his portion who Pilots her into this Harbor.

Committee for Tarring and Feathering."

Nov. 27, 1773.

THE COMMON FARMS

The Common Land, consisting of nearly 1000 acres of land in the possession of the City has an interesting history. It is the only land so held and so named in America.

William Penn always took a special interest in New Castle and its inhabitants. He at first thought of locating his Capitol here and perhaps the location would have been superior. The crowning act of his life in Delaware and one for which New Castle will always revere his memory was the issue of the warrant for the survey of 1000 acres of land for the use of the town. Penn confirmed the use of these lands and defined their extent on Oct. 31st, 1701 "for a common for the use of the inhabitants of the Town of New Castle. In 1764 Penn's heirs appointed trustees to guard this land for the people and prevent encroachments. Trustees as named were John Finney, Richard McWilliam, David Finney, Thos. McKean, G. Read, G. Munro, John Van Gezel, L. Van Leuvenigh, Sator Clay, John Yeats, Nathaniel Silsbee, D. MacConen, Robert Morrison—(representative men of the town).

This land was deeded by Thomas and Richard Penn "in free and common socage by fealty only in lieu of all other services yielding and paying therefore yearly and every year, unto us and our heirs and successors at the town of New Castle aforesaid, the rent of one ear of Indian Corn, if demanded."

In 1791, July 8th, upon solicitation of the Trustees of the Common, John Penn of Stoke Pogis and John Penn of Dover St., deeded the Common to Isaac Grantham, Rev. Robt. Clay and William Lees, merchant, to be transferred to the Trustees for the Town. This deed was executed in London and the Seal of the City and of the Lord Mayor were affixed.

In 1796 the trustees had the Common Land divided into farms and the rental is used for the city. The trustees are elected as vacancies occur by death or resignation.

COBBLE STONE STREETS

In 1815 the trustees resolved to pave the principal streets, accordingly they laid cobblestones which to this day remain on several of the streets of New Castle. These cobbles were and still are a picturesque and annoying example of paving and will probably last forever.

NEW CASTLE MADE A TOWN

In June 1797 an act was passed establishing the Town of New Castle and five commissioners were appointed to carry out the provision. Dr. A. Alexander, John Crow, John Bird, Nicholas Van Dyke and George Read II, Daniel Blaney surveyed the town. The names of 84 citizens were recorded who owned property. New Castle was incorporated as a city February 25, 1875. E. Challenger, Mark M. Cleaver, Wm. H. Jefferson were commissioners. Thomas Giffen was elected Mayor; S. Eckles, President of Council; G. A. Maxwell, Clerk.

FIRE CO.

The Union Fire Co. was organized in 1796, a volunteer organization with 29 members. \$468.00 was subscribed, 20 leather buckets were bought and A. Alexander and John Bird were appointed a committee to purchase an engine for which they collected \$400.00. Among the early officers were: Pres., James Booth; Sec., D. Morrison; Thos. Bond, G. Peirce, T. Turner, N. Van Dyke, King, Walraven, McCalmont, Frazier, Bowman, M. Kennedy, James Riddle, Evan Thomas, Caleb Bennett, Kensey Johns, Colesberry, W. Armstrong, Charles Thomas, John Janvier, Magens, John Crow, Hugh Ritchie, Jacob Belleville, J. Panton, Christopher Weaver, Alex. Duncan.

In April, 1824, New Castle was visited by the most disastrous fire in its history, resulting in a loss which was said to be \$100,000. The fire started in the stables of what is now the Jefferson House, then the property of James Riddle. It was said boys made the fire to warm some puppies but it has been suggested that the new steamboat which lay immediately behind this stable threw out sparks, which started the fire. The engine was run with wood and the late Mr. J. H. Rogers in advancing this theory says the stable was full of hay and that the sparks poured out of the smoke stack when they fired up. Before the fire was controlled it burned most of the Strand and on the Strand were the oldest and most important houses of the town; the whole street was burned with the exception of three houses until the fire reached the large Read House, there the fire was checked but the loss in buildings, furniture and priceless papers was irreparable. The house of George Read, the Signer, was burnt. The house of Caleb Bennett, Governor, at present Captain Garrison's, was spared.

Among the subscriptions received to repair the fire loss was one from Boston which served to return the gift of friendship which New Castle had shown that city in 1774.

During the enforcement of the Port Bill Nicholas Van Dyke and George Read collected \$900.00 and forwarded it (as from one prosperous seaport town to another) for the relief of the sufferers. Boston in 1824 sent a liberal response to the call for aid and soon the majority of the buildings were replaced. The late Mr. J. H. Rogers has left a vivid picture of the fire. This fire is not to be confused with the fire about 100 years earlier, which burned the house of the magistrate, John French, corner of Strand and Delaware Sts., thus destroying many valuable Court Records. This property was known as the "Burnt Lot" until the Farmers Bank was built there in 1845. Now the home of Francis deHaes Janvier.

The "Good Will" Fire Engine was purchased in 1824 and was in its day a powerful machine. A force of 30 men was required to work the levers and it threw a stream 15 feet over the



"YE STRAND"

highest spire in town. This was used until 1885 when the "Humane" was bought, with hook and ladder attachment. In 1887 a Silsby engine, costing \$3400, was bought. At the present time the Fire Company is one of the best volunteer Fire Cos. in the State, owning an up to date equipment and a fine Ambulance.

THE STRAND

The old name, "Ye Strand", given in the days when the row of houses facing the river had before them a strip of sandy beach, gives one an idea what to expect. To feel the calm and quiet of the olden days one should visit the Strand on a golden afternoon in summer when the stately elms and tall maples throw their softly moving shadows on the little, crooked, cobble-stone street; on the worn brick pavements and on the mellow Georgian houses. And by our side always the great river, lap, lap, lapping against the old wharves; the fresh sea wind beating in our face, and the big vessels moving up and down the river ceaselessly, a stone's-throw away. We seem to expect the lady of the house to sweep out of this rosy brick domicile with the white door and the marble step, tiny parasol in hand over the gay bonnet and crisp crinolines.

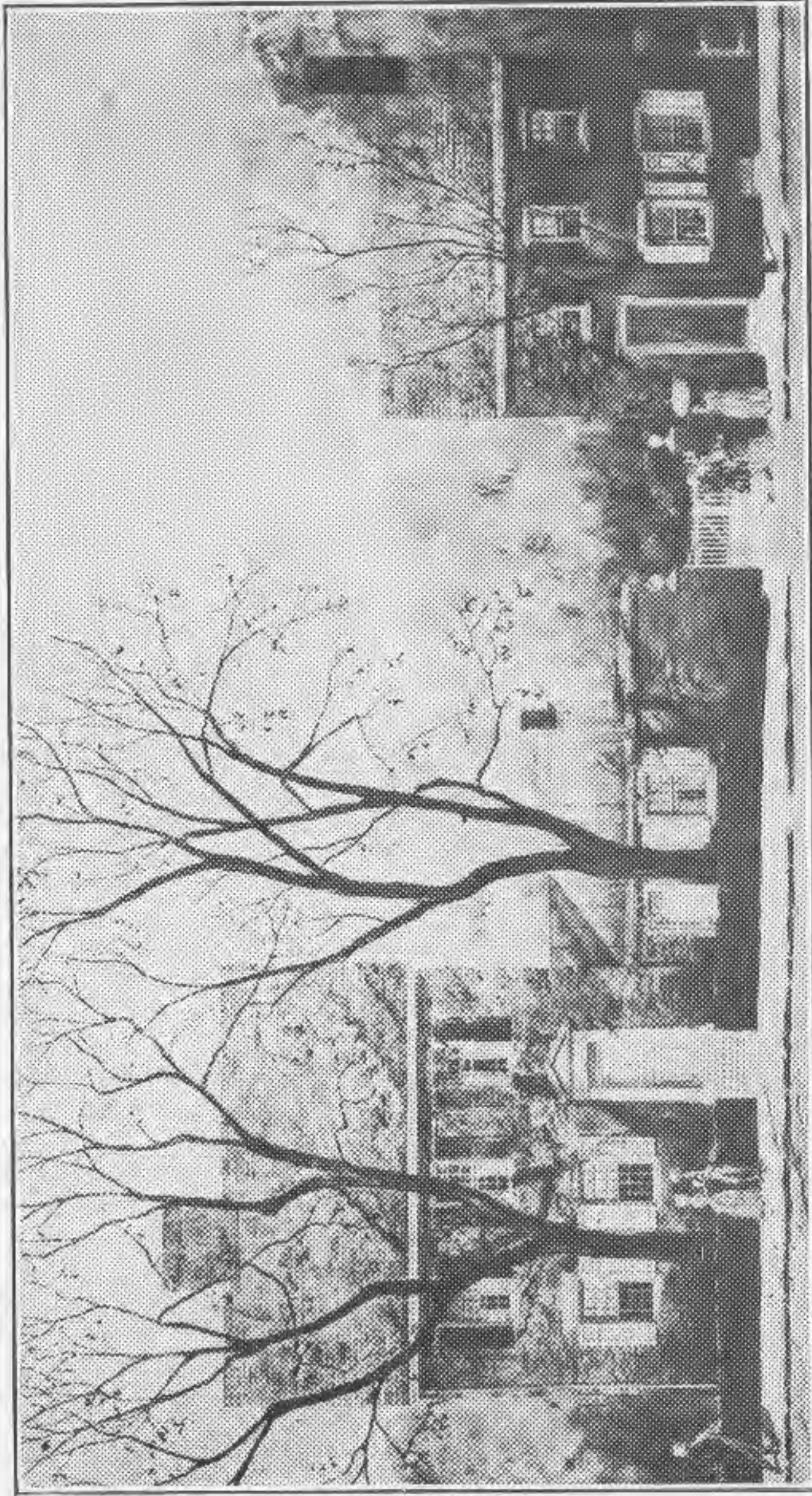
The irregular line everywhere strikes one, as the pavement is uneven, so is the line of roofs. Here came the Swedes, and the Dutch, from Ft. Casimir to the Dutch Church on the Strand. Here came the Miller Arnaldus de la Grange and Cornelia his wife pretending to be holy but, writes the stern Moravian who saw him, "he can be seen walking up the Strand, sword clanking, ribbons flying, like the great fop he is."

