

F 157  
.D3 D3  
Copy 1

# OLD MARKET STREET

CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA

---

Historic Incidents That Have Taken Place Within  
or are Associated With This Highway

---

By HENRY GRAHAM ASHMEAD

---

Reprinted from the Chester Times of May 4, 11, 18, 25, and  
June 1, 1895, to Which Some Additional Incidents  
Have Been Inserted

---

BULLETIN OF THE  
DELAWARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
AUGUST, 1920

---

Chester, Pa. :  
Press of Chester Times  
1920

F157  
I 3 I 3

31

20-20518





# OLD MARKET STREET

## Historic Incidents That Have Taken Place Within or Are Associated With this Ancient Highway

By HENRY GRAHAM ASHMEAD

[Reprinted from the Chester Times of May 4, 11, 18, 25 and June 1, 1895, to which some additional incidents have been inserted.]

I invite the reader to accompany me in a ramble along Market street from the intersection of that thoroughfare with Edgmont avenue to the Delaware river, and as we proceed I will attempt to relate the annals of the ancient highway, recalling some of the incidents that enter into the history of Market street. In doing this I will not repeat the stories of old buildings that stood or now stand along it, but shall strive to present a few of the noticeable occurrences that have taken place in the highway itself, and the memories of which have not been wholly obliterated in the lapse of years.

The plan of Chester, as the residents of the old town of half a century ago remember it, was not adopted until 1700. Prior to that date, Edgmont avenue, from Front street, had been merely natural extension, following in its development the course of Chester creek, but after the establishment and rapid growth of Philadelphia, it was necessary to unite the settled parts of Chester, with the main road leading to the former city. The sharp angle existing in Edgmont avenue above Third street today, is the result of that change. The Queen's Highway, as we now know it in Fifth street and Merton avenue, was not laid out until 1706. Previous to that date the road to the Quaker City was Twenty-fourth street, which crossed Chester creek at the ford, near the present covered bridge at Upland, and Ridley creek at Irving's mills, where in early days the water was shallow.

### The Darby Highway

Many of the people were dissatisfied with the present highway to Darby when first projected, and it was charged that Jasper Yeates, one of the Commissioners appointed to lay out the road, took it the present course that it might benefit his own and his father-in-law — Sandeland's—ground. "God and nature," they declared, "intended the road to cross directly across the creek, but the devil and Jasper Yeates took it where it was located." Second street, or Filbert, as it was known in early times, was laid out by David Lloyd in 1698, a thirty-eight feet wide street extending from the creek to the plantation at Welsh street recently known as the Porter estate, which he had purchased of Widow Laerson nine years before. These highways—Edgmont avenue to a short distance north of Third, and Second street, were in existence when Sandeland made the plan, and he was compelled to recognize them on the draft he submitted to William Penn on November 19, 1700. In the petition accompanying he stated that he was "possessed of a certain spot of land lying in the sd county of Chester \* \* \* verie fitt and naturally commodious for a town, and to that end" he had "lately caused ye sd spot of land to be divided and laid out into lotts, streets and market" a copy of which he produced. The following day Penn gave his approval of the draft, and Chester, from the river to Seventh street and from Edgmont avenue to Welsh street, conforms in substance today to the

plan that the Sandeland family prepared, for excepting a small part, all the land from the creek to Welsh street was at that time the property of that family.

#### A Review From the Past

We all recall the weird German ballad by VonSedlitz, in which he described how at the twelfth hour by the night a ghostly drummer with his drum went through the world beating the reveille, summoning all the soldiers, who, slumbering in the sands of Egypt, the snowdrifts of Russia, or the sunny plains of Italy and Spain, as well as in other parts of Europe, had fallen victims to the ambition of Napoleon. Last of all, when the dark legions of ghosts had gathered, the dim squadrons had mounted their phantom horses and the long lines of bayonets had moved into form—miles after miles, there came the stately horseman in the gray coat and the cocked hat, passing between the murmuring ranks just as the moon beamed for a moment and showed the fleshless arms holding the muskets that rattled at his approach. Such a review, drawn from the shadowy past, do I summon for you as we stand near the City Hall, now, as it has been for more than two centuries, the heart of Chester. \*

It was early in the morning of Wednesday, August 11, 1732, that Thomas Penn, then a man of thirty, the son of William, landed at Chester, and as the Council and Assembly were in session at Philadelphia, a messenger was dispatched to that city to an-

\* This idea is not that of the poet only. Many of my readers will recall that on the 18th of December, 1840, the body of the greatest soldier in all recorded history, amid unusual funeral splendor, was carried through Paris from the Place de la Concorde, the Arc de Triumphe to the Church of the Invalides. Shortly thereafter Frederick Soulise published his one-time noted "A Review of the Dead," in which he pictured the apparition of Napoleon, wrapped in the blue mantle in which he slept the night after the battle of Marengo, with that of the King of Rome at his side, standing on the arch that commemorates his conspicuous victories and pointing out to his son the different divisions of the spectral army, that from midnight to dawn, filed along in military grandure the Champ Elysiens, in honor of their great dead commander. See also the masterpiece of Raffet "Le Revue Nocturne."

nounce his arrival. The Secretary of Council immediately came to Chester, bearing the congratulations of the authorities and "to acquaint him"—Penn—"that tomorrow they would in person pay their respects to him." The next day, Deputy Governor Patrick Gordon and the members of his Council, accompanied by a large number of gentlemen, came to Chester, where they "waited on the Honorable Proprietary and paid him their compliments."

#### A Momentous Event

"After dinner the Proprietary and his company, now very numerous, sett out for Philadelphia." All the family of Penn at this time had renounced membership in the Society of Friends. It was a momentous event for the little hamlet when Thomas Penn, in the full maturity of his manhood, attired in the height of the London fashion, at the side of the Deputy Governor, who sat his horse like a veteran trooper as he was, accompanied by a cavalcade of several hundred horsemen, the greater number dressed in sober drab, rode up High street, as Market was then called, and thence by the Queen's Highway—Fifth street—proceeded to Philadelphia. At the latter place he was compelled to endure a tedious address from Speaker Hamilton. A banquet was given him by the civic authorities and a pow-wow by a party of chiefs of the Five Nations, who chanced to be on a visit to the city. Later the fire engines squirted for him and many other demonstrations were made which show that exalted public position a century and a half ago brought with it those hours of agonizing afflictions that attend it today. Samuel Reimer, the eccentric editor of the Pennsylvania Gazette, in one of a series of letters in his paper over the signature of "The Caribbean," laughed at Thomas Penn as a youth who was frightened at the stalwart reception accorded him. Reimer was an elderly man, and like the Septuagenarian of today, looked upon anyone ten years his junior 'as only a boy.'

A little more than a year thereafter John Penn, the eldest son of William by his second marriage and known as "The American," because of his birth in Philadelphia, January 29, 1700—the only child of Penn born in the new world—on Thursday, September 20, 1733, with his brother-in-law, Thomas Frame and his wife, formerly Margaret Penn, together with their children, reached Chester, where they were received by Thomas Penn, who, with a number of gentlemen came from Phil-

Philadelphia to greet the eldest living son of the founder. That night was passed here and the next morning the party rode up Market and out Fifth street to the capital city, where they were received with manifestations of popular rejoicing very similar to those which had greeted Thomas Penn the year before. At the banquet on this occasion the health of the King and that of others in authority was so repeatedly drunk that, it is believed by many historians, the reports thereof which got into general circulation, influenced Michael Walfare, one of the hermits of Conestoga, to go to Philadelphia where, in his linen pilgrim garb, with his tall staff and venerable beard, he stood in the market place of that city and proclaimed the judgments of an offended Deity against the iniquitous town.

### Franklin's Visit

A greater man than any of these now appears through the mist of years. On November 7, 1764, Benjamin Franklin rode down Market street, then so-called, attended by a cavalcade of more than three hundred horsemen, who had accompanied him from Philadelphia that they might give him "God's speed" when he embarked on his second voyage to Europe as Commissioner to the Court of St. James, representing there the provinces of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. Franklin, by his outspoken denunciation of the slaughter of the friendly Indians by the "Paxtang boys," had aroused an opposition that compassed his defeat as a member of the Assembly, but that body shortly afterwards appointed him to present the petition of Pennsylvania to the King of England, and his native province clothed him with similar duties. At that time he was the most conspicuous man in all the Colonies, and his fame had preceded him to the old world. Richardson's wharf, at the foot of Market street, then only recently built, was crowded with people, for the residents of the town and the neighborhood had gathered there to catch a sight of "Poor Richard," who it was known would take the vessel at Chester. As the boat pushed off, Franklin stood in the stern-sheets, while the assembled populace burst into cheers which continued until he had reached and boarded the ship that, with anchor afloat, lay in midstream.

