

# TRENTON

## OLD and NEW

*by*

Harry J. Podmore

*Revised and Edited by*

Mary J. Messler



THE WILLIAM TRENT HOUSE  
*Built 1718.*

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TRENTON TERCENTENARY COMMISSION

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## FOREWORD

Progress has constantly been invading the Colonial and Revolutionary towns of America until they have become unrecognizable. The tavern, where the gay gentlemen in periwigs and knickerbockers once gossiped with the stage driver and the post rider, has gradually given way to the modern hotel with conveniences then undreamed of. The village blacksmith shop is a memory, and in its place stands the gaudily-painted gasoline station with garage and repair shop in the rear. Old dwellings, with their large rooms and open fireplaces, are becoming a rarity. The plain meeting house or church, where those before us worshipped on rough-hewn benches and listened attentively to long discourses on the weaknesses of the flesh, has been entirely renovated. The grist mill crumbled away years after its pad wheel ceased to turn. The placid mill pond disappeared with the removal of the dam and the waters of the once pretty stream that fed it are murky with industrial waste.

Trenton is one of these transformed communities. In Colonial and Revolutionary days it was a center of life and trade - the main stopping place on the stage line running from New York to Philadelphia. Leading figures of those periods passed and repassed through its streets. In the history of the nation it has played no small part. It was the scene of two brilliant Revolutionary battles of George Washington's winter campaign of 1776-77. The Continental Congress met in the town in post war days. For a time it was favored for the permanent national capital. It was selected as the site for the capital of the State and during epidemics of yellow fever in Philadelphia, then the seat of government, it served twice in that capacity.

Vestiges of these days still linger. The narrow and crooked streets, landmarks, church graveyards and old structures partly hiding their identity behind modern construction are reminders of earlier life. How long these remnants of long ago will remain is, of course, a matter for speculation. Hardy a year passes that some building, the pride of past generations, is not replaced. These sites have stories to tell. Some are of national interest, and others purely local in significance.

The very life of Colonial, Revolutionary and post Revolutionary Trenton is embodied in these locations. The scene of Col. Rall's Christmas party was at a centre of town corner At another

corner the early governing body of the land met, the State Legislature held sessions, General Washington, Martha Washington, General Lafayette and other eminent persons were entertained. At nearby places the first railroad charter in America was granted, noted trials were held; Prince Lucien Murat, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, pawned the diamond bracelet of Hortense, Queen of Holland; Louis Kossuth, the famous Hungarian patriot, and President Franklin Pierce were dined. At further distances Col. Rall had his headquarters, President John Adams was entertained and the famous Goodyear vs. Day rubber case was tried. These are but a few of the many high lights of Trenton's rapidly-changing sites.

The purpose of this work is to preserve these historic associations. In a vastly changed city it was believed that this could best be accomplished by presenting the sites as they were and as they are today. The old and the new have been placed side by side and in consequence the interesting story of Trenton's development is unfolded.

The whole is the outgrowth of twenty-five articles published in "Trenton," the magazine issued under the direction of the Chamber of Commerce.

This volume is not by any means a history of Trenton. It is a sketch book on some of the many places of historical significance, covering the past and present.

The material for this book is the result of several years of collecting and research. Many of the pictures and drawings of scenes of former days are from the author's collection or loaned by friends. For valuable additional data the writer is indebted to William J. Harney, an indefatigable delver into the records of older Trenton. Works that have been consulted as well as the names of others who have furnished information are listed in the bibliography. For many suggestions in the revision of the original articles the writer is indebted to Alex Young Burslem and Leo A. Smith, and for making possible the publication of the work credit is due to Kenneth W. Moore.

Harry J. Podmore.

Trenton, N.J., December, 1927

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## **FOREWORD TO REVISED EDITION**

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Nearly the whole of Harry J. Podmore's life was devoted to the investigation and writing of Trenton area history. His column "Trenton in Bygone Days" appeared regularly in the Trenton Sunday Times-Advertiser for many years and his carefully-researched historical articles were published in numerous local and national publications. He also assisted substantially with the collecting of material for many historical publications which did not bear his name.

As much of the material in the original edition of his book, *Trenton, Old and New*, was gathered by diligent perusal of the early Trenton newspapers or by personal interviews with old-time Trenton residents, and is not readily available in any other printed form, it seemed appropriate to publish a revised edition of the book in this Tercentenary year, both as one of Trenton's contributions to the State's celebration as well as a memorial tribute to one of the city's most-dedicated historians.

In this new edition, changes have been kept to a minimum in text and form, except where a rearrangement of material made the chronology a bit clearer, or new material obtained since the original edition was published, needed to be added. The footnotes in the original edition have been incorporated into the text. A few errors, pointed out to the editor by Mr. Podmore before his recent death, have been corrected, and the text brought up-to-date as of March, 1964. At his suggestion, the article on "The Green Tree Inn" has been omitted and a new chapter on "The William Trent House" added. A number of new illustrations have also been added. It is hoped that this second and slightly-enlarged edition of Mr. Podmore's book will prove no less interesting and valuable to readers of the present day than did the first edition of 1927, which has long been out of print.

The editor gratefully acknowledges the interest and support of the Trenton Tercentenary Commission, under whose authority this publication is published. She is especially grateful to Dr. John Perry Pritchett, General Chairman of the Commission, and to all the members of the Historical Research and Publications Committee, whose names are listed below. Without their untiring interest and help, this publication would not have been possible.

It is the hope of the Publications Committee that this revised edition of *Trenton, Old and New* will remain as a lasting memorial to the late Harry J. Podmore's lifetime of devotion to Trenton's historic past, as well as preserving for coming generations the significance of the part that Trenton played in the early history of our nation.

Mary J. Messler

Trenton, New Jersey, March, 1964

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## I. THE HISTORIC FIVE POINTS

Several days before the Battle of Trenton, Colonel Johann Gottlieb Rall, commander of the Hessian forces in the village, accompanied by Captain George Heinrich Pauli, an engineer officer, made a survey of the site where Brunswick, Princeton and Pennington Avenue now intersect with Broad and Warren Streets, for the purpose of placing a fortification there to defend the northern end of the cantonment. Colonel Rall agreed to have the spot fortified, although he considered the rebels a miserable lot and the village safe from attack. Fortunately for the American cause, this project was not carried through.

Early on the morning of December 26, 1776, a few hours after he had returned to his headquarters in the Stacy Potts House on Warren Street, after enjoying an evening of Christmas festivity at the home of Trenton's wealthy merchant, Abraham Hunt, Colonel Rall was aroused from a deep sleep by his Lieutenant Jacob Piel, to learn that Washington and his army were already attacking Trenton. Although Rall hastily endeavored to rally his panic-stricken troops, his efforts were too late, as two divisions of the Continental army had already hemmed in the village and their artillery, planted on the site which the Hessian leader had neglected to fortify, was raking with cannon fire the two main highways leading into the town. Rall soon fell mortally wounded, while his Hessian troops, in disorderly retreat, surrendered in the apple orchard which occupied the site on East State Street where the Public Service building now stands. Washington and his army had won a most timely and brilliant victory, considered by many historians as the turning point of the Revolution.

From the earliest settlement at Trenton, the site where the Continental artillery opened fire on the Hessian cantonment served as the northern gateway for travel in and out of the village. A little community of houses, shops and taverns soon grew up at the crossroads. Following the close of the Revolution, this small settlement seemed to have had a marked growth and by 1792 had become, according to Francis B. Lee, in his *History of Trenton*, "an established center for upper-country trade."

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## THE FIVE HIGHWAYS

At the time of the early settlement of the North Trenton community, the stretch of the highway now known as Brunswick Avenue, was a part of the old Maidenhead Road, leading through Maidenhead (now Lawrenceville) to Princeton. Princeton Avenue was then only a lane running to the Beakes Plantation about a quarter of a mile north of the corners, but by Revolutionary times, had become known as the Post Road to Princeton. The Pennington Road was designated as the Pennington-Hopewell Road



running to Queenstown (later Penny Town, now Pennington) and Hopewell. Following the opening in 1804 of the Brunswick Road, at a point above Mulberry Lane (now Mulberry Street), and the incorporation of Beakes Lane as a part of the Princeton Pike a few years later, the site where the three highways converged with King and Queen (now Warren and Broad) Streets became known as the "Five Points."

The gateway site at the "Five Points" has been a silent spectator of the development of Trenton from pre-Revolutionary times to the present day. It has witnessed the gradual evolution of locomotion from the days of the Indian, who silently passed on his way to the Falls of the Delaware, to the present era of the jet planes leaving their trails in the sky. Through these highways came the early Dutch trader with his heavy pack, the stagecoach and lumbering freight wagon, the traveling preacher spreading the gospel across the countryside, the gay traveler seeking new fields to explore, the traveling showman and magician, the road circuses and the postrider with the momentous news that patriot blood had been shed on the village green at Lexington and that Cornwallis had surrendered at Yorktown. Later came the canal barge and then the snorting locomotive on its way to north Jersey towns and cities. With the creation of the famous Lincoln Highway in 1913, the auto tourists came in ever-increasing numbers, followed by the motor trucks and buses of the present day.



THE GATEWAY SITE, 1855

*From "Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion." The Battle Monument stands today on the site of the building shown in the center of the picture. The building to the left of it, with signboard on a post at the front, is "Lamb Tavern," later known as the "Bull's Head." The rear part of the tavern was probably at one time the pottery of Joseph McCully, the elder.*

Among the prominent travelers who passed through the "Five Points" prior to, and for some time after the Revolution, were William Edmundson, the English Quaker, in 1667; Peter Kalm, the Swedish naturalist, in 1748; George Whitefield, the celebrated Methodist preacher, in 1754 and Benjamin Franklin, in 1757. In 1775, came the striking figure of the young Virginia rifleman on his way to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to take command of the Continental army, while at the same place, fourteen years later, he bid the town farewell while on his journey to New York City to be inaugurated the first President of the United States. Thomas Paine, patriot and noted writer of Revolutionary days, whose ringing lines, "These are the times that try men's souls," stirred the ragged soldiers on to action at the Battle of Trenton, journeyed through this gateway in 1803, when "a mob surrounded him with insulting music, and he had difficulty in getting out of town."

Other notable figures who passed through Trenton in the early days of its history were Washington Irving, Samuel Adams, John Adams, John Hancock, John Quincy Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Captain John Paul Jones, Elkanab Watson, Richard Henry Lee, Lord Cornwallis, Sir William Howe, Aaron Burr, Martha Washington, James Monroe, Marquis de Chastellux, Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Duke of Saxe Weimar, J. B. Brissot de Warville, General Lafayette and President Andrew Jackson.

At the time of the Battle of Trenton, according to William S. Strykers' sketch of Trenton in 1776-77, there stood at the gateway site, the frame dwelling of Thomas Case, a Revolutionary soldier. His house is believed to have been the one that was later converted into shops for blacksmithing and wheelwrighting. For a number of years, James S. Robinson operated the blacksmithing enterprise. Later the building was demolished and upon its site was erected a brick carriage factory, owned by Jacob S. Valentine, his son-in-law. The carriage shop was demolished in 1891 to make room for the erection of the Battle Monument.



Just south of the site for the monument across Brunswick Avenue, which then continued through to Warren Street, stood the "Lamb Tavern," known in later times as the "Bull's Head." For many years this was the most popular hostelry at the "Head of Town" and nearby, at the head of Warren Street, stood the gaily-festooned arch under which Lafayette passed when making his dramatic entry into the town on September 25, 1824.

The front part of the tavern, which faced Warren Street, was of brick, but the rear, of rough stone construction, was originally a separate building. In all probability, this was once the pottery of Joseph McCully, the elder. This pottery later came into the possession of Jacob Hester, another pioneer potter, who was for a long time the proprietor of "Lamb Tavern." The tavern was demolished in the 1890s at the time the Battle Monument was being erected. Other proprietors of the tavern were Isaac Hester, Patrick Conyery, Xavier Meyer, Henry Spencer and Jacob Gettler. The site of the hostelry is now part of Monument Park.

### A NOTEWORTHY MEMORIAL

The Battle Monument, commemorating one of the most famous battles in American history, commands the gateway site today. The column of the memorial is hollow-fluted and of granite construction. The pedestal which supports the column is partly of the same material and partly of darker stone to give a more apparent solidity to the base. The style of the column is known as Roman-Doric.

On top of the column is a cap, forming an observatory accessible by means of an electric elevator. Over the years from this observatory, thousands of tourists have obtained an excellent view of Trenton and the scenes of the battle. Encircling the column, just above the cap, thirteen electric lights, symbolic of the thirteen original states, shed their radiance at night.

On the top of the shaft is a bronze statue of General Washington as he appeared at the opening of the engagement, with his extended right hand directing the fire of the Continental artillery down King (now Warren) Street. The great leader is represented in the uniform of a Continental general officer, an exact reproduction of the one worn by him at Trenton. The figure is thirteen feet high while the whole monument, including the statue, is one hundred and fifty feet above street level.

On the east, west and south sides of the base of the pedestal are three bronze reliefs, depicting respectively, "The Surrender of the Hessians," "The Continental Army Crossing the Delaware River" and "The Opening of the Battle" The latter shows the battery of Alexander Hamilton about to fire down King (now Warren) Street. On the north side of the pedestal is a bronze tablet presented by the Society of the Cincinnati of New Jersey.

Guarding the entrance to the monument stand two bronze figures of Continental soldiers. One is the statue of Private John Russell, a member of Colonel John Glover's splendid regiment of seafaring men from Marblehead, Massachusetts, who gained fame by transporting Washington's army across the ice-choked Delaware, Christmas night, 1776. The other statue is

modeled after a likeness of Private Blair McClenachan, of the Philadelphia Light Horse Troop, which also took part in the Battle of Trenton.

The cornerstone of the Battle Monument was laid on Saturday, December 26, 1891, the one hundred and fifteenth anniversary of the Battle of Trenton. The base and pedestal were erected in the spring of 1892, the capstone was raised into position Saturday, August 31, 1893, and the statue of General Washington was placed on top of the shaft September fifth of the same year. The completed memorial was dedicated with elaborate ceremonies on October 19, 1893, the one hundred and twelfth anniversary of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia. Monument Park at the "Five Points" was acquired under the provisions of an ordinance passed June 28, 1893, to afford a setting for the Battle Monument.



THE GATEWAY SITE TODAY  
*The Trenton Battle Monument.*

Although various changes have taken place in the immediate vicinity of the Monument since its erection seventy years ago, the commanding figure of Washington still looks down upon the great industrial city and capital of the State, which has developed from the small village made famous by his signal victory at Trenton, December 26, 1776.

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## II. THE STACY POTTS HOUSE

Hier Liegt der Oberst Rall, mit ihm ist alles all! ("Here lies Colonel Rall, with him all is over) was the epitaph written for Colonel Johann Gottlieb Rail, the commander of the Hessian forces at Trenton, following his death from wounds sustained in the engagement of December 26, 1776. It was written by Lieutenant Carl Andreas Kinen, a member of Rall's regiment. but the words were never cut into stone. According to local tradition, the brave, but headstrong leader of the Hessian troops, sleeps in an unidentified grave in the churchyard of the First Presbyterian Church on East State Street.



THE STACY POTTS HOUSE  
*Headquarters of Colonel Rall, December, 1776.*

Colonel Rall died on December 27, 1776, at the commodious house of Stacy Potts, on King Street (now Warren) , where he had his headquarters while stationed in Trenton. It was there that General Washington and General Greene visited the dying officer at the close of the Battle, raking his parole of honor and offering words of consolation before leaving. Stacy Potts, the owner of the house during the Revolution, was a prominent Quaker resident of Trenton and mayor of the city from 1806 to 1814. He conducted a tanyard and a steel works in the rear of the property for some years.

### RICHARD HENRY LEE'S RESIDENCE

The Potts House again figured in the history of Trenton when it was leased for one year by the State of New Jersey to provide official quarters for Richard Henry Lee, President of the Continental Congress, when that body met in Trenton from November 1, 1784 until January 11, 1785, when it moved to New York. When General Lafayette arrived in Trenton on December 10, 1784 to bid farewell to Congress, it is presumed that he was the guest of President Lee at the official residence, Sometime after the departure of Congress from Trenton in January, 1785, the Stacy Potts House became a tavern, which for a number of years was known as the "City Hotel."

On November 9, 1798, the Honorable Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, former Envoy to the French Republic, visited Trenton and was tendered "an elegant entertainment" at the "City

Hotel," which was attended by the mayor, other city officials and heads of the government departments, according to an item in *The Federalist*, November 12, 1798. James Ewing, as Mayor of Trenton, made the address of welcome.

From 1800, until its doors closed in 1857, the tavern was the scene of many noteworthy gatherings and meetings. In February, 1803, the question of uniting the waters of the Delaware and Raritan rivers by a canal was discussed at a meeting of the citizens held in the tavern. On January 18, 1806, a public dinner was given to Captain (later Commodore) Bainbridge upon his return from Barbary. James C. Martin, a portrait and miniature painter, made the place his temporary headquarters in November, 1808, and the State Bank opened its books for subscriptions at the "City Hotel" in February, 1812.

For several years, the house was a boarding house, with John Mount, Jr., as one of the keepers, but in 1838, the place was again opened as a tavern. The occasion was announced in an advertisement in the *New Jersey State Gazette*, December 28, 1838, as "Once More Revived," and open for business under the name of the "Trenton City Hotel," with John Van Fleet as the proprietor. Some of the other proprietors during the intervening years were John Anderson, Peter Howell, Scott and Herbert, the Widow Harvey, Richard Davis, Hannah Herbert, Nicholas Bendel and Samuel Heath.

The "City Hotel" had other attractions aside from the refreshments dispensed in its taproom. A great Natural Curiosity - Shark or Sea Serpent, 8 feet, 9 inches long, caught in the Delaware, 8 miles above Trenton, admittance 12 1/2 cents, children half price" was advertised in the *Emporium True American*, August 7, 1840, as being on exhibition at John Van Fleet's.

Three years after the so-called monster of the deep was exhibited at the inn, a show featuring "Dan" Rice McLaren, called the greatest of American clowns, together with "Yankee Simpson" (Mr. Can-field), strong man, and the "Learned pig," Lord Byron, with its knowledge of letters and figures, was advertised in the *State Gazette*, June 26, 1843. The show was held in the tavern yard with "everything orderly and comfortable."

In 1853, after its varied career as a tavern, the property came into the possession of Dr. Jacob Quick, who demolished the building four years later to make room for a brick dwelling which he used as both his home and office.

The passing of the old Stacy Potts House is cited in the following item published in the *State Gazette*, June 12, 1857:

"Revolutionary Relic - Workmen are now engaged in demolishing the house in Warren Street, opposite Perry, long known as the City Hotel. This house is probably over a hundred years old, and at the time of the Revolution was one of the largest and most elegant houses in the town. It was occupied by Colonel Rall, the commander of the Hessians, and was his headquarters at the time of the Battle of Trenton. It bears many marks of that combat, in the shape of bullet holes and marks in the weatherboards, and tradition relates that a Hessian officer was shot through one of its windows while shaving himself. The window with the bullet hole through the glass is preserved by Dr. Quick, the owner of the house." (This window is now on display in the "Armory at the old Barracks.)

The *Gazette* then reprinted from its issue of January 10, 1785, a description of the place, as advertised for rent at that time:

"To be let until the first day of November next, and maybe entered immediately, the House wherein Stacy Potts lately lived in Trenton. which was taken for use of the President of Congress. and is now vacant by his removal.

The house is two stories high, spacious and elegant, having three rooms with fireplaces. besides a large dining room with two fireplaces on the lower floor. five rooms on the second floor, a large and convenient kitchen, a cellar under the whole, a pump at the door, a convenient lot with a stream of water running through it and an excellent garden - a stable sufficient to contain eight horses, with room for hay to keep them, may he had with it.

For terms inquire of the subscribers.

Moore Furman

Conrad Kotts

James Ewing"



RESTORED BRONZE TABLET ON THE NEW RECTORY  
*Unveiled at rededication ceremonies, February 27, 1961.*

In 1865, Dr. Quick's home was purchased by the Roman Catholics as the site of a new church and in 1866, Father Anthony Smith, of St. John's Church at Market and Lamberton Streets, began the building of St. Marys Church, of which he became the first pastor. The site was marked by a brass tablet reciting the fact that Colonel Rall died in his headquarters in the Potts House, December 27, 1776. Exhaustive research by Dr. Carlos Godfrey, well-known Trenton historian, led the New Jersey Society, Sons of the Revolution, to recommend an amendment to

the original inscription, stating that the dwelling was from November 30, 1784 to January 5, 1785, the official residence of Richard Henry Lee, President of the Continental Congress, then in session in Trenton. A handsome bronze tablet, three feet in width by four feet in depth, was accordingly unveiled on February 22, 1919, during the annual meeting of the Society, held in Trenton.

Following the disastrous fire which engulfed the Cathedral on March 14, 1956, necessitating the demolition of the church and its adjoining rectory, this tablet was removed and safely stored by the church authorities. At the request of the Trenton Historical Society and the New Jersey Society, Sons of the Revolution, the authorities of St. Marys Cathedral had the tablet restored and placed on the front of the new Rectory, where rededication ceremonies were held on February 22, 1963. Among those taking part in the ceremonies were Msgr. John E. Grimes of St. Marys Cathedral, Mayor Arthur J. Holland, J. A. Bughee, President of the State Society, Sons of the Revolution and Howard L. Hughes, former city librarian.

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### III. THE PONTIUS D. STILLE HOUSE

At the southeast corner of what is now Warren and Perry Streets there stood until 1926, the Central House property, a building of considerable significance in local Revolutionary history. Although the place underwent a number of changes in its long and varied career, it still embodied a goodly portion of its original outline when it was finally demolished.

This building was the dwelling of Pontius Delare Stille, the first treasurer of the City of Trenton, and served as the headquarters guard-house of the Hessians before the Battle of Trenton. In it



THE PONTIUS D. STILLE HOUSE  
*Used as a Hessian Guard House, December, 1776.*

was billeted the Headquarters Company of Colonel Rall, commander of the Trenton cantonment, whose own quarters were in the Stacy Potts House that stood on the opposite side of the street. At the front of the house, in the center of King (now Warren) Street, were planted several Hessian cannon, one behind the other on account of the narrowness of the street; and in the capturing of these guns, Captain William Washington, a relative of the great General, and Lieutenant James Monroe, afterward fifth President of the United States, were wounded. Between the Stille House and the original St. Michael's Church, built in 1748 but closed for seven years during the Revolution, which was used as a stable by the Hessian troops, ran Church Alley connecting the two main thoroughfares of the village, King and Queen (now Warren and Broad) Streets. Perry Street, originally called Centre, was not opened until the fall of 1813.

In this alley, some of the Hessian troops sought shelter from the fire of the Continental artillery stationed at the "Five Points," and through it Colonel Rall, mortally wounded, was carried to his headquarters in the Stacy Potts House.