Here is another afternoon on the Strand. It is 1773, George Read, son of the "Signer", is standing on the front step with his mother, a great storm is breaking, a small boat runs before it and just opposite George they run aground; two sailors spring out and take two gentlemen on their backs and make for shore; down goes one, on his back is Captain Swanwick "a very corpulent man" we enjoy the joke as they "excited much mirth" with the "mud sticking largely to their persons and were the subject of much wit."

Half way along the Strand we come to an alley leading to the river. There is a rotting wharf. This is "Packet Alley."

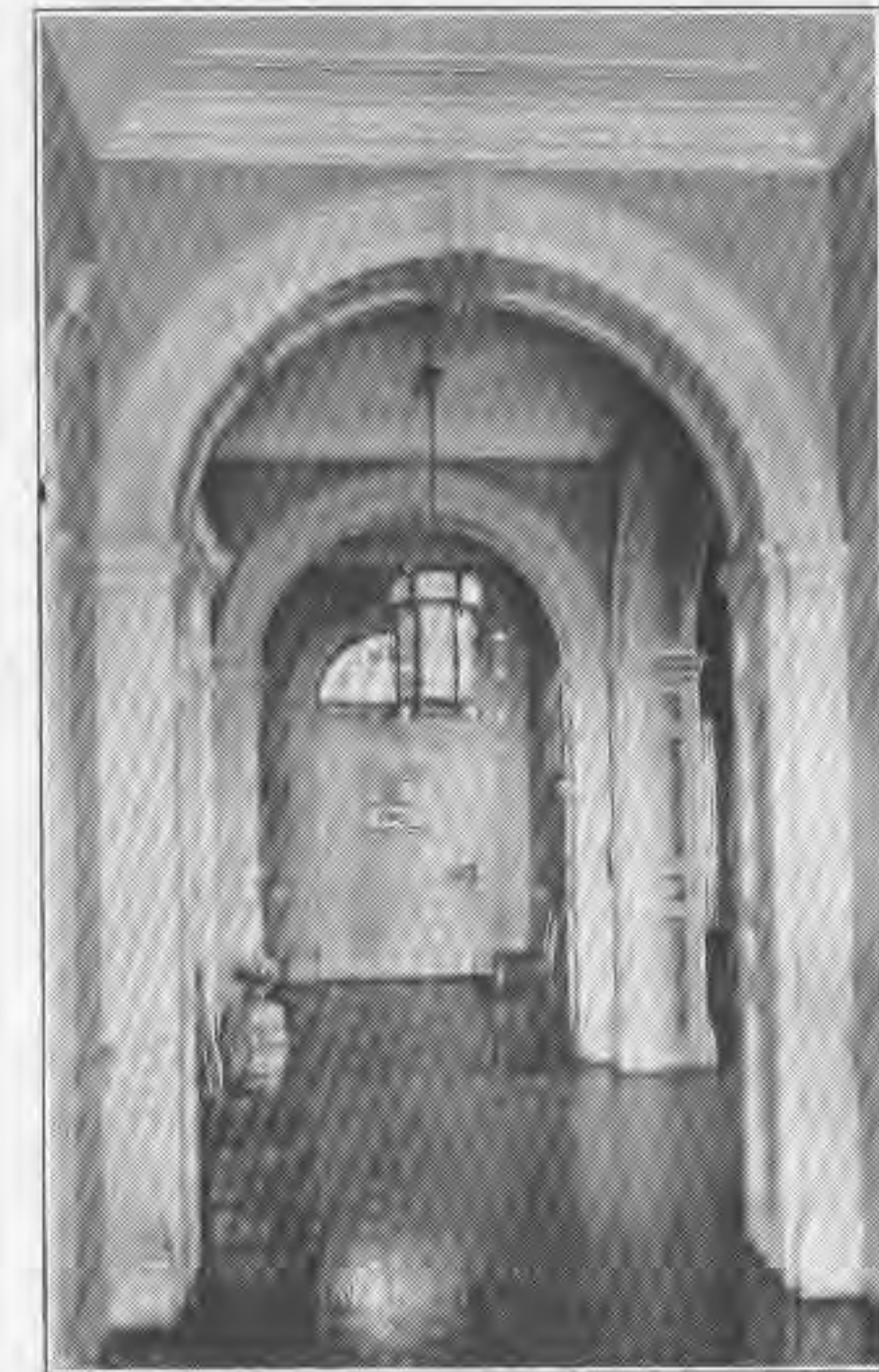
PACKET ALLEY ON THE STRAND

"Here's a remnant left of an old highway,
When George of England held royal sway,
Only an alley from River to Strand,
Yet here are figures from every land.



CHANCELLOR JOHNS HOUSE

From the tide of travel that over it rolled,
For hundreds of years, in the days of old,
Lift the veil, and the throng shall pass
Before your vision as in a glass.
Hear the Conestoga Wain;
Hear the teamsters shout again,
Before you, pass on its tedious way
The stage and four of the ancient day,
With brass-bound boxes the Ladies ride,
The liveried coachman by their side,
Bugles of soldiers greet your ear,
For North and South must pass through here,
Mark ye the leaders in Buff and Blue,
Washington, Rodney and Steuben too,
And Lafayette and Chasteleux,
With exiled Louis Napoleon
And those who have lost and those who've won,
These are the visions in memory's eye
If you lift the veil at Packet Alley.



READ HOUSE (LAIRD)
INTERIOR

THE READ HOUSE

The stately dwelling on the Strand known as the "Read House", now the home of Philip Dandridge Laird, is one of the best examples of architecture of its period. Built by George Read, the second of a line who left a record to be remembered as patriotic and loyal citizens he showed his accurate and careful temperament, his farseeing vision and appreciation of good and beautiful work, in this house of his.

The builder was Mr. Crowding of Philadelphia, and there was apparently no architect; but every mantel, every bit of carving was personally inspected by Mr. Read, often rejected, but all must be perfect for this house. And so it stands and may for centuries, a monument to the man who created it, even had he done nothing greater for posterity.

This view is of the Arches in the Hall. The garden is especially lovely with marvelous formal box-bordered beds, originally laid out by Robert Buist in 1846.

GEORGE FOX IN NEW CASTLE

George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, on his historic journey through the Colonies came to New Castle in September, 1672. Travelling for days seeing no white man they "at length crossed a desperate river" (Brandywine) and so to New Castle. Very weary, asking his way in the streets, he is met by the Governor, Lord Lovelace, "who came into the street inviting me to his house, a bed for me and I was welcome." This house was where King's ice-house is now. A brick house with an arch of yellow Dutch bricks over doors and windows, this house was still standing after 1800. Lovelace believed in tyranny, "he layed such Taxes as gave the people no thought but to discharge them."

REFUGEES IN 1791

The insurrection of the blacks at St. Domingo in 1791 and the massacre of the white population which followed, drove hundreds of families to our country and New Castle became a favorite place of residence for the refugees. Their names and tragic story has been lost for the most part, but there is extant a letter to George Read from George Washington about two unfortunate ladies among the seventy or eighty who came here with no resources and so were cast on the charity of the town.

Washington asks G. Read to investigate and help them, if they are as represented. "I will make no apology for giving you this trouble because to be employed in acts of humanity cannot, I am sure, be disagreeable to such a character as yours. With very great esteem and regard I am, dear sir, your most obedient servant, George Washington."

These two ladies, Laurent de Saxy and Laurent de Verneuil remained in New Castle and letters may be read from Mme. de Saxy describing the "affreuse situation" without clothing or food except that received from Mr. Read and citizens of New Castle, she prays that heaven will help her to thank him for his kindness. Nothing more is known.