The struggle between the Colonies and the mother country had finally culminated in an appeal to arms, and in that "time that tried men's souls"

the regular tramp of soldiers was no unusual sound in the streets of "Old Chester," for even at that early day the town was frequently so called, in affection by some, in derision by others. Early in February, 1776, Wayne, the Colonel of the Fourth Battalion of the Pennsylvania Line, mustered his command at Chester, and on the 17th of that month reported that 560 officers and men were present, although more than three weeks prior to that date he had ordered the companies commanded by Captains Robinson, Church and Lacey to New York, where they had reported. The schooling of raw recruits on Market street was a daily sight to the people, until old and young alike had grown familiar with the middle-sized, ruddy-complexioned, piercing-eyed man of commanding carriage, who as "Mad Anthony," was destined to make an imperishable record in the history of our country. Time and again Chester was the designated encampment for the troops levied for the Continental service, and at such periods the drilling of the men at all hours of the day were ordinary incidents in the story of the street.

### Warlike Scenes

It was the evening of August 24, 1777, a sultry Sabbath day, that the American Army, sixteen thousand strong, in its southward movement to meet Sir William Howe, encamped in and around Chester, and the hillsides were illuminated with the camp fires. Washington established his headquarters at the "Pennsylvania Arms" tavern, now the Washington House, its peculiar situation immediately opposite the Court House, rendering it a desirable location for a commanding officer, but Lafayette, then a young man not quite twenty years of age, became the guest of Caleb Coupland, at the present Stacy House, now occupied by Mrs. C. C. Eyre, on Market below Fourth street. Eighteen days thereafter, on Tuesday, September 11, 1777, the same army, which had suffered defeat that day at Brandywine, from eve to long after midnight, straggled into the town and encamped in the neighborhood. It was no inspiring sight as these disordered, ill-equipped, dust-covered and powder-stained men, many wearing dirty bandages concealing their hastily-dressed wounds, tramped wearily up Market street and out the Darby road as far as Leiper-ville, but despite their reverses they still carried on their bayonet points the destinies of a nation.

A more glittering scene now rises from the past. It was late in the morning of Tuesday, November 18, 1777, that Lord Cornwallis, in command of nearly 3,000 men, reached Chester, having left Philadelphia, crossing the Schuylkill at the Middle ferry about noon of the preceding day. That night—Monday—the British troops encamped a mile or so this side of Darby, and their marauding parties had plundered the inhabitants in the neighborhood. It was a spectacle such as the people of Chester never saw before, these well-fed, well-equipped and admirably disciplined troops, for the detachment was composed of the flower of the English army, composing the 5th, 15th, 17th, 33rd and 56th Regiments, as well as a battalion of Hessians and the Light Infantry, together with twelve pieces of artillery, several howitzers and a train of baggage wagons. The sugar-loaf hats, long white leggings, carefully pipeclayed, the scarlet coats of the grenadiers, faced with white, which Hogarth's celebrated picture, "The March to Finchley," has made so familiar to us all; the Hessians, who "wore their beards on their upper lips," at a time when all the rest of the civilized world were closely shaven, would have attracted attention anywhere and no wonder was it that most of the people of the town gathered on the sidewalks and gazed with admiration and apprehension as the soldiers to the ruffle of drums, with Lord Cornwallis at their head, swung round the corner of the Queen's Highway into Market street. The able commander with his staff drew reins at the "Pennsylvania Arms," and he was the observed of all observers. His lordship, then in his thirty-ninth year, was in person short and thick-set, his prematurely gray hair, unpowdered, was worn in a queue, his features regular, but an affection of his left eye, which caused it to blink incessantly, detracted much from his appearance. He was exceedingly nervous and his habit of raising his hand to his head and changing the position of his hat every few minutes when in thought, was very noticeable that day, and the men knew that "Old Corncob," as his soldiers in the southern campaign afterwards termed him, had serious business in contemplation. Major Campbell, handsome "Mad Archy," of the staff, as he stood by the side of his horse that day in Chester, was in excellent humor, as he always was when battle was in the air.

### Archy Campbell's Romance

Strange how slight an incident in the life of an individual may result in dispelling the oblivion with which time generally enshrouds the memory of the dead. In Archy Campbell we are confronted by one of these peculiar cases. The story shows three years thereafter. "Mad Archy" compelled Rev. Edward Ellington, by a threat in event of refusal to shoot the clergyman, the lady and himself, to perform the ceremony of marriage whereby the lovely Paulina Philips, of Charleston, without prior engagement, became his wife, is one of the most romantic incidents that cluster about the history of the little English church on Goose creek, South Carolina. It has furnished William Gilmore Simms with material for a chapter in his "Katharine Walton," and has imparted interest to innumerable magazine and newspaper articles. While the fellow-members of his Lordship's staff are forgotten, Archy's marriage more than his death in battle six months thereafter, has kept his memory green.

The day was chilly, and while the arrangements for the embarkation were being perfected, that the men might be removed from the temptation offered by the public houses, the main body of the troops were withdrawn to "Gallow's Hill," at the intersection of Edgmont and Providence Great Roads, that being elevated ground affording a full view of the Queen's Highway to Philadelphia, and commanding the approaches to the town. Over eighty English men of war and transports lay abreast of Chester, and the boats from these were employed to carry the soldiers to the Jersey shore. The surface of the Delaware was alive with crafts going to and returning from the other side of the river. The horses, artillery and baggage wagons were placed on floats, which were towed by the launches of the ships. A strict disciplinarian, Lord Cornwallis, of all officers in the English army, was the best man to be in charge of such an enterprise. So admirable were his arrangements that the soldiers, who the day before in solid column had taken an hour and a half by actual timing to cross the bridge at Darby, were all embarked before sunset. The people of the little hamlet breathed freer when they had gone, for the times were hard and the country had been swept by foraging parties from both armies until provisions were difficult to be had. Major John Clark, who had been detailed from General Greene's staff to keep



Washington informed of the movements of the enemy, the day after Cornwallis had crossed over to Billingsport and captured the works there, in a letter written from the "Plow and Harrow" tavern, then kept by Mrs. Withy, which stood where the Hotel Cambridge is now, told the American commander that "that the only article of general food among the people was potatoes," and they sold at 16 shillings a bushel, while beef, worth 7 shillings, 6 pence a pound, was difficult to be had even at that price.

### Jones, the Tory

Five days before Cornwallis passed through Chester, the authorities of Pennsylvania had published a hand bill offering a reward for the arrest of John James, a noted Tory. These bills were posted in conspicuous places throughout Chester county, for he was a resident of the old bailiwick. An aged gentleman who died nearly twenty years ago related this instance to me. His father, then hardly out of his minority, one day noticed a man reading one of these bills which had been tacked on a tree near the corner of Fourth and Market streets, wherein James was officially described as about 35 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches in height, slenderly made, with a stoop in his walk, leaning sidewise, and his shoulders falling greatly. His eyes, it stated, were dark, and his hair, for he wore no wig, was of a dark hue. He usually dressed in drab, his coat in the "strictest Quaker fashion being lengthy in the skirts and without pockets," while his hat was exceedingly plain. The man who read the bill, my informant's father said, was so very like the person whose arrest the State was so anxious to make that he never doubted but that John James that day in Chester had seen the portraiture of himself as officially presented by the Supreme Executive Council. James, however, eluded the authorities.

### "Sandy Flash" in Chester

It was early Sunday morning, August 22, 1778, that James Fitzpatrick, the noted outlaw, who, as "Sandy Flash," is one of the principal characters in Bayard Taylor's "Story of Kennett," a prisoner under guard, was brought to Chester, and at the jail door, heavily manacled as he was, he stretched out his hand and clasped that of a youth of 19, who was in the crowd about him, saying, "How are you, brother chip?" The incident brought the youth under suspicion and in explanation he stated that he, James

Shillingford, was an apprentice to a blacksmith whose shop was near the Fox Chase Tavern, in Newtown, on the West Chester road. In the early spring of that year he had gone to the forge and had started the fire preparatory to the appearance of the master smith. While thus employed, a handsome athletic young man, with sandy hair and ruddy complexion, astride of a blooded animal, rode up to the shop and said:

"My horse has cast a shoe, do you think you can put one on?"