In all probability, the Pontius D. Stille House dated back a number of years before the Revolution. The following extract concerning the site is from an article by John J. Cleary, well-known local historian, which was published in the *Trenton Sunday Times Advertiser*, May 31, 1925:

"The site at the southeast corner ... has a history antedating the Revolutionary War. The New Jersey Archives of 1763 contain an advertisement over the signature of Mary Beadels, offering the property at public vendue on the

eleventh of April of that year. Mention is made that Pontius Stille was then the occupant but a more interesting fact is stated, namely, that the house 'has been a well-frequented tavern constantly kept for about thirty years past.'

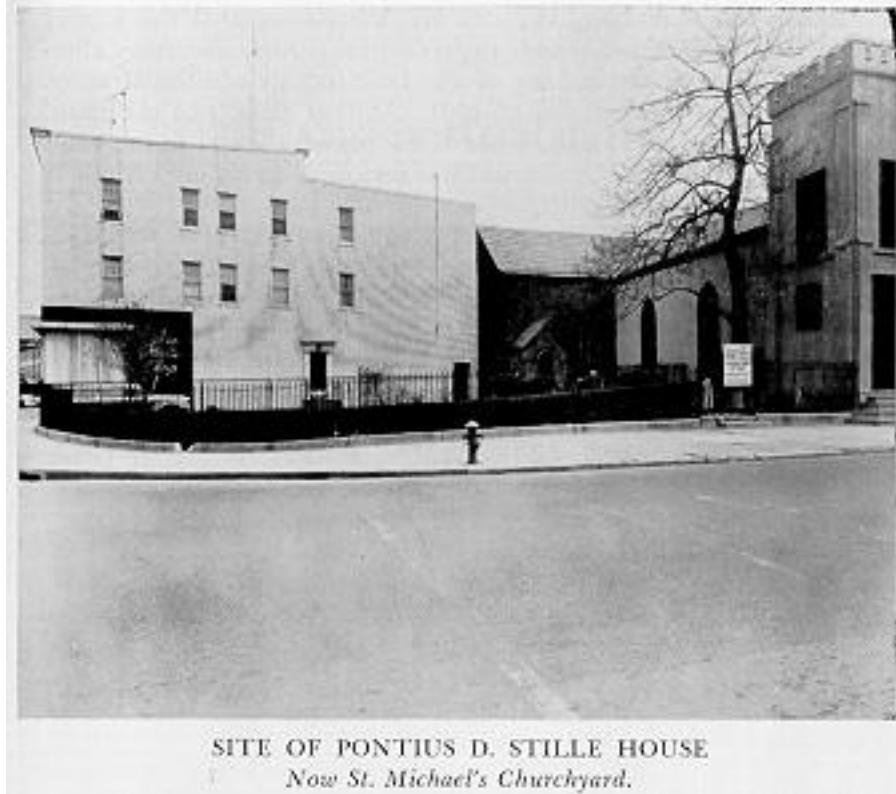
This would take its history back nearly two hundred years from our time. Just when the house incorporated in the structure now standing was erected does not appear. It is described in the Archives of 1763 as of two stories with stabling, etc. . ."

Among the early owners of the place were William Plaskett and his son. William, Jr., Joseph Clunn, Dr. William Bryant and Rachel Stille. After the latter's death, the property came into the possession of Joseph Brumley, who offered it for sale in an advertisement published in the *Federalist and New Jersey Gazette*, September 16, 1799. The advertisement describes the property as being two stories high, sixty-three feet frontage, two separate cellars, a good room on each side of the entrance, a kitchen and six chambers, two rooms in front suitable for stores, a passageway for wagons running under part of the building, pump in the rear, cistern, pump, garden, good stable and a chairhouse. At this time, Brumley operated an ironmonger in one of the large front rooms on the first floor. Another part of the building seems to have been occupied by a cabinetmaker. Other Trentonians who conducted businesses there were: Gilbert Brown, brushmaker, 1802; Foster Hart, shoemaker, 1804; Samuel Paxon, dry-goods and medicine merchant, 1806; publisher's office of the *Federalist*, 1807; P. Smiley, dry-goods merchant, 1809; Peter Parrish, tobacco manufacturer, 1814; Samuel Paxon, hardware and cutlery merchant, 1815; and Richard Burdsall, Jr., baker, 1816.

The family of William Potts owned the building for many years. In 1826, and perhaps earlier, Mr. Potts conducted a leather business there and subsequently it became his residence. He was a member of the Potts family which came from England with Mahlon Stacy in 1679, and later the two families intermarried. William H. Potts, tanyard owner, and leather and wool merchant, lived in the stone house on the west side of Warren Street, between Bank and Chauncey Streets, which was purchased and remodeled by the Public Service Electric & Gas Company, which still uses it as a business office.

About the year 1884, William H. Allerton opened the former Stille House as a hotel, known as the Central House. Extensive alterations, including the raising of the building an additional story, were made in the summer of 1904. At that time, two skeletons, one the body of a child, the other of a man, were found in the place by workmen. When the old roof was removed, a number of bullets were found imbedded in it.





The building was later purchased by Newton A. K. Bugbee, who had it razed in 1926. Mr. Bugbee, senior warden, later presented the land to St. Michael's Church, in memory of his mother, Mrs. Lucy Kendall Bughee, who died January 29, 1926. Impressive services on November 1, 1931, marked the dedication of the churchyard, by the Rt. Rev. Paul Matthews, Bishop of the New Jersey Diocese, assisted by the Rev. Samuel Steinmetz, rector of St. Michael's Church and the Rev. Milton Kraft, rector of Grace Episcopal Church, and formerly assistant rector at St. Michael's.

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#### IV. THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

One of the few buildings still standing in Trenton whose history goes back to the years 1746-1750, when Trenton was a free borough town, exercising its powers and privileges under a Royal Charter of Incorporation granted by His Majesty, King George the Second, is the Friends Meeting House which stands today on its original site at the northwest corner of Hanover and Montgomery Streets. When it was built in 1739, Trenton was a little settlement of less than one hundred houses



THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE  
*Built 1739.*

north of the Assunpink Creek. Because it was the county seat of Hunterdon County, the court sessions were held in the town and twice a year, fairs attracted a varied populace from the neighboring countryside.

Although there had been Friends at the Falls of the Delaware since Mahlon Stacy built his gristmill on the south bank of the Assunpink in 1680, and an early Quaker burial ground in the extreme southwesterly part of what is now Riverview Cemetery, there was no meeting house in the town for some years and the Friends assembled in the homes of members William Yardley, James Harrison, Phineas Pemberton, William Biles, Nathan Beakes, Thomas Lambert, John Bainbridge and Isaac Watson.

When the Chesterfield Meeting, with which the Society of Friends in Trenton was affiliated, finally granted permission for a meeting house at Trenton, the committee proceeded at once to erect the building, which was completed in November, 1739. The original meeting house, built by William Plaskett, was of plain red brick and faced Montgomery Street, then known as Quaker Lane. The entrance was in the end of the building, on Third, now Hanover Street. There was one long room inside which was later divided into the hall and a room for worship. The facing benches where the officers were seated are in the same position today. There were two long benches for the membership. When first erected, the house was thirty by forty feet, one story high, with a hip roof.

Although many changes and enlargements have been made to the Meeting House during its two hundred and twenty-five years of existence, the greatest changes have been those it has witnessed as the city developed around it. Its once quiet corner has become one of Trenton's busiest traffic centers while the shadows of modern bank and office buildings have taken the place of those cast by the orchard where the Hessians surrendered at the Battle of Trenton in 1776. Under its roof, the British Dragoons, and later, the Continental soldiers, each in turn found shelter. Here also in 1776, was held a meeting of the Convention of New Jersey Province.

Mahlon Stacy's gristmill passed away many years ago and the once-beautiful Assunpink, with its shady nooks and placid waters for boating, has now dwindled to a slowly-purring stream, with litter-strewn banks. It is encouraging, however, to find included in the Urban Renewal plans now being formulated by the city, that the Assunpink Creek is to be returned to much of its original beauty, with the landscaping kept natural to provide relief from the city atmosphere. Trenton's present Mayor Arthur J. Holland, in commenting on the plans has said: "This is a chief natural and historic asset in the city, and we plan to preserve and beautify it."

In the burying-ground adjoining the Meeting House are buried many citizens who played prominent parts in the early history of the city. Among these are Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, first Burgess of the free borough of Trenton, 1746-50; Colonel Lambert Cadwalader, his son, who was a member of both the Continental and Federal Congresses; General Philemon Dickinson, head of the New Jersey militia in Revolutionary days; Richard Howell, Governor of New Jersey, 1792-1801; and George Clymer, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. A copy of an engraving by John Sartain after a miniature of George Clymer by Benjamin Trott, probably made about the year 1788, now hangs in the library on the first floor of the Meeting House.

Although the Friends Meeting House has been occupied as a place of worship since its erection in 1739, differences arose between the followers of Elias Hicks and the Orthodox members in 1827, which resulted in a separation in the meeting. The Meeting House was retained by the Hicksites. In 1838, the Orthodox Friends purchased the Methodist Meeting House at the northeast corner of Broad and Academy Streets, when the Methodists moved to their new church on South Broad Street. In 1858, the Orthodox Friends erected the red brick house of worship on Mercer Street which was used as a meeting house until 1955. In 1957, the building was turned over to the Mercer Street Friends Center for use as a community center.



In 1873 and again in 1896, as well as in later years, the Hicksite Friends have enlarged and remodeled their original meeting house at Hanover and Montgomery Streets so that its aspect has been changed considerably, although much of the original walls still serve and the original adz-hewn timbers support the present structure.

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## V. THE METHODIST MEETING HOUSE

Before the outbreak of the Revolution, four religious denominations already had houses of worship in Trenton. The first three to establish themselves in the town were the Presbyterians, the Friends and the Episcopalians. In 1771, the Methodists organized a congregation and sought a place in which to conduct services. This denomination had already gathered a number of adherents to its faith, largely through the leadership of Joseph Toy, a brilliant and dedicated young preacher, the convert of the traveling officer-preacher, Captain Thomas Webb, who had preached in Trenton in the 1760's and had also done some missionary work in the town.



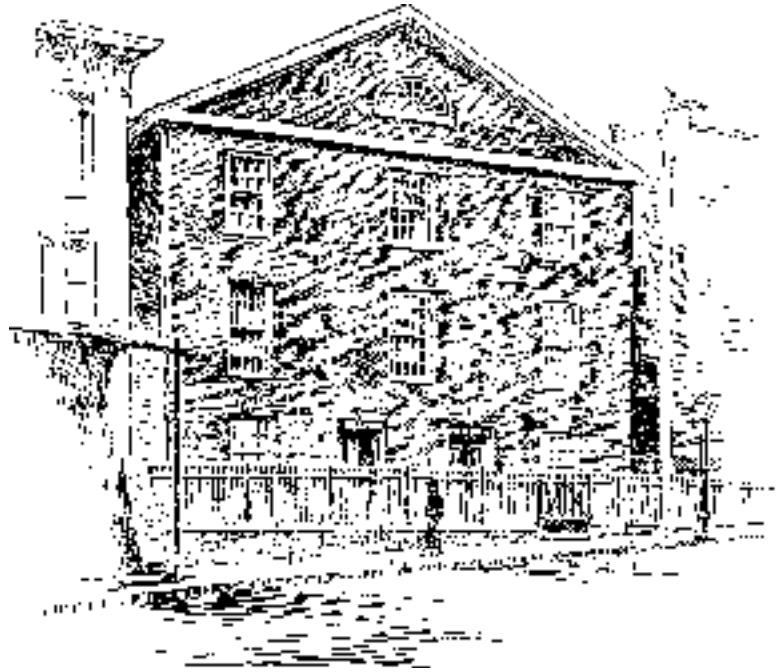
The First Meeting House, 1773



The Second Meeting House, 1806

In looking about for a place in which to worship, the Methodists purchased a site at the northeast corner of what is now Broad and Academy Streets from John Rossell and his wife. In 1772, the Trenton Society, consisting of about nineteen members, secured subscriptions from one-hundred-and-twenty-two persons for the erection of a meeting house. The subscription list bears the date of November 25, 1772 and the total amount subscribed was £213. When the frame meeting house was erected in 1773, it measured thirty by thirty-five feet and was finished with glass doors and windows. It was the first Methodist church in New Jersey and the third in North America. This little building sheltered part of a Hessian artillery detachment at the time of the Battle of Trenton, and it was here that Colonel Rall, the Hessian commander, was first taken when he was shot from his horse during the course of the battle.

The first annual conference of Methodists in New Jersey was held in Trenton, May 23, 1789, with both Bishop Coke and Bishop Asbury present. "It was Opened in great peace. We labored for a manifestation of the Lord's power and it was not altogether in vain. Sunday, the 24th, we had an abundance of preaching," wrote Bishop Asbury, commenting on the event. The Trenton Circuit at that time included Trenton, Pemberton, Mount Holly, Burlington and Monmouth. This was enlarged in 1817 and, in 1818, Trenton was made a station with a membership of two hundred and thirty.



THE GREENE STREET CHURCH

*Built 1838.*

The joint meeting of the State Legislature was held in the Meeting House in May and June, 1779. according to William S. Stryker's monograph, *Trenton One Hundred Years Ago*.

Among the nineteen members who sponsored the meeting house in 1772 was John Fitch, whose small commercial, steam-propelled craft traveled on the Delaware between Trenton and Philadelphia, seventeen years before Robert Fulton's so-called first steamboat, "The Clermont," plied the waters of the Hudson. The first trustees of the church were James Emerson, Conrad Kotts, Robert Singer, Joseph Toy, George Ely, Alexander Cart, Jacob Link, Richard Sause and Lambert Wilmore.

In 1806, the original frame meeting house was replaced by a brick church located on the same site. This church was called "Bethesda" and was used as a Methodist meeting house until it was sold to the Orthodox Friends in 1838, when the growing church organization made a larger place of worship necessary. A plot of land was purchased on the western side of Greene (Broad) Street. just below Second (State) Street as the site of the new house of worship.

The new church was a large three-story brick building which for years remained one of Trenton's familiar landmarks. It was dedicated on Sunday, September 9, 1838, with appropriate exercises, and was called "Trenton Methodist Episcopal Church." When the Front Street Methodist Church was organized in 1846, in what was previously a Dutch Reformed Church, the mother organization became known as the "Greene Street Church." In 1894, the name was again changed to the "First Methodist Episcopal Church."

In 1894, the brick church was demolished and an imposing structure of light granite and brick in Romanesque style, with a seating capacity of 2,000 was erected on the same site at a cost of

580,000. It was dedicated May 5, 1895. This building was used until partially destroyed by fire on December 16, 1956. Due to an active rebuilding program, the church was reopened on February 2, 1958, with a refurbished front entrance set in the original granite facade which had retained intact. Among the treasured religious symbols salvaged from the fire were the original pewter communion cups used by Bishop Francis Asbury to serve communion in the original church at Broad and Academy Streets almost two hundred years before.

The former meeting house at Broad and Academy Streets continued to be used for various purposes after 1838. While the Court House was being erected at Flemington, the Hunterdon County Freeholders met in the building, at a rental fee of fifty dollars. In 1851, the property was enclosed by a neat brick wall. After the Friends moved to their new meeting house on Mercer Street in 1858, a public school held sessions in the building for a short time. In May, 1859, the school moved to Temperance Hall at the southeast corner of Broad and Front Streets, and by June first, the work of demolishing the edifice was completed. In the graveyard adjoining the building, a number of pioneer residents of Trenton were buried. Some of the bodies were removed in the spring of 1849 when the yard was being leveled.

The neighborhood adjacent to Broad and Academy Streets was identified with Methodism in Trenton for a long period of years. Thomas Webb, a captain in the English army stationed at Albany, preached the doctrines of Wesley in a stable in 1766, and in 1866, a short distance east on what is now Academy Street, on the south side, stood the Trinity Methodist Meeting House, known locally, as the "Plank Church," because the pews were hewn from planks and set up like those at a camp meeting. This building was used as a church until 1869, when the Trinity M.E. Church was completed on Perry Street. The "Plank Church" was then occupied as an armory by the Emmett Guards, local State militia, so named because of its large membership of native Irish and those of Irish extraction. According to an article in the *Daily True American*, the church was demolished in May, 1872, and subsequently four fine brick houses were erected on the site.

In 1859, a store building was erected upon the meeting house corner, which was occupied by Forst and Taylor, wholesale grocers, who furnished edible supplies for Civil War troops; and in 1881, by the establishment of Elwood, Minor H. and George C. Ivins, trading under the name of Ivins Brothers, grocers and commission dealers. In 1895, an L. Lehman and Company Grocery Store bought the property from the Ivins Brothers for \$30,000 and conducted Trenton's first chain department grocery in the building, with Emanuel New as manager. It was the first



FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW JERSEY TODAY

grocery to give trading stamps in Trenton. The building was later enlarged and renovated for the Lehman business, which continued to flourish on the corner for over twenty-five years.

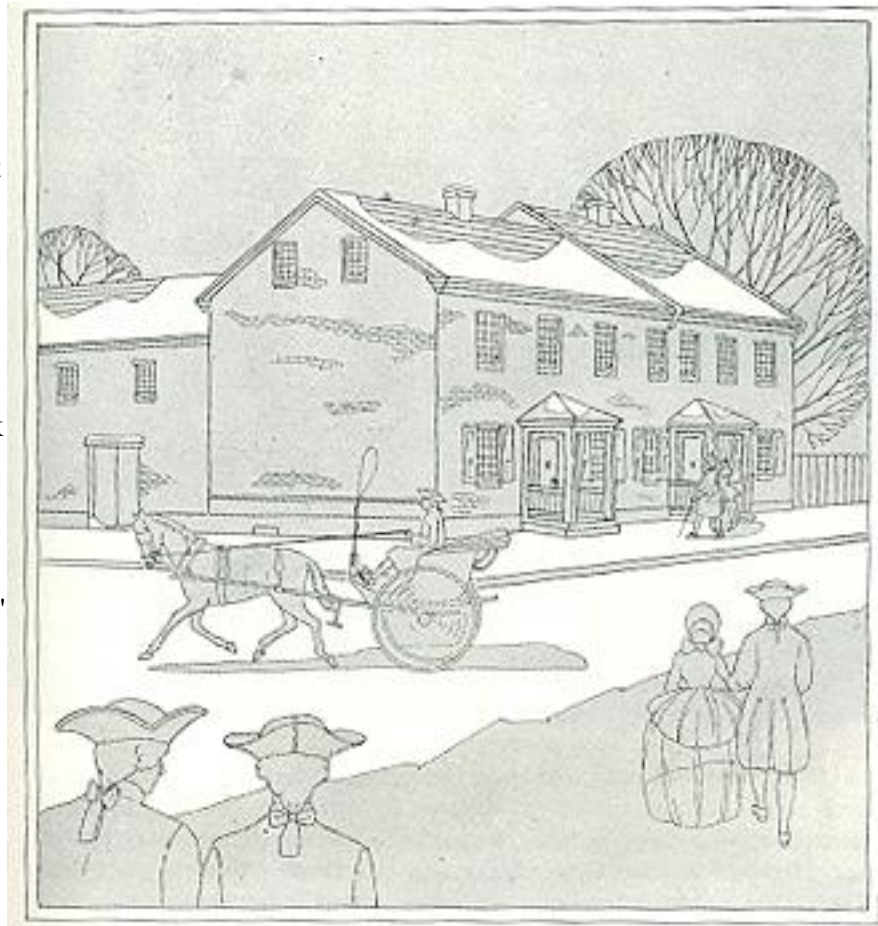
Later Smith Brothers Company, furniture dealers, occupied the place, followed in 1927, by Stern & Co., of Philadelphia. In 1937. Stern moved to a remodeled store on the southeast corner of Broad. and Academy where it remained until 1963, when the business was given up. The last firm to occupy the Lehman corner was Whitehill Brothers. furniture dealers, which also took over the five-story building at 112-114 Academy Street, formerly occupied by Murrax Griffith & Messler, wholesale merchants. Both buildings were razed in 1961 but the site is still an empty lot.



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## VI. THE CORNER WITH A CHRISTMAS STORY

The march of time has brought many changes to the site formerly occupied by the Trenton Banking Company at the northwest corner of Warren and State Streets. In fact, four transformations have taken place there within the past seventy years. With a record as a business mart, dating back to Colonial days, this location may well lay claim to having witnessed the growth of Trenton's first "town center of trade" from its days as a hamlet to the flourishing city of the present day. At this corner in Revolutionary times, stood the dwelling and general store of Abraham Hunt, the rich merchant of the village and also its postmaster. Nearby stood the City Tavern where important meetings of the city and state were held, the Hunterdon County Court House and jail, the early street market and the original town pump, each of which contributed its part to the city's center of activity.



Drawn by George R. Podmore.

HOME OF ABRAHAM HUNT  
*Northwest corner, State and Warren Streets.*

Probably the first merchant to do business at this corner was Joseph Reed, whose son Andrew Reed, father of Joseph Reed, Colonel Washington's Adjutant General, was appointed postmaster of Trenton in 1734. Some of those who followed Abraham Hunt as shopkeeper at the corner were Wesley Hunt, George Kinney, William Miller, West & Cole, and William Norcross. In the early 1840's Charles Howell conducted the "Washington House" there. The Hunt building was demolished in 1884.

It was in the Hunt House that an important incident of Revolutionary history took place, for it was here that Abraham Hunt's commercial activities worked hand-in-hand for the cause of

liberty, serving as a means toward the winning of the Battle of Trenton, a timely Christmas gift to a struggling nation.

Did Abraham Hunt plan a conscious part in the plans of General Washington before the Battle of Trenton or was his lavish entertainment of Colonel Rall on Christmas Eve, which facilitated the capture of the Hessians, merely coincidental? While both questions have been debated by historians for many years, we are led to believe that Hunt was entirely unaware of the current designs of Washington. Whichever version is true, "Certain it is," says General Stryker, in his *Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, "that he was a most active though perhaps unconscious agent in bringing disaster and defeat to the British arms."

Aside from all tradition and assumption, however, the records tell us that the dwelling and store of Abraham Hunt at the corner of Second and King Streets figured so prominently in the noteworthy Revolutionary incident that the site may well be named "The corner with a Christmas story."



THE SAME CORNER IN THE 1880's

History records that when the Hessians were stationed at Trenton in December, 1776, General Washington, who was encamped on the Pennsylvania shore with his small band of patriots, was well informed of the doings in the enemy's cantonment in Trenton. The Battle of Trenton was a well-planned and timely stroke, due part to the intelligence obtained from the patriotic farmers of Hunterdon and Burlington Counties, as well as to the work of Washington's trusted spies who were able to learn the strength and position of the Hessian forces. One of the most famous of these spies was John Honeyman, who lived in Griggstown, Somerset County, and was noted for his cunning and keen observation. Just a few days before the Battle, Honeyman, disguised as a butcher and dealer in cattle, made a number of visits to Trenton and reported to Washington what he saw there.