PIRATES

There had from early times been many troubles from Pirates and Privateers on the Delaware. Kidd, and our own particular Pirates, Avery and Blackbeard, were very frequent visitors. In 1747, a raid was made on the homes of Hart and Liston below New Castle, when the Pirates carried away everything of value even slaves. Captain Ballat on the Otter was sent up the Bay to protect the town from Pirates but went to Philadelphia for repairs.

A large Spanish Brig of 14 guns and 160 men sails up the river to attack New Castle. Flying the English Flag, she would not have been recognized but an English prisoner, George Proctor, jumps overboard and swims to New Castle and warns the town that the Captain, Don Vincent Lopez, had entered the river to capture a large ship in New Castle Harbor and intended to plunder and burn the Town. The brig came up but was met by cannonading, and Lopez, fearing the gunfire, dropped down the river, "Huzzahing as he left and hoisting the Spanish Flag."

A TERRIBLE NIGHT IN NEW CASTLE

OCTOBER 1699

The great Brigantine Sweepstake lay at anchor in New Castle Harbor. She had just been heavily laden and was all ready to weigh anchor for England. One pirate ship after another is descried coming 'round the bend of Pea Patch Island until 13 surround the "Sweepstakes". They carried off ship and cargo and crew. New Castle was frantic and appealed for help from Philadelphia, but little was done to aid except to establish a messenger service along the coast.

THE NEW CASTLE HOAX

Gov. Evans issues a call for Militia. New Castle raises three companies, Kent and Sussex each raise two, but in Philadelphia the Quakers will do nothing. The great Fair is going on in Philadelphia, bringing crowds of people to the city. Robert French of New Castle and Gov. Evans conceive a thrilling coup d'etat. French sends a post-boy from New Castle: "A hostile fleet is coming up the River, has passed N. C. Philadelphia will be sacked and pillaged." The idea is to rouse the Friends to see the necessity of arming.

Messengers are stationed about the city of Philadelphia to spread the alarm. The Governor rides through the streets beseeching the people to arm and fight. Too many people are in the secret, or Gov. Evans is a poor actor. Only the very timid are aroused. But for many a long day the people talk over "The New Castle Hoax."

RIVER BATTLE

In April, 1776, the Roebuck and the Liverpool, British ships of war, came up the river with all the panoply of battle. They were met above New Castle by a fleet of thirteen armed "row-galleys" sent out from Philadelphia. A fight ensued and the Roebuck was badly damaged. They passed down the river with orders to "go ashore at New Castle, plunder the town and burn it, that night," but the row-galleys followed and prevented this—this was the last sea fight of the Revolution.

ANOTHER DAY, JULY 1776

Here comes Enoch Anderson's Regiment marching down the street, drums beating, bugles shrilling. Every patriot is at the door, following the ragged, hungry, brave fellows. On they go to the State House, throw down their arms and light bon-fires on the Green. What to do to show their patriotism on this early 4th of July and their scorn of George of England. Tear out the portraits of the King and Queen from the Court Room, throw them on the blaze, down with foolish signs of the oppressors Red velvet and gew-gaws. Rather, rags, hunger and freedom. Anderson writes in his Diary: "Burnt all the 'Baubles of Royalty' A merry day we made of it."

In the autumn of 1777 the British had possession of New Castle; they seized and removed all official seals but there is no record of other damage, though contemporary letters are full of the distress of the people, packing up their valuables and moving back in the country.

A letter from Thomas Rodney, brother of Caesar Rodney, Signer, July 14 or 24, 1776:

"We arrived safe at New Castle

The Declaration of Independence was read in the presence of the House of Assembly to 400 or 500 people, the principal inhabitants of this county, who gave three huzzas and immediately took the King's Arms and burnt them with the Constables' Staves, etc. The general sentiment was warm for a convention and I expect the House will appoint one to be chose at some short day for the purpose of settling the form of government If the Patriots of Kent are as warm as these in New Castle they will leave off all the Tories and such as have shown themselves to be the servants of the Crown and Propriators."

THE GREEN AND MARKET SQUARE

Originally all one expanse known as "Ye Market Plaine" in the centre of the town, it has been held for public use since the settlement of the town. Laid out by Gov. Petrus Stuyvesant in 1655, it has remained for 275 years the heart of New Castle, where the old and young found recreation in the past. The elms which are such beautiful trees now, were planted for the Trustees of the Common by Mr. Charles H. Black in 1851, and the minutes of the Trustees recount that there were 75 trees purchased at a cost of \$.48½ each.

The Whipping Post and Pillory and the Stocks stood upon this square and there was also the old Prison and the Gibbet.

ON THE GREEN, JUNE 24, 1731

"At New Castle, Catherine Bevan is ordered to be burned alive for the murder of her husband, and Peter Murphy, the servant who assisted her, to be hanged. It was designed to strangle her dead by the previous hanging her over the fire, before it could reach her; but the fire broke out in a stream directly on a rope round her neck, and burnt off instantly, so that she fell alive into the flames, and was seen to struggle therein."—Watson's Annals.

The Market Square has been controlled by various authorities until on June 13, 1772, when the Assembly appointed a Board of Trustees of the Market Square, which includes the Green and the buildings thereon. The Trustees who were originally appointed by the last surviving member, are now elected. The first Trustees were David Finney, John Thompson, George Read, Thomas McKean, G. Munro.

McKean appointed in 1809, James R. Black, Kensey Johns, James Rogers, James Riddle, W.C. Frazier, G. Read, 2d, G. Munro.

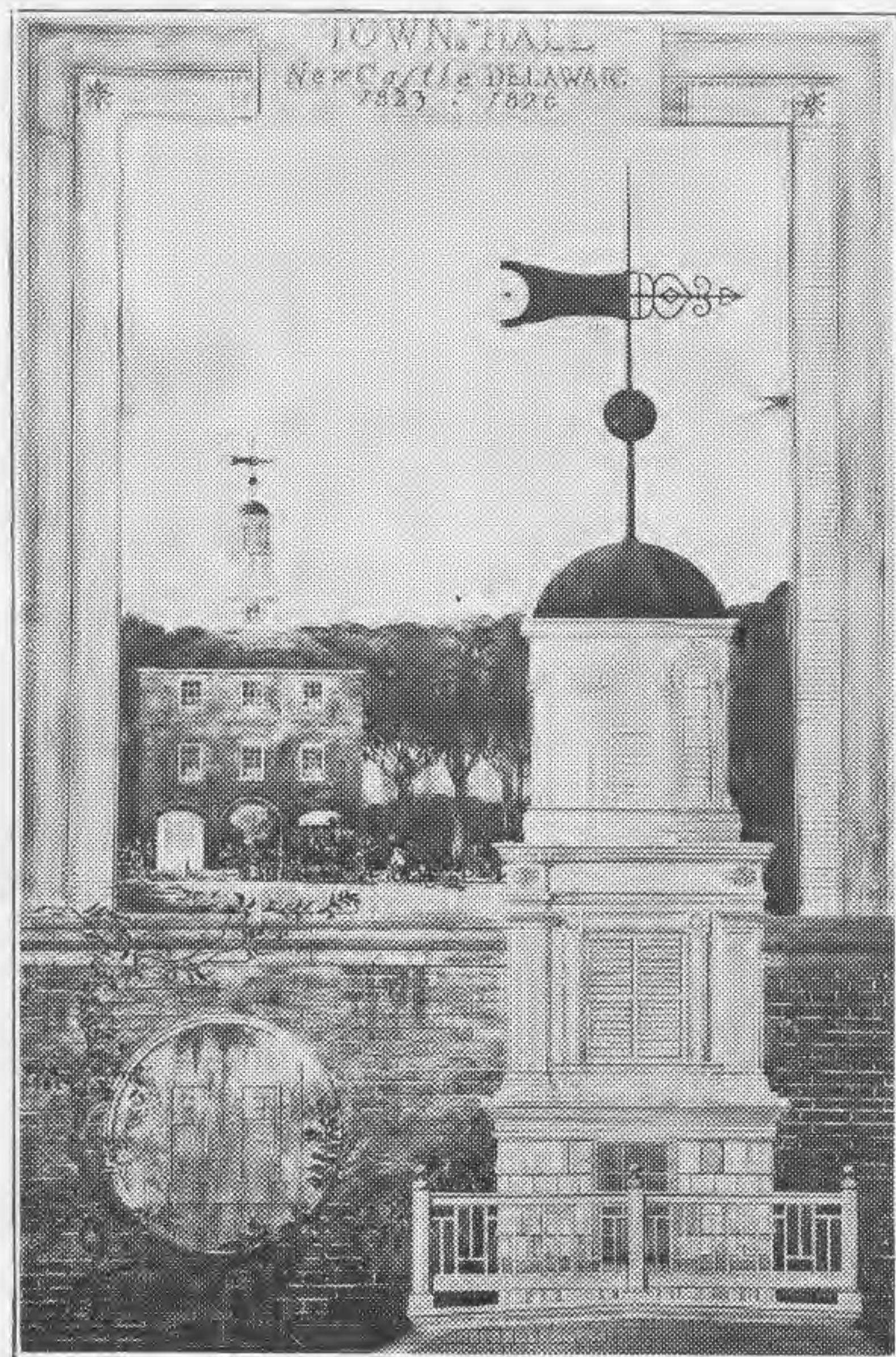
1857, Wm. T. Read, John Janvier, Wm. Couper, C. H. Black, J. Mansfield.