"I think I can," was the answer.

"Well, I'll let you try," said the stranger, dismounting.

The apprentice, much pleased at the opportunity to try his skill, took up the horse's foot and began trimming the hoof, when the stranger remarked:

"Give me your apron and you blow the bellows while I try my hand just to see what sort of a job I could do."

The youth protested that it was a dangerous thing to drive a nail in a horse's hoof, but the man insisted, declaring that he would assume all responsibilities on that score. The horse was shod and the apprentice saw that the stranger was an expert smith, and as the latter threw aside the apron and resumed his coat the youth noticed he was well armed and mentioned it.

"It's dangerous traveling these roads alone," replied the stranger. "They tell me there is a Captain Fitz who frequents the neighborhood and the people are much afraid of him. Have you ever seen him?"

"No," was the answer, "but I've often heard him described."

"Do I answer the description of Fitzpatrick?"

"I don't know that you do," was the cautious response.

The man mounted and threw a coin to the apprentice, saying: "Pay your master for the shoe, and keep the rest for yourself. So you have never seen Fitzpatrick? I am going now and I might as well say that Fitzpatrick happens to be my name." The apprentice never saw him again until he chanced to be in Chester on a visit and was surprised that the noted outlaw had recognized him.

### The Herald of Great Tidings

It was nearing midnight, Sunday, October 21st, 1781, when a horseman drew rein and wearily dismounted at the Washington House, the name of this tavern had been recently changed from that of the "Pennsylvania Arms"

to the title it then bore. Then, as before, it was recognized by the American authorities as a designated post for the reception and dispatching of intelligence for the patriots. It was not until he had beaten loudly for some time on the door that mine host, William Kerlin was awakened and answered the summons. It was no unusual thing for him to be aroused at all hours of the night by bearers of momentous intelligence. In this case it was tidings of great joy. The rider told how about two o'clock on Friday, October 19th, Lord Cornwallis had surrendered his command at Yorktown to the combined American and French armies, and how soon thereafter he was dispatched to carry the momentous news to Congress; how he had left Yorktown, skirted the Rappanock until he could ford that river, crossing the Potomac at a ferry, then galloping through Maryland, crossing the Susquehanna at Bald Fry's Ferry (1), then through Delaware to Newark, Wilmington and finally Chester, covering the distance which often was through wild forests and wretched roads in fifty-six hours, stopped only to change or bate his horses, or to take some hasty refreshments himself. Here he changed his horse for a fresh one, ate a hasty meal and after an hour's sleep mounted and began the final part of his journey to Philadelphia.

Although a town of less than six hundred inhabitants, Chester and its neighborhood, a fair representation of the young and middle aged men were in the Pennsylvania line, under Wayne, and, notwithstanding the hour the news spread rapidly, so that by daylight few in the old borough were ignorant of the news that Cornwallis had surrendered. How the news was received in Philadelphia has frequently been narrated. But I cannot refrain from relating what was told me when a lad of sixteen, by an aged relative, then in her ninety-fourth year. (2) On that Sunday night, October 21, 1781, she was visiting friends in the city, living on Market street near Second, close to the residence of Thomas McKeen, then president of Congress. We all recall the story how the express rider asked a watchman to take him to McKeen's house, who after conducting him to the president's dwelling and having learned the news, returned to his duty of walking the rounds and proclaiming the hour of the night. My relative was a light sleeper and easily aroused. She told me that she

was awakened by hearing old Hurry, a German watchman, and a well known character of that day, crying the hour but he was then so distant that she failed to hear what he said. Presently he came nearer and she distinctly heard him cry "Basst dree a-glock, a starlight night and Gornwallis isht daken." She clearly remembered that he proclaimed it was a "starlight night." (3)

#### Washington's Visit

On Monday, April 20, 1789, Washington, then on his way to New York to be inaugurated President of the United States, reached Chester at 7 o'clock in the morning and breakfasted at the Washington House. He was accompanied by General Thomas Mifflin, Governor of Pennsylvania, Judge Richard Peters, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the First City Troop of Philadelphia as a guard of honor, who had met the President-elect at Naaman's creek, the State line, whither he had been escorted by the authorities of the State of Delaware. Washington travelled to Chester in a coach and four, attended by Colonel David Humphreys, his aid, and Charles Thomson, "the perpetual secretary of Congress," who had been dispatched to Mount Vernon to officially notify the General of his election to the Presidency. Thomson was well-known in Chester, his first wife, Mary, being the daughter of John Mather, a noted resident here in the last century. The inhabitants of the town flocked to the tavern to see the distinguished guests and the village urchins gazed with admiration as the troops rode into the yard, the jingling of swords, the champing of the bits by the horses, the showy uniforms of the men, and the blare of the trumpet combined to produce a picture in the memories of the young that could never be effaced. The address of welcome to

(1) So called because Fry was bald headed. Later known as Bald Frier's Ferry.

(2) Mary Moulder, who died in 1864 aged 104, and is buried in Marcus Hook Baptist Church yard.

(3) The New York Packet for November 1, 1781, reports: "An honest old German, a watchman of Philadelphia, having conducted the express rider from Yorktown to the door of his Excellency, the President of Congress, a few nights ago, continued the duties of his office, calling out "Basht dree o'clock and Gornwallis isht daken."

Washington, by William Martin, the Chief Burgess, and the unostentatious response by the President-elect, constituted an event of marvelous importance to the town, as it was indeed to the world, for it was part in the beginning of an untried form of government that with giant strides in a few decades grew to be one of the great powers of the earth.

### Lafayette's Return

It was Tuesday evening, October 5, 1824, that General Lafayette, then the Nation's guest, was received at Chester. The steamboat which brought the noted Frenchman was chartered for the occasion, and among those who accompanied him hither were Governor John A. Shulze and staff, General Cadwallader and staff, a committee of the Council of Philadelphia, the marshal of the United States and a number of prominent gentlemen, together with the "Washington Grays," commanded by Captain C. G. Shields, who were detailed as a guard of honor. The First City Troop had marched to Chester that day, reaching here about sunset, and had established their headquarters at the Eagle Tavern, now the City Hotel, then kept by Mrs. Polly Engle.

It was 11 o'clock at night when the steamboat was made fast to the wharf at Market street, and there had gathered the people of the town and neighborhood, while the Delaware County Troop, commanded by Major Joseph Wilson, was present with the City Troop to receive the Marquis. The town was brilliantly illuminated, the windows of the houses were decorated and in many places handsome transparencies and designs were displayed; bonfires blazed in the side streets, and from the pier to Fifth street, on both sides of the curb, stood a line of boys, each bearing in his hand a lighted candle of mammoth size, made especially for this use.

The red glare of rockets lit up the dark sky as Lafayette was conducted to the Columbia House, its site now that of the Hotel Cambridge, where the troops, that were dismounted, formed in open order and with their swords made an arch of steel under which the honored guest walked into the room where forty-seven years before he had lain extended on a table, while Mrs. Crossman Lyons, then Mary Gorman, dressed the wound he had sustained that day at Brandywine. Here he was received by Doctor Samuel Anderson, then our member of the Assembly, as the representative of the town, with an address of welcome. At

the City Hall, then the Court House of Delaware county (1) which was decorated tastefully, the ladies of the old borough had provided "a sumptuous entertainment, to which upwards of 100 gentlemen sat down at one o'clock in the morning." That night Lafayette was the guest of Major William Anderson, whose house at Fifth and Welsh streets, removed recently to make place for the government building, was one of the finest mansions in the town.

The next morning at 7 o'clock, the Colonial salute of thirteen guns was fired by Captain Joseph Weaver's Artillerists in honor of the General, and from the piazza of the Columbia House he reviewed the military that marched up Market street for that purpose. At 9 o'clock the parade was formed and Lafayette, in a coach and four, was escorted down Market street to James, now Third street, thence by the King's Highway to the "Practical Farmer," where "a handsome cold collation" was served. Here the Pennsylvania authorities took leave of the Marquis, having transferred him to the care of the State of Delaware. It may not be uninteresting to add that in commemoration of the part that was taken by the "Washington Grays" during the reception that company was introduced into the background of the full-length portrait of Lafayette, painted for the city of Philadelphia, which is still to be seen in the old State House building.