Was Honeyman in touch with Abraham Hunt who at that time was a Tory in the eyes of his townsmen? While there is no proof that the two worked together in securing information, there seems to have been an opportunity for such to have taken place. John Honeyman, known as the Tory butcher, purposely wandered from the town a few days before the Battle and was captured along the River Road by several soldiers of the patriot army. He was transported across the river and brought before General Washington, who after interviewing him privately, ordered him held for court-martial the following morning. What actually transpired between Honeyman and General Washington is not known, except that there was no court-martial in the morning, as the spy had vanished from the log hut where he had been confined for the night. His mysterious escape and his return to Trenton with greatly exaggerated information concerning the poor condition of the patriot army, all planned by Washington, is a matter of history.

### **THE CHRISTMAS STORY**

It is Christmas night, December 25, 1776. Snug and warm in their quarters throughout the village of Trenton, the Hessian mercenaries are celebrating the occasion in traditional German style. Colonel Johann Gottlieb Rall, the Hessian commander of the cantonment, is being royally entertained at the home of Abraham Hunt, where he is busily engaged in tasting the best wines the village affords. He imbibes the delicious spirits between each hand of cards and when the clock on the wall shows that it is nearly dawn, there is a loud knock on the door. It is opened by a servant who is confronted by a Tory farmer who asks to see Colonel Rall. The messenger is undoubtedly Moses Doane, one of the notorious Doane Brothers of Pennsylvania, with the timely message that the Rebels are crossing the Delaware are planning to march on Trenton. Being informed by the servant that Rall's card game cannot be interrupted, the messenger hastily writes a note which is given to Rall by the servant. But the Hessian Colonel, in no mood to trouble himself with a carelessly-written message, places it in his vest-pocket without reading it, and returns to his card game, unaware that he soon must pay with his life for this apparently trivial act.

Meanwhile the famous crossing of the Delaware has been accomplished, and Washington's loyal army of cold and bleeding patriots is already marching on Trenton. before Rall and his troops are aware of what is happening. The story of the defeat of the Hessians at the Battle of Trenton, which General Washington called "a glorious day for our country ," is so well-known to every student of American history that it need not be repeated here.

In answer to the charge that Abraham Hunt was a Tory because of his entertainment of Colonel Rall on Christmas night before the Battle, General William S. Stryker, in his *Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, has this to say in refutation:

"It has never been stated that he ever claimed protection from the British. His property does not appear to have been confiscated which would have been done if he had been a Tory, and he certainly was in full enjoyment of it to the date of his death, long after the close of the war. He also retained the office of postmaster of the village under the national government for many years."

## THE YEARS ROLL BY

It is the year 1885— Abraham Hunt has been in his grave for over sixty years and his former property at Trenton's early "center of trade," with its Revolutionary story, has been recently demolished. In its place stands the new Masonic Temple, in whose large assembly hall on the second floor will be held many balls, weddings, fairs and theatrical performances.



THE MASONIC TEMPLE  
*Stood on this Corner from 1885 to 1918.*

It is the year 1919—The Masonic Temple is gone and on its site stands the new home of the Trenton Banking Company, Trenton's first banking institution, formerly located at 16 South Warren Street



THE TRENTON BANKING COMPANY  
*Stood on the Corner from 1919 until razed in 1961.*

It is the year 1958—On September second, the First Trenton National Bank opens its doors for the first time. The occasion is marked by a ribbon-stretching ceremony across State Street, from the doors of the First Mechanics National Bank to those of the Trenton Banking Company, symbolizing the merger of those two famous banking institutions.

After the Trenton Banking Company building was razed in 1961, a new drive-in, walk-in office, connected with a parking lot, was opened on the historic site. On August 13, 1962, there was a rededication of the historic plaque, gift of the Trenton High School Class of 1904 to the Masonic Temple, which proclaimed "Col. Rall was entertained on Christmas night, 1776, in the house of Abraham Hunt, which stood on this site." The plaque is now to be seen on the base of the flagpole at the corner of the parking lot.



THE CORNER TODAY  
*Showing Flagpole with Historical Plaque.*

## VII. THE HUNTERDON COUNTY COURT HOUSE AND JAIL

More than one hundred and eighty years ago, the little village of Trenton was very much astir. The citizens, excited by the events of the conflict in New England, eagerly awaited any word that might alter their conditions of life as Colonists. The tavern-keeper hurried from his inn, the housewife, worried and unhappy, rushed from her doorstep, the artisan abandoned his tools on the bench, the shopkeeper left his counter, and all hastened to the center of the little community to hear what news was in store for them. Little did they realize, however, that what they were to hear was a pronouncement which was to shake the throne of an obstinate king and eventually become the foundation for a republic which was later to grow into one of the greatest Democratic governments in the world. For the pronouncement was the Declaration of Independence, proclaimed from the steps of the old Hunterdon County Court House, which stood on the east side of Warren Street, just south of State Street.

The assemblage at Trenton, history records, was the first to hear that famous document read publicly outside of the city of Philadelphia, where it was conceived and formulated, and later agreed to, on Thursday, July 4, 1776. The reading of the famous document in Trenton took place on Monday, July 8, 1776, following its printing in Philadelphia, and its reception here by post. It is believed that Samuel Tucker, the President of the Provincial Congress of New Jersey and a leading citizen of Trenton, was the person who read it on that notable occasion. It is recorded that the reading was held "in the presence of the Provincial Congress, the gentlemen of the committee, the officers and privates of the militia under arms and a large concourse of the inhabitants." Although no Trenton residents signed the famous document, six of the signers were from the Trenton area: Francis Hopkinson, of Bordentown; George Clymer and Robert Morris, of Morrisville; John Witherspoon and Richard Stockton, of Princeton; and John Hart, of Hopewell.

The Court House also figured in other events of national interest. In all probability, the building was the meeting place of the seven members of the Court of Commissioners, appointed by the Continental Congress in 1782, to settle the land dispute between Connecticut and Pennsylvania, known in local history as the "Pennamire War." The decision in the case, rendered December 30, 1782, is known as the "Trenton Decree," and terminated a controversy which had been pending since 1757. From the steps of the building on April 15, 1783, the proclamation of Governor William Livingston, declaring the cessation of war between Great Britain and the United States, was publicly read to the townspeople. On this occasion, the Vice-president of the State, members of the Legislature, judges of the Supreme Court and other public officials were present. The ratification of the Constitution of the United States by New Jersey was read aloud before a large body assembled at the Court House on December 19, 1787, followed by the firing of thirteen rounds, together with one more for the State of Delaware and another for Pennsylvania, by the militia who were present. New Jersey was the third State to ratify the Constitution, being preceded by Delaware on the seventh, and Pennsylvania on the twelfth of December.

## TRENTON'S FIRST PUBLIC BUILDING

In the five years, 1746-50, that Trenton was a free borough town. under a charter granted by King George the Second, the Court House was used both as a Borough Hall and as a place for confining offenders.

The Hunterdon County Court House was Trenton's first public building and according to tradition, the lot on which it stood was given to the county by Chief Justice William Trent, for whom Trenton is named. The following description of the building is given in John O. Raum's History of Trenton:

"It was a two story building erected of gray sandstone, with stuccoed front. The cells were in the lower story. The upper story was used as a court room, the entrance to which was by a number of stone steps, erected on the outside of the building and surmounted by an iron railing. The steps extended over the pavement, commencing from the gutter, and persons going up and into the court room were compelled to ascend from the street. Pedestrians going up and down the street passed directly under these steps .

The steps were afterward removed from the street and placed crosswise upon the front of the building, commencing from either corner, on the north and south sides of it, and meeting at the top, in the center of the building, forming a pyramid, so that anyone going into the court room could ascend either from the north or south of it. Subsequently these steps were removed and placed inside the building."

The old courtroom was the scene of a number of interesting trials among them the case of the Rev. John Rowland, a famous traveling evangelist. It was undoubtedly a case of mistaken identity. By establishing an alibi for Mr. Rowland, the Rev. William Tennent renowned Presbyterian minister, then pastor of the church at Freehold, and Joshua Anderson and Benjamin Stevens, lay members of the First Presbyterian Church of Trenton, found themselves being tried for perjury. Before an acquittal was finally obtained, "To Trial of William Tennent, 1741," aroused more lasting interest than any other case tried in New Jersey in early times.

## THE OLD JAIL

The common offenders confined in the jail were largely counterfeiters and horse thieves. Repetition of these offenses often led death penalties being imposed by the authorities. As executions in those days were public affairs, they attracted many people from the countryside to Trenton. Such an event is recorded by George Whitefield, the famous Methodist minister, in his journal under the date of November 21, 1739:

"Being strongly desired by many, and hearing that a condemned malefactor was to suffer that week, I went in company with about thirty more to Trent-town, and reached thither by five in the evening. Here God pleased humble my soul, to and bring my sins to remembrance, so that I could hardly hold up my head. However, knowing that God called, I went out, trusting in Divine strength, and preached in the courthouse [sic]; and though I was quite barren and dry in the beginning of the discourse, yet God enabled me to speak with great sweetness, freedom and

power before I had done. The unhappy criminal seemed hardened, but I hope some good was done in the place."

The Trenton jail, like other Colonial jails, was not very secure, so that escapes were common. During the Revolution, British soldiers, Tories and persons arrested for high treason were kept there. Toward the close of 1755, a group of Indians, who were skulking about the countryside in Sussex County, were taken into custody and held in the place for the safety of the inhabitants, who were terrified by outrages then being committed by the red man in Pennsylvania.

#### COUNTY SEAT REMOVED

The Court House of Hunterdon County was removed to the house of Henry Mershon, formerly the home of John Ringo, in Amwell township, by an act of the Legislature, March 4, 1780. After that date, Trenton was no longer the county seat of Hunterdon, although prisoners of war and the Admiralty Court were kept in the Court House for a time. When the county prison was finally abandoned, the jail in Trenton was placed in charge of a town jailer who had the custody of prisoners of the city.

When the Hessians were stationed at Trenton, a part of Colonel Rall's own Grenadier Regiment was quartered in the old Court House. It is said that during the Battle of the Assunpink, January 2, 1777, the wall around the rear and sides of the building was struck by a cannon ball fired from a Continental battery.

#### CONVERTED INTO BANK

When the charter of the Trenton Banking Company was granted on December 3, 1804, a committee was appointed to secure suitable quarters for use as a banking house. Just at that time, the Old Hunterdon County Court House was being offered for sale and the Directors of the new bank, finding the building ideally suited for their needs, purchased it for the sum of \$2,055.00. The new bank was officially opened for business on April 30, 1805, with Isaac Smith as president, and Pearson Hunt as cashier. The former was a man of remarkable talents: a graduate of the College of New Jersey (at Princeton) in 1755, he later became a practicing physician, commanded a regiment during the Revolutionary War served for eighteen years as an Associate Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court and two Years in the United States House of Representatives. Pearson Hunt, the bank's first cashier, was the son of a Director of the bank, Abraham Hunt, who entertained Colonel Rall prior to the Battle of Trenton.





In 1839, the remodeled "goal and courthouse" building was demolished and a new bank building erected on the site, which became known as the "White Marble Bank." An addition was added, and changes to the interior were made in 1872. The bank continued to occupy the building until 1919, when it moved to its imposing new home on the northwest corner of State and Warren Streets.

No story of the early history of the Trenton Banking Company would be complete without some reference to an exciting night in its history. This occurred on Sunday evening, January 21, 1872, when a party of burglars entered the bank. And of the affair, as given in a history of the institution published in 1907, runs as follows:

One of the watchmen, Mr. Bailey, was seized and gagged after he entered the bank. The other, Mr. Asher Swem, being also attacked as he entered the front door of the bank. The latter defended himself with so much vigor, and resisted their attempt to bind him with so much noise, as to attract the attention of Mrs. John V. Hutchinson a lady who was passing by, who instantly gave the alarm in the neighborhood. The police arrived too late to secure the burglars who abandoned their attempt and fled from the rear of the building. The boxes of some of the depositors were broken open, and several thousand dollars in bonds and other securities were carried away, some of which were never recovered. A short time after the occurrence a letter bearing a Brooklyn postmark, reached the bank, containing \$6,800 of bonds and coupons of the State of New Jersey, payment of which had been stopped, and which the burglars thought best to return. The burglars were never traced but the alert action of Mrs. Hutchinson was not passed over and she was rewarded with a gift of silverware by the Directors of the bank.

Old records of the Trenton Banking Company reveal the names of prominent and international figures among its depositors. It is shown that a loan was once made to Prince Lucien Murat, a nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, who offered a diamond bracelet as security for \$8,000 which he needed to return to Europe. This bracelet had been entrusted to the Prince by Hortense, Queen of Holland. The loan was later paid and the bracelet redeemed. Other distinguished persons who had business transactions with the bank were Joseph Bonaparte, a brother of Napoleon; General Victor Moreau, one of the great generals of the First French Republic; L. Maillard, secretary to Joseph Bonaparte; Jasper



INTERIOR VIEW OF OLD TRENTON BANKING COMPANY BUILDING

Harding, an owner of the Philadelphia Inquirer; and Commander Richard Dale and Lieutenant C. M. Hunter, both of the United States Navy.

After the Trenton Banking Company moved to its new location on the northwest corner of State and Warren Streets in 1919, the old building was owned for some years by the Public Service Corporation. It was razed in 1930, and the land has since been used as a parking lot. A few sections of the wall of the old jail can still be seen at the sides of the lot.

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## VIII. THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Few landmarks in the city are more expressive of early Trenton than the First Presbyterian Church and its graveyard. In the heart of Trenton's business section, it is Trenton's "Old Trinity," clinging with ancient dignity to a modern world. In its churchyard, now overshadowed by business establishments, lie prominent citizens of Colonial and Revolutionary Trenton, as well as of later years.

The history of the plot of land on which the present church stands goes back to the year 1726, when there came a demand for a chapel so that the people living near the Delaware would not have to go all the way to the log church at Ewing for worship. A part of the present property was given to the trustees by a number of residents of Trenton and city, with the understanding, as specified by deed: "for the special uses and trust following, that is to say, to be and remain forever for the use of public worship and as a burial place for the Presbyterian congregation of Trenton forever." The other part of the plot was acquired by purchase some years later.

### FIRST HOUSE OF WORSHIP

The first church building, which is believed to have been erected in 1726, one year prior to the deeding of the original piece of land, was a small edifice of stone construction, which stood on the southwest corner of the present property. John Fitch, whose name is identified with early steamboating on the Delaware, worshipped there following his dispute with the Methodists because of his working on the Sabbath as a gunsmith and armorer for the Committee of Safety. When the first military company was formed at Trenton, Fitch was one of the lieutenants



and held that rank in the encampment at Valley Forge. John Fitch Way, which originally ran along the Delaware from the Old Municipal wharf at the foot of Ferry Street to the Assunpink Creek, and now is the name applied to the former East-West Highway, is named for Trenton's early inventor whose steamboat made trips on the Delaware River from Trenton to Philadelphia, in 1790, seventeen years before Robert Fulton's boat, the "Clermont," ran on the Hudson. A memorial boulder honoring John Fitch was erected along the river front in the rear of the ancient Bloomsbury ferry-house, by the City Commission, in 1921, but the bronze plaque was stolen from the boulder by vandals during World War II and has never been replaced. An historical plaque, however, was erected in 1956 on North Warren Street, near the site of the

gunshop operated by Fitch, which was destroyed by the British in 1776, when they occupied the city.

Near the early Presbyterian Church stood the parochial schoolhouse where many of the children of the settlement were initiated into the mysteries of the three R's by Nicholas Dubois, who also filled the offices of elder and chorister. This little place of learning, which is believed to have been erected in 1735, was leased to the Trenton Academy in 1800 for its girls' school. "The lessees," according to Dr. Hall, in his History of the [First] Presbyterian Church, "added a story to the building and it continued to be used for school and church purposes until it was taken out of the way at the erection of the present church." The first Presbyterian Sunday school was held in this building in 1816.

The Trenton Academy held examinations in the building, which were attended by the Governor, the State Legislature and persons of national prominence. Richard Henry Lee, President of Congress. Baron Frederick William Augustus von Steuben and other prominent persons were present at the examinations held in 1784.

#### THE CHURCH INCORPORATED

On September 8, 1756, the church was incorporated with the following incorporators: Rev. David Cowell, the first settled pastor, Charles Clark, Alexander Chambers, Andrew Reed, Joseph Yard, Arthur Howell and William Green. On May 4, 1788, this charter, which had been granted by King George the Second of England, was superseded by the action of the congregation which accepted the provisions of the general act providing for the incorporation of religious bodies.

In 1762, the congregation purchased a lot on Third Street, now Hanover, where a parsonage was erected. During the winter of 1776, this house was used as a hospital by the Hessians, who badly damaged the place and totally destroyed the stable on the premises. A number of the Hessian mercenaries were also quartered in the church, which was badly damaged and plundered by them. Major Friedrich Ludwig von Dechow, of the Von Knyphausen regiment, was severely wounded near the church during the Battle of Trenton. He died the day after the engagement and was probably buried in the churchyard.

Other outstanding figures interred in the cemetery surrounding the church are Moore Furman, Aaron D. Woodruff and James Ewing, the first, second and third mayors of the city; Alexander Calhoun, Sr., the "Head of town" shopkeeper for whom Calhoun Street is named; Dr. Nicholas de Belleville, the eminent French physician, who accompanied Count Pulaski, the Polish hero of the American Revolution, to America and settled in Trenton in 1778; Col. Isaac Smith, head of the local militia, a member of the U. S. House of Representatives and first president of the Trenton Banking Company; General John Beatty, a member of the State Legislature and later a member of Congress; and Abraham Hunt, the wealthy merchant who entertained Col. Rall, the Hessian commander, on Christmas night, 1776. Tradition also says that somewhere within the enclosure reposes the dust of a number of Hessians who were killed or died later of wounds received in the Battle of Trenton, including the brave Col. Rall himself. On the east side of the church, stands a monument erected to the memory of the Rev. John Rosbrugh, who was

massacred by the British just prior to the Battle of the Assunpink, January 2, 1777. Many of those who rest in the sacred ground were of the Presbyterian faith as this was the first Presbyterian house of worship erected in Trenton.

## SECOND HOUSE OF WORSHIP

The first stone house of worship was razed in 1804 to make room for a new brick edifice which was dedicated August 17, 1806. The following description of this church, by Dr. Francis A. Ewing, quoted from Dr. Hall's History of the [First] Presbyterian Church:

"Elevation seemed to be the great object to be attained, and so the walls were carried to a height which would now be thought excessive. Its galleries were supported by lofty columns and in consequence, its pulpit was so high as sometimes to threaten dizziness to the preacher's head. Above the gallery the vaulted ceiling afforded almost enough room for another church. It had its tower, its belfry and bell still sweet and melodious, its spire which had it been proportioned us height to the tower supporting it, would have ascended needle-like almost to the clouds. With all its architectural defects, however, it was a fine old building well adapted to the purpose of speaking and hearing; filled an important office, both to the congregation and on public occasions; stood for years the chief landmark to miles of surrounding country and at last resisted sternly the efforts of its destroyers. Its site, on the southwest corner of the graveyard, is well defined by the old graves and tombs clustered close to its northern and eastern sides, and is only part of the ground divided into burial lots."

General Lafayette attended services in the church when he visited Trenton in 1824 and James Monroe, who fought in the Battle of Trenton, and served as a Representative from Virginia to the Continental Congress when it met in Trenton in 1784, worshipped there on June 8, 1817, while President of the United States. Other person of note whose names are identified with the early history of the church are: Samuel Henry, owner of the ironworks in Trenton Andrew Reed, the first treasurer of the Borough of Trenton; Colonel Joseph Reed, of Revolutionary fame; Samuel Tucker, president of the Provincial Congress of New Jersey and treasurer of the State; Samuel L. Southard, Secretary of the Navy under James Monnroe; Charles Ewing, Chief Justice of New Jersey; and the Rev. John Hall, the tenth pastor of the church, whose History of th [First] Presbyterian Church "is highly regarded for its illuminating presentation of early church progress as well as for its accurate reference to many secular incidents in Trenton's early history."

## PRESENT CHURCH ERECTED

In 1839, the brick building was demolished and the present church built. The cornerstone of the new house of worship was laid with appropriate exercises on May 5, 1839, and on January 18, 1840 the first service was held in it. In 1870, the interior was entirely renovated and other improvements made. In 1949, the church was designated as the Capital Church of the Synod of New Jersey and special services are held on the inauguration of New Jersey governors. The old steeple was taken down in 1956, after it had been weakened by the 1955 hurricane. A new steeple was placed on the church, April 15, 1964.

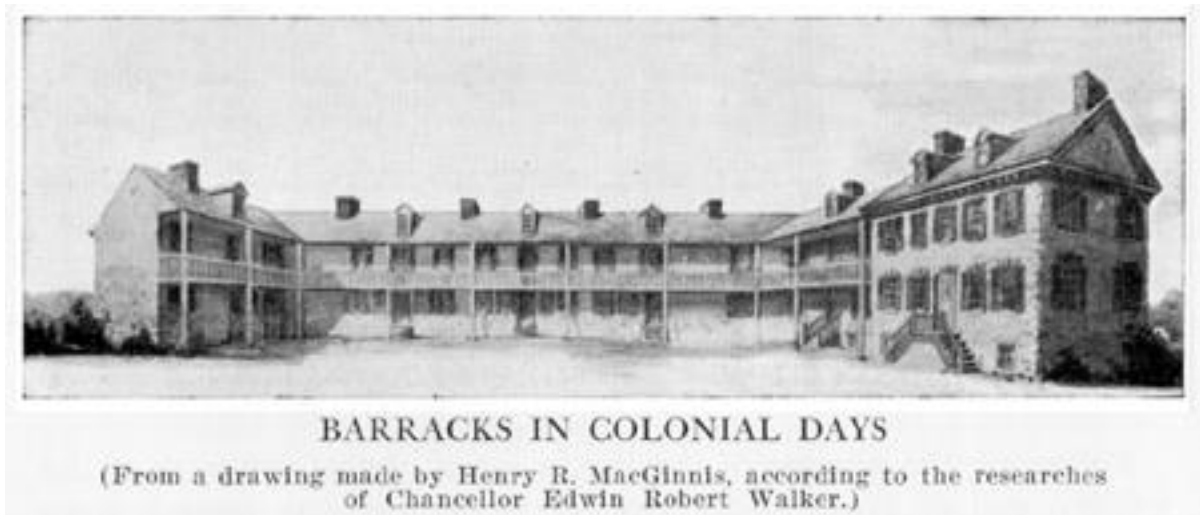


THE PRESENT CHURCH, BUILT 1839

During 1962, the First Church celebrated the 250th anniversary of the Presbyterian church in this vicinity, dating back to the original church in Ewing, built 1712. The opening of the anniversary observance took place on Historical Sunday, September 23, 1962, when the congregation followed the same order of service as was followed in the early days of the church. Other special Sunday observances and a display of historical relics and documents were a part of the historical celebration. Included in the display was the original sacramental flagon use in communion services in the early days of the church.