1877, John Janvier, survivor, appointed George Gray, John H. Rodney, R. G. Cooper, J. H. Rogers, J. D. Janvier.

On the removal of the Courts by Act of Assembly, February 20th, 1883, the Trustees were authorized to hold the property for the City of New Castle, the rights of the County to the Court House for original purposes being reserved.

In 1670 Captain Carr proposed that "ye Market Place where the Bell hangs bee the most convenient place for the Block House," this being the second Fort. It probably stood about where Immanuel Church now stands.

A regular market was held on Wednesday and Saturday from 10 o'clock to 4, on and before November 9th, 1682. No one was allowed to buy anything elsewhere on those days. Bakers had to stamp every loaf with their brand.



TOWN HALL

The Town Hall and Market House was built in 1823 mainly through the efforts of John Crow, a leading citizen who kept the hotel opposite afterwards known as Delaware House. The upper room of the Town Hall was used for city purposes and frequently for Court uses, the lower room was the Fire Engine House and the archway gave entrance to the great street markets in the rear. These fell into decay and were removed about 1880.

SCHOOLS

The first mention of a schoolmaster in New Castle is in 1658 when Evert Peterson arrived. A lot was soon set aside for a School House. On June 13, 1772, an act was passed setting aside part of "the State House Lot", northwest corner of Immanuel Churchyard to erect a School House. D. Finney, George Read, John Thompson, Thomas McKean, G. Munro, were Trustees to erect the School House. It was built in 1800 and was known as "The Academy". The Assembly passed an act in 1801 as follows: "Whereas inhabitants of New Castle have by voluntary contributions erected an Academy in the Town upon a lot of ground in the Publick Square, which lot was vested in Trustees for school purposes." This was conveyed by Thomas McKean, as last survivor, to another Board of Trustees for "1 cent lawfull money." The Schools were private, the building only being under Trustees. Samuel Jacquette, S. Hood and James Riddle were early teachers. Miss Harriett Schofield and Miss Kilburn had a dame school later. William F. Lane was Principal about 1850 and prepared many boys for college.

The other school building on the Green was built as a United States Arsenal in 1812, but when Fort Delaware was destroyed by fire in 1831, the garrison was brought here and they occupied the building under Major Pierce, a brother of President Franklin Pierce. At a later period this building was used as a hospital during an epidemic of yellow fever.

NEW CASTLE LIBRARY

An effort was made to establish a Library in New Castle in 1800, and on January, 1812, the New Castle Library Co. was chartered by James Rogers, James R. Black, James Couper, Jr., George Strawbridge, Thos. Stockton, Alex. Reynolds and G. Read, Jr. The names of the members at this time comprise a list of cultivated men and women such as few towns of the size possessed. The books, about 5000 volumes are valuable, but modern libraries have destroyed the demand for such literature and the books are regarded more as antiques and heirlooms than as reading matter. For many years the Library occupied a room in "The Academy." About 1890 the new Library building was erected on Third Street.

In 1807 a Geography was published, with an account of New Castle:

"All vessels bound from Philadelphia for foreign ports stop here and supply with live stock. A great line of packets and stages passes thru' from Philadelphia to Baltimore by way of French-town, in Cecil Co., Md. Vast quantities of merchandise are sent to the West.

It is at present one of the greatest thoroughfares in the United States. Seven large Packet-boats sail from New Castle to Philadelphia. Ten to fifteen Conestoga Wagons across to French-town and four large Stages."

These Packet-boats stopped at the wharf mid-way on the Strand, the passengers came up Packet Alley to take the Stage Coach waiting on the Strand. The first steamboat was the "Delaware", built in 1816.

This line continued until 1822 when an association took control. John and Thomas Janvier in New Castle and a group of Philadelphians, organized under the name Union Line Transportation and Steamboat Co.

"The Union Line" ran for some years, then the progressive citizens, the Janviers and others, hearing of the new rail-roads, conceived the idea of substituting the Rail Road for the slow cumbersome coach line. They were sagacious man and speedily put their ideas into operation. If not the first—and there are many claimants—it was one of the first passenger roads to run on schedule. The first act was passed by the Maryland Legislature in Dec., 1827, then in Del. authorizing the Turnpike company to build a Rail Road from New Castle to Maryland; Maryland to complete the road to Frenchtown.

The board met on March 31, 1830, as follows: John Janvier, Pres.; Wm. MacDonald, James R. Black, James Rogers, Frisby Henderson, John Moody, Thomas Stockton, Thomas Janvier, James Smith, Geo. Read, Jr., Thomas W. Rogers, James Booth, C. Blaney and J. Couper.

In July, 1830, 10,000 cedar rails and blocks of gray stone arrived in New Castle. The wooden rails were pinned on the stone sleepers as the iron rail had not then been invented. Two passenger cars were received from Steever of Baltimore at a cost of \$510.00. They were very like the old stage coaches. The road was formally opened July 4, 1831, but the locomotives ordered from England were not here and horses were used for a while.

The stables were on East Delaware St. in the rear of the Farmers Bank. Other stables were in a court behind the Presbyterian Church and also on 3rd St. running back to 4th St. The original ticket office is in existence, now used as a watch-box at Washington Ave. on the Delaware R. R.

The first engine, bought in England, arrived in sections, August 1st, 1832. It was named "The Delaware." An Englishman, Swanson by name, was sent by Mr. Baldwin to assemble it. He first built an inclosed workshop and was seven weeks on the job. It was ascertained that he made drawings of each piece for Matthias W. Baldwin, who soon after became a great locomotive engineer. This is local tradition.

Sept. 10, 1832, the Delaware made its first trip. A Mr. Galloway ran ahead of the engine ringing a large bell to warn off children or cattle. This being before the day of telegraph, they invented a system of signals, unique and successful. Repeated at intervals from New Castle to the Chesapeake were black and white barrels raised on long poles to tell of the leaving of the train. This continued until the telegraph took its place.

Many historic figures have passed this way by stage and the "French-town Road." Andrew Jackson when President came through, David Crockett, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Lord Ashburton, John C. Calhoun, Sam Houston of Texas, Fanny Essler, the famous singer, Louis Napoleon, Stonewall Jackson, a large delegation of Indians in full war paint en route to see the Great Father in Washington, led by Osceola of Florida, and the old Chieftain, Black Hawk.

In 1824 La Fayette went by the "Frenchtown" and so south.

Henry Clay came and New Castle gave him a reception. A poem was read by some ladies to the "Sage of Ashland" and the crowd conducted him to the Cape May boat. This boat stopped at New Castle; Cape May was the fashionable summer resort of the last century. The prominent men of the town were jokingly called the steamboat committee. They were accustomed to meet the afternoon boat, talk to the captain and passengers and partake of a Mint Julep for which the bar on board was famous and so gather news of the day. In fact everyone went "down to meet the Cape May boat." Mention should be made of a later boat which is dear to the memory of the older inhabitants even yet, with intimate familiarity it was called "The Major", but the name on its side was Major Reybold. Built in 1853, it ran every day from Salem to Philadelphia and back getting into New Castle at 5.30 each afternoon.

CHURCHES IN NEW CASTLE

Almost the first action of our forefathers in building their homes in this land was to establish their place of worship. The Dutch Church was probably the first in New Amstel. No doubt a rude log hut, it existed for about 50 years built on or near the site of the new Presbyterian Church. In 1657 the Dutch Reformed Church was organized by the Rev. John Polhemus.