### A Tragic Episode

On Sunday, March 21, 1830, in the shadows of the evening, a closed carriage was driven at a rapid pace up James, now Third street, by Market to Fifth and thence to Philadelphia. This coach bore an unusual passenger, a corpse, placed in a sitting position on the back seat, with a cap, very fashionable at that time with young gentlemen, drawn over the forehead to shade the eyes, while on either side sat a man to prop the body in an upright attitude, imparting to it the semblance of life, so that anyone passing by who would glance within the carriage would not suspect the truth. It was the mortal remains of William Miller, Jr., a young lawyer of Philadelphia, who that afternoon had been killed by Midshipman Charles G. Hunter, of the United States Navy, in a

(1) Delaware county was erected in 1789, after the removal of the Courts of Chester county from Chester to West Chester.

duel near Naaman's creek. Several young men of Chester, who had been riding in the neighborhood of Claymont, learned that a duel had taken place, and as they reached here in advance of the carriages, it was decided by the authorities of the town to arrest the principals at the bridge over Chester creek. When the first carriage came in sight the driver, noticing that a body of men were assembled and aware of the ghastly freight in his vehicle, applied the whip vigorously, and his horses, at a full gallop crossed the bridge and dashed through the town. The second carriage came along at an easy trot and was without difficulty brought to a full stop. When it was found that it contained only the surgeon and some lookers on, it and its passengers were permitted to resume the journey to Philadelphia. The first carriage, after it had gotten beyond the town, continued to its destination, and about 9 o'clock halted with its ghastly burden at the house in Chestnut street below Seventh, its site now occupied by the German Democrat Building, from which that noonday it had taken away the dead, then a living man. Rumor relates how all that night the men kept the corpse in a room while those present drank deeply, due largely to the extreme excitement under which they labored. The next day the father of the dead young man was informed of his son's fate and shortly after six o'clock Tuesday morning the remains were interred without waiting for the legality of a coroner's inquest.

#### A Day of Mourning

On April 23, 1841, a mock funeral took place in the ancient borough, a tribute of sorrow at the death of William Henry Harrison, the first President of the United States to die in office. On that occasion the Sunday school children, all the literary, temperance, beneficial and secret societies took part, paraded and counter-marched on Market street. Major Samuel A. Price was chief marshal, while Spencer Melvain, John G. Dyer, Robert McCay, Jr., Jonathan Vernon and Gifford Johnson acted as aids. Rev. Mortimer R. Talbot, rector of St. Paul's, delivered a funeral oration in the old church which stood for almost a century and a half opposite where St. Paul's now stands. It was taken down in 1850.

#### Scenes of Another War

Chester, on Saturday, April 13, 1861, alike with the whole country, was startled by the news that the American flag, which floated over Fort

Sumter, in Charleston harbor, had been hauled down in surrender to the forces of the Palmeto State. The excitement was intense, ordinary business was suspended as by a common impulse, and the absence of intelligence on Sunday, added by uncertainty to the general impatience. On Monday President Lincoln issued a proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand troops to be enlisted for a period of three months unless sooner discharged. That evening a meeting was held in the Town Hall and immediate steps taken for the enrollment of a company of volunteers. By Wednesday the ranks were filled and the late Harry B. Edwards was elected captain, to whom Rev. Mr. Talbot, the rector of St. Paul's, presented the sword that he himself had worn while a chaplain in the United States Navy. On Saturday, April 20, "The Union Blues" was ordered to report at once at Harrisburg, and at 6 o'clock that evening the company mustered in front of the Washington House, where from the piazza the late Judge Frederick J. Hinkson, then president of the Delaware County Bank, addressed the "Blues," assuring them that the citizens of the borough had pledged themselves to maintain and protect their wives and families during the absence of the men at the front. Rev. Mr. Talbot and Rev. A. W. Spruill, then pastor of the First Presbyterian church, also made speeches, while Rev. Father Haviland had personally contributed and had solicited subscriptions to a fund to be used in defraying the cost of equipping the company. The street between the Town Hall and the hotel was crowded, and no one old enough to remember these early days of the war can forget the departure of the first troops who responded to the call of the President, or the ovation then extended throughout the North to the "Boys in Blue," before constant repetition in the years of battle that followed had imparted a sameness to the movements of soldiers. The company, as it marched up Market street to the railway station made little attempt to preserve military precision; that would have been almost impossible, for friends crowded around to shake the hands of the men, while mothers, wives and sisters walked at the side of their loved ones with affectionate solicitude. The people of Chester, including refined and cultured women, gathered at the depot in numbers such as had never before occurred in the history of the town. When the engine and special train rolled from

the station the impression that war with all its attending horrors had indeed come upon the nation, caused the populace to disperse in silence to their homes.

### The Nation's Natal Year

There are many among us who can recall the night of Friday, December 31, 1875, the eve of the Centennial. Almost a score of years have gone by, and the girls and boys then just entering their "teens" are now middle-aged people, but the memory of that time comes back to them as to their elders, as vividly as if it were an incident of recent happening. It is not difficult to remember the public buildings, the hotels, the newspaper offices, stores, private dwellings—that night bedecked with flags and streamers, the windows brilliant with the tri-colors, while innumerable rows of Chinese lanterns spanned the thoroughfares and were radiant from every available place. Old and young thronged the streets, while a procession composed of the military, fire and civic societies of the city and outlying districts, traversed the principal highways, greeted by the shouts of the populace, the glare of rockets, the noise of guns and fire crackers producing a hubbub such as Chester had never known before and it is doubtful whether it has ever been equalled since. At half past 11, at Seventh street, near Market, a colonial salute of thirteen guns was fired by a detachment from Post Wilde, and hardly had the reverberations of the cannon ceased when the hands on the illuminated clock in the belfry of the City Hall, marked the hour of midnight. Then the crowd that packed Market street in a dense mass broke into prolonged cheers, the bells of the city rang out joyous peels, the bands played the national airs, the discharge of firearms and cannon all combined in producing a din such as never before had startled the ancient municipality from her propriety, and will never be forgotten by those who witnessed the tribute to 1876, as that year showed itself on the dial of time. The parade on the Centennial Fourth of July was the most imposing ever witnessed in the city up to that period.

### Off For the World's War

It was two o'clock on Wednesday September 12, 1917, that Companies C and B, of the Sixth Infantry Regiment, National Guards of Pennsylvania, commanded respectively by Captain Edmund W. Lynch and West S. Blain, which for a fortnight had been

cantonned in Deshong Park, broke camp and started to entrain for active service in a war the like of which the world's annals furnish no parallel. The column, led by Taney's Military Band and Colonels James A. G. Campbell, T. Edward Clyde and George W. Thomson, Spanish War Veterans; Councilman T. Woodward Trainer, marched down Edgmont avenue to Market street, to Market Square, where it countermarched and was addressed by Mayor Wesley S. McDowell and a telegram from New York read in which Senator William C. Sproul said "Regret I cannot reach Chester to see the boys of B and C leave. Give them my love and wish them God speed." The line then moved down Third street to Trainer station, where they entrained for Mount Gretna, the point of regimental mobilization.

### The Premature News of Peace

The autumn of 1918 brought with it a general impression that the great World War was nearing a conclusion of active hostilities. Germany and her allies had suffered severe reversals in the field and it was believed that before coming spring she would be forced to sue for peace. No one thought the end was so near. Hence, when, on Thursday, November 7, 1918, the bulletin boards proclaimed that Germany had signed an armistice, Chester, as with other cities in the United States, was thrown into a delirium of joyful excitement. The whistles of the shipyards, factories and workshops in long interrupted blasts shrieked out the glad intelligence in which the firehouses and church bells joined in the noisy rejoicing; all business abruptly ceased, people sought the streets, giving the wildest expression to their feelings in clangorous demonstrations. Women and girls in the excitement of the hour kissed each other and their male acquaintances. Cheering crowds blocked the streets. Never before had Chester witnessed a like scene. Bands of music were hastily summoned; The Fire Department, with clanging bells and ear-piercing whistles, hurried to the center of the city, adding to the volume of the uproar. An impromptu parade was organized and what it lacked in formation was more than compensated in enthusiasm. Governor-elect William C. Sproul and a number of leading men of the city, headed the line, which roughly estimated comprised more than ten thousand partisans, marched through the principal streets for several hours, hailed wherever it went by the crowds, which

lined the sidewalks, until it returned to Fifth and Market streets, where it was dismissed by the Governor-elect.