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## IX. THE OLD BARRACKS



Of all the historic landmarks in Trenton, the "Old Barracks," as it is now affectionately called, is the most widely-known and visited by those interested in the late Colonial and Revolutionary history of America. The building, which stands on South Willow Street at the entrance to Mahlon Stacy Park, is today regarded as finest specimen of Colonial barracks in the United States and the only one remaining in New Jersey of the five barracks erected at Burlington, Trenton, Perth Amboy, New Brunswick and Elizabeth-town during the French and Indian War to house British troops which formerly were quartered in the homes of the citizens. The building is so historic and so representative of the earlier days in the State that reproductions of it were erected at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, at the Sesqui-Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1926 and at the New York World's Fair in 1939-1940. The law which provided for the erection of the barracks, was passed by the Council and General Assembly of the Colony, April 15, 1758. The purposes of the act, as set forth in the preamble are as follows:

"WHEREAS, it is found by experience that in admitting Soldiers within private Houses in this Colony during their Winter Quarters is not only attended with very heavy publick expense but many other pernicious consequences to private Families, for prevention whereof for the future:" Following the passage of the law, a lot of almost one acre at the western end of Front Street was purchased for forty pounds from Mrs. Sarah Chubb, daughter of Joseph Peace, one of the early settlers of the town, for whom Peace Street is named. Mr. Peace had bought the lot as part of a tract of thirty acres, called "Peace's Meadows," from James Trent, son of William Trent, in March 1732, for one-hundred-and-seventy pounds, silver money.

Work on the building was begun on May 31, 1758 and proceeded so rapidly that more than one-half of the building was filled with soldiers by the sixth of the following November. It was, however, not fully completed until March, 1759. According to William S. Stryker's paper on the Old Barracks, at Trenton, New Jersey:

"On the second day of October, 1759. we find the barracks was occupied by a Regiment of Highlanders. whose peculiar dress created much interest among the people of the town. In December 1759, a small addition was built to the barracks for the use exclusively of the officers in charge of the English troops. The building was originally designed to hold about three hundred men but we find at one time four hundred and fifty men quartered therein."

The barracks was built entirely of stone, undressed, two stories in height, the main building one-hundred-and-thirty feet in length and eighteen-and-one-half feet in width, with two wings, each fifty-eight feet in length at either end thereof and projecting right angles from the front of the barracks. For several years after the barracks was finished, it was constantly filled with troops. On January 5, 1764, a band of persecuted Indians on their way from Philadelphia to New York under guidance of Moravian missionaries were lodged in the building overnight.

In 1765, no use for the barracks then being apparent, the Legislature passed an act directing the Barrackmasters, William Clay and Abraham Hunt, to sell the furnishings at public sale and rent the buildings. The venture was not too successful, as more money was spent in repairs than was received in rental.

During the Revolution, the barracks was used for many purposes. For two weeks before the Battle of Trenton, a party of English Dragoons and some fifty Hessians occupied the building, with large number of Tory refugees from Burlington and Monmouth Counties. After the Battle of Trenton, the barracks was occupied by the American militia, and until 1781 various detachments of American troops passing through Trenton were sheltered there. In 1782, the barracks was used as a hospital for about six hundred invalid and sick soldiers from Yorktown, Virginia.

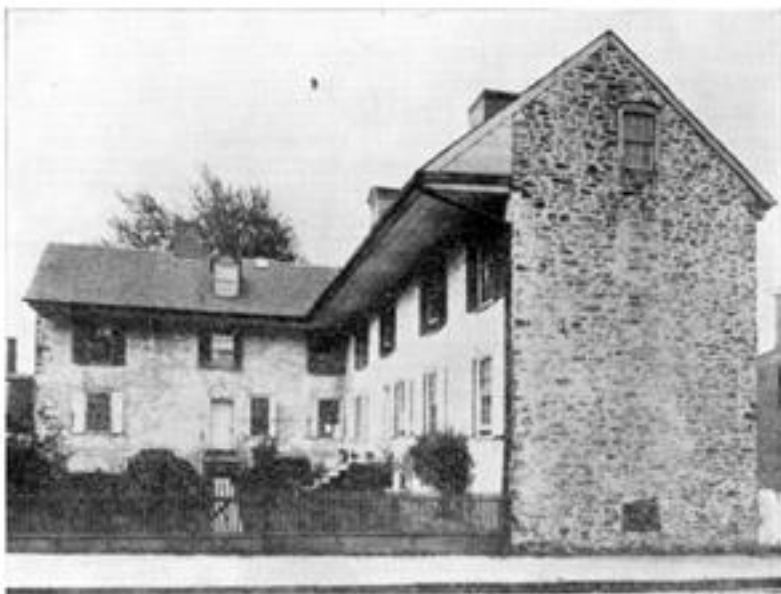
For several years after the close of the Revolution, the building was again unused. On January 1, 1786, it was sold by Moore Furman, Commissioner for the State to William Ogden and William Patterson, for three thousand two hundred and sixty pounds. In 1792, it was again sold, and plans were made by a group of associated citizens to convert the building into dwellings. When Front Street was extended from Willow Street to the State House, a portion of the structure was demolished to accommodate the lengthening of that thoroughfare. This left the north wing standing on one side of the street and the south wing and a part of the main structure on the other.





THE NORTH WING BEFORE RESTORATION

The north wing was converted into three residences. The porches were removed from the other section, and subsequently it was purchased and occupied by the "Trenton Society for the Relief of Respectable Aged and Indigent Widows and Single Women" for nearly half a century. When the Society moved to its new home on Spring Street in 1902, this part of the Old Barracks, often called "White Hall," was put up for sale. To keep it from passing into the hands of speculators or contractors, and save it from destruction, some of the patriotic ladies of Trenton formed a committee headed by Mrs. Beulah A. Oliphant, assisted by Mrs. Cornelius Hook, Mrs. James B. Breese, Mrs. Washington A. Roebling and Mrs. William S. Stryker, who by great effort, raised a fund and purchased the property which they maintained as the Old Barracks. On June 13, 1902, the Old Barracks Association was formed, and this organization has been graciously continued by the State as managers and custodians of the Barracks as an historical landmark and repository forever. Later the north wing was purchased and the work of restoration begun. Wilbur F. Sadler, Jr., Adjutant General of New Jersey and Chancellor Edwin Robert Walker, were both prominently identified with this work.



SOUTH WING AND PART OF MAIN SECTION  
BEFORE RESTORATION

In 1914, the restoration was completed and the Old Barracks Association deeded its property to the State of New Jersey in order to insure its perpetual care and preservation, with the proviso that the control and management of the property would remain with the Association.

In addition to its memories of Colonial and Revolutionary clays, the Barracks has other associations worthy of mention. Among the occupants who lived in the officers' quarters, after it was made into a residence, were Mr. and Mrs. David Johnston, whose daughters, Emmeline and Mary, conducted a private school there for a number of years. The following extract from an unsigned article published some years ago in the Sunday Times-Advertiser gives a picture of this place of learning:

"In a corner there was a dunce stool, and downstairs in the kitchen, near the pump hung a rag with which Katie, the housemaid, swabbed the mouths of boys the Misses Johnston had overheard uttering 'darn it' and 'gosh' and 'gee' and other such horrible words. Dear Katie, she was a sympathetic soul and when a bad boy cried as he saw her soaping the swab, she, too, generally dropped a tear, at the same time declaring she didn't like the job she had on hand but must obey orders.

When the switch was used it was Miss Mary who was on its stouter end, and as a rule the boy upon whom it was used had done something awful-like holding one of Beade's terrible dime novels, with a yellow cover, inside his geography, and in the deeds of Rattlesnake Bill, or some other hero of the plains, becoming so interested that he failed to observe the teacher leave her little platform after which she would tip-toe along the wall execute a flank movement grab the novel and throw it into the stove, march the culprit forward, give him a trouncing, then sentence him to the dunce stool for the remainder of the day."

## THE OLD BARRACKS TODAY

The Old Barracks, with the exception of a part of the main section, stands today practically the same as when it was originally erected in 1758. Together with the Old Masonic Lodge, erected 1793, at the foot of Willow Street, and the Douglass House, in which Washington held his famous Council of War the night before the Second Battle of Trenton, January 2, 1777, in Mahlon Stacy Park, the Barracks forms Trenton's famous historic triangle. The Barracks is



furnished throughout in the style of the period and the collection includes many rare pieces of furniture. Old prints representing phases of Trenton's Revolutionary history adorn the walls. It is a refreshing place of seclusion where the quaint charm of Colonial days awaits the visitor.

The upper floor of the officers' quarters, known as the "Armory," is devoted to a museum. Here on display is the Ernest R. Ackerman collection of Continental currency and many other objects of Colonial and Revolutionary days. One of the outstanding pieces in this room is a segment of the original arch under which General Washington passed at Trenton in 1789, while enroute to New York City to be inaugurated the first President of the United States. General Lafayette, on his farewell visit to the United States in 1824, passed under the same arch which was re-erected in his honor at the gate of the State House.

Under the eaves of the officers' quarters on the wall facing Willow Street is a porcelain reproduction of the Great Seal of the Colony of New Jersey. This seal occupies a niche or circular opening, evidently, the place of the original, which is supposed to have been removed after the Barracks was sold by the State. The original model for this seal was made by Colonel William E. Pedrick, a local artist. It was unveiled some years ago with appropriate ceremonies, the address at the time being made by Chancellor Edwin Robert Walker.

The building is used today as a meeting place for a number of historical and patriotic societies as well as the Old Barracks Association, and annually plays host to school classes and thousands of visitors from all over the United States and many foreign countries.

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## X. THE CORNER HISTORIC

Trenton's most historic corner is undoubtedly the one now occupied by the First Trenton National Bank, on the southwest corner of Warren and State Streets where historic events of local state, national and international significance took place. For many years it has been appropriately designated "The Corner Historic."

The story of the corner begins when John Dagworthy erected there during the early 1730's what was then the largest residence in Trenton. It was a stone, stuccoed house, which faced King (now Warren) Street, on a lot with a frontage of sixty-six feet, and a depth of two-hundred-and-thirty feet on

Second (now State) Street. Ten years later, the house became the official residence of Lewis Morris, the first Royal Governor of the Colony of New Jersey. Governor Morris occupied the house until June 25, 1742, when he leased Kingsbury on South Warren Street, now known as the Trent House. Following the death of John Dagworthy in 1756, the house was purchased from his executors in 1760 by Samuel Henry, one of Trenton's early manufacturers of iron products, who occupied it during the Revolution. The conversion of the house into a tavern is found in the following advertisement in the New Jersey Gazette, May 17, 1780:

"Jacob G. Bergen announces this day his leasing of what is better known as the Dagworthy homestead for the establishment of a tavern where he hopes his endeavors to serve the Publick in this business at this place will be acceptable. And which place he prefers to be called the "Thirteen Stars."

### CONGRESS MEETS IN TRENTON

Dr. Carlos E. Godfrey, in his treasure on "The Mechanics Bank, 1834-1919," gives a noteworthy history of the site from its early days to the twentieth century. To enumerate the many phases in which it has figured, and property present each one, would go beyond the space available for a brief sketch, but a review of the highlights as presented by the well-known historian are worthy of quotation:

"There is no landmark in historic Trenton which stands forth so pre-eminently as that now occupied by The Mechanics Bank. The combination of events occurring upon it are as



conspicuous as they were extraordinary and rare. On the site resided one or more of our Colonial Governors. The Seventh Capitol of the United States was located in the Old Tavern, where the Continental Congress deliberated, and where the New Jersey Legislature frequently met during and after the Revolution. Here Lafayette took his farewell of Congress. and where - years after - he was entertained by his illustrious comrades in arms of the Society of the Cincinnati. The first American Flag definitely known to have been hoisted in Trenton was unfurled to the breeze from the "French Arms" on May 24, 1782. In the tavern the National Constitution was ratified by the Convention of the State of New Jersey. And here also Washington was dined and where he held a public reception when en route to New York to be inaugurated President of the United States.

On the site frequently gathered men famous in the councils of the Nation and of the State, foreign diplomats, distinguished officers of the army and of the militia, and other eminent citizens. Many notable functions of international, national, state and local interest occurred here. Among the prominent patrons of the tavern were such men as President George Washington, the Marquis Lafayette and other celebrities. Here also banks, manufacturing and other interests were organized and manipulated. The various fascinating attractions by which the inn was surrounded, it long maintained its supremacy as the social centre of Trenton, and where congregated interesting convivial spirits in ye olden days."

#### A CENTER OF LIFE

Dr. Godfreys review of the site indicates that it must have been in the fine old tavern days that the building enjoyed the most eventful part of its career. What an interesting center of life the inn must have presented during the early days of our new government. Think of the scenes of gaiety. There is a hustle and bustle at the door. The stage has arrived from New Brunswick. The passengers have already alighted and the baggage is rapidly being unloaded. While the horses are being fed and watered, the stag driver comes from his seat to mingle with the throng that eagerly awaits news of the latest happenings along the route. And here also comes the postrider with important tidings and official documents.

The scene changes as we look in upon the basement taproom where there is continual chatter and laughter, the clashing of ale mugs and the clinking of glasses. Then a discussion arises. It becomes heated and there is a thumping of clenched fists on the tables. What is it all about? We inquire of the barkeeper as to the cause of the excitement and he politely informs us that it is just a friendly argument as to whether George Washington should or should not be King of the New Empire.

As we enter the spacious Long Room on the second floor, we see another scene of merrymaking, in contrast to the boisterous and argumentative one in the basement. Here Trenton's youth, the pupils of the suave and debonair Monsieur D'Oriffiere, of the French Academy in Philadelphia, are being instructed in "all sorts of dances, the most in fashion, but principally in the graces and manners" as well as in the French language.

That the tavern had an inviting atmosphere is evidenced by church records which tell us that the Deacons and Elders of the First Presbyterian Church officially met there and even the minister

was there on at least two occasions. The organization of the "New Jersey Temperance Society" was also held in the tavern October 27, 1829, and shows that Trenton's early social center, which was known at different times as the "Thirteen Stars," "the Freud Arms," the "Blazing Star" and the "City Tavern," was used for many varied purposes in the early history of the town. The proprietors of the tavern at various times were Jacob Bergen, John Cape, Francis Hewitt, Henry Drake, Joseph Broadhurst, John Voorhees, Joseph I. Thompson, Jacob Herbert, Joseph M. Bispham, Joseph M. Van Cleve, Benjamin South, Stacy Kirkbride and Mrs. Frances Green.

## BANK IS ERECTED

In 1836, the Old "City Tavern" property was purchased by the Mechanics and Manufacturers Bank, which had been doing business in a four-story brick building on North Warren Street since its incorporation in 1834. In 1837, the Old tavern passed from the scene when a two-story brick rough-cast building was erected on the site. Additions and alterations were made to the building from time to time. At a special meeting held on June 1, 1865, the Directors changed the institution from a state to a national bank, with the name of "The Mechanics National Bank." The bank continued to prosper and many of its officers and directors were men of high caliber who won distinction in state and local politics as well as in banking circles throughout the state and nation.



THE MECHANICS AND MANUFACTURERS BANK  
*Organized in 1834, Moved to This Building on "The Corner Historic" in 1838.*

A merger took place in 1928 with the First National Bank, then on East State Street, and the bank became known as First Mechanics National Bank. The present bank building was erected on the "Corner Historic" in 1930.

On April 21, 1958, the stockholders of the Trenton Banking Company voted to merge with the First Mechanics National Bank to form the First Trenton National Bank. The new bank, which opened its doors for the first time on September 2, 1958, marked the occasion with a unique ribbon-joining ceremony from the doors of the First Mechanics National Bank across State Street to those of the Trenton Banking Company, thus heralding "a new financial era in the Trenton area."



THE HOME OF THE MECHANICS NATIONAL BANK  
*On "The Corner Historic", 1895-1930.*

After an auction failed to attract a high enough bid for the Trenton Banking Company property, the building was wrecked in 1961. A new drive-in, walk-up office of the First Trenton National Bank, surrounded by a parking lot, now occupies the site, which is landscaped to add a garden touch to midtown Trenton.



FIRST TRENTON NATIONAL BANK  
*Stands on the Corner Today.*

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## XI. THE TRENTON ACADEMY

The American Revolution was still being fought when the movement to establish a suitable school for the education of Trenton's youth took tangible form. On February 10, 1781, twenty men prominent in the city and state formed an organization known as the Trenton School Company, thereby bringing into existence one of the renowned educational institutions in New Jersey - The Trenton Academy. The original capital was seven-hundred-and-twenty dollars, divided into thirty-six shares. The day after the organization,



the trustees purchased a lot on the north side of what is now Academy Street, for the sum of fifteen pounds. Upon this lot, a two-story stone building was erected, which was far enough completed on February 11, 1782, as to permit the opening of the school. James Burnside was the first teacher and there were forty students of both sexes during the first quarter.

It was then an elementary school, but in August, 1782, it was raised to the grade of academy. On November 10, 1785, an act was passed incorporating the original proprietors and trustees and changing the name of the Trenton School Company to that of The Proprietors of the Trenton Academy.

The original course of instruction offered at this seat of learning was very elementary in character, arithmetic and public speaking being considered among the higher branches. As the institution progressed, the course of study was greatly enlarged, so that by 1789 the following branches were taught: English, Extraction of Roots, Algebra, Mathematics, History, Logic, Rhetoric, Moral and Natural Philosophy, Spirit of Laws and Criticism, Caesar's Commentaries or Ovid's Metamorphoses, Justin or Sallust in Latin, the New Testament. Lucian's Dialogues, Xenophon or Homer in Greek. The school, by 1783, had an established reputation and the public quarterly examinations, which usually closed with exercises in public speaking, were held in the First Presbyterian Church and attended by "crowded and polite" audiences, usually including the Governor, members of the Legislature and other distinguished visitors.

The Academy was a private school, each proprietor's share entitling the holder to send a child without any charge for the use of the building. Pupils not sent on shares were required to pay a stipulated sum in addition to tuition. All pupils were required to pay extra charges for incidentals, such as wood money. Dr. Hall, in his History of the [First] Presbyterian Church, says that although Isaac Collins, the famous Colonial printer, and one of the founders of the



Academy, sent nine of his fourteen children to the school, he refused to take advantage of his right as a stockholder to have them instructed without further charge.

Additional parcels of land were bought in 1783, 1788 and 1854, and numerous additions and alterations were also made to the original school building during its long history. William L. Dayton, in his *Historical Sketch of the Trenton Academy*, says that a belfry was built on the Academy in December, 1785, and in March, 1788, a bell, which was borrowed from the wardens of the Episcopal Church, was placed in the belfry and could be heard all over town. The trustees of the Academy gave a receipt for it, engaging to return it when required. As far as is known, the bell was never recalled, and it continued to summon the scholars as long as the school remained in existence.

Among the prominent men who attended this famous institution of learning were: Joseph Naar, editor of the *Daily True American*; Colonel Washington A. Roebling, eminent engineer, who completed the work of his father in the erection of the Brooklyn Bridge; Dr. Charles Conrad Abbott, celebrated naturalist and archaeologist; Chief Justice William S. Gummere and Ion Perdicaris. The last-named became an international figure in 1904 when, as an American citizen residing in Morocco, he, with his stepson, Cromwell Varley, a subject of Great Britain, was captured and held for ransom by the notorious bandit Raisuli. Both governments immediately demanded the release of the prisoners. "Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead," was the ultimatum issued by President Theodore Roosevelt, which resulted in the freeing of the two men.

The Academy building was at times used for religious purposes and one of the earliest Sunday schools founded in the United States held sessions there at one time. During the year 1816, the Methodists conducted a school there in connection with the Trenton and Lambertson Sunday and Free School Association. In 1876, the Trinity P. E. Church used a second-floor room in the building for Sunday school purposes. Later, the United Brethren held services in the building.

After completing more than a century of service as a school, the old Trenton Academy closed its doors in 1884. Clark Fisher, a former pupil of the Academy, purchased the building and grounds in order to obtain the old bell, which he had moved to his Fisher and Norris Eagle Anvil Works, where it rang shop time for the beginning and ending each day's work. The Academy property continued in his possession until sold to the Trustees of the Free Public Library in 1900. During the Fisher ownership, the building was used as a public school annex and as a temporary abode for the School of Industrial Arts.



THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
*Stands on the Academy Site.*

Although the Trenton Academy is now but a memory, we still have two reminders of its existence: one, the street which bears its name, having been changed in the early days of the Republic from the Fourth Street of Revolutionary times, in keeping with the changes of other numbered streets in the center of the city; the other, the Academy bell, which was presented to the Free Public Library by Mrs. Harriet Fisher-Andrew in 1935, in memory of her former husband, Clark Fisher. The bell is still in the custody of the Library, and a tablet on the west corner of the building also reminds the passer-by that the Trenton Academy stood on the library site from 1782 to 1884.

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## XII. THE STATE BANK CORNER

On the northwest corner of what is now Warren and Bank Streets, there stood, in Revolutionary days, one of Trenton's well-known taverns, which was previously the home of Abraham Cottman, one of the leading lawyers in Trenton before the Revolution. It was a frame building with a detached kitchen. In the rear was an apple orchard through which flowed Pettys Run. A tavern was opened at the place by Rensselaer Williams in 1776, which was known as "The Royal Oak." John Adams was entertained there in 1777, and the following year, the Court of Admiralty held at least one session within its walls. On November 29, 1780, the Marquis de Chastellux, a distinguished French traveler, visited Trenton and dined in the tavern. In the record of his Travels in North America, 1780, 81 and 82, he has the following to say concerning his visit:

"I arrived early at Trenton, having remarked nothing interesting on the road, unless it be the beauty of the country which every where corresponds with the reputation of the Jerseys, called the garden of America. On approaching Trenton, the road descends a little, and permits one to see at the east end of the town the orchard where the Hessians hastily collected and surrendered prisoners." Speaking of the tavern, Chastellux says that he found "his headquarters well established in a good inn kept by Mr. Williams. The sign of this inn is a philosophical, or if you will, a political emblem. It represents a beaver at work, with his little teeth, to bring down a large tree, and underneath is written, Persevando."

Members of the Trenton Library Company met in the tavern in 1781 and on July 4, 1782, the Governor and leading citizens of the town celebrated the occasion with an "elegant dinner." The flag was displayed from the front of the building along Warren Street. In 1784, the merchants of western New Jersey held a meeting in the place, which was then known as the "Coffee House." From this time on until the establishment closed its doors, the tavern was conducted under various names. During its last years as a public house, it was a stopping point for stagecoaches. In Woodward's and Hageman's History of Burlington and Mercer Counties, New Jersey, we find that "On the 13th of April, 1801, Thomas Potter advertised three trips weekly between Hummel's Tavern (corner of Warren and Bank Streets) and Philadelphia, with a pair of horses and a coacher, during the summer season."