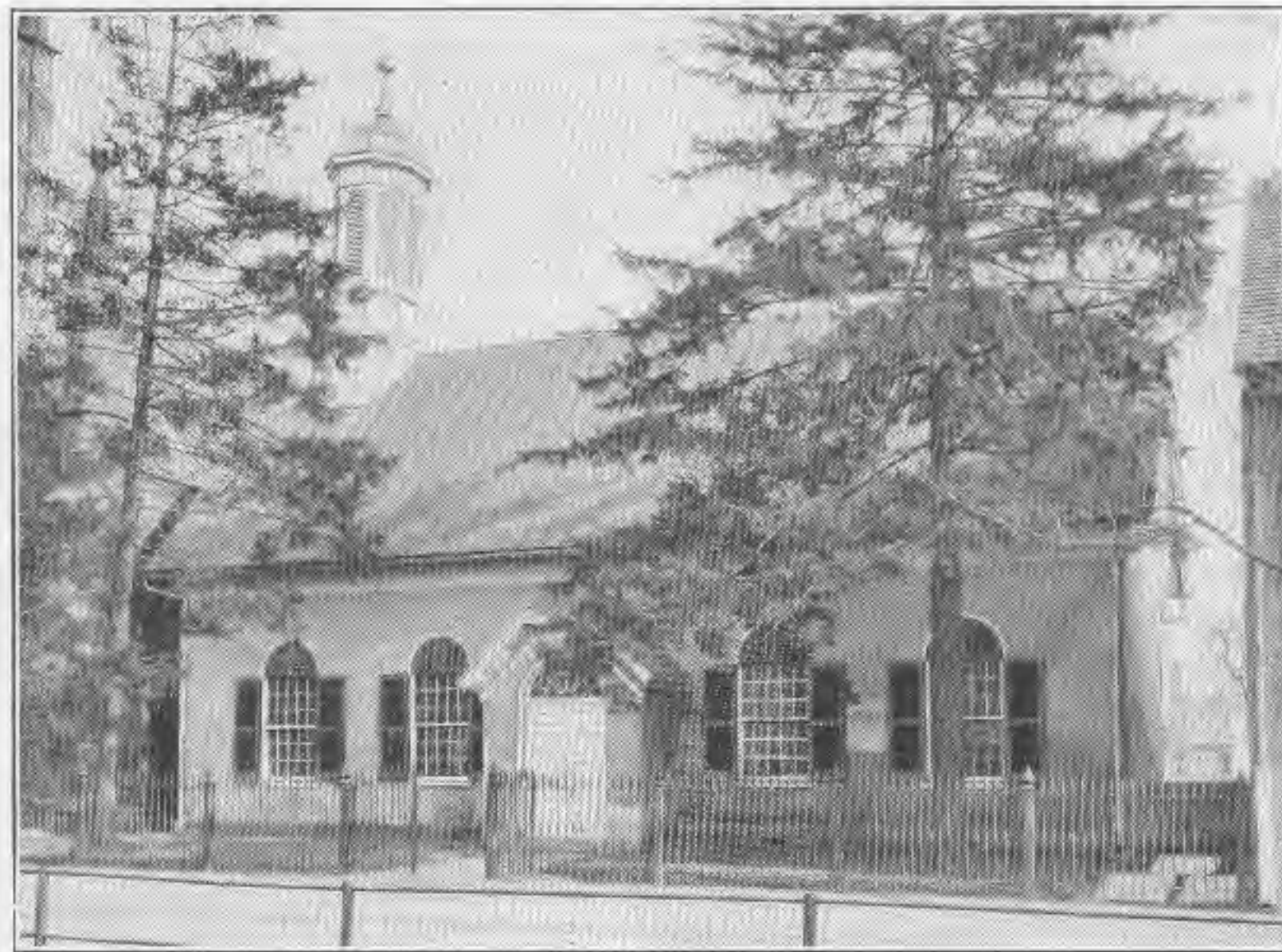
Before that time there was a wandering Swedish minister, Petrus Hjort, described by Governor Rising as "both temporally and spiritually a poor parson."

Rev. Evarardus Welius of the Dutch Church was the first ordained minister to settle here, 1659. He soon died and is followed by shadowy figures known scarcely by name.

The Dutch Reformed and the Presbyterian Church were probably merged early in 1700 when the Dutch language ceased to be used; after the English supremacy.

When the English took New Amstel it was expressly stipulated that "the people be left free, as to liberty of conscience in Church as formerly," an expression of broad minded vision indeed remarkable in that time of religious oppression.

On August 15, 1707, the lot for the Presbyterian House of Worship was acquired from Thomas Janvier and John Brewster, the agents for the Church were Roeloff de Haes, Sylvester



THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Garland and Thomas Janvier, Huguenots exiled from France. The Dutch Church had by this time fallen into disrepair but as the Dutch Graveyard was in existence we can place the Church with some accuracy. This first Presbyterian Church, now used as a Sunday School, is in fine condition. There are silver cups there given by Hon. Nicholas Van Dyke in 1807.

The men who came to the Colonies were a brave and noble band and when we read in Dankers and Sluyters Diary of a Sunday in New Castle in 1680, that the Rev. Tasshemacher was "the worst preacher in the world and a perfect worldling" we think perhaps his death in a French and Indian Massacre was refutation of this captious criticism.

The history of the Presbyterian Church in New Castle was compiled by the Rev. John B. Spottswood, one of the most honored of the many worthy pastors. The brown-stone modern Church was built mainly by his efforts.

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

Soon after William Penn's arrival, steps were taken to establish a Friends Meeting, but this town being a stronghold of Church of England families and of Presbyterianism, the Quakers were never very numerous in New Castle.

The Meeting was established in 1684. At first they met in private homes, the first Meeting House was built in 1705. In 1720 they took title to a lot, 120 x 100 ft., between Beaver and Otter Streets, now 4th and William, bought from G. Hogg, Cordwainer, sold to John Richardson, Mahala Meers, G. Hogg, Jr., and E. Gibbs, other names are John and Joseph Lewden, Scott Garretson and Rotherham. In 1758 the Meeting was "Raised" and the property was sold. The small brick Meeting House stood for many years, first used as a white and then a colored church and was demolished in 1885. Until recently there were some remains of the burial lot—a vault and a stone marked with the name of Finney—the family of Finney once so influential like the Meeting House has passed from our midst and "the place thereof shall know it no more." Thomas McKean was a relative of Finney and read law with him.

IMMANUEL CHURCH

Late in the year 1677 the first mention of a Church of England clergyman appears, a Mr. John Yeo, who wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury telling of the deplorable state of the Colonists here, without religious aid. On the west wall of old Immanuel is a white tablet, placing the date of the foundation of the Parish as 1689.

The building itself was begun in 1703, the same year as the arrival of the young Scotch missionary, the Rev. George Ross, sent over from England by the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel.

The Rev. Mr. Ross had a very deep influence on this town and vicinity in his 50 years as pastor here. He had a large family; one of his sons was George Ross, Signer of the Declaration of Independence from Pennsylvania; another, the Rev. Aeneas

Ross, who followed his father at Immanuel Church, New Castle, holding the charge for 38 years, another was a distinguished lawyer in Philadelphia.

In 1791 the brick wall was built about the churchyard. In 1822 extensive repairs and enlargements were made; the tower and spire were built under Mr. William Strickland, a noted architect of Philadelphia.



IMMANUEL CHURCH

On October 25th of that year a notable service took place. Bishop White of Philadelphia, Bishop Kemp of Maryland, with many visiting clergy performed the Service of Consecration. Among the contributors to the restoration fund was Commodore Thomas MacDonough. The story is that when MacDonough was a young lad on a ship in New Castle Harbor, he with a party, having a gay evening, came to the Church and rang the bell so vigorously that it cracked and feeling his obligation he discharged it at this time.

The Church Silver is very old but bears no date. One flagon is known to have been the gift of Gov. Gookin. The two chalices and patten, were, according to a letter written by a vestryman in 1802, presented by Queen Anne.

Richard Halliwell, "the Prime Patron" of the Church, left the Glebe Farm to the Church in 1719, and it still remains in the possession of Immanuel.

A long succession of Godly men have ministered to the people of New Castle and while never wealthy the congregation has maintained this ancient House of God and preserved it with veneration. To read the names of those who lie in the churchyard turns the page of history, and the thought of those noble and sincere men and women who lie close about the Church they loved brings home to us the name "God's Acre." Thomas Holcomb, Warden, has written a History of Immanuel Church, containing many interesting details.

METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodists, who had a stormy time in other places establishing their new form of religion, were not so unkindly treated in New Castle; at least the violence met with in Maryland was not so in evidence. As early as 1769 Captain Thomas Webb, who had lost an eye at Louisburg and gained a wound with Wolfe in Canada, preached here the Methodist Tenets. They closed the Court House to him, though it was used for all meetings and entertainments. He was wont to preach in full British Regimentals with his sword laid on the Bible. Robert Furness, who kept the Inn where the Gilpin House stands, opened his doors to Webb though he lost much custom by this. Also he was required to quiet a riot or two and deflect the missiles. The present Society was formed in 1820 and the Church built 1863. The present enthusiastic and progressive congregation has increased from year to year until it is one of the leading religious organizations in the State. The iron fence was placed around the graveyard in 1908.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Largely through the influence of Bernard Murphey, a substantial resident of the town, the first services of the congregation of the Roman Catholic Church were held in 1804. April 15, 1806, a lot was purchased from Samuel Rowan, original owner, Nicholas Van Dyke, and conveyed to Mr. Mundell, Kennedy, McArthur, Lafferty and Neagle, "trustees of the Roman Catholic Church in New Castle." The building was begun in 1807 but its completion was delayed for some years and it was finished in 1821. The congregation soon outgrew this small church and the large new one was completed in 1870. Gardiner L. Jemison was the contractor and Aquilla M. Hizer the brick and masonry builder. The Rev. John Daly was the Pastor at this time and a tablet to his memory is placed in the vestibule where his body lies in the Church he served so faithfully.

THE BOULDEN HOUSE

Nicholas Van Dyke built and occupied the lovely old house on the south west corner of 3rd and Delaware Streets. He had a taste for architecture and made the small town and surrounding country more beautiful by four fine old houses.