While this demonstration was premature and parades later celebrated the actual signing of the armistice, all creditable to the city the spontaneous demonstration of November 7, 1918 is the one which will remain hereafter well defined in our local story.

### City of Para Launch

On Saturday, April 6, 1878, the mammoth steamship City of Para was launched at Roach's yard, and the event was rendered memorable from the fact that President Hayes, the members of his cabinet, Governor Hartranft and a number of State officials were present. Senators and Congressmen by the score were in attendance, and it affords a striking instance of the ephemeral character of political greatness to note that out of the list, exceeding a hundred of then prominent men, who were present on that occasion, the reputations of less than half a dozen have survived to this day. From the station of the P., W. & B. Railroad down Market street to Third, and thence to Kerlin street, was a dense mass of humanity; the windows were filled with spectators, as were the housetops, and it was with much difficulty that a platoon of policemen could force a way for the military acting as a guard of honor to the Presidential party and the officials of the city, in carriages, to pass to the yard. The President, standing uncovered in his carriage drawn by four horses, as it moved along the streets, was received by deafening cheers, which he acknowledged by repeated bows. A special train from Washington had also been moved over the railroad on Ulrich street immediately to the yard, where its passengers had been disembarked. It was no exaggeration when it was stated that more than twenty-five thousand strangers were present in our city that day.

### Blaine's Visit

In the early spring of 1878 the Wood tariff bill was pending in Congress and the politicians of Delaware county, as in other places, deemed it important for their own interests to foster an adverse opinion to the measure. The project was well carried out and a huge demonstration, in the form of a parade, which traversed the principal streets of Chester, took place on Saturday, April 20, of that year. James G. Blaine was induced to be present. The pageant has passed away like

mist on a mirror, leaving no distinct memories. Even Blaine's speech is forgotten. Out of the past rises merely the figure of an old Emerald Islander, short in stature with ruddy, mottled complexion, gray hair and scanty gray whiskers, wearing a light colored top coat over his ordinary dress, who on Seventh street, near where the Grand Opera House now stands, presented, in Milesian accents, the distinguished guest of the hour, in the following words: "Fellow Citizens: I have the honor to introduce to you James G. Blaine, of Maine, the Gibraltar of America." All else but this has passed totally from the recollections of the people.

### The Bi-Centennial

It was Monday, October 23, 1882, when the Bi-Centennial anniversary of the landing of William Penn, in Pennsylvania, was celebrated at Chester. It was a public holiday, strangers were present in the city in great numbers, including Governor Henry M. Hoyt and staff, many of the State officials and other prominent guests. The streets and buildings were gay with flags and other decorations, and the old historic landmarks were designated with banners bearing the date of construction and other interesting data plainly marked thereon. A flagstaff over eighty feet in height had been erected at the place of Penn's landing from which floated the proud emblem of the Union. It was high water about nine o'clock that morning, and shortly thereafter the Pacific Dramatic Association, assisted by the various lodges of Red Men, at the foot of Penn street, and, as near the exact spot where Penn actually landed as could be, considering the changes that had occurred in the river bank in two centuries, enacted the incident that had happened there two hundred years before.

The dialogue written by William Shaler Johnson presented many dramatic features appropriate to the occasion. At 10 o'clock a great crowd gathered on the then vacant lot at the northeast corner of Concord avenue and Second street, and address was made by Mayor James Barton, Jr., a prayer by Rev. Henry Brown, a bi-centennial poem read by its author, Rev. Samuel Pancoast, followed by an able historical oration by the late Judge John M. Broomall. The children of the public schools, nearly a thousand, sang a bi-centennial hymn written by Prof. C. E. Foster, the music composed by Prof. John R. Sweney,

who also directed the children that day. In the afternoon was a parade under the marshalship of Colonel W. C. Gray, in which, by actual count made at the City Hall, more than 6,000 men participated. Several of the industrial establishments and all the manufacturing interests were represented, many of which presented novel and attractive designs. The fifth division, restricted to the various trades, had numerous floats in line whereon were displayed the craftsmen at work, constituting one of the most interesting features of the great parade.

### Firemen's Day

The Eleventh Annual Convention of the Firemen's Association of Pennsylvania was held in this city on the 16th, 17th and 18th days of September, 1890. Fire organizations from every section of the State were present, as were also representatives from the cities of New York, Brooklyn, Washington, D. C., and Wilmington, Del., Bayonne, Gloucester, Merchantville, Camden, Elizabeth, Bound-Brook, Raritan and Burlington, N. J., Winchester and Alexandria, Va., Baltimore, Port Deposit and Annapolis, Md. Thursday, September 18th, was the day set apart for the parade and it was one that will be remembered in our city's annals. The people of Chester had extended to the visitors a hearty welcome, and while many droll incidents were enacted in our streets, creating much merriment, no scenes of disorder occurred. In honoring the occasion, stores, hotels, business places and dwellings were elaborately decorated, while in many places triumphant arches, appropriately ornamented, spanned the streets. Nearly five thousand men were in line and music from the extreme ordinary to exquisite harmony, filled the air as long as the line filed by, consuming an hour and a half to pass the City Hall. In the evening at various places selected, bands furnished gratuitous concerts to the public. Cappa's New York Seventh Regiment Band, which had been secured at a cost of \$1,200, by the Hanley Hose Company, of this city, was the peculiar attraction and for nearly two hours it discoursed a number of "bright gems instinct with music."

### Back to Old Times

Let us stop a moment here at Market Square. It was not until 1749 that the old Market House which formerly stood in the center of the square was built and which, after standing one hundred and eight years, was removed

in the spring of 1857. The ancient structure was erected on a raised brick platform curbed with stone, extending about fifty feet along Market street and in breadth thirty feet. The building itself was thirty-five feet in length and twenty-five in width. The shingled roof was supported by seven brick pillars on the east, and a like number on the west side, and the plastered ceiling within forming an archway the entire length of the market house. On the roof at the north end of the building about 1829, a frame structure twenty feet square was erected, on the roof of which was a cupola, with green blinds, surmounted by a spire and weather vane. This room, which was used as a town hall, where the Burgessesses sat and where the Chester Library Company kept their books, was reached by a wooden stairway on the outside, and at the east of the building towards St. Paul's church. When the market house was taken down, the frame superstructure was sold to Thomas Clyde, who removed it to Fifth street, where it still stands, opposite the Hotel Cambridge, and is today used as a Chinese laundry.

### A Romance of Old

It was in the square fifteen years before the market house was built, that James Annesley, then a young man of nineteen, who, in attempting to escape from a brutal master, for he was a redemptioner, had fallen in with a party who had committed a theft in Chester. The hue and cry resulted in their capture. Annesley and the others were tried and found guilty—the punishment for the offense at that time was death.

When he was asked what he had to say why sentence should not be imposed, he told the court his story and as his presence with the criminals was the only evidence against him, the court remanded him, ordering that execution should be suspended in his case for the present, but that on "the fifth day of the week, called Thursday," the day designated in the charter from Penn on which market should be held in Chester, he should "be set up from early dawn to noon-day in Market Square with a paper affixed to his breast," whereby all persons who read it were requested to report to the authorities whether they had ever seen him in Chester before he was thus exposed in the pillory. (1) If it

---

(1) The pillory stood on the southeast corner of Market Square, for it was then a square, not an octagonal

should appear by creditable witnesses that he had been here prior to that time, the court ordered that the deferred sentence should be carried into execution at a date designated by the Chief Justice, but if it could be shown that his story was true, the Chief Justice, David Lloyd, who was a resident of Chester, would discharge him on such proofs being made. For five weeks, each market day he was there exposed, when his master, Drummond, chanced to be in Chester, claimed his servant and Annesley was delivered to him. It is not necessary to follow further this incident, but the subsequent claims made by Annesley that he was the kidnapped son and heir of the Earl of Anglesley, is one of the most noted cases that was ever heard in any court, and on the incidents that were presented in that trial.