Rensselaer Williams, who formerly conducted a tavern at Trenton Ferry, seems to have been the most prominent proprietor of the tavern. He was a friend of John Fitch and aided him in obtaining from the New Jersey Legislature the exclusive privilege for the navigation of the Delaware and all other waters of the State, by steam propulsion. He was also one of the founders of the Trenton Academy and an active member of St. Michael's Church, in whose churchyard he is buried.

## THE STATE BANK

When the State Bank of Trenton was created by an act of the Legislature passed January 26, 1812, which also established State Banks at Camden, New Brunswick, Morristown and Newark, its first home was in a building on East State Street, near the present entrance to S. P. Dunham and Co. Preparations for a permanent home for the bank were made immediately, and later in 1812, the plot of land at the northwest corner of what is now Warren and Bank Streets was purchased from Robert McNeely, a prosperous tavern owner, and mayor of Trenton from 1814-1832. The following year, when the building was finished, the bank moved from East State Street to its new quarters.



THE STATE BANK BUILDING.  
Before it was demolished in 1921.

The commissioners of the new bank were Stacy Potts, Peter Gordon, Charles Rice, William Scott and John Smith, who with Elliot Tucker, Reuben D. Tucker, Lucius Horatio Stockton, Evai. Evans, Edward Yard, William Wood, Phillip F. Howell, James S. Wilson and Abner Reedier were the first directors. The first president of the State Bank was James Jefferson Wilson, well-known editor and publisher of the True American, and Brigadier General and Adjutant General of New Jersey in 1810 and 1814. He was also Quarter-master General in 1821-24. Wilson died in the city in 1824, but the location of his grave is not known. The first cashier of the bank was Charles Gordon who was also prominent in the city and state and held several military offices during his lifetime.

It is said that for a time the State Bank had good patronage, but competition from other banks finally proved too strong, and in 1845, the Legislature passed an act to extend the charter of the Bank long enough for it to settle its affairs. Twelve years were given from January 28, 1842, which was forty years after its charter had been authorized. The settling process was conducted in due time and the bank passed out of existence. But the State Bank building, until demolished in 1921, could perhaps lay claim to the distinction of having housed more enterprises of a varied character than any other landmark of old Trenton.

In the 1830's, Miss Betsy P. Atkinson opened a boarding-and-day school for young boys in the building and it was also used for worship by the Rev. Morgan J. Rhees, the first Baptist city missionary in Trenton, and pastor of the First Baptist Church from 1830 to 1840. In the early 1840's, a public high school, probably the first in Trenton, was conducted there. This school was held in one of the upper rooms of the building, with William M. Hough as the superintendent. At the same time, one of the lower rooms was used by a Mr. F. Kingman, as a

school for boys. In 1844, the high school, under Mr. Hough, was moved to the old Town Hall building on Academy Street.

## OLD VAULT UNEARTHED

A sidelight on the history of the old bank and its workings is given in a news item in the State Gazette, April 18, 1843, which tells of the reopening of the old vault by workmen engaged in renovating the building for an agricultural implement factory. The story of the "find" as told by the newspaper runs as follows:

“The vaults of this institution, which have been for so many years closed to the light, were broken open last week. by Mr. Woodward’s workmen. One of the vaults, that in the old banking room, has been entirely removed. The walls were very thick. and bricks and mortar of which they were composed now almost fill the yard. The whole building is indeed of the strongest and best construction. It is evident that the bank was at least not meant to break. Many packages of notes of the bank were lying in the upper vault and some of them were carried off by the boys. It is said that the youngsters found among the packages quite a number of good bank notes, amounting to about one hundred and fifty dollars. They were the notes of the Sussex Bank, and Middletown Point Bank and of the Newark banks. About five dollars were found in a till in cents and half cents.

A large number of books and papers were also in the vault. Most of them were such as showed only the ordinary transactions of the institution: but occasionally one of them met with a peculiar kind - indicating what shifts the agents in the bank in New York were sometimes put to, to keep up its credit - and also, what straits the creditors of the bank sometimes found themselves in, what odd securities they offered for discounts, and what appeals they made for renewals upon the payment of a very small percentage on their notes.

The names of many persons figure largely on the discount books who have long since closed all their worldly accounts - some by death and not a few by insolvency. It would do no harm to the present and most prosperous of our merchants and traders to look over these names. We observe that those who borrowed thousands, few have any credit left: while those who borrowed hundreds or fifties, many have lived since in moderate prosperity and died in possession of at least enough to pay their debts."

In the 1850's, the old bank building was used as a brewhouse and bottling establishment by William Morton and Nathan Richardson, trading under the name of Morton and Richardson, manufacturers and wholesale dealers in porter, ale and sarsaparilla, mineral water, beer, meade, et cetera. Later the business was conducted under the name of Nathan Richardson and Son. A laundry was also operated by them in the rear of the building.

In the 1880's, the building, or a part of it, was the office and publishing house of the Trenton Herald, a weekly newspaper, and the New Jersey Staats Journal, printed in German, both papers edited and published by Colonel E. C. Stahl. Other uses of the building included a dancing school, an undertaking establishment, a plumber's shop, a storehouse for ordnance and camp equipage. and a cabinetmaker's shop. During its last days, it served as a storehouse for antiques owned by the late Samuel Gordon.

The old bank building, with its fine doorway, was demolished in 1921, when St. Marys Cathedral Convent was built on the historic site.

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### XIII. THE STATE CAPITOL

The nation was still young when Trenton was made the seat of government for New Jersey by an act of the Legislature, approved November 25, 1790. In November of the following year, Joseph Cooper, Thomas Lowery, James Ewing, Maskell Ewing, George Anderson, James Mott and Moore Furman were appointed commissioners, with the power to purchase or accept suitable land upon which to erect a State building. A tract of land of about three-and-three-quarters



acres was secured in the environs just west of the town. Here the original State House, a plain rough-cast building, sixty-by-one-hundred feet, with a belfry, was erected. The work of construction was begun in November, 1791. By an act of the Legislature passed March 3, 1795, an additional building was erected for quarters of the Secretary of State and for the preservation of the public records. During the years 1791-1795, a gravel walk was laid by Common Council from Chambers Corner, now the Trenton Junior College corner, to the State Capitol building. In 1798, the lot was enclosed with a fence, and in 1799, a brick pavement was laid around the building. From time to time improvements were made to the original structure.

When a final attempt was made in 1801 to establish the national capital at or near Trenton, the State House and other public buildings were offered to the Federal Government for the use of Congress and for public offices. On December 2nd of that year, the Legislature of New Jersey unanimously resolved:

"That the members representing the State, in the Congress of the United States, be and they are hereby requested, if Congress should resolve to remove, for the purpose of better accommodation, from the city of Washington, to use their best efforts to procure their removal to the city of Trenton; and they are hereby authorized to proffer, in the name of this State, the State House and other public buildings belonging to the State for the use of Congress and their officers, for any length of time that the Congress shall wish to occupy them. and that his Excellency, the Governor, be requested to transmit a copy of this resolution to the members of Congress from this State, to be used by them as occasion may offer."

In 1806, the State House was provided with a bell which announced the hour of meeting for both houses. At one time the bell was also used to give alarms of fire in the town. The bell was eventually discarded and an American flag substituted, which originally was flown only when the Legislature was in session and upon holidays and State occasions, but now- flies every day until sunset.

Decided improvements were made to the State House in 1848 when the rough-casting was removed, two additional buildings erected adjoining the main one, and the rotunda added. John Notman was the architect. The grounds were fenced and graded and shade trees planted. This work was done under the direction of a commission composed of Samuel R. Gummere, Samuel R. Hamilton and Stacy A. Paxson.

In 1863, 1864 and 1865, substantial appropriations were spent in building additions to house the State Library and Executive Chambers. In 1871, Charles S. Olden, Thomas J. Stryker and Lewis Perrine were appointed commissioners to cause a suitable addition to be built which contained more commodious apartments for the Senate and Assembly. These buildings were ready for occupancy by the Legislature in 1872. In the same year, \$120,000 was appropriated for completing the building, \$3,000 for fitting up the Executive Chamber, \$4,000 for fitting up the Chancery and Supreme Court rooms and \$2,000 for fitting up the offices on the first floor of the east wing. In 1873, the sum of \$43,000 was appropriated for the improvement of the front of the building, completing unfinished repairs and improvements, and for fitting up the library.



THE STATE HOUSE, 1845-48



THE STATE HOUSE ABOUT 1860

On March 18, 1875. the sum of \$15,000 was appropriated for the purpose of putting a new three-story front on the building and equipping offices on the second floor for the Clerks of the Court of Chancery and the Supreme Court, and for providing a suitable museum for geological specimens and the battle flags of New Jersey volunteer regiments, carried during the Civil War.

## THE BIG FIRE

One of the most memorable fires in the history of Trenton occurred on the bitter cold morning of March 21, 1885, when the State House watchman noticed smoke issuing from the office of the Quartermaster General in the northwest end of the State House.



The alarm was sounded from the corner of State and Willow-Streets, according to the account of the fire in the State Gazette. When the firemen arrived, they found the plugs frozen and a thick layer of ice on the Water Power. By the time the plugs could be thawed, the blaze had swept on to the Court of Chancery and to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It had also reached the museum on the third floor of the structure, where flags and relics of the Civil War Were on display, and it was only through the courageous work of the Adjutant General William S. Stryker, of Trenton Hose Company, No. 1, the firemen and a number of citizens, that the mementos were saved.

The weather was so cold that the water from the hoses was frozen as soon as it struck the building, so that it was soon sheeted with ice. After fighting the fire for several hours, the firemen succeeded in confining it to the front portion of the State House, and by six o'clock in the morning it was under control. The Legislature appropriated \$50,000 for rebuilding the damaged structure and the following year an additional appropriation of \$225,000 was granted. The new building was completed in 1889. The following description of it is taken from Fitzgerald's Manual of time State of New Jersey, 1963:

"It is of rectangular shape and of the Renaissance style of architecture with a frontage of one hundred and sixty feet on State Street, a depth of sixty-seven feet, and three and a half stories high, with a rotunda thirty-nine feet across, which connects the new section of the Capitol with the original part. The rotunda is surmounted by a dome one hundred and forty-five feet high. The building has about sixty feet more frontage than the former one and approaches about ten feet nearer the street."

The dome was regilded in 1953 with 24 carat gold leaf. A battery of floodlights now illuminates the dome every night until midnight.

From 1889 on, subsequent additions, repairs and improvements were made to the State House. These included a new Assembly Chamber, which was erected in 1891; an addition providing for a consultation room for the judges of the Supreme Court, the Court of Errors and Appeals and a private room for the Governor; a new Senate Cabinet erected in 1903, and an addition providing more offices and extensions to the east and west wings.

From 1910 to 1917, the State made extensive purchases of land, including the acquisition of Delaware Street, the Green property which fronted on State Street and other properties along Willow Street, with extensions to the old Water Power, later Sanhican Creek, which was filled in in the late 1930's and covered by a highway.

Delaware Street, a rather steep thoroughfare paved with great cobblestones, which was donated to the city by U. S. Senator Garret D. Wall of Burlington, was closed, and the land became a part of the State House grounds. For a time, the residences on State Street were used as offices. Later they were demolished, and the land added to the State Park. The oldest of this group of residences was the one that stood on the corner of Delaware and West State Streets. It was the home of Caleb S. Green, who was a judge of the Court of Errors and Appeals. Following Judge Green's death, the home was occupied by his widow. During the administration of Governor

Murphy, 1902-1905, an unsuccessful effort was made to purchase the residence as a site for an executive mansion.

In 1921, the State Office building on West Hanover Street was erected, and the Henry C. Moore residence, which stood opposite the State House and which had previously been purchased by the State, was demolished to make a suitable rear entrance to the building.

During the years 1924 and 1925, the Green, Vroom and Dayton residences, just west of the State House, were purchased for further extension of the State House grounds. Upon the site of these houses there was erected from 1927 to 1930, the handsome four-story State Capitol Annex, at a cost of approximately three million dollars. This Annex has housed the Courts, the State Library and several State departments, including the State Department of Conservation and Development and the State Museum, since its opening.

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n the years since the opening of the Annex, the State has gradually acquired all the land between it and Calhoun Street. In 1961, the five remaining mansions on the south side of State Street were razed to make way for the erection of the State Cultural Center, at a cost of six million dollars. This unique and imposing group of buildings will include a three-unit State Museum complex, comprising a two-story museum proper, a related auditorium and a planetarium. An adjoining three-story unit will house the State Library. Target date for the completion of the Center is late in 1964, when the State will still be celebrating its 300th anniversary. The 10.7-acre site extends back to what will be the re-aligned John Fitch Parkway skirting the Delaware River. All the museum-group buildings will be linked by under-ground or enclosed passageways. The new Department of Education Building at Calhoun Street has been in use since 1963.

In the words of Governor Richard J. Hughes: "New Jersey will be proud of this beautiful and versatile center. It will enrich the fine culture of New Jersey and receive attention and praise from all over the nation."

Other State buildings now in process of erection in Trenton's John Fitch Way Development Project are the State Department of Labor and Industry Building and the buildings of the Health and Agriculture Departments. Plans to move the Legislature from the State House to larger quarters in a new building at the rear of the present Capitol are now being considered by the State Capitol Development Commission. The front portion of the State House, including the gold dome, would be retained but thoroughly renovated.

Although the State House complex is now expanding so rapidly and dramatically, the present State Capitol building, which embodies in its structure both the old and the new, has many historic associations with the early history of the city in the original State House, the townsfolk held solemn exercises commemorating the death of Washington. The early Fourth of July celebrations were held in the building in the evening and usually took the form of parties conducted by the ladies of the town, and called for the illumination of the building and grounds.



THE STATE HOUSE AS IT IS TODAY

It was at a session of the Legislature held in the State House, February 6, 1815, that John Stevens was given the right to construct a railroad in the State. This was the first charter ever granted in the United States for the building of a railroad.

Many men of prominence in the early days of our Republic spoke in the State House, including the Marquis de Lafayette, Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln and William Henry Harrison. When Lafayette came to Trenton in 1824, he was taken to the State House, in front of which the Triumphal Arch, under which Washington had passed on his journey to New York in 1789, to be inaugurated President, had been reconstructed. At the arch, Lafayette was met by a choir of twenty-four young ladies, each bearing the name of the State she represented on a white belt which encircled her waist. The General playfully remarked "that the States were never so well represented before." When Abraham Lincoln came to Trenton, February 21, 1861, while en route to his inauguration in Washington, he spoke before the Legislature and later dined at the Trenton House where he addressed a large crowd assembled on Warren Street.

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#### **XIV. THE CENTER OF TOWN**

If a Trentonian who died in the early 1860's were to return to the center of town today, he would, in all probability, have great difficulty in recognizing any of the buildings that were standing in his time. He would discover that Greene Street, with its familiar landmarks, had undergone a transformation both in name and appearance. He would search in vain for the street market, the town pump, the lampposts, the City Hall clock, the sheds extending over the sidewalks, the hitching posts and the sign designating the printing office of *The Monitor*, as well as becoming confused by the steady stream of autos and pedestrians continually crossing the corner of State and Broad Streets.

Let us look back for a moment to a few of these landmarks that were familiar sights at Trenton's business center in our grandfather's day. In the middle of Greene, now Broad Street, stood the street market, a long, shed-like structure consisting of two buildings, one standing in the rear of the other and the whole extending from a point just north of State Street to Academy Street. The market, in width, covered a little more than the space later taken up by the trolley tracks, leaving room on either side for vehicles.

The first building of the Greene Street market to be erected was the one running from State Street to Hanover Street. This was built in 1845 at a cost of \$2,200. Greene Street, at this time, was widened from State to Academy by an additional fifteen feet at a cost of \$600, which brought the entire cost of the market up to \$2,800. The market was opened for occupancy in August, 1845, and the first sale of stalls brought \$634. In 1848, the second building, extending from Hanover to Academy Street, was erected at a cost of \$2,000.

The Greene Street market was a busy place on market days, as it was here that the farmers came to sell their produce and at the same time do their own shopping. It was here, also, that the local butchers, who then did their own slaughtering as well as selling, had their stands.



MARKET HOUSES IN GREENE (now Broad) STREET, 1869

At the beginning of the market, going north, stood the popular newspaper stand of the downtown section, which for a number of years was conducted by Levi Pierson. It was at this place that the leading business and professional men of the town purchased their favorite newspapers. On the signboard at the front of the stand was inscribed:

"N.Y. Tribune, Times, Philadelphia Ledger, Press and Inquirer, Frank Leslie's, Harper's Weekly, N.Y. Illustrated News and other Weekly Papers."

The activity in the Greene Street market could always be depended upon to provide stories for the local newspapers, especially when town happenings did not produce enough "copy" to fill the local column. Hence an item published many years ago in the True American:

"The lovers of good beef will have an opportunity of seeing something to tempt the appetite. Michael Meyer, whose stand is in the lower market directly opposite this office (40 North Greene Street) will exhibit in the streets two steers, raised by Alfred Black, near Jobstown, Burlington County, coming six years old and weighing 5,000 pounds. Mr. Meyer paid \$475 for the pair, and will slaughter them for market next Tuesday, when our citizens, who can afford it, may have one of the finest cuts ever perhaps offered in our market."

In the following issue of the newspaper appears:

"The huge beeves mentioned yesterday, belonging to Michael Meyer, were driven through the town this morning amid elicited the admiration of all our citizens who saw them. Many of them are doubtless preparing themselves for a feast of fat things, when these cattle are slaughtered and brought to market."

Two subsequent items tell of the killing of the cattle and the placing of the meat for sale at the market. In his day, Michael Meyer was one of the best-known butchers of the town. For a number of years he lived in a large frame dwelling that stood on the present site of the Blakely

Laundry building at the corner of North Montgomery Street and Brunswick Avenue. His slaughterhouse was nearby.

The Greene Street Market was also a well-known stand for the sale of fish, and the following item from the State Gazette, April 28, 1851, referring to this market and other places where fish were then sold in the town, is a reminder of the days when sturgeon was plentiful in the Delaware:

"Sturgeon went off like hot cakes in our markets on Saturday. One dealer cut up and sold seven fine fellows at 5 cents a pound. Pickled sturgeon is a rather delicious dish fixed up after the style of some of our Lambertton fishermen."

Saturday nights were "big" nights in early Trenton, and especially busy ones at the Greene Street Market. Franklin S. Mills, local reporter for the State Gazette, gives us a description of Saturday night life in the center of town over a hundred years ago:

"A Saturday night in Trenton seems to be particularly appropriate to promenading by the 'under ten.' Seven hundred and fourteen persons passed the corner of Warren and Second from 8 o'clock to 10 last Saturday night. Some with a lady on each arm; others admirably paired off - and hundreds were promenading single-handed and alone. The industrious mechanic, with his neatly dressed wife - on one arm, and a capacious market basket on the other - making his purchases for the Sabbath. It is amusing and instructive to sit for an hour, and contemplate the passing crowd - to speculate on the destiny of each - to mark the hurried step of some, and the snail-like movement of others. Some bearing the evidence of excessive toil and others of comparative ease. But all must yield at last to that leveler of distinctions, Death!"

In the trying days of the Civil War, when five military camps were located on the outskirts of the city, incoming troops were furnished rations at the market. Edmund C. Hill, who was a small lad at this period, recalled the receptions given to visiting Civil War soldiers who traveled through Trenton. Said Mr. Hill: "Public spirited citizens made a practice of offering them an appetizing lunch, some of the spreads taking place in the street markets, where the butchers stalls were utilized for tables which were set out in a line down the middle of the paved floor after market hours."

The year 1870 saw the passing of the Greene Street Market. Following its demolition, came the period when Taylor, Washington, Central and People's Markets were erected. With the Greene Street Market also passed one of the important offices in the business life of early Trenton, the office of clerk of the market. Although at one time this position paid only \$50 per year, and came with it no end of trouble, there were always many applicants for the office. The clerk was custodian of the market and his word was law. He had charge of the renting of the stalls and general supervision over all its activities. On market days, he opened the place for business and during the hours the market was open, any farmer selling produce upon the streets was likely to be arrested.

The Greene Street Market was not a new local institution, because for some years to its erection, the town had a market in Second Street, now State, between Greene and Warren Streets, and this was preceded by a market in Warren Street running north from State.

## THE SECOND STREET MARKET

The market in Second Street, or Market Street, as it was commonly called during the time the town market was located there, was erected in 1793, and like the Greene Street Market, consisted of two buildings. One of these was for the sale of truck and the other for meat. The roof of the market was shingled and supported by brick pillars. One of the market buildings was surmounted by a cupola containing a bell which announced the opening of the market for business.



When the city fathers decided to erect the market in Second Street, considerable opposition to the location arose among some Trentonians. The opposition became so great that one night in October, 1793, at a time when the market was under construction, some irate citizens pulled down one of the brick pillars. This caused a stir in the town and brought forth speeches of indignation and threats of prosecutions from the town fathers. Several citizens were summoned before the governing body, but from all accounts, no evidence was secured and the guilty ones were never apprehended. Common Council ordered new and larger pillars to be erected, and two watchmen were appointed to police the place. The work was continued without further hindrance, and in the course of time the market was completed.

In 1807, Common Council passed an ordinance that the Market in Second Street be protected from the passage of wagons during the market hours, by two chains to be stretched across the thoroughfare at each end of the market, thus prohibiting the passage of vehicular traffic through Second Street from Warren to Greene Streets, during the hours set aside for marketing.

The market in Second Street, besides serving as a place for the sale of food and domestic products, was a good stand for the traveling preacher, lecturer and medicine man who were always assured of an audience ready to listen to whatever was offered, whether it was a theory of religion or a snake oil guaranteed to cure all ills. The Sheet Anchor of Democracy, May 16, 1843, under the heading "Varieties in Trenton," gives us an idea of some of the stray talent that amused and instructed our forefathers in the old market:

"We have in Trenton. in addition to the good things of the season, a variety of talent, religious, comical and dramatic. For two or three nights last week the Market House was crowded with attentive listeners, first to an eccentric preacher on some doctrine of his own and afterwards to a melodramatist, who recited Shakespeare with a stentorian voice, and filled up his time with occasional passes of wit amid humor, and imitations of members of Congress, broken-down players and stars in the ascendant."

In 1844, the market in Second Street was found to be both inadequate and unsightly, so Common Council decided to have a new and larger one, and accordingly the Greene Street Market was erected. The old market in Second Street was sold for \$76.50, and removed from the street where it had stood for half a century.