In this house we see the handsome woodwork of the period, the graceful arch in the hall springing with exquisite proportions the paneling of the great mahogany doors and the gray marble mantles have a fine effect.

Under this arch Lafayette stood to witness the marriage of Dorcas Van Dyke to Charles I. duPont in 1824.

A Frigate was sent to France to bring the great Friend of America here to pay us a visit. Thus on Wednesday October 6th, 1824, he was met at the Pennsylvania line by the Notables of Delaware, escorted to Wilmington and later in the new coach of Mr. James Rogers of Boothhurst, brought to New Castle.

There were the usual triumphal arches, bands and bebies of flower-garlanded young ladies. Finally he arrived at the home of George Read on the Strand for refreshment and then proceeded to the home of Senator Van Dyke to mark a page in the history of this stately old Georgian house by giving the bride away.

He left later by stage coach to take the French-town-New Castle Line for Baltimore and the South.

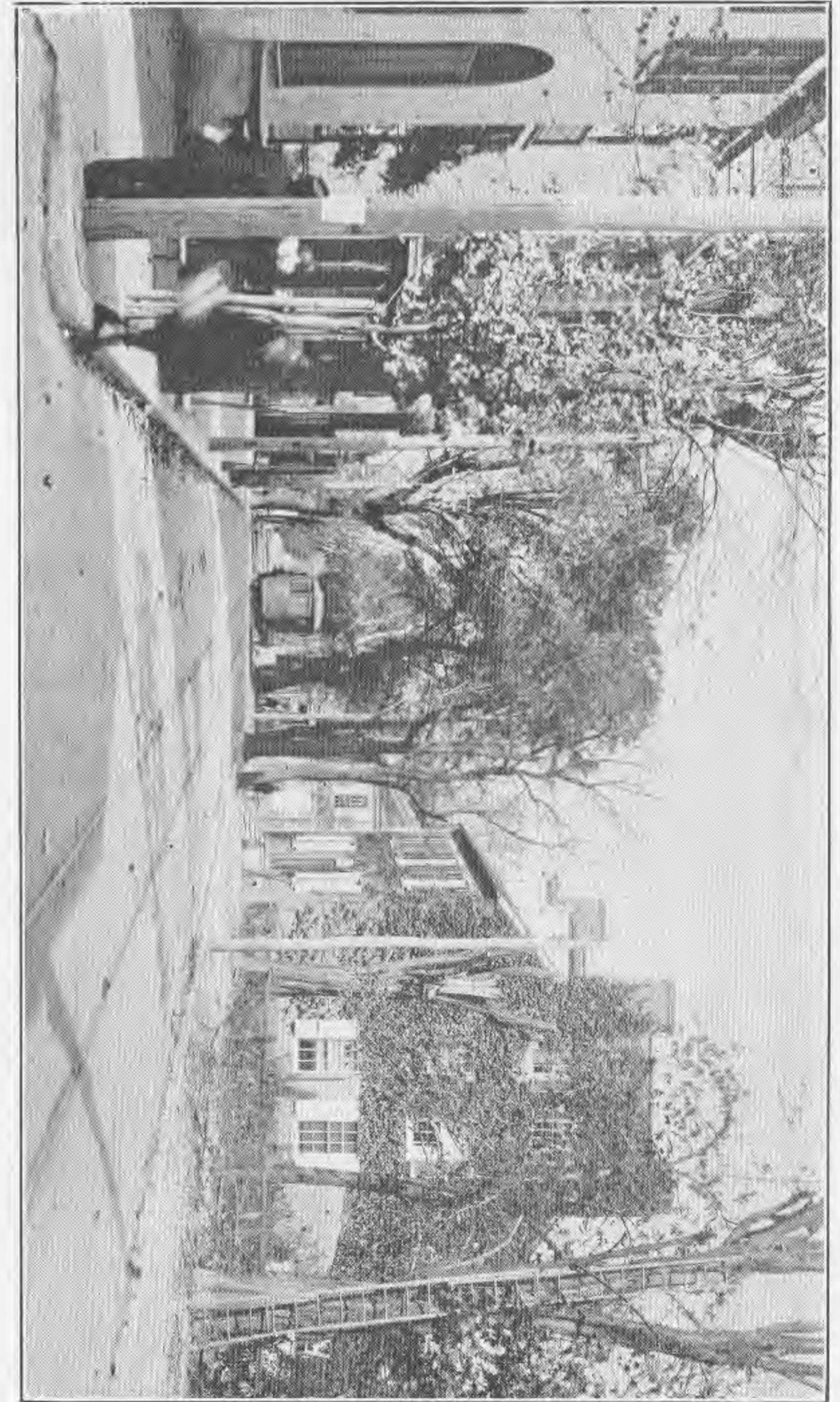
NEWS! BATTLE OF LEXINGTON

A post-boy clatters into town April 26, 1775. Down past the Court House, to the Strand. He stops in front of Zachariah Van Leuvaneigh's house (now Mr. Philip Burnet's). Mr. Van Leuvaneigh, the Magistrate, franks the message, sends the Post on his way to Baltimore and then turns to the gathering crowd and tells them of the "shot heard round the world," the Battle of Lexington.

THE KENSEY JOHNS HOUSE AND THE DORSEY HOUSE

Chancellor Kensey Johns built this house in 1783 on the N. W. corner of Delaware Street and dwelt here with his family. His son, Kensey Johns, Jr., built on the north west corner next to his father. Kensey Johns, Jr., also became Chancellor of the State on his father's resignation. These two men were types of the finely educated gentlemen of their period. Interested in their town, state and country, they have left noble traditions behind them. This house is now the residence of Dr. Lewis Booker.

KENSEY JOHNS AND DORSEY HOUSE (ERECTED IN 1781)



CASIMIR PARK

Entering New Castle from the Great Dyke Bridge we see a small triangular lot now named Casimir Park, but once known as Battle Hill. It has always been public land. Long ago a man named Jacob Battle was convicted of manslaughter and branded with the letter M for killing a man named Clark, on this spot. Afterwards a smithy stood here for many years.

The old "Rainey" House, which stood on the site of John R. Lambson's present home, was very old. It was an ancient tavern called "The Cave," kept by Barney Murphey. The old sign which was in existence for many years after was as follows:

Traveller, as you pass by
Come, take a drink as well as I;
The Liquor's good, the Price is low,
Come take a drink before you go.

On August 4, 1798 an order was made that pavements must be seven feet wide. The inhabitants rebelled but were made to comply. Pumps were the only water supply and the town gathered at Harvey's (now Chase's Pump); another opposite the Read House; another at Amstel House, for their daily supply of water. Many people think no water so good as that from Chase's Pump.

THE TILE HOUSE

This house, which was built on the Strand was originally a pure Dutch type. Built of Dutch brick with five gables on each side, it was a remarkable structure but unfortunately it was pulled down a few years ago and only the iron figures which ornamented the front remain, telling the date of erection, 1687.

THE LITTLE DUTCH HOUSE

On East 3rd Street is a tiny house. This is always called the Dutch House though the records can be traced back only to 1704. Though used at one time as the Rectory of Immanuel Church, its story for the most part is lost in the passage of time. The architecture is quaint and unusual.

THE UMBRELLA STORY

There is an ancient umbrella in New Castle, the brass ferrule has the coat of arms of England on it, the handle is ivory, the ribs are solid chunks of whalebone, and the cover is heavy dark blue silk. And this is the story. One winter night over a hundred years ago, Mr. William T. Read was wending his way to his home on the Strand. He had a lantern in one hand and in the other his new umbrella. A great gust of wind blew the umbrella out of his hand, he pursues it to the river's edge and sees it blow out over the wharf's edge. Mr. Read goes home lamenting his handsome

umbrella. A year later a ship puts into New Castle Harbor from China. The Captain asks for one William T. Read. When he appears he hands him the umbrella, saying it had blown aboard his ship as he was weighing anchor for China. He had carried it round the world and brought it back to the owner whose name was cross-stitched on the cover. This umbrella may still be seen in New Castle.

THE BOOTH HOUSE

Directly opposite the Court House is a lovely rambling old house added to and restored by Judge James Booth in 1797. The mantels of carved wood are especially fine and the cornice under the eaves. Chief Justice Booth studied law under George Read, the Signer, and was one of the outstanding figures in old New Castle. It is related that when a case was being tried and the jury deliberated a long time at night, Judge Booth would go across the street, and so to bed. On the jury reaching a decision the Court House bell was always vigorously rung. Then could be seen a gentleman in dressing gown and slippers hastening across the street to receive the decision and to sentence the prisoner.

AMSTEL HOUSE

This house, one of the most interesting in the State has recently been purchased for a Historic Museum. It is hoped to raise funds to restore this as a Colonial Home of the Period—early in 1700. This booklet is an effort to defray expenses of restoration. The following paragraphs of description were prepared by Prof. H. H. Hay, of Girard College, at a time when he was an owner of the house.