#### Our Boys in the Spanish American War

It became evident early in April, 1898, that open hostilities between Spain and the United States was inevitable. Although Congress did not declare that a state of war existed until Monday, April 25th, on the preceding Saturday, under authority already given the Executive, President McKinley by proclamation had called one hundred and twenty-five thousand men to the colors, which was designed to include the organized, equipped militia of the several States. So rapidly did the Pennsylvania authorities act, that the National Guards were ordered to mobilize at Mount Gretna, in one week's time. On Wednesday, the 27th, Mayor Crosby M. Black notified the fire department of Chester that the following morning companies B and

C. of the Sixth Regiment N. G. could leave at an early hour for Mount Gretna and instructed the organizations to be present to take part in giving the soldier boys a suitable departure for the war. That Thursday morning ushered in a day of most unpropitious weather; a wild wind accompanied with a downpour of rain, hail and sleet. Despite all this the parents, wives, sweethearts and friends of the soldiers gathered at the Armory on Fifth street to bid goodbye to the troops. When the time came to in-train Company B Captain Daniel McDevitt and Company C Captain Samuel D. Clyde marched up Fifth street to Market, to the Square, and where they counter marched to the station, where they embarked. Col. Perry M. Washabaugh and staff accompanied the Chester companies, picking up other units of the regiment on the way, reaching Mount Gretna well along in the night. There the railroad officials notified the Colonel to disembark his command. The storm which had continued all day, was then raging violently. "Detrain my men in this tempest and darkness! I'll not do it, Sir. Until morning they shall not leave these cars." The official persisted but the Colonel was immovable. Finally the train was run on a siding and remained until daylight, when under a clear sky they were disembarked.

#### A Gay Young Colonist

Let us stop a moment here opposite the Steamboat Hotel. The house was built by Francis Richardson subsequent to 1760. In that year Grace, the widow of David Lloyd, died and by her will she devised the bulk of her es-

form, in front of the unimproved lot owned by the Rev. Richard Backhouse, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal church.

The Annesley case is one of the most famous in law and literature. It is reported in Hargraves' State Trials, Vol. 9, page 431; in Howell's State Trials, Vol. 17. Burk's Trials connected with the Aristocracy, p. 249; Trial at Bar between Campbell Craig, lessee of James Annesley, Esq., and the Earl of Anglesey, London, 1744; Craik's Peerage Cases, and "Celebrated Claimants, Ancient and Modern," London, 1873. Annesley himself wrote the "Memoirs of An Unfortunate Young Nobleman," and Chambers, in his "Stories of Remarkable Persons," page 272, treats of this notable case.

On this case Lady Morgan founded her once popular but now almost for-

gotten novel, "Florence McCartney"; Tobias Smollett, his famous "Roderick Random," and Sir Walter Scott his "Guy Mannering," while in recent years, following very closely the testimony in the case, Charles Read in his "Wandering Heir," has again employed the story of James Annesley as the ground work of his novel and he presents an exceedingly graphic picture of the pillory scene in the old market place, in this city. To lawyers the case is ever of interest for in it the rule which Chief Justice Holt, somewhat vaguely announced on the trial of Ambrose Rockwood in 1691, that council could not call a witness, if objected to, unless he first stated to the Court the nature of the testimony he was expected to give, was so well settled that it has never since been questioned.



tate which was large to her cousin, Francis Richardson, then a merchant in Philadelphia. He removed to Chester and erected this building as his personal mansion. He was of a speculative disposition and somewhat improvident, and the long war of the Revolution, in unsettling values, ultimately caused his financial ruin. His eldest son, Francis, was "a person of great personal beauty," we are told by John F. Watson, the annalist, a statement that is fully corroborated by Mrs. Deborah Logan. Another authority informs us "that he was fair and delicate to effeminacy, reserved in his intercourse with he fellows, but very attractive in his conversation and manners, that he dressed with studied care, particularly favoring in his attire scarlet cloths. of fine texture, a peculiarity that was exceedingly obnoxious to the Friends, of which society he was a birthright member. His courtly bearing, his costly raiment and his custom of wearing a handsome dress sword when on the street were resented by the plain people of the town, who regarded him as "a brand for the burning." While a young man he visited England, where he became the associate of distinguished men of letters and was received in the best society of London. When he first went to Europe he chanced to lodge in the same house in which Samuel Foote, the noted comedian, celebrated wit and successful playwright, lived. It is related that one day as Richardson came out of his room he met Foote on the stairway, when the latter said, "Richardson, a person has just been asking for you, expressing a strong desire to see you and pretended that he was an old Philadelphia acquaintance. But I knew better, for he was a d—d ill-looking fellow, and I have no doubt the rascal was a bailiff, so I told him you were not at home." Foote's career was a life-long struggle with the bailiffs, and by his mistaken kindness, Richardson failed to meet Mr. Willing, one of the wealthiest merchants of Philadelphia, who had been particularly requested by his father to visit his son and see in what manner he was faring in London.

Richardson has been termed "one of the most singular and successful of American adventurers." He acquired the reputation of an expert swordsman and an unerring pistol shot, so that men were chary of offending this delicately handsome man. He obtained a commission in the Coldstream Guards, the regiment that was and is the highest in its social affiliations of all the

English army. He ultimately rose to be its Colonel, a rank that is coveted even by men of royal birth. His regiment was not ordered to America during the Revolution, where, had he come, he would have found his father, a Friend as he was, one of the active spirits in the cause of the Colonists.

### Richardson's Wharf

The foregoing incident is a digression, but we have reached the foot of Market street, when our ramble must needs end. Prior to 1762, when Francis Richardson built a wharf there, the vessels stopping at Chester must have discharged their cargoes in the most primitive way. The craft was brought as close to the shore as possible on the high tide (we are told that vessels in the early part of the late century could stand into the land until the branches of the trees growing on the bank would brush their rigging), when she was moored stem and stern, grounding on the ebb. Of course, as the cargo was discharged, the vessel rode higher in the water. Return freight which, in those days, consisted entirely of cereals and peltry, was loaded in like manner, but the last portion of the cargo was put on board by lighters while the vessel was at anchor in the stream. The piers that Richardson built consisted simply of logs driven in the mud with planks laid thereon from the head until the structure united with the firm land. The flow of water was uninterrupted, save only by the piles themselves, for there were no cribs filled with stones and earth, as is the case with the present wharf. Richardson firmly believed that Chester could be made a commercial rival of Philadelphia, arguing that the river rarely was frozen over at this place sufficient to arrest navigation wholly, whereas the Delaware at the horse-shoe for months together in the winter season, in those days of sail navigation entirely, would be blocked with an impenetrable field of ice. He spent money lavishly to carry out this project, and finally became a bankrupt.

### The Tea Tax

It was Christmas—Saturday—1773 that the ship "Polly," which had sailed from London on the 29th of the preceding September with a cargo of tea consigned to merchants in Philadelphia, anchored off Richardson's wharf. Captain Ayres had followed another vessel up the Delaware this far. In the heated state of the public mind, no pilot dared to bring the "Polly" up

the river, for six weeks prior to this time, when it was learned that the ship was coming, a public meeting had been held in the State House Square, in Philadelphia, at which it was, amid boisterous applause, resolved "that whoever shall directly or indirectly aid or abet in unloading, receiving or vending the tea," while the objectionable tax was imposed, "is an enemy to the country." Richard Riley, who died 1820, a venerable man of over ninety, and for seventy years one of the leading men of this section, from his dwelling, which with broken walls and rafters fallen still remains at Marcus Hook, on Front street between Church and Market, had kept a careful lookout for the vessel, and when the "Polly" hove in sight, he rode to Chester to consult with William Kerlin, then the proprietor of the present Washington House, as to what action ought to be taken.

Whether the traditional account in this particular is correct or not, certain it is that a courier was immediately dispatched, post-haste to Philadelphia, to announce the unwelcomed news. The messenger reached that city the same evening, as did also Gilbert Barclay, one of the consignees of the ship, who had been a passenger on the vessel, had landed here and ridden immediately to Philadelphia. Three members of the committee were ordered to come to Chester and obtain an interview with Captain Ayres, in which they were to picture to him the inflamed condition of the public mind and to advise him that personal danger to him would in all probability result should he act contrary thereto.