#### WARREN STREET MARKET

What is believed to have been Trenton's first market was evidently built in Colonial days and stood in Warren (then King) Street, commencing at State, in front of Abraham Hunt's store, and extending north about sixty feet up the middle of the street. "At the southern end of it ...", according to John O. Raum's History of the City of Trenton, "stood the old town pump, and near the pump, stood those relics of barbarity, a whipping post and the stocks or pillory. The latter instrument of torture differed somewhat from the modern instrument bearing the same name, in that the one here erected confined the hands and feet and not the head." At a meeting of Common Council held December 21, 1792, a resolution was passed to dispose of the market on the grounds that it had outlived its usefulness. It was sold to James B. Matchett for five pounds, one shilling and sixpence and subsequently was removed from Warren Street. The pillory as noted to the old court house and jail when the city fathers met there and the whipping post was reerected in front of the Town Hall, which stood on Academy Street. It was used until 1839, when it was removed by a group of irate citizens and never replaced.





WARREN STREET, LOOKING NORTH FROM STATE  
*In the 1860's.*

## OTHER MARKET HOUSES

There were two other early places of business that are worthy of mention: the fish and the charcoal markets. "Charlie" Jay, town wit and satirist, described the fish market as a "diminutive box, honored by the name of the Fish Market," in an article on old Trenton, published in the Trenton Daily News, April 9, 1847. The building is said to have been demolished in the late 1830's.

The Charcoal Market goes back to the days when this product was brought to Trenton from the Pines in long wagons. The place of business was at one of the corners of State and Warren Streets. Wood was also offered for sale by the cord or half-cord at the same stand.

One of the first, if not the first, to fill the position of official corder of wood for Trenton was John Sunderland, who was appointed at a meeting of Common Council, September 4, 1797. Upon motion of that body, he was to receive eight pence for measuring, one half to be paid by the purchaser and the other half by the seller.

## THE TOWN PUMP

Although the proverbial town pump has long been the subject of song and story, the date of its erection in Trenton is not known. Trenton's town pump occupied a site along the curblineline near the northwest corner of State and Broad Streets, where for many years it served as a popular institution where citizens and wayfarers were refreshed, and as a meeting place for the town gossips. Like all material things, its time was limited. With the growth of the city and the beginning of civic pride, the old pump became the object of numerous attacks. Although it was not without supporters, the march of progress had begun, and on Tuesday, December 27, 1870, the pump was removed from the center of town.



**THE TOWN PUMP**  
*Which stood on Northwest Corner of State and Greene Streets, until 1870.*

Under the heading "Farewell to the Old Pump," the following obituary was written by a local reporter:

"Old way-marks of life help to make the journey pleasant. We grow accustomed to an old tree, an old house, an old pump, an old barn by time roadside. Love for the old is a conservative feeling we have little conservatism in our land. Changes come rapidly amid progress, as it is called, is the law than governs. Thus, we moralize respecting the old pump. It is gone but the services in rendered entitle it to graceful mention."

While speaking of the pump we must not overlook the clumsy iron ladle which served at the pump in the days before the sanitary, paper drinking cup was thought of. This ladle or dipper was of peculiar construction and had a sort of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde makeup, having an unruly side as well as a pleasing one. To those who knew it, all went well, but to others not acquainted with its eccentricities, it was a source of annoyance not entirely devoid of humor. The antics of the old dipper are well told in the following extract from a letter signed "Old inhabitant," which was published some years ago in a local newspaper:

"That dipper was a delusion and a snare to the uninitiated. It was about the size, shape and depth of an ordinary table saucer, and as fast as one pumped water into it, it splashed out to the annoyance of the holder and of ladies and men who happened to be passing. Only by waiting and catching the 'drippings' of the pumping could the pumper get water to satisfy his thirst."

The same writer also mentions that the dipper was suspended by a chain about the size and strength of an ordinary trace chain. He informs us that it had to be strong, because the boys of the 1850's and 1860's were quite as mischievous as those of his day.

## THE TOWN CLOCK

Gone, too, is the City Hall clock, one of the last of the center-of-town landmarks to disappear from the scene. The death warrant of the clock was definitely sealed at a meeting of the City Commission held June 19, 1926, when that body decided that the old timepiece must go. Excessive cost of repairs to the tower and annual maintenance expense were the reasons given for this decision. The passing of a resolution at a later meeting put the warrant into effect. This clock, with dials nearly five feet in diameter, was placed in position in 1882. It was a Seth Thomas which was purchased through the firm of Cook & Jacques, watchmakers and jewelers.

The original town clock, which was smaller than the later one, occupied a place in the front of the building near the peak of the roof. This, of course, was before the mansard roof was added and other alterations made to the City Hall. This clock was previously in the steeple of the First Presbyterian Church which occupied a site on the northwest corner of the church lot before the present house of worship was built. This timepiece was the work of James Houston, an ingenious mechanic who is said not to have been in the employ of John Probasco, who kept a store near the northeast corner of Warren and State Streets.

The clock had three dials "So that the time could be readily seen, approach the clock from whatever quarter you might," says Raum in his History of the City of Trenton. Its running and regulation were looked after by a committee of Common Council, and their trials and tribulations in connection with it were humorous. For awhile it registered faithfully, and then it began to lag and the citizens of the town who depended upon it often found themselves several hours behind. Bill after bill was paid for repairs. Finally in 1820, Common Council refused to bother with it any longer and for weeks the clock remained still. A number of citizens subscribed to a bid of \$150 to keep the timepiece in repair, but when the work was done, less than half of the money could be collected, and Council had to pay the balance of \$98.53. Council then appointed John Probasco as official custodian of the town clock at a salary of \$20 per year.

For a time the clock gave no further trouble but in 1827, it began to cut up queer antics. After an investigation, it was discovered that the machinery of the clock was damaged every time the sexton of the First Presbyterian Church tolled the church bell. Accordingly, the trustees of the church were asked to provide some contrivance to toll the bell without injury to the town clock. This was done, and the old clock continued on its regular duties until 1837, when the City Hall was built, and it was placed in the tower.

## THE TOWN BELL

With the passing of the City Hall clock went also the town bell a relic with a history dating back to the time of the erection of the City Hall in 1837. In the days of the Volunteer Fire Companies, the bell was rung to indicate the direction of an alarm of fire, and during the time when Trenton's only place of amusement was in the City Hall, it announced the opening of the

performances. In addition to this, it recorded many important events in the history of the nation. The bell, which was cast in 1836, was about three-and-a-half feet high and is said to have weighed approximately eight hundred pounds. It is said that the last time it was rung, on Armistice Day, 1918, the clapper broke. According to an article in the Sunday Times-Advertiser, September 19, 1926, the old bell was taken down from the cupola a few days before and consigned ignominiously to a local junkyard. It is unfortunate that no effort was made to preserve this ancient link with Trenton's historic past.

## THE LAMPPOSTS

The flames in the center-of-town, gas lighted lampposts assumed the dimness of their oil-lit predecessors on Saturday evening, January 10, 1885, when the long-anticipated electric lights made their appearance. The citizens greeted the dazzling globes suspended at the front of the stores along the south side of State Street and both sides of Greene Street, with exclamations of surprise and pleasure. "Many people stood along State and Greene Streets forgetful of the cold in their admiration of these thoroughfares illuminated brilliantly," according to a report in the local press.



EAST STATE STREET IN THE 1860's

An this time, the town had thirty lights, which received power from a dynamo located an Cubberly & Kafer's carpenter shop, South Stockton Street. The engine could only furnish light for sixty globes and these were all taken, an additional thirty having been called for to be used at the State House and at the Post Office. Power was on from 5 P.M. until midnight. In speaking

of the possibilities of illuminating Taylor Opera House by electricity, John Taylor, President of the Opera House, expressed the belief that one globe would adequately light the place if in were not for the shadows that the balcony would throw.

The first exhibition of electric street lighting in the city took place on Saturday evening, November 12, 1881, at the corner of Broad and State Streets. This consisted of a single lamp suspended from a rope stretched from the State Gazette building to the old City Hall, on the opposite side of Broad Street. The power was furnished by a dynamo which was set up in the pressroom of the State Gazette. When the new light burst forth in all its radiance, applause came from the large crowd at the corner. After an hour, the light was turned off and a demonstration of operating a Wheeler and Wilson sewing machine by the power transmitted, was given in the city clerk's office in the City Hall. The exhibition was given by the New York Electric Association, under the direction of Professor Daft, who later explained the mysteries of the new lighting at a lecture at Earleys Hotel.

On Saturday evening, September 16, 1886, a number of electric arc lights placed at different corners by Common Council, were lit for the first time.

In Colonial and Revolutionary days, Trenton's only street lighting was that afforded by the dim glow of lanterns that hung in the front of the taverns. Street lighting seemed to be of little or no importance until the year 1804, when some ultra-progressive individual had the matter brought before Common Council. The project failed, however, to pass that body, as some of the Council members considered it an extravagance.

It was not until some years later that street lighting was established in Trenton. The first lamps erected by Council were ordinary oil-burning ones placed upon rough-hewn posts. This innovation eventually brought with it another position, that of lamplighter. For a number of years, the clerk of the market served in this capacity. In 1828, Joseph W. Jenkins was the official lamplighter at a salary of fourteen dollars per month. Provision for street lighting in 1842 carried with it the notation that lamps should not be lit on moonlight nights.

## THE HAYSCALES

Another institution of by-gone days, which disappeared with the market, the town pump and the bell, was the town hayscales. What is believed to have been the first proposal for the exclusive privilege of erecting and operating an official hayscales was made by Benjamin Yard at a meeting of Common Council, March 29, 1800. In 1836, Isaac Barnes operated the official scales, and he was succeeded by Lafayette Strading on October 9, 1848.

At one time, the official scales, where the farmers were required to come with their loads previous to making a sale, was located on East State Street, opposite the First Presbyterian Church. In later years, the hayscales stood on Willow Street, near Bank Street.

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## XV. THE CITY HALL

The mention of the name Common Council brings up memorable scenes of stormy sessions between representatives of the various wards of the city, sessions that at times fairly sizzled. What serious thought and heated debate ensued when opposition arose on the placing of a lamppost or the building of a drain! What thunderous rebuke was accorded the Councilmen from the West End by the representatives from East or South Trenton, if they thought that too many improvements were being bestowed upon the western section of the city. Such scenes were closely associated with the old City Hall building at the northeast corner of Broad and State Streets, which remained Trenton's house of administration and political mecca from 1837 to 1910.

### DATE OF ERECTION

Previous to 1837, there was no City Hall in Trenton, but the city possessed what was known as a Town Hall in connection with the lockup and whipping post on Academy Street. Agitation for something of a more convenient and prepossessing character began in 1835, and as a result, the northeast corner of Broad and State Streets, then Greene and Second, was chosen as the site for a new City Hall, at a meeting of Common Council held in English's Tavern, June 8, 1835. The corner was purchased from James Hunt for the sum of three thousand dollars and the cornerstone was laid with appropriate ceremonies on June 6, 1837. A bell was purchased and hung in the cupola, and the town clock, which for some years had hung in the steeple of the First Presbyterian Church, was placed in the tower. The City Hall was used for the first time on New Year's night, January 1, 1838, when a dance was held in the large assemblyroom.



One of the early owners of the corner where the City Hall stood was Nathan Wright. On a judgment placed against the land it was sold in 1760 by sheriff's sale to Samuel Henry, iron manufacturer, for the sum of eighty-two pounds. In 1780, Bernard Hanlon, one of the first potters in Trenton, who was then occupying the stone house on the premises, advertised for sale, stoneware made at his pottery. Two years later, Jacob Maus, clock and watchmaker, conducted a business there. In 1797, James Emerson had his hat shop in the dwelling. In 1799, Mary Emerson offered the property for sale. A claim was placed against it by Nathan Wright. Later, the property came into possession of Joseph Milnor, a leading merchant, who conducted a general store at the State Gazette corner. Milnor had his garden, stable and outbuildings on the

tract. In 1816, the estate was offered for sale by L. H. Stockton. At that time, Arvin Kennedy was operating a dyeing establishment in the dwelling.

In 1832, Jane Hart was the owner of the property and four years later it was offered for sale by Jane Hart and Armitage Green.



## JAIL AND POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Aside from providing quarters for Common Council and offices for the Mayor and other city officials, the old City Hall also housed the local jail and police headquarters. In the same building, the Mayor held court, where petty offenders were sentenced as in the police court of today. In 1893, when workmen removed the old dungeon cells which had been used to confine prisoners when the Police Department had quarters there, they were found to be about three-by-six feet, with heavy iron doors. The only light and ventilation came through the grating in those doors.

## AN AMUSEMENT HALL

During its early years, the City Hall served as one of the first amusement places in the city. In its spacious assembly hall on the second floor, lectures and exhibitions of various kinds, and public and private functions were held. There the traveling magician, the bell ringers, the dramatic and minstrel troupes presented their performances to the delight of Trenton's citizenry, and there also the showman exhibited his curiosities, freaks, automatons and mechanical wonders, and gaudily-painted panoramas. As a matter of fact, the old City Hall at one time



embodied most of the public activities of the city, succeeding the City Tavern, at the corner of Warren and State Streets, where many of the town's social affairs were held following the Revolution and until the City Hall was built.

#### STAGE CELEBRITIES WHO PLAYED HERE

Among the number of lecturers, entertainers and showmen who appeared before Trenton audiences in the old assembly room several decades before the erection of Taylor Opera House, two of the most outstanding were General "Tom Thumb," the famous midget, and his manager, that celebrated showman and "King of Humbug," Phineas T. Barnum. The Sable Harmonists came in 1847; Horace Greeley, celebrated journalist and lecturer, in 1850; William's panorama of the Bible, advertised as "covering 3,000 yards, which is nearly 10 feet wide"; John B. Gough, famous temperance lecturer, in 1850; Herr Henry Anderson, renowned magician and ventriloquist, and Gester, the magician, with his big gift show, in 1850; Prof. Wyman's exhibition of magic, automatons and performance in ventriloquism, in 1850; famous diorama of Napoleon's Funeral, in 1851; Panorama of California, in 1850; Elihu Buritt, the learned blacksmith, in 1851 and 1858, speaking on low uniform postage rates on overseas mail; and a diorama, the Burning of Moscow. One of the first amusement enterprises to use the building was Mrs. Schenck's display of wax figures which opened on the evening of February 14, 1840. During the month of August, 1851, Leonard's Players, a dramatic troupe, opened an engagement in the assembly-room which was then advertised as a theatre.

Anyone desiring to use the assembly room in the City Hall for a lecture, show or exhibition was required to pay the city the sum of five dollars, according to an ordinance passed in 1844. The City Hall Committee, appointed annually by Common Council, was also authorized to rent stores and offices in the building for the purpose of meeting running expenses. The stores were located along the State Street side of the building and several of the old-time merchants had their places of business there. One of these was Charles Dippolt, prominent shoe dealer of the 1840's. Another was Joseph Manko, a clothing merchant. The Trenton Saving Fund Society, chartered in 1844, opened for business on July 20, 1847, in a small room in the City Hall. The first days deposits were \$429.00. The following year, the bank moved to offices in the Chancery Building, at No. 1 Chancery Court, later the site of the Trenton Trust Company.

The story of the old City Hall also touches upon the history of a number of local enterprises and educational movements. At various times, the Trenton Institute, 1838-1844, Irving Institute, 1845-46, Mechanics Institute, founded 1842, and the Constitutional Library, established 1853, held meetings and lectures in the building. Several of the old military companies held their drills there and in 1853, William A. Benjamin, Postmaster, fitted up an office in the building. In 1838, the Board of Freeholders met in the building while the Mercer County Court House was being erected. In 1843, a Universalist Society was organized in the building and at various times, the Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists held services in the place.

One great occasion that took place in the old City Hall was the farewell accorded Captain Joseph A. Yard and the Company he had recruited for service in Mexico, then at war with the United States. The Company, whose personnel included a number of Trenton was given a dinner, and just before leaving, the Captain was presented with a sword. The Company left the city by way of Greene (now Broad) Street, and Brunswick Avenue, amid the applause of

hundreds of citizens. Another great occasion was the reception given in the building to former Governor Peter D. Vroom, Minister to Prussia, on his return home in September, 1857.

## FROM CITY HALL TO BUSINESS BUILDING

The completion of Trenton's new Municipal Building on East State Street in 1910 brought to a close administrative and political history at the corner of Broad and State Streets. On April 21, 1910, the old building was sold to John L. Kuser for \$141,000 and its interior was entirely renovated for business purposes. The building became known as the State-Broad Building, but while many alterations were also made to the exterior, the general outline of the structure today is the same as it was at the time of its erection in 1837. The greatest alteration was the erection of a mansard roof which made possible an additional story, and the placing of a new cupola while the building was still used as the City Hall.

The scenes familiar to the older generation at the front of the City Hall are now but memories. The statue of the "gilded" fireman, which stood for many years along the curb line of Broad Street and later on the Stockton Street side of the Municipal Building, now stands on the lawn in front of that building. It bears the inscription:

"Dedicated to the Fire department of the City of Trenton. Volunteer department organized February 7, 1747. Paid department established April 4, 1892. Re-dedicated 1961."

Another familiar landmark which disappeared when Trenton's municipal government moved to its new building on East State Street, was Peter G. Curtin's pioneer lunch wagon which stood on Broad Street in front of the City Hall every night from 1894 to 1911. The original lunch wagon, built by Fitzgibbon and Crisp, and drawn by an unusually-intelligent horse named "Dandy," was later replaced by a new wagon, just as the original coffee and simple sandwiches gave way to a more elaborate menu. The lunch wagon hours were usually from 9 P.M. to 4:30 A.M., one of its busiest periods being when the crowds from the Taylor Opera House stopped by for a "snack" while awaiting the last trolley home.

An institution once associated with the old City Hall, was a house for vagrants, erected in June 1850, and commonly known as the "Paupers' Roost." The "Roost" was a small frame shack, which it is believed, adjoined the larger building on the State Street side. Here destitute travelers were given food and lodging for the night, eight cents being allowed the keeper of the City Hall for each meal served.

At a meeting of Common Council, March 1, 1852, the Mayor of the city called attention to the loose manner in which the "Paupers' Roost" was being conducted and recommended that alterations be made to the building. His Honor referred to the "Roost" as a place that was more of a resort for drunkards and vagabonds than a shelter for the really destitute. "Those who understand the ropes," said the Mayor, "after spending their money in drunkenness, turned into the 'Roost' without permits. Twenty-two persons lodged in this place on Friday night with permits and five without permits." The "Paupers' Roost" was at last condemned as a common nuisance and was sold for the sum of twenty-five dollars and removed January 6, 1853.

For several years after the city government vacated the old City Hall, it was occupied by various business enterprises, including the Sun Ray Drug store and Littman jewelers, which occupied the first floor, and Yards department store which took over the three upper floors. In the summer of 1954, Yard's store took possession of the entire building as a further development of the store's expansion program which started when Louis C. Hano, Sr., purchased, after the death of Fred Yard in 1914, the store which had been started in 1856 by his mother, Mrs. Mary M. Yard, at 71 N. Greene Street. then 85 N. Greene, and in 1880, at 6 N. Greene, next to the City Hall. Yard's store expansion included 4 and 8 N. Broad as well as No. 6.



THE OLD CITY HALL.  
*As it appears today.*

In June, 1963, the old Trenton landmark, officially described as No. 2 N. Broad, was sold to the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company which had held a mortgage on the property. The building has remained empty since April 17, 1964, when it was vacated by Yard's department store.

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## XVI. EAST HANOVER STREET

Perhaps no street in Trenton today typifies the growth of the city more than does East Hanover Street. Once a quiet, residential quarter where a number of prominent citizens resided, East Hanover Street has now become one of Trenton's busiest streets and its once beautiful homes have been remodeled into commercial houses and stores, or replaced by new office buildings.

A glance at the early photograph of Hanover Street before it was paved gives one the impression of the main street of a fair-sized country town. The building with the tower, shown in the right foreground, has all the earmarks of a town hall. At the time this picture was taken, it was the headquarters of the Trenton Hose Company, No. 1, one of Trenton's well-known Volunteer Fire Companies, organized in 1839 because of the need for more fire-fighting facilities in the growing city.



HANOVER STREET IN THE 1850's  
*Looking East from Broad.*

At one time, William Hewitt conducted the Lodge Hotel next to this building. The place was later kept by "Charlie" Fow. Nearby was the old Arcade, noted for its shooting gallery and as one of the meeting places of the City Invincibles, a group of Young Republicans, organized on August 13, 1872, and one of the oldest political marching clubs in the State. Albert Huber was the proprietor of the place when it opened on the evening of May 15, 1875, under the name of the "Arcade Theatre." An item in the Daily True American announced the new place of amusement as having a neat hall, with a seating capacity of five hundred persons, by twenty-one feet a stage twenty-two feet wide feet deep, equipped with six scenes, two drop curtains, footlights, et cetera. Near the site of the Arcade, a Mr. McCauley operated an oilcloth factory in 1847. In the 1880's, a primary grade class was held in the Arcade for a brief time when the Joseph Wood school building on Academy Street became overcrowded. When the City Hall was being remodeled in 1882, the city officials moved temporarily to the Arcade Building.

On the north side of the street, lived Timothy Field, iron-founder and first President of the Trenton Horse Railroad Company, who in 1856, laid at the front of his house what is believed to have been the first iron pavement in Trenton. The pavement was manufactured at the Field Iron Foundry in South Trenton. Other prominent citizens who had homes on East Hanover Street were Aaron D. Woodruff, who held the office of Attorney General of New Jersey for over twenty years and was the first master of Trenton Masonic Lodge, No. 5; Judge William S.

Yard; Clark Fisher, of the Fisher & Norris Anvil Works; the brothers, Captain Woodbury D. and William H. Holt, lawyers; and Thomas J. and Samuel Stryker, merchants.

"Guyerville" or "Comancheville" were the names applied by the local press in the late 1840's to a dilapidated building which stood near the canal basin at the corner of Stockton and Hanover Streets.

Once a noble dwelling, perhaps the retreat of a man of wealth and prominence, it seems to have been forsaken by its owner. The new occupants no doubt found the place a most pleasant one, free from rent, taxes and many of the other responsibilities of city life. According to a news item in the State Gazette, August 15, 1848:

"Injins about! For sometime past a gang of rowdies has been in the habit of assembling nightly at 'Comancheville' .. and disturbing the neighborhood with their unseemly conduct. On Saturday evening last this band of outlaws varied their usual performances by the introduction of new and exciting features, among which was a loud, continuous cry of 'murder.' This cry, uttered with most terrific shrieks attracted many of the neighbors to the spot which fact appeared to give the utmost pleasure to the young gentlemen who had chosen this mode of enjoying an evening."

Soon after this item appeared, the old residence met its fate, as we find its obituary in the State Gazette, October 17th, of the same year:

"The old rookery, occupying the business corner of that part of the city known as 'Guyerville' has been demolished to make room for some kind of improvement. This was one of the most venerable mansions in the city, hut we grieve to say that of late years, it has been sadly given to had company who congregated there."

"Portico Row," the name given to a group of houses below Montgomery Street, and "Mechanics Row," were other names familiar to East Hanover Street residents many years ago. In the State Gazette of October 13, 1854, we find the news note that Hanover was "already one of the handsomest streets in the city" and was being rapidly built up, only a few vacant lots being available "at about \$40 a foot."