THE ANNALS OF AMSTEL HOUSE

That New Castle has reason to be proud of its past, no one will deny. Here Charles Thomson lived as a boy. Thomson, the man without guile, who, as secretary of Congress, announced to Washington his election to the Presidency. Here also dwelt George Read, a signer of the Declaration; also another signer, Thomas McKean, even lingering in New Castle after he became chief justice of Pennsylvania. And there was one more signer, George Ross, who, as a native of New Castle, spent his early years in the town. Here, too, the immortal Caesar Rodney rested on that ride, which was to end in creating the master republic. Here, also, slept Washington in the perilous time of the Revolution.

The history of this idiosyncratic New Castle has never been written, and the mislaying or destruction of some of the records of the county makes an accurate history almost impossible. It is an ancient town set apart, rich in colonial traditions, and, perhaps, a little too self-sufficient. Still, now that the tide of appreci-

tion is rising, now, when architects praise us, and beautiful books are written about us, we must look to our facts, and even beyond, to the region of reasonable conjecture.

There has been a theory that the Revolution was a war between a rich country and a poor one, the opposite is nearly the truth. In all that made for comfort, the colonies were affluent; part of that affluence showed itself about 1725 in the building of fine houses. And among the first fruits of the Delaware crop was the Amstel House. The plans were English, but the oak was Delawarean, and the bricks, too, were made in the southern part of New Castle, then known as "Brickmaker's Point."

A master builder constructed the house. I wish I knew his name, for the work was well done, and is likely to endure two centuries more. Our worthy builder has left his mark upon the house, for no two windows are exactly alike in measurement, also one of the bays is one inch wider than its fellows! So came into being the dwelling place which you are honoring with your presence; the house whose front has been called the most beautiful of colonial facades. And, as this house has been praised by experienced pens, I am saved some architectural trouble.

In "Colonial Architecture For Those About to Build," Mr. Wise says, "As Salem is to Massachusetts, Annapolis to Maryland and Charleston to the South, so is New Castle, Delaware, to the territory of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware." Perhaps the most interesting old residence in New Castle is the Washington House, so called from the presence of the Father of his country within it on the occasion of the wedding of the Honorable Kensey Johns (afterwards chancellor of the state), and Ann Van Dyke. The transfer of the property traces its existence back to the year 1737, while its architecture indicates that it may have been built much earlier. A wide gable, pitched at an angle of 29 degrees, spans a frontage of 43 feet, but has only a depth of 22 feet, the remainder of the house constituting a service wing extending 24 feet farther toward the rear. To the right of the hall is the parlor, with cupboards on each side of the fireplace, and "secret" cupboards also, concealed by panels of the wainscot hinged as doors. Mr. Hammond, too, sketches the house with a loving brush. He says: Entering the house through the heavy doorway with its very decided Dutch character, one finds oneself in a hallway bisecting the house and facing a broad stair with deep, generous steps. To the right is a living room, the opposite wall of which is heavily and beautifully paneled in wood. To the left is a dining room. The house contains much paneling throughout, and the north wall of the aforementioned living room has set in it two secret cupboards on either side of the big old fireplace."

In Amstel House grew up Nicholas III, who was to bloom into a Senator, a man of affairs, a lover of architecture and polite literature; and who should, at his daughter's wedding, entertain his distinguished friend, the Marquis de Lafayette. In this house was to come to flower Ann Van Dyke, who should be later the happy bride of the Chancellor Kensey Johns, who, as I said before, was at one time a subject of George II.

Let us cull a romantic document or two from the past. In the first exhibition we shall see the lover in a tentative mood, thus he writes with careful pen, "Mr. Johns' compliments wait upon Miss Van Dyke and solicit the honor of her hand at the ball at Wilmington on Monday evening."

Next let me give you a love letter (somewhat abbreviated) which, indeed, must have made Miss Ann happy.

"This evening I visited the "Corner." Soon after I went in Mrs. V. (the second Mrs. Van Dyke) says, "Well, Mr. Johns, what say you to a ride (sleigh ride) below (St. Georges) in the morning with me, and bringing Miss Nancy up?" After an hour passed I recovered myself and answered in the negative, that my business would not permit of it—your papa discovered by his countenance the highest satisfaction at my refusal; this approbation of his afforded me great pleasure. The more I regard your happiness, the more desirous I am by assiduity and attention to business to establish a character, which will give me consequence and importance in life. I wish to see you more than words express. Mrs. V. says she wants you to come up very much; she asked me to use my influence to persuade you. All I can say is, that if your Grand Mama's indisposition will admit of it, and your inclination prompts you to come, it will much contribute to my happiness, even if I should only see you now and then for a few moments. My fingers are so cold I can scarce hold my pen, therefore adieu. Be assured that I never cease to be,

Yours most affectionately,

KENSEY JOHNS.

New Castle, February 15, 1784.

There is a romantic story told of a gentleman living in Amstel House, who married, as he supposed, a widow; her husband having gone on a sea voyage and never returned. It was another case of Enoch Arden, the sailor returned, and, it is said, departed with his pockets a-clink with gold.

Among others who frequented the house was that versatile Delawarean, the novelist, poet, dramatist, and editor, Dr. Robert Montgomery Bird.

But to return to the would-be Chancellor and his cold fingers.

The winter of 1784 is calculated to chill the blood of the most ardent lover. The whole country is polar, with mountains of

drifting snow; roads are gone, and rescue parties have to be formed to succor outlying hamlets. Save at Mount Vernon, all visiting has ceased; there, post riders bring bundles of letters; there, distinguished strangers and curiosity mongers are breaking through winter's barriers; there, the world comes to greet incarnate truth, in the shape of earth's foremost man. Fame is busy with the phenomenon of George Washington, Esquire. No longer a general, for he has resigned his sword, and is not yet called to the presidency, but by consensus of kings and people, he is acclaimed as the noblest of heroes, and the loftiest of citizens; this is the high priest of patriotism, and the only one since the world began.

The great man himself is minding his own business; he is attending to his estate; trying to renew friendships, and tolerating notable guests. He has revived an old scheme for opening up the Potomac river; and to make this a success, he must enlist in the plan Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Delaware. The executives of all these states must be fairly met. And when the snow goes, say some time in April, he intends to make a little call on Governor Van Dyke at his home in New Castle, Delaware.

Other things are to happen at that home. In April, Miss Ann Van Dyke will become Mrs. Kensey Johns. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder; the folks of New Castle think the small fresh-colored lady almost beautiful. When the day of the marriage comes, it is rumored that there will be a delay of twenty-four hours. Rumor is mistaken for once, for the appointed evening finds the wedding over, the Presbyterian clergyman gone, the friends dispersed, and the bride and groom snug in their temporary home. Their permanent home, opposite the town green, is not yet built.

All the people of the wedding are to return to the Governor's house on the morrow, not only for the wedding feast, but for the supreme satisfaction of meeting the Father of his Country, who is to make Amstel House famous by his presence. So dawns Friday, April the 30th, 1784.

By mid-day the four-horse carriage is standing near the Governor's door, and the great man, with his back to the fireplace, is receiving compliments and congratulations. At this point the task of narration becomes difficult. To speak the gratification of the bride, the manly pride of the groom, the hearty hospitality of the Governor, even the dishes of the marriage feast, all this is easy enough. But how shall a chronicler picture Washington, when poetry hesitates, and history is only able to reach an approximation.

To say that he is 52 years of age, magnificent in health and fortune, is to say but little. Washington's qualities of soul do not appear in such a description. Some great men have an insignificant person, but this giant man, in face and bearing,

commands reverence and arrests attention. The grave steady eyes show that invincible command, which rebukes levity and forbids presumption. Yet the hero can bend, and on this occasion he is simple, straight-forward and even warm. And when at last he stands majestic, and half smiling in the beautiful doorway, he puts a fitting end to his visit by framing the bride's face between his hands and gently kissing her on the forehead. It is pleasant to remember, too, that the pretty incident lingers in President Washington's mind. For ten years afterward he meets the groom, then the leading lawyer of the state of Delaware, at his levee, he has a little compliment to pay, "You must be a happy man, Mr. Johns, to have such a beautiful wife."

On the 25th of March, 1785, Governor Van Dyke vacated the house, and Kensey Johns and his wife moved in, bringing with them the new wife's dower; to wit, a number of law books and one Negro girl, called Hannah. Nevertheless, the would-be Chancellor is not wanting in hospitality, for the house became to quote his own words, "A place of resort and accommodation for his father-in-law, the second Mrs. Van Dyke and all the children, and also for the numerous relations and acquaintances of the Van Dyke family in Kent and New Castle counties and in the city of Philadelphia.

A picture of the bride confirms Washington's opinion of her good looks, and evidence is not wanting of her determined character. She ruled the household with firmness, and that household included her husband—convivial midnights were frowned upon. It is related that some of Mr. Johns' gay friends, anxious for a wet night, being refused at the house door, attacked the upper windows with a ladder and encountered both the lady and the tiger in one buxom personality.