When the men had reached the high ground this side of Darby they were met by another messenger from Chester, who informed them that the Polly had that Sunday, at noon, sailed up the river. The vessel was hailed at Gloucester Point, and Captain Ayres was prevailed on by the committee to anchor the ship and go with them to the city. On Monday morning 8,000 men gathered in the State House yard, when it was decided that the ship should not be reported or permitted to enter at the custom house; that the tea should not be landed, but must be taken back to England; that a pilot should be put aboard the Polly, with instructions on the next high water to carry her to Reedy Island; that Captain Ayres could stay one day in the city to procure supplies for the return voyage, and that being done, he must put to sea immediately.

This he did on Tuesday, only forty-six hours having elapsed from his dropping anchor off Chester until he sailed on his return voyage. Captain Ayres came by land hither, where he boarded the sloop carrying supplies to the Polly. When the vessel reached England Earl Dartmouth demanded that the insult "offered this kingdom \* \* \* should be fully explained." Richard Penn, who was then Governor, had returned to England and John Penn, the grandson of William, and son of Thomas Penn, had been commissioned in his stead. He was arrogant and reserved, besides the great mass of the people—superstition was very strong at that time—looked upon him as unlucky, for on his arrival at Philadelphia to assume office on Sunday, August 30, 1773, the eastern part of Pennsylvania was shaken by an earthquake, accompanied by a loud roaring noise, an ill omen for his administration. He was never able to have the Assembly take any action on Dartmouth's demand, and as in a little more than a year the Revolutionary struggle began in earnest, the "insult" was never "fully explained."

#### Washington in a Hilarious Mood

It was here an incident occurred in our national and local history of which I had no knowledge until recently. On Wednesday, September 8th, 1781, Washington left Philadelphia (where the rear of the French army had arrived, the American army having already passed through that city) for the head of the Elk, now Elkton, where he designed to overtake his command. In his journal he records that at Chester he "received the agreeable news of the safe arrival of the Count de Grasse in the Bay of Chesapeake." His Excellency J. J. Jusserand, ambassador from France to the United States in a recent article (1) gives a charming account of Washington's meeting with Rochambeau and his staff, at Chester, which until M. Jusserand's article appeared was comparatively unknown to American historians, but shows the Father of his Country in a novel light. The distinguished writer tells us that "On the 5th of September, Rochambeau and his aides took boat from Philadelphia to Chester and when they reached the latter place Closen" (Captain Baron

(1) "Our First Alliance," National Geographic Magazine, June, 1917, page 518.

de Clozen, of the Regiment de Royal Deux-Ponts) "records, we saw in the distance General Washington shaking his hat and a white handkerchief and showing signs of great joy. Rochambeau had scarcely landed when Washington, usually so cool and composed, fell into his arms, the great news had arrived, de Grasse had come, and while Cornwallis was on the defensive at Yorktown, the French fleet was barring the Chesapeake."

#### A Naval Hero

It was late on the afternoon of April 10, 1782, that the good people of Chester saw two vessels standing up the river. The foremost floated two ensigns, the Stars and Stripes being displayed on the same halyards with the meteoric flag of Great Britain, but the last was undermost. The intelligence ran quickly through the town and in a short time a crowd had collected on Richardson's wharf, for the people knew that Captain Joshua Barney, who had sailed from Philadelphia on the 8th in the Hyder Ali, had met and captured the English vessel-of-war, General Monk, that had been lying in wait at the mouth of the Delaware, a terror to all the merchants of Philadelphia as well as to the owners of vessels at smaller places along the river. When the ships rounded to and lay by the pier a gang plank was run out from the General Monk, and Captain Barney came ashore, followed by four seamen bearing a stretcher on which lay Captain Rodgers, of the Royal navy, grievously wounded. The English officer was taken to the house of a Quaker lady who nursed him for several months before he entirely recovered from his injuries. Who it was that nursed him I do not know, but in the biography of Commodore Barney, published in 1831, it is stated that the lady was then alive and resided on Pine street, Philadelphia.

#### American Strategy

The crowd gave but passing attention to this incident. They were busy in pointing out to each other the many scars of battle the captured vessel exhibited, and gazing with amazement at the mizzen staysail, in which small canvas alone could be counted 305 shot holes. With open-mouthed wonder the rustic population listened to the story of the battle: How the Hyder Ali, carrying only sixteen six-pounders and a crew of 110 men, including the marines, who were Bucks county riflemen, disguised as a merchantman, had met the General Monk,

armed with twenty nine-pounders and 136 men; how Captain Barney had instructed his people to execute every command as though an exactly contradictory order had been given; how, as the Englishman ranged alongside of his vessel, the American officer, in a voice so loud that it was heard by the enemy, cried out: "Hard-a-port your helm! Do you want him to run aboard of us?" In response to which the man at the wheel clapped the helm hard-at-starboard, and by so doing the jibboom of the English ship caught in the fore-rigging of the American, giving the latter a raking position; how when Barney shouted "Board," the brave Englishmen crowded together to repel an assault, and were met with a close fire that swept the deck with an iron hail of death, and when the command "Fire!" was given, to the surprise of the British, the Americans, cutlasses in hand, sprang in a body on the deck of the English vessel; how in twenty-six minutes twenty-three broadsides were fired by the American ship, and how when the General Monk was captured every officer, except one midshipman, was killed and wounded and the casualties among the crew were near one hundred, while the Americans had four killed and eleven wounded. The next day Captain Barney took his prize to Philadelphia, and the following evening returned to Chester and sailed in the Hyder Ali for the capes, but the English vessels of war had gone to sea.

#### The First Steamboat

It was during the month of June, 1790, that the inhabitants of Chester were astonished to learn that a marvelous craft, vomiting volumes of black smoke from a pipe amidships, was in a direct line, and against the wind, making for the pier at Market street. It was John Pitch's steamboat—the first vessel of that description ever successfully navigated in the world—seventeen years before Robert Fulton built his celebrated steamboat, The Clermont. The people of the town who gathered at the wharf to inspect this peculiar vessel—which had no name other than "the steamboat!"—when it was made fast at the wharf, saw a mere cockle-shell sixty feet in length, eight feet beam, for which power was supplied by an eighteen-inch cylinder engine, and the propulsion was made by four paddles, two on each side, located at the stern. This wonder attained an average speed of eight miles an hour.

In the New York Magazine for that year appears a letter dated at Philadelphia, August 13th, in which the writer says: "On Saturday morning she sets off for Chester and engages to return in the evening—40 miles," and adds, "God willing, I intend to be one of her passengers." In the Federal Gazette, published in Philadelphia, in the issue of July 30, 1790, appears an advertisement informing the public that "The steamboat sets out from Arch street wharf on Sunday morning, at 8 o'clock, for Chester, to return the same day." During the months of June, July, August and September, 1790, this boat made regular trips, carrying freight and passengers—one day to Wilmington and return, another day to Burlington and Bristol, but to Chester always on Sundays, for Chester at that time for some reason was an exceedingly attractive locality for the restless public of Philadelphia. At the end of the season the boat became disabled, the machinery being defective, and Fitch, a man of limited means, was not able to pay for the repairs, while the men who had advanced the money for the construction of the boat had grown tired of an experiment that yielded no financial returns—the boat was dismantled and sold to discharge the debts already outstanding.

#### Visit of the U. S. Scout Cruiser Chester

On November 29th, 1909, by order of the Secretary of the Navy Truman H. Newberry, the United States Scout Cruiser "Chester," (whose sponsor was Miss Dorothy, daughter of Senator William C. Sproul) commanded by Captain Henry B. Wilson, visited the city for which she was named, anchoring in the Pennsylvania channel of the Delaware, off Chester Island, and for five days until December 1st, her officers, marines and crew were the guests of officials and citizens of the city. During the cruiser's stay each day was apportioned to events designed especially for the gratification and entertainment of the "Devil Dogs," the Blue Jackets and their officers, the guests of the city.