## A RAILROAD CENTER

East Hanover Street also played a part in the early days of local railroading. At the southwest corner of Broad and Hanover Streets stood Trenton's first railroad station, a shabby, shedlike structure with a ticket office and a waiting room. From this terminal, a line of track extended down Hanover Street to Stockton Street, and on to the canal, then followed the west bank of the waterway to a southerly point where it turned westward to the old railroad bridge over the Delaware, and then over the bridge to Morrisville. Here it connected with the steam railroad running to Philadelphia. Coming to Trenton, the cars, then called trains, were detached from the engine and the journey continued by horse power. In leaving the city, the horses were detached from the cars at the same point, Morrisville, and the journey continued by steam power.

## EARLY LINE OF TRAVEL

East Hanover Street was also one of Trenton's original lines of travel, being known as Third Street at the time of the Revolution. This was in keeping with the numerical order of State Street, as Second, and Academy Street, as Fourth Street. Lots were offered for sale along this thoroughfare as early as 1746.

East Hanover Street also has some Revolutionary significance, for it was down this street that a number of Hessians retreated to the apple orchard where the surrender took place at the Battle of Trenton. At the corner of East Hanover and Montgomery Streets still stands the Friends Meeting House, in use continuously since 1739.

The narrow end of the funnel stretch of East Hanover Street from Broad to Warren, once noted for its "liquid refreshment stations" and eating houses, is reminiscent of Morris' Lane, laid out by William Morris in the 1740's. In Revolutionary days, it was called Pinkerton's Alley, for David Pinkerton, a local landowner and merchant. The engine house of the Union Fire Company once stood on this section of Hanover Street. An item in the State Gazette, December 17, 1856, gives an idea of the difficulties of travel in this narrow street:

"One of three things must be done by or for the ladies who walk through East Hanover Street, from Warren to Greene. Either the ladies must walk on the South side of the street, or they must leave off their hoops, or the sidewalks on the North side must be widened. It is not fair that the ladies should crowd people into the gutter or be crowded off themselves. Street committee, please take notice."

Hanover Street is said to have been named for the House of Hanover from which the Georges of England sprang, but why the patriots and citizens of a new country should have named the street after the reigning family of England has never been satisfactorily explained.

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## XVII. THE GOLDEN SWAN OR TRUE AMERICAN CORNER

To refer to early Trenton journalism without mentioning Judge David Naar would be like calling the roll of the Legislature and forgetting to name the Speaker of the House. Because so far as New Jersey newspapermen are concerned, David Naar during his lifetime was every bit "the speaker" and perhaps a bit more. His family was one of the prominent families in the history of New Jersey whose members, representing several generations, attained public office, and distinguished themselves in the legal and journalistic professions. The honored Naar family line dates back to the time of the discovery of America by Columbus.



"THE GOLDEN SWAN"  
Or True American Corner, in the 1880's.

David Naar's name is synonymous with that of the old True American, and any story that is written about this century-old newspaper must have his figure moving through it as a leading character.

Judge Naar purchased the paper from Morris R. Hamilton in 1853, and from that time until he laid down his pen in retirement in 1869, it was a living exponent of his own ideas and ideals of Democracy. He was known as the "War Horse of the Democracy" and his virile editorials made the newspaper one of the most distinctive journals in the State. Even in succeeding years under the editorship of his nephew, Moses D. Naar, and later, Joseph L. Naar, a son, it continued to hold its prestige. These three Naars were able successors to James J. Wilson, who figured in many hotly-contested political battles, while he was owner and editor of the True American from 1801 to 1824. Judge Naar was one of the fiery Democrats who was outspoken in criticizing the vigorous war measures of the Federal Administration that put restrictions upon the press. He decided to suspend publication of the Daily True American, on August 24, 1861, but publication was resumed October 7, 1861. The weekly edition, however, was continued during this period. Judge Naar declared that "Free discussion is the only safeguard of a Republican people" and this should not be characterized as treason. The Daily True American was being published at 40 Greene, now Broad Street, one door north of the old City Hall, when Judge Naar became its owner and editor. In the publishing of the paper, Mr. Naar was assisted by Franklin S. Mills, a well-known local journalist.

The first issue of the True American under the name of Naar was published April 4, 1853.

In December, 1855, Judge Naar purchased the building at the southwest corner of Warren and Front Streets, and about two years later, the publishing business was moved to that corner. The printing offices and shop were located on the first floor, while the Naar family occupied the upper stories. At about this time, Jewish services were held on the second floor of the building.

On Monday, April 1, 1872, the Daily True American moved to Trenton's famous literary corner, the southeast corner of Broad and State Streets, where Isaac Collins, the distinguished Colonial printer, who published the New Jersey Gazette and the famous Collins Bible, maintained his home and printing establishment from 1778 to 1786.

For a number of years before Judge Naar established his newspaper office at Warren and Front Streets, the building was a well established public house, patronized by members of the State Legislature and other prominent figures who did business in the town. It was generally known as "the Golden Swan," although various proprietors advertised it under variations of that name, such as "Sign of the Swan," "Swan Inn" or "Mechanics' Hall."

The building is believed to have been erected about 1815 and was one of the largest in the town at that time. William Hancock, who was probably the original owner, advertised it for sale, in the Trenton Federalist, May 22, 1815, as a "new three-story brick house constructed of the very best material, five rooms and pantry on the first floor, six rooms on the second, nine on the third, finished garret with six rooms, also good four-room kitchen attached."

In the summer of 1815, Thomas Barnes, Jr., and William Van Hart, trading under the name of William Van Hart & Company, opened a shoemaking establishment there. The place was advertised for rent by David McKean in the Trenton Federalist, February 4, 1822. The advertisement named James Voorhees as the occupant. In the early summer of 1824, it was again advertised for sale or rent. Peter Smick, tavern-keeper, was the occupant. In the Emporium, April 15, 1826, Joseph Palmer advertised he had removed "to the tavern stand 'Sign of the Golden Swan,' Front and Warren Streets." Later proprietors of the tavern were Joel Gordon, Isaac Pitcher, Mrs. Pitcher and Samuel Quicksall.

After the Naars vacated the Warren and Front Street corner in 1872, the building was used for various purposes. One of the enterprises to do business there in 1882 was the firm of Mathias Miller and John Hartman, upholsterers and manufacturers of furniture, trading under the name of Miller & Hartman. Caril Sons' Company, tinsmiths, later occupied the place.



The building has changed considerably in recent years, although the exterior lines remain essentially the same. The present structure and adjoining buildings were taken over in the 1920's by the Hearnen Electric Service. Mr. J. Harry Hearnen had begun business in the store next door to the corner structure in 1907, first as a locksmith, and later began a battery business as well as a very extensive electrical, auto supply and radio trade in addition to the lock and safe establishment. At the present time, the first floor of the corner building is occupied by Stout & Co., custom tailors, and Sanders Lock Shop, while the Eldridge Advertising Agency occupies part of the second floor.



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## XVIII. THE MERCER COUNTY COURT HOUSE

When our grandfathers were strolling around under "stovepipe" hats, and Trenton itself was only half-grown among cities, the construction of a court house for the newly-formed County of Mercer was taking place in the little settlement of Mill Hill, south of the Assumpsink Creek. This change was significant in many ways, for it not only marked new political boundaries but also actually made Trenton the seat of County government, an honor which it still holds today.

Mercer County, created in 1838 from portions of Hunterdon, Burlington, Middlesex and Somerset Counties, was named for General Hugh Mercer who lost his life at the Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777. In 1839, the Court House was erected on a tract of land at the northwest corner of South Broad and Market Streets in the settlement of Mill Hill, which was annexed to Trenton in 1851. The building was an imposing structure of the Grecian style of



THE ORIGINAL MERCER COUNTY COURT HOUSE  
Built 1839

architecture with Corinthian columns front and back. It was constructed of brick, stuccoed or rough-cast, and surmounting it was a cupola with a bell which announced the opening of the courts. Immediately to the north stood the office of the county clerk, and to the south, the office of the surrogate, both built of the same material as the main structure and in keeping with its architecture.

The county buildings were designed by Charles Stedman, of Princeton. The cornerstone of the main building was laid by Judge William L. Dayton, on Saturday, April 20, 1839, and the building committee was Richard J. Bond, John S. Van Dyke and Joshua Hollingshead. When the present Court House was built in 1902, the cornerstone was dislodged, but it was later imbedded in the wall of the entrance hall of the present jail, where it still remains.

The Court House was first occupied by the courts at the June term, 1840, and the building was also dedicated at that time with the Rev. Charles Pitman, pastor of the First Methodist Church, giving the invocation and the presiding Judge, William L. Dayton, making appropriate remarks in his charge to the jury. The first sheriff was Richard Jacques; the first surrogate, William P. Sherman; and the first prosecutor, James Wilson.

The old bell, which figured in a number of later Fourth of July celebrations in Stacy Park, was cast by G. H. Holbrook at East Medway, Massachusetts, in 1840, and it is said to have been hung in the cupola of the old Court House soon after the building was finished. This bell acclaimed the first message sent over the Atlantic cable, 1886; the news of the capture of Richmond, 1865; and tolled for the death of Lincoln the same year. When the Court House was demolished in 1901, the bell was taken first to (the) Cadwalader Park (Museum) and later was moved to Mahlon Stacy Park. Because of vandalism, it was later moved to the basement of the State House, and in June, 1927, was presented by the Mercer County Board of Freeholders to the Colonial Volunteer Fire Company. The bell now stands in front of its firehouse on Liberty Street.

## OLD-TIME CELEBRATIONS

The county buildings were set back some distance from the street line and at the front along Broad Street, was a fine lawn shaded by several large, beautiful trees. A massive iron fence originally enclosed the grounds. Here a number of outdoor meetings and celebrations associated with the life of the older Trenton were held. One of these affairs was a patriotic demonstration conducted as a part of Trenton's Centennial Fourth of July observance. Judge Edward T. Green was the orator of the day and the program included the singing of patriotic songs, speeches, readings and musical numbers.

A similar event, held indoors, took place on July 4, 1847, during the War with Mexico. Lieutenant Samuel G. French, a native of Trenton, who won his spurs for distinguished service on the battlefields of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey and Buena Vista, was presented with an elegantly-wrought sword by a number of his fellow citizens as a token of their appreciation. The orator of this July Fourth observance was the Rev. Luther Halsey, of Perth Amboy. The secretary of the Society of the Cincinnati read the Declaration of Independence and members of that organization, the military and the citizens of Trenton and vicinity participated in the ceremonies. At the close of the program, banquet tables were spread at three of the leading taverns of the city.

At least one President of the United States spoke in the old Court House. He was Franklin Pierce who, accompanied by members of his cabinet, visited Trenton on July 13, 1853. Before an audience that crowded the courtroom to the doors, the Chief Executive of the nation was welcomed by Chief Justice Henry W. Green on behalf of the citizens of Trenton. The President responded with an address. The next speaker was the Hon. Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, who later became President of the Confederacy. Addresses were also given by the Hon. James Guthrie, Secretary of the Treasury, and General Caleb Cushing Attorney General.

## THE FAMOUS RUBBER CASE

In 1852, the old Court House was the scene of the famous Goodyear vs. Day rubber case, the outcome of the alleged infringement by Horace Day of the patent of Charles Goodyear. Two of the nation's most famous lawyers Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State in the Cabinet of President Fillmore, and the Hon. Rufus Choate, former United States Senator, clashed in this legal battle. The case was brought to a close with an address by Webster which is said to have been one of the finest legal arguments ever made. This address figuratively "demolished" the

defense for Day and established the rights for Charles Goodyear, whose name since that time has been acclaimed in national history as the inventor of the process for the vulcanizing of rubber.

In the early days of the county, residents living in remote sections who attended the courts had to come by carriage over rough country roads. As the journey and court session took up the greater part of a day, it was the usual custom to remain in the city overnight, and when business demanded, to stop over for several days. This was the time when the old Mercer County Hotel, which stood on the present site of the Mercer Trust Company, at Market and South Broad Streets, as well as the merchants of the Mill Hill section, did a flourishing business.

Mention of the Old Court House stirs recollections of the period when each county took the lives of its own murderers and the gallows performed its duty when the occasion demanded it. Mercer County had been formed for more than twenty years when its first hanging took place on April 3, 1863, when Charles Lewis was executed for the murder of Rowan, a Princeton jeweler. The last hanging took place in January, 1906. Since that time, a State law has provided for the electrocution of murderers.

With the growth of Mercer County, the old Court House became inadequate for the increasing business of the county, and so during the month of July, 1900, the Freeholders decided to erect a modern and more spacious structure upon the site. The following year witnessed the demolition of the old building and its adjuncts, the county offices and the courts moving to temporary quarters in nearby buildings. The county court was moved to the basement of the Central M. E. Church and the first case tried in the building was one involving manslaughter. The defendant was found guilty and was sentenced by Judge Gummere to eighteen years imprisonment. The cornerstone of the present Court House was laid on May 14, 1902.



THE PRESENT COURT HOUSE, SHOWING ANNEX.

The lot upon which the Court House stands figured in early Mill Hill history, for near the corner of Broad and Market Streets stood the little frame engine house of the Eagle Fire Company of that settlement. The building was erected in 1821 at a cost of \$17.67 for lumber and \$5.00 for labor. In 1836, the Company moved to the lower floor of the Mill Hill Academy, a primary school which occupied the second floor. On another portion of the lot, stood the little cooper shop of Jared L. Cool, which was destroyed by fire during the month of August, 1837.

The first jail in Mercer County was in the basement of the old Court House, which was fitted just for that purpose when the building was erected. It was from this place that Edwards, alias "Piggy" Norton, a notorious character, made his escape on the night of December 16, 1855, by digging under the wall. In August 1857, three other prisoners dug their way to liberty. Later, the county confined its prisoners in a separate building, which was completed in May, 1867. The county at that time operated a paper bag factory in connection with its jail. There the guests of the county were taught the useful occupation of making paper bags, an industry which was brought to a close when the local storekeepers refused to put their goods in containers made by the prisoners. When John Briest was Mayor of Trenton, 1871-75, the following doggerel relating to him and the making of paper bags was popular among the boys of the "lime-kiln" gang and other police court characters of the town:

"Johnnie Briest, he is the ruler— He's a man of common sense:

If you get drunk he puts you in the cooler

Then sacks you three bills and twenty cents.

If he finds you big and lazy

And your clothes are torn to rags,

He sends you over to Sheriff Crozier

Who learns you to make paper bags."

The building known as the old county jail was demolished in September, 1912, and later, the present building was erected.



THE PRESENT JAIL

Minor alterations have been made to the interior of the Court House from time to time since 1904, but in May, 1963, bonds amounting to \$415,000 for extensive improvements to the building, including the addition of two new courtrooms, jury rooms, new aluminum entrance doors and the remodeling of the corridors, were sold by the Freeholders. The work of remodeling is now in progress.

## XIX. THE ELISHA GORDON HOUSE

Hardly a week passes that does not witness the demolition of some old house that played a part in the early life of our city. These buildings, notable for their Colonial design, are disappearing so rapidly that most of them will soon be remembered only in pictures.

One of such buildings was the Gordon House, better known in later years as the Moore House, which stood on West State Street opposite the State Capitol building. While the dwelling itself had no particular historical connections, it possessed several noteworthy features, especially its Colonial doorway and cornices. It is thought that it was built in the early 1800's by Elisha Gordon, a wealthy Trentonian, who was identified with a number of local enterprises, two of them being the development of the Mercer and Trenton cemeteries. The latter was situated back

of the westerly side of Princeton Avenue, north of Gordon Street, a small thoroughfare that now bears the name of the cemetery promoter. This particular cemetery was laid out in 1837, and a number of lots were sold. The land proved unsuitable for burial purposes. however, and later the cemetery was abandoned. A large portion of the tract was purchased by the late James S. Robinson, who for many years had a blacksmith shop at the "Five Points" on the site of the present Battle Monument. Mercer Cemetery, comprising some fifteen acres of land fronting on South Clinton Avenue, was organized in 1843. An occasional burial still takes place in that cemetery.

After the death of Elisha Gordon in 1840, the property passed to his heirs, who sold it on March 31, 1841 to Charles G. McChesney, Secretary of State for New Jersey from 1840 to 1851, who occupied it for more than ten years. It was sold in 1865 to Edwin Fox of Elizabeth, who in turn disposed of it in 1894, to Norman C. Conklin, of New York City. On March 21, 1894, it was purchased by Mrs. Jennie C. Bamford, who did extensive restoration to the house. Henry C. Moore purchased the house for his residence in 1899 and resided there until his death in 1921.



THE ELISHA GORDON HOUSE  
*From a sketch by Alex. Y. Burslem.*



**SITE OF GORDON HOUSE TODAY**  
*Showing approach to State Office Building.*

When the State Capitol was partially destroyed by fire, March 21, 1885, the Gordon House was used for State offices, the Secretary of State, Henry C. Kelsey, occupying the lower floor. In July, 1922, the property was purchased by the State and for a time it was suggested that the house be kept as a State museum.

With the erection of the State Office Building on West Hanover Street, it was decided to make use of the site as an entrance to the building from West State Street. Where the Gordon (Moore) house once stood, broad white steps now lead up to a series of green terraces as an imposing frontage from West State Street to the office building. This approach has been expanded by the purchase of an additional slot of land on West State Street, which will be landscaped and added to the present mall.



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## XX. ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL

In 1870, Trenton seems to have awakened from a somewhat sleepy period so far as improvements were concerned, and civic pride began to assert itself. The market houses which had stood for years in the middle of Greene Street were demolished, and the town pump removed. West Hanover Street, originally known as Quarry Street, was extended easterly from Willow to Warren Street, supplanting an alley that had provided the only link between those streets. When the U. S. Census was taken in 1870, the city was credited with a population of 22,917. A



ST. MARY'S CHURCH  
*Prior to 1879.*

movement was under way for a Federal building, and the need was felt for better sewer facilities and improvements to the streets.

It was in this year, also, that St. Marys Catholic Church on Warren Street was completed. On Sunday, January 1, 1871, the edifice was solemnly dedicated with the Rev. James Roosevelt Bayley, Bishop of Newark, assisted by a large number of clergy, officiating. Before this time, the leading Catholic house of worship in Trenton was St. John's Church, built in 1848, which stood on the present site of the Sacred Heart Church on South Broad Street.

### EARLY CATHOLIC RESIDENTS

The records do not tell us who was the first Catholic to settle in Trenton, but in the Catholic Encyclopedia (Vol. X:792), there is the statement that "Patrick Colvin seems to have been the only Catholic in Trenton in 1776. He was interested in the cause of the patriots, and helped to furnish the boats used to transport General Washington's army across the Delaware on December 25, 1776."

About 1800, Giovanni Battista Sartori, the first Papal Consul to the United States, arrived in Trenton and selected as the site for his residence the attractive river front at the foot of Federal Street. He erected there a spacious dwelling called "Rosy Hill," which is still standing, although now used as offices, by the American Bridge Division—U. S. Steel Corporation. On Sundays, Mr. Sartori opened his doors to the public for divine services. Mass was said, in 1811 by Father Matthew Carr, O.S.A.. and later by a Father Michael Hurley of the same order. Before that time, it was celebrated at regular intervals at the "Fox Chase Tavern" on Brunswick Avenue, and in

the printshop of Isaac Collins, publisher of the New Jersey Gazette, which stood on the southeast corner of Queen and Second Streets. Priests usually journeyed to Trenton from Philadelphia.

The first Catholic Church in Trenton, known as the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, was erected in 1814, at the corner of Market and Lamberton Streets, on land purchased by Mr. Sartori and Captain John Hargous, another Catholic pioneer in Trenton. The small edifice was of brick construction and in the graveyard adjoining, were buried a number of the early worshippers. These bodies were moved to St. John's and St. Francis' cemeteries when the graveyard was abandoned.

The rapid growth of the parish necessitated the erection of a new St. John's Church at Broad and Centre Streets, and the first services were held in the church on December 25, 1847. Soon after coming to St. John's Church as pastor in 1861, the Rev. Anthony Smith saw the need for a new church north of the Assunpink. In 1865, the property of Dr. Jacob Quick at the southwest corner of Warren and Bank Streets, was purchased as a site for the church. Ground was broken April 23, 1866. It was a most pretentious undertaking, but due to Father Smith's tireless energy and enthusiasm, the Church slowly rose on the site and was dedicated on Sunday, January 1, 1871.

In 1879, a spire was erected which was said to have been the highest in the State at that time. Joseph Trier, a well-known contractor in Trenton, was the builder, and during the course of its construction, he encountered and overcame many difficult problems. Mr. Trier's diary, which remains in the possession of his family, tells in minute detail of the progress of the work, when the chimes were first played, the fact that the pendulum weighed three hundred pounds, and other interesting statistics. The following are a few of the details relating to the spire: there were two tons of iron bands and rods in the steeple to strengthen it; a stairway leading to the top had about two hundred and sixty-six steps; the first time the clock struck was at noon on December 12, 1879. For many years, Trenton's citizens have depended upon this timepiece in the regulation of their watches and daily pursuits. The clock was built by the Seth Thomas Company for the Paris Exposition of 1878, where it was the official timepiece. The spire was removed in 1956, because of the danger of collapse, shortly before the disastrous fire which destroyed the Cathedral.



ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL  
*In the 1920s.*

In 1881, St. Mary's Church became the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Trenton. The first bishop was the Rt. Rev. Michael J. O'Farrell, who was consecrated to that office of Cardinal

Archbishop McCloskey in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City. His enthronement took place in St. Mary's Cathedral, Trenton, November 17, 1881.

On the night of March 14, 1956, the Cathedral and the adjoining Rectory were destroyed by one of the worst fires in Trenton's history, in which the rector, Monsignor Richard Crean and two rectory housekeepers lost their lives. Just three years later, the new Cathedral, built of Mount Airy granite, was blessed in a solemn ceremony attended by one thousand priests, nuns and lay representatives from every church in the Diocese of Trenton. The pontifical mass was celebrated by the Most Rev. Thomas A. Boland, Archbishop of Newark. The Most Rev. George W. Ahr, Bishop of Trenton, preached the sermon.



ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL  
*As rebuilt after 1956 fire.*

The bell tower of the new Cathedral is ninety-eight feet high. The ten bells of different weights and tones, which were warped and blackened in the fire, have been completely restored and are now rung and played electronically from a keyboard alongside the organ. The former Cathedral clock, whose original mechanism was controlled by weights and pulleys, is now also operated

electrically. Parts of the original stained glass windows, bronze doors and altar rails have also been incorporated into the new Cathedral building.

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## XXI. THE UNITED STATES HOTEL

The coach has just arrived. The driver climbs from his high seat with a porch of mail. The horses are being quickly changed. Time is precious. There is a hasty unloading and loading of baggage. Passengers are discharged and their places taken by other passengers. Amid the slamming of doors and the prancing of fresh horses, the driver regains his seat, cracks the whip and the stage is off again to either New York or Philadelphia.