The present owners have not only found a sunny happiness in their home, but they have also discovered behind the paneling of the library a hollow place, a possible crypt for papers and secret treasures, but they decline to pry lest the fairy gold should turn to dust, and they have dealt with a great deal of dust in the redemption of Amstel House.

When the last of the Burnhams bade farewell to New Castle, the house passed into the hands of an agent, and suffered strange vicissitudes. The fine old garden was largely sold for building lots. One of the windows was turned into a door, some of the rooms divided by partitions. A tailor, to be followed by a grocer, dominated the dining room. Elections, with bad whiskey, rather than good Madiera, held sway in the parlor. In each room there was a different tenant. But the guardianship which protects old churches, protected the house. The bricks, the timber and most of the woodwork stoutly resisted. Then your present hosts saw the poor soiled thing, and, resolving on its redemption, called

into council an able Delaware architect, and were put in good heart when he told them that a general renovation was certainly needed, but that nothing material was lost. Some of the old bricks were dug up and the windows restored; partitions were removed, and finally the house rose from its ashes, which was almost a fact, as the little garden was covered with ashes and refuse. The floors were propped in places, much repairing done, cornices were replaced in part; but the wood, the brick, the window sashes and their old fastenings remain; the house, *pro bono publico*, is as it was when George II was on the throne.

But, in spite of Mr. Wise, the house was never known as the Washington House. The old-time chancellor (Kensley Johns), calls it the "Corner", perhaps because it was to him the sweetest corner in the world, for there his liege-lady dwelt. Also it has been called the Van Dyke house, but there is another Van Dyke house in New Castle; so the present owners, having a loving regard for the past, have christened the house "Amstel."

As to the age of the house, this was settled by an architectural verdict. The great authority saying that, in his opinion, having regard to the sashes of the windows, the angle of the watershed, and the character of the paneling, he would pronounce the house to be only a year or two behind Stenton, and Stenton was built in 1728.

The register's office partially confirms this estimate, for the house was sold by the sheriff in 1738, being then the property of William Goddard.

If you will then graciously accept the name and date, we can go on with our story.

The first owner of the house, whose name the burnt records conceal, must have had taste and judgment. He probably knew the history of his times, and in books and newspapers had crossed the separating seas; let his eyes be ours for the nonce, and let us con the social fabric of two hundred years ago.

Important is the New Castle of 1730, with its 500 inhabitants, and the Amstel House enunciates its importance. A gracious dwelling set in a quaint corner, backed and surrounded by trees; for, by an enactment of Penn, New Castle and Philadelphia were ordered to plant trees. From the upper windows can be seen the coming and going of ships; many are the cargoes embarked and disembarked at the warehouses of the good town, this Penn creation, which still hopes to rival Philadelphia.

There are other sights too; great flat-bottomed cargo boats called arks, and propelled by poles; these are going up on the tide, and sometimes passenger batteaux pass, driven by eight oars.

New Castle is not a town of many inhabitants, but it is well situated; and it has a decent established church with communion vessels, the gift of Queen Anne; but, indeed, in the whole country

there is no large town. New Orleans has only existed fifteen years, and Baltimore, with less than 100 houses, has been founded about a year. The greatest of all American cities is some twelve hours away from us, by horse or carriage—and that greatest town is Philadelphia, which has a population of 10,000 souls, not including a couple of hundred slaves. It has suffered from fire and disease; but is growing at such a rate that game within ten miles is getting scarce, and it is some years since they killed a bear at Germantown. If we want to enlarge our knowledge, and get rid of our homespuns, we must go to Philadelphia, for Philadelphia sells English goods.

We can see the fashions there. We can see women wearing hooped petticoats and striped shoes with red heels. Women fanning themselves and, perhaps, taking a slight pinch of snuff. Women wearing turned-down hats, topped with great bunches of plumes. We can sell our natural hair in Philadelphia and help to pay the price of a new wig. We can go to the old London Coffee House, where business is transacted and slaves sold; or turn into Crooked Billet Inn and have a hunk of bread and cheese and a toby of ale, and read Bradford's "Weekly Mercury" Also there are plenty of fine buildings; Christ Church, on Second Street, is being enlarged, and they are going to build the Philadelphia library and finish their State House. As for country houses, Mr. Logan has built himself a fine house above Nicetown, and has called the house "Stenton." The relics of the past are nearly all swept away, still you can see Penn's cottage in Letitia Street, but the beautiful gardens have disappeared. If you are a person of importance, maybe you will be bidden to the governor's ball, and as they drink and are apt to keep things going till past midnight, the George's Inn or the Plume of Feathers will be glad of your patronage, until the time to salute the governor.

Patrick Gordon, by the will of the proprietors, and with King George's approbation, is governor. An old soldier, a plain, simple man, and an excellent executive.

But New Castle has its share of good eating; most of us know some skipper fresh from the West Indies, and a live turtle and a keg of limes are a common gift, turtle soup and punch are the first and last of a hearty dinner. Nor are we without amusement, for a journey to Philadelphia is not always possible. Lotteries are common, and horse racing is always with us. Old England has lent us some of her customs. She has sent us quarter staff fighting, in which the man who does not get his head banged wins the prize. There are boat races, and greasy poles to climb, and wrestling for silver buckles, and the prettiest girl receives a pair of silk stockings, and ballads are sung, and liquor is drunk, and at all our entertainments we loyally drink to our sovereign, George II, happily reigning, and busy about the happiness of the people.

After the first owner, there were others of which I have a list, but they hardly lend themselves to artistic treatment; presumably, they lived and loved, and ate bread and butter. But the Van Dykes, the Moodys and their descendants, the Birds and Burnhams, were well-known people. The interest in the house begins with the Governor (or President) Van Dyke. Around his occupancy a certain romance has gathered, for Nicholas Van Dyke, at the time which tried men's souls, was an active patriot. He was born at his father's house, at Dutch Neck, St. George's Hundred, in 1738, and died at the same place in 1789. He was admitted to the Philadelphia bar in 1765, and his military and political activities were unending. In 1774 he was a major in the militia. Later he was one of the committee of thirteen appointed by his own colony to consider the Boston Port Bill, and raised money to assist Boston. He helped to frame the first constitution of the State of Delaware, and served six years in the Continental Congress. He was also one of the delegates to ratify the Articles of Confederation. After he left Congress he was a member of the Council of the State of Delaware in 1779, and was elected speaker. He was a judge of the Admiralty, and finally, as I said before, was governor of the State of Delaware for three years. He occupied the "Corners" as the house seemed to have been called, for ten years, and lived there during part of his governorship.

There is a strong impression in the minds of the general public that a colonial dwelling is an inconvenient doll's house, made interesting and even charming by old panelling, quaint furniture and family pictures. But the real appeal to the eye in an old house is a result of the architecture. The high ceiling of the present may be the minister of hygeia, but it is the enemy of beauty. Whatever else the builders of the past understood, they understood proportions; they avoided the monotony of square rooms; they were not guilty of over ornamentation. They achieved rhythm by harmonizing height and length, and, above all, as there was no window tax, they warmed and illumined their homes with the sun.

On a pane of glass in our guest chamber, some long dead hand, possibly that of the old Chancellor, has written, with a diamond, this couplet:

"Around her head ye angels constant vigil keep,
And guard fair innocence her balmy sleep."

In Scharfs History of Delaware is a list of famous men most prominent in the State in the Revolution, the first eight mentioned are residents of New Castle. "The first is George Read, in a peculiar sense the Father of the State of Delaware, the author of her first Constitution in 1776 and of the first edition of her laws. Member of Assembly for twelve years; Vice-President of the State and Acting Chief Magistrate. He was one of two statesmen

and the only Southern statesman who signed all three great State papers: Petition to the King; The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution of the United States. There was not a dishonest fibre in his heart, nor an element of meanness in his soul."—(Scharf).

The story of New Castle would not be complete without the mention of some of the men who have lived here and made history; not only the history of the town and state but of the Nation. It is possible to list only a few of the names, would that there were space to write their doings or even the stories of the lighter side—the anecdotes which have remained; such as the story of Chief Justice Clayton coming into Court a moment late; severely reprimanding himself—fine \$10.00. Promptly paid. Court continues. Or Charles Thompson, landing here as a poor orphan, walking miles to get an education, finally raising himself to the position that when he entered the Hall of Congress, they said, "Here comes Truth." A few outstanding residents of New Castle follow:

George Read, Signer.
Gov. Gunning Bedford.
Gov. Caleb Bennett.
George Ross, Signer.
Thomas McKean, Signer.
Judge Jehu Curtis.
Commodore Thomas Read.
Gov. Nicholas Van Dyke.
Sen. Nicholas Van Dyke.
Chancellor Kensey Johns, Sr.
Chancellor Kensey Johns, Jr.
Chief Justice James Booth, Sr.
Chief Justice James Booth, Jr.
Hon. Louis McLane.
Chief Justice Thomas Clayton.
Hon. John M. Clayton.
Gov. Thomas Stockton.
Attorney Gen. James Rogers.
Charles Thompson, Sec. of Congress.
Judge James R. Black.
Judge George Gray.