#### A Chester Hero

It was about noonday of March 11, 1813, that the American 32-gun frigate Essex, Captain David Porter commanding, reached Chester and announced the glorious victory in which the British frigate Castor, outnumbering in guns and men the Essex, had been compelled to strike her colors to

the valiant seamen, whose heroic deeds are part of the national history and have imparted lustre to the annals of our town. The people of the hamlet, even those who were adverse to war, were enthusiastic at the welcomed news, for in the glory of the officer so well known to them all, they felt a personal pride. Aaron Cobourn, then postmaster, in dispatching the mail that afternoon for Philadelphia, endorsed as a postscript to the way bill that by the regulation was then required to accompany each mail sent out from a postoffice, a brief statement of Captain Porter's arrival, the capture of the "Castor" and the fact that the loss of the latter had been enormous—150 men of the British frigate having been killed and wounded. The news was published in the Freeman's Journal, of Philadelphia, the next day and from its columns copied by the press throughout the country.

#### The Piers

The War of 1812 was followed by great commercial activity, although the fictitious values that it had stimulated, in the adjustment that ensued produced a period of protracted business depression. As the commerce of Philadelphia at that time largely exceeded that of any port in the United States, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, on March 11, 1816, made an appropriation for the erection of piers at Chester, to afford a safe harbor to vessels in the winter season, when drifting ice rendered navigation of the Delaware exceedingly dangerous. The owners of the then existing wharves, David Bevan, that at Market street, and Ephraim Pearson, that at Edgmont avenue, conveyed their titles to the State. During the year 1817 the Commonwealth built new piers at the points designated, but the cost of keeping them in repair became so onerous that the State rued the acceptance of the gifts. Finally it was so desirous of being relieved from the expense of the maintenance of these white elephants that it succeeded, through the influence of its Senators and Representatives in inducing the National government to accept the piers at Chester, the only condition made being that they should keep them in good repair. The United States acceded to the proposition, and on April 11, 1825, the Commonwealth formally ceded the wharves here to the general government. The latter, as had the State, soon regretted its bargain, for yearly a goodly sum was required to be expended in keep-

ing the piers in a serviceable condition, and it was not until an interval of sixty-two years had elapsed when, on May 9, 1887, William E. Endecott, Secretary of War, under the provisions of the Act of Congress of August 6, 1886, conveyed the title of the United States to the wharves here to the City of Chester.

### A New Naval Type

It was in the summer of 1845, that the Princeton, the first screw propeller in the American service, and the first vessel of war of that character in the history of the navies of the world, sailed from Philadelphia to take part in the Mexican war. The steamship was designed by Commodore Richard F. Stockton, and was a marvel at that time, although when compared with the man-of-war of the present, she dwarfs into insignificance. Her total length was 165 feet, breadth 30 feet and her original cost \$212,000. She was pierced for 30 guns and carried in addition a large swivel on the maindeck. She was ship-rigged, and her maximum speed 10 knots an hour. She was launched at the Philadelphia navy yard in the fall of 1843. After the bursting of the "Peacemaker," the big swivel gun, at Washington, D. C., on February 28, 1844, an accident by which many distinguished men lost their lives, spreading gloom over the whole country, she was refitted at the Philadelphia navy yard.

I have particularized these facts because the Princeton revolutionized the system of naval architecture just as nineteen years thereafter the Monitor brought about a similar radical change in the same science throughout the world. My first distinct boyhood recollections are connected with the sailing of that vessel in 1845. All Chester was anxious to catch a glimpse of the marine wonder, for one of her birth-right citizens, Commander, afterwards Rear Admiral, Frederick Engle, was its captain and along the wharves the people of the town gathered to be eye witnesses of the scene. Doubtless, the commander, as the vessel steamed by, was complimented by the interest the inhabitants of his natal place exhibited that day. The Princeton, under his command, was conspicuous in the bombardment of Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa, March 22, 1847, and a shot from this vessel made the first breach in the walls of that fortress.

A distinguished naval officer who had taken part in that action told me that early one morning in the summer

of 1845 the Princeton for the first time steamed into the port of Vera Cruz, her sails nicely furled, her yards squared and the Stars and Stripes at the peak. As she burned anthracite coal no smoke was discernible from her stack, which was so short that it was only a trifle above her bulwarks, and as a strong wind was blowing it caused her to careen slightly, giving to her the appearance of having struck on a reef. Several French and Spanish men-of-war were at anchor in the harbor, as was also the English frigate Euridyce. Captain Endecott, the commander of the latter, observing what he supposed was the critical condition of the vessel, dispatched an officer to acquaint Captain McClung, commanding the United States sloop-of-war John Adams, that an American sailing ship had struck on a reef. Before the boat could return, much to his surprise and that of the other foreign naval officers, the ship, still careening and without apparent cause rapidly drew near and they discovered that it was the famous steamship Princeton approaching them. The foreign naval vessels as the marine wonder glided by greeted her with hearty cheers.

### Wounded Warriors

It was Tuesday, July 17, 1862, that the steamship State of Maine made fast to the wharf, having on board 223 sick and wounded Union soldiers, who had been captured by the Confederates in the seven days of battle before Richmond and had recently been exchanged. The men presented a most pitiable sight. Some had strength barely sufficient to walk ashore; others were unable to stand without assistance and many had to be borne on stretchers. The pallid features, the emaciated forms and extreme weakness present in every instance, aroused the heartfelt sympathy of all beholders. It was an object lesson, for it was a realistic picture of war, bereft of the gilt and glitter that cast a glamour over the career of the soldier; conspicuously lacking in the pride, pomp and circumstance of battle, which is wont to stir the blood of youth; nothing was present but sorrow, suffering and the shadow of death. The instance is noticeable in that it was the first time the people of Chester in recent years had witnessed such a scene, and because it was the initial consignment of patients to the Crozer Hospital, where, during the following three years, thousands of men, Union and Confederates alike, were received

and tenderly nursed, many to be restored to health and many never more to emerge therefrom in life. On the deck of a steamship under the torrid sky of the gulf, while journeying amid the everlasting snows of the Rockies, and beneath the cloudless heavens of the State of Utah, I have met men who have told me of the hours they, as wounded soldiers, had passed at the Crozer Hospital at Chester, and of the kindness, while convalescents, that had been extended to them by the people of the town, and these cherished recollections welled up from their memories in unfeigned emotions of gratitude.

### Grant's Journey

On Tuesday afternoon, April 17th, 1877, Chester was gay with bunting. Over the City Hall, school houses, mills, work shops and numerous private dwellings, "old glory" floated proudly in the air, while on the piers at the foot of Market street and Edgmont avenue, on the docks along the river front, at every available place, on roof tops and on the decks of the vessels on the stocks and lying at the piers at Roach's yard, the people of the town came together in a mass, for ex-President Grant that day set out on his memorable tour around the world. It had been arranged by the committee in Philadelphia that he should board the Indiana down the river below New Castle, and to carry out this purpose the Twilight had been chartered. The illustrious soldier was accompanied on the steamboat by a great number of prominent men, conspicuous among whom were General Sherman, Senators Zachariah Chandler and Simon Cameron, and ex-Secretary of the Navy George M. Robeson. The flotilla of yachts, steamboats and launches, as well as the mammoth

steamship itself that was to bear him to the old world, where he was to be accorded a welcome from princes and potentates such as had not been extended to any other man in modern times, as it moved down the Delaware a mass of flags presented a scene of marvelous animation and inspiration.

When the pageant neared the wharf at Market street, the steam whistles of the city screamed out the universal expression of public approval; the artillery served by the cadets of the Pennsylvania Military College, stationed at Roach's yard, shook the air with their discharges, the cheers of men rose in a mighty swell, and the flutter of handkerchiefs and scarfs by thousands of women, combined in producing a picture of popular enthusiasm such as has rarely been accorded to man. The Twilight drew close to the shore, that the General could be seen by our people, and as the steamboat moved slowly by, a continuous ovation was extended to the citizen who had held two of the most exalted offices in a great nation, and had, in accordance with its system of popular government, laid them both aside to resume that of private station. In that aspect alone it was an incident that will never be wholly blotted from the records of time.

Our ramble is ended. The story of the main street of Chester-on-Delaware has merely been outlined in these papers. The subject covering over two centuries, with no continuity of events, necessarily required its presentation in a paragraphic form, but if I have succeeded in demonstrating that our city is not devoid of historic interest, my purpose has been attained. A people without history is a people without patriotism, stagnating in arrested civilization, which is the beginning of disintegration.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 311 436 3