This is a passing glimpse of life at the Old "Indian Queen Tavern" on North Warren Street, in the days when stagecoach travel was at its height and the "Flying-machines," as the stagecoaches were then called, ran between

Philadelphia and New Brunswick, via the Trenton Ferry. From Brunswick, the passengers were transferred to Elizabeth-town or Amboy, as the passenger might choose. Those wishing to go to New York, made the remainder of the trip by boat.

### EARLY HISTORY OF THE TAVERN

The early history of the "Indian Queen Tavern" is still somewhat vague. Several names are mentioned in connection with it, but the records are too confused and indefinite to identify any one of them with the occupancy or early ownership of the property. In one instance, it is supposed that the tavern was originally the boarding house of a "Mrs. Joseph Brittian." In another reference, it would appear that the building was for sale in 1799, as the house of a "Widow Brittian." Again in 1783, there is a property for sale under the name of "Charity Brittian." Just how closely these names, or name, can be associated with the "Indian Queen" is a question which has never been decided. One fact that is certain, however, is that a "Mrs. Brittian" did live in the neighborhood. It is a matter of record that her house was ablaze several times in the big fire of 1772, and in February, 1789, Trenton Masonic Lodge, No. 5, rented two rooms in the place for the holding of meetings, for the sum of eight pounds a year.



THE UNITED STATES HOTEL  
*North Warren Street, about 1870.*

More definite information about the tavern begins to appear in the 1790's. In 1797, the hostelry was offered for sale by John Polhemus. In the Trenton Federalist, December 3, 1818, the place was again advertised for sale by the executors of Andrew Blackwell.

It was then described as a stone building "two stories high, spacious yard with outbuildings." Toward the close of 1829 or the early part of 1830, John David Green, tavern-keeper, moved his business to that stand. The following year, the hostelry was advertised as the "Indian Queen and United States Hotel." Eventually, the name was shortened to the "United States Hotel."

One of the best-known proprietors of the tavern was Joshua English, who took over the tavern in 1835 and extended a warm welcome to his patrons through the columns of the local press, calling attention to his "Commoilious hotel in Main (Warren) Street, as being furnished in a style inferior to none in the city." Continuing, the advertisement says "for the accommodation of travelers and boarders he stocked it with choice liquors of the first quality; his larder will show an abundant supply of the best the market affords; the stable will be attended with sober and careful hostlers."

Other proprietors of the "Indian Queen" and "United States Hotel" were Enoch Green, John Anderson, Peter Probasco, John Baker, Isaac Reeder, Edmund Burk, Peter Howell, John D. Green, Mrs. Frances Green, Michael Bashford, Charles Howell, Samuel Kay, Orrin B. Fausett, Austin Walton, John McCarthy and Messrs. Early and McKelway.

An amusing hit of satire concerning the "Indian Queen Tavern" is found in the advertisement of Erastus Emmons, a local jeweler, published in the Trenton Federalist, July 16, 1807. Part of the advertisement reads as follows:

"In repairing and putting into order, watches and clocks and time-pieces on the shortest notice, and most reasonable terms, at this old stand, in Warren Street, Trenton, nearly opposite the Temple of Bacchus, vulgarly called the "Indian Queen Tavern," where all orders in the line of watch repairing will be thankfully received and punctually executed.

So no more at present (as the girls end their love letters) from Yours 'till death.

Erastus Emmons."

#### SOME EARLY AMUSEMENTS

Before the days of public halls in Trenton, the amusement places were the taverns. In the summer, it was common for the small circuses or traveling troupes to give performances in the spacious tavern yards. In the winter, these showmen exhibited indoors. Apparently the most popular public house for these exhibitions was the "Indian Queen" or "United States Hotel," as it was later called.

One of the early shows to give an exhibition at the tavern was the waxworks of Davenport and Street, in 1802. Three years later the "invisible lady" was an attraction, and later came Cesar Casa, of Europe, with his wonderful electrical machine. In 1807, Dawson and Potter gave an exhibition of their wax figures and the following year, the infant Roscius, a six-year-old oratorical prodigy, was advertised to perform there. In April, 1818, Messrs. Stowell and Bradey

opened their exhibition of waxworks in the house and in subsequent years, there was a concert company, a performance of a "large and learned elephant," an exhibition of an Egyptian mummy, "3,000 years old," and a display of one hundred and fifty rattlesnakes.

For many years the "Indian Queen" vied in prestige with the "Trenton House" and the "American House," formerly the "Rising Sun Tavern," which were also on North Warren Street. While its historical associations were not as renowned as these other public houses, the "Indian Queen" was, nevertheless, a popular resort for travelers to Trenton.

#### VISITED BY NOTABLES

Perhaps the first person of national prominence to be entertained at the "United States Hotel" was Vice President Richard M. Johnson, who came to Trenton on Saturday, July 11, 1840. After making an address in the Assembly Chamber at the State House, he was taken to the old tavern, where a banquet was tendered him by the city. Mayor Charles Burroughs gave a welcoming address, to which the distinguished guest ably replied. Delegations from New Brunswick, Newark, Princeton and Philadelphia attended the reception.

In June, 1848, Lewis Cass, then a presidential candidate, visited Trenton and a public reception was given to him at the "United States Hotel," where he lodged overnight.

When Louis Kossuth, the famous Hungarian patriot and orator, came to Trenton on Monday, April 19, 1852, he made his headquarters at the same hotel. Here the noted visitor was accorded a reception by the citizens of Trenton and following the exchange of greetings and speechmaking, he appeared on the balcony before a cheering, though rain-drenched, concourse of people. Later, at a crowded meeting held in the Front Street M. E. Church, now St. Francis' Church, he made a stirring address on behalf of the People of Hungary in their struggle against the despotism of Austria and Russia. Following the meeting, a dinner was held in his honor at the hotel, where he stopped overnight.

On July 13, 1855, Franklin Pierce, President of the United States, and members of his cabinet, were tendered a reception at the "United States Hotel." The cabinet members included Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, James Guthrie, Secretary of the Treasury and General Caleb Cushing, Attorney General.

In January 1903, the "United States Hotel" was purchased by the Taylor Hall Association, which erected the Trent Theatre on the site. The Theatre, which was opened with a gala celebration on Monday evening, December 7, 1903, was Trenton's first vaudeville house, and many of the entertainers who appeared within its walls later became well-known stars of stage and screen. When refined Variety began to wane, the Trent Theatre presented drama, musical shows and other productions. Among those who appeared on its stage were Robert B. Mantell, John Drew, Maude Adams, Harry Lauder, George M. Cohan, Eddie Cantor, Spencer Tracy, Will Rogers and scores of others of international fame.

In 1940, the theatre was completely rebuilt and refurbished as an ultra modern motion picture house, equipped to handle the big Spectaculars, such as "Ben Hur" and "Lawrence of Arabia."

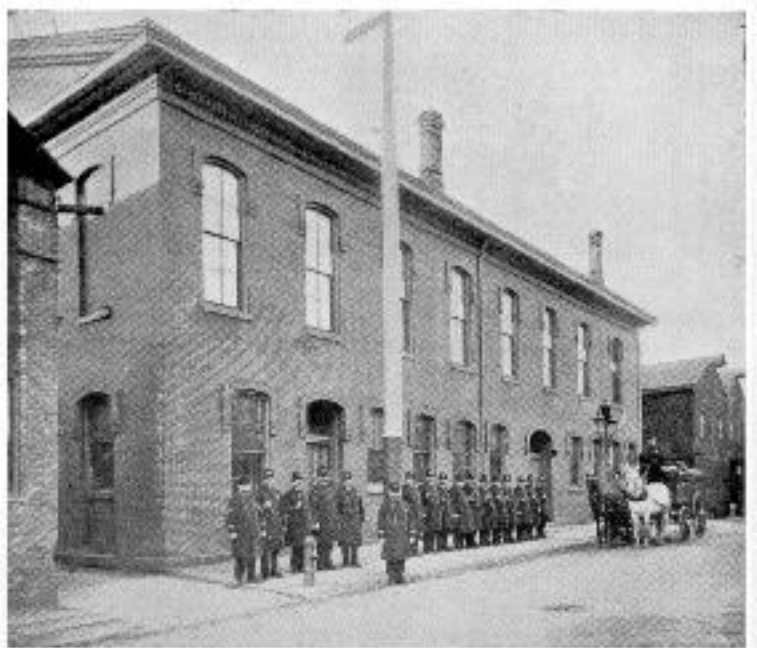


THE TRENT THEATRE  
*Before alterations made in 1940-41.*



## XXII. THE POLICE STATIONS

Trenton showed a marked growth in 1888 when the borough of Chambersburg and the township of Millham were annexed to the city. The addition of these two districts naturally affected the administrative branches of the city government, and among the changes that came about because of the additional territory and population, was the improvement of the Police Department. At that time, Common Council decided to divide the enlarged city into two police precincts and to establish two separate police stations, each to be located in its own precinct.



HEADQUARTERS AND FIRST PRECINCT STATION  
1888.

Looking about for a building to use as the headquarters for the First Precinct, the Council finally decided to purchase the Freese property on Chancery Lane, then known as Chancery Street. This building was originally erected as a market house and for a number of years was used as such. The Freese property was first leased by the city with an option to buy it, if it proved to be satisfactory for police purposes. After a number of changes had been made to the structure, the police offices and jail were moved into it, on September 26, 1888, from the old City Hall, where they had been located for half a century. As the Chancery Street building proved an adequate location, the city purchased it from Samuel K. Wilson for \$18,000. This old building was used until the 1920's, when it was so entirely remodeled that it became practically a new Station House.

### FREESE'S MARKET

Freese's Market House, called the "Peoples Market" by the press, was built by Samuel K. Wilson, capitalist and woolen manufacturer, and Jacob R. Freese, a prominent financier of the city-, at a cost of about thirty-five-thousand dollars. In his History of Trenton, John O. Raum gives the following description of the building:

"The main building fronting on Chancery Street, is 50 by 100 feet, and is two stories high, with an extension in the rear, 20 by 120 feet, and one story high. There are 119 meat and vegetable stalls and one restaurant.

The main hall on the second floor is 50 by 85 feet with two anterooms and a passageway and gallery on the south end about fifteen feet wide, and running entirely across the building. This

hall will seat about 700 persons and is splendidly arranged for meetings of grand bodies of the various secret societies extant.”

The plans for this structure were drawn by Henry E. Finch, a local architect, who also designed several of Trenton’s churches and other large buildings, including the Taylor Opera House.

The opening of the market took place on Saturday morning, April 30, 1870, and on Monday morning, the Daily True American had the following to say:

"People’s Market, Chancery Street, presented an attractive appearance Saturday morning. Stands were filled with meats, vegetables and flowers, and what was better, the market was full of customers. Residents seemed highly pleased with the market, and many were the congratulations passed on the accommodations afforded for citizens for market purposes in that quarter."

The existence of three other markets in the city during the 1870’s made business difficult for the "People’s" establishment, however, and as it did not prosper, it was finally abandoned as a market. For several years, the building was used for storage purposes.

The hall on the second floor of the market, known as Freese’s Hall, later listed as a gymnasium by the police, was the scene of many gatherings, dances, exhibitions and entertainments of various kinds. Here Charles Williams, alias the Manchester Antelope, one of the sleepless wonders of his time, gave an exhibition of endurance by keeping awake on his feet for one-hundred consecutive hours, according to news items in the local press. The Daily True American, on Monday, January 6, 1873, had the following to say at the conclusion of the feat:

"On Saturday night the great feat of remaining in a standing attitude, without sleep, was conducted at Freese Hall. The young man who performed the feat, when the task was concluded, was very much exhausted and had to be taken to Fort Rawnsley Hotel in a carriage."



HEADQUARTERS AND FIRST PRECINCT STATION  
*In 1964.*

In the Fall of 1879, Trenton's first bicycle school was opened in Freese's Hall by Joseph Y. Clark, who played a leading role in the promotion of cycling in the earliest years of the craze. The Grand Lodges of Odd Fellows and Masons held their annual meetings in the Hall in 1870 "and it gave general satisfaction." The Emmett Guards, Company D, 7th Regiment, New Jersey National Guard, and the Salvation Army, also met in the Hall from time to time.

With the annexation of Chambersburg to Trenton in 1888, the old "Borough Hall" on South Broad Street, the scene of many meetings and social events that figured in the development of Robert Chambers' settlement into the Borough of Chambersburg, 1872, was made the Station House of the Second Precinct. This building was the center of activity for sometime, serving as a meeting place for the governing body of the borough, offices for the police officials, jail and fire headquarters. For several years, the old Liberty Hose Company had its house in a frame structure that stood in the rear of the hall. This particular building was destroyed by fire in 1876.

It is interesting to trace the gradual evolution from the town jail or common lockup to a modern police station, that has taken place in Trenton.



THE SECOND PRECINCT STATION  
*South Broad Street.*

One of the first places of confinement in Trenton, to which the resident who strayed from the "straight and narrow" path became introduced, was the jail of the old Hunterdon County Court House on South Warren Street. When Trenton was a borough town under the Colonial charter, 1746 to 1750, it was empowered to make use of it until a jail could be erected.

Perhaps Trenton's first separate and distinct jail building came into existence in 1805, when the Freeholders of Hunterdon County sold the old Court House and jail to the Trenton Banking Company for \$2,055. Left without a place in which to confine the petty offenders of the city, the governing body met the emergency by renting the smokehouse of a leading citizen. This unpretentious little structure probably served its new purpose up to the time of the erection of the Town Hall and jail on Academy Street. After the erection of the City Hall at the corner of Broad and State Streets in 1837, the jail was moved from the old building on Academy Street to the new building, where it remained until the establishment of the two precinct police stations in 1888.



THE SECOND PRECINCT STATION TODAY.

It is interesting that one of the recommendations in the report prepared in 1963 by Joseph F. Weldon, former Newark police officer, after a four-and-one-half months' study of Trenton's Police Department, is the abolition of the present two-precinct system in force since 1888. In his detailed report, Mr. Weldon states that the present First Precinct Headquarters on Chancery Street is "old and inadequate" to house even its own units, let alone those of the Second Precinct, "even with extensive alterations." Mr. Weldon therefore recommends a new headquarters building in the heart of the city with room for all police units, jails, off-street parking, a central court, indoor garage and a range for firearms training. Such a central headquarters has been discussed in connection with the plans for the development of the recently acquired tract in the rear of the present City Hall.

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### **XXIII. THE NEWBOLD OR RIBSAM CORNER**

Few Trentonians still remember the houses that stood on the northeast corner of Front and Broad Streets until just before the turn of the century, when the intersection appeared more typical of a small town than a part of the business district of a growing city. Front Street, at that time, had very few stores east of Broad Street, and was very little traveled by vehicles.

Where the Ribsam building, now greatly changed, still stands, there were two dwellings which were originally the pride of an earlier Trenton. Both houses were at one time the property of Joshua Newbold, a Quaker from Philadelphia, who occupied the one at the corner, which was the older of the two dwellings. In the minutes of the Trenton Preparative Meeting in 1817, Joshua Newbold's name is included as one of the Trustees of the Friends' School in Trenton at that time. Later, his daughters Hannah and Ann Newbold had a young ladies' boarding and day school in a one-story building on what is now the site of the First Methodist Church. After Mr. Newbold's death, when both houses were up for sale to settle his estate, they were described in the New Jersey Gazette of February 17, 1837, over the name of Samuel Newbold, administrator. The upper dwelling, according to the advertisement, was built of stone, having a brick front, with "entry through and staircase, parlor on each side, five comfortable living rooms upstairs."

An intimate picture of this dwelling and its owner is given by Miss Mary Moore, in an article by John J. Cleary, published in the Sunday Times-Advertiser, October 8, 1922. Miss Moore was the daughter of Rebecca Brearley, second wife of Imlah Moore, and the granddaughter of Susan Brearley, who lived in the corner house for many years. Miss Moore says in describing the site:

"The original owners of the upper house were the Newbolds, the lot being about 50 feet by 150 feet deep. The house was of stone and in front was a colonial doorway with a small green strip of lawn separating it from the sidewalk. The lawn ran around the house on the south side into a walled garden in the rear, which was a point of special attractiveness. It was distinguished especially for the rare plants set out there. There were many pomegranates, figs and cape jasmine and everything was kept trim and prim.

Subsequently, the lawn on the south side was built upon with a gain in tax ratables but a sad depreciation in aesthetic value. Of course in the earlier days, there was open space to the north also, for Trenton had lots of room, business not yet approaching as today out every spare foot of ground."



REAR VIEW OF THE BREARLEY HOUSE

*Which stood on the Northeast Corner of Broad and Front Streets.*

It is said that much of the cellar walls of this house were made of stone quarried in the immediate neighborhood. Mahogany, rosewood and other precious timbers entered into the interior construction of the house.

Some idea can also be had of the corner house from the same advertisement of 1837, which describes the building as a three-story brick, "nearly new," and with a "large parlor, entry and staircase." This advertisement throws considerable light upon the character of the dwellings in spite of its prosaic manner of explaining the features. Such phrases as "entry through" and "staircase" are significant, for it would appear that only the better-designed dwellings of the town could boast of an open staircase with an entry through to the rear. For many years these two dwellings were identified with early education in Trenton. Probably the first to open a school on the site was a Mrs. Watts, who advertised in the Trenton Federalist, September 28, 1807, her place of learning for young women at the house of Joshua Newbold. In the summer of 1819, the "Trenton Boarding School for Girls" occupied the place. Hannah Newbold and Caleb Richardson were the directors. In 1852, Miss Bradford conducted a school in the house. Sometime before September, 1859, a member of the Brearley family opened a private school in the corner house. The Misses Rebecca and Louisa Brearley were identified with this institution.



NORTHEAST CORNER OF BROAD AND FRONT STREETS  
*About 1892.*

When the photograph which illustrates this chapter was taken, the two houses had lost nearly all their attractiveness, as many changes were made to the original houses when they were given over to commercial activities. Lambert Hughes, tobacconist, conducted a shop in the corner house and under the roof of the other dwelling was a Chinese laundry and the showrooms and workshop of David B. Naar, sign painter.

These buildings remained until 1893, when Carlman Ribsam & Son erected a five-story brick building on the site, at a cost of \$55,000. The Ribsam flower and seed store occupied the first floor and the four upper floors were leased to various tenants. In 1927, the Ribsam business was moved to the new Ribsam building at 143-47 East Front Street and in 1948, to 26 East Front Street. John's Bargain Store, Inc., now occupies the former Ribsam building on the corner site.



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## XXIV. STATE STREET WEST OF CALHOUN

A hundred years ago that part of Trenton above the intersection of Calhoun and State Streets was considered far from the center of town. West State Street, a short distance beyond this point, divided into a mere roadway leading through a section dotted with farms. The western part of the city, with its fine residences, was yet to be developed. Calhoun Street, then a country lane passing through the little settlement of Camptown, the unofficial name for the locality where West Hanover Street now intersects Calhoun Street, which was a recruiting station for Halstead's Cavalry during the early years of the Civil War, extended from the Pennington Road to Beattys Ferry, over which the Continentals passed both before and after the Battle of Trenton. Prospect Street was then a picturesque byway leading over Prospect Hill, so named for its pleasing panoramic view of the Delaware. Nearby was "Little Moses Woods," used for picnics, harvest homes, camp meetings and similar outdoor gatherings.

It was the natural beauty of the Calhoun Street section that appealed to Isaac L. Pearson, originally a resident of Philadelphia, who, in 1849, erected his retreat, called "Glencairn," at the southwest corner of a beautiful tract running a considerable distance westward along the main thoroughfare. A local newspaper item, which appeared April 26, 1849, cites the digging of the foundations for Isaac Pearson's new dwelling on the lot lately acquired by him. John Notman is named as the architect. Both Mr. Pearson and his son, Dr. Charles L. Pearson, a director of the Trenton Banking Company and one of the managers of the Trenton Saving Fund Society, were lovers of rare trees and shrubbery and they spared neither trouble nor expense in further beautifying the tract. A number of specimens were imported, while others were brought from various sections of the United States. Ginkgo trees, native to Japan, were planted on the lands. There was also a shell bark tree, a yew brought from England, and a variety of locust known as the coffee bean brought from Kentucky, and two European larch trees. River birches, red cedars, papaws, ironwoods, honey locusts, post locusts, butternuts, persimmons, bilstedes, black gums and many other varieties were planted on the tract. Only a few of the original trees are standing today.

John Mitchell, whose father was Dr. Pearson's gardener, reminisces in an article in the Sunday Times-Advertiser of March 13, 1921:

"In the spring of the year, when the Pearson magnolia tree which stood near the side porch was in bloom, the fragrance spread all over the neighborhood. We used to set up a stepladder under the tree when the flowers commenced to come and many times, the Montgomerys, the Atterburys, the Cadwaladers and the Daytons could be seen climbing the ladder to get a closer sniff."

"Glencairn" was a substantial residence of stone construction, surrounded by a thick hemlock hedge, six-feet high, which gave the place an air of seclusion. With the growth of the city westward, the Pearsons disposed of much of their land. In 1891, John Stapler acquired the Pearson house, and it was during his occupancy that the fine hedges and fences were removed and the lawn decorated with statuary. The last occupant of the house was Charles Howell Cook, pottery manufacturer and dairy farmer, who lived in the residence for thirty-two years. He sold it to Elwood A. Frost, an organizer and developer of real estate from Princeton, for \$125,000.



Upon the site of the old house, in 1926, was built the two five-story apartment buildings known as the Glen Cairn Arms, which are still in use.



About 1870, on a lot beyond "Glen Cairn" known as the old Grant pasture lot, Mrs. Charles Higginson built a home where she lived but a short time. It was then rented as a private school for girls. Later, Colonel Washington A. Roebling rented the place for a year or so and finally it was purchased in 1880 by Charles G. Roebling, who extensively remodeled it. From 1921 to 1957, the house was occupied by the Carteret Club. The property was finally disposed of to

investors who broke ground in 1959 for the fifteen-story luxury apartment building, the "Carteret Arms," which now Occupies the site.

### THE HORSE CAR LINE

When the horse car line was extended westerly on State Street in 1883, to a point just beyond Calhoun Street, there was a lot on the north side of State near Calhoun, which was the terminus of the line. On it was built a carbarn and stable for the horses, where a fresh supply of animals were kept. A change of animals was made after a horse had made several trips to the other end of the line at the Clinton Street Station of the Pennsylvania Railroad. When this waiting



HORSE CAR ON WEST STATE STREET, 1884

room was destroyed by fire, a horse car that had seen better days was used instead. When the horse car line was extended to Prospect Street, the old car waiting room was moved to that point.

Near the site of the original horse car lot, along West State Street, still stands the old Emlen House, erected in 1796, which for more than ninety years was the home of the Emlen family. This historic landmark was purchased some years ago from John H. Emlen of Avon, New Jersey, by Dr. Benjamin Vine, who had both the exterior and interior extensively remodeled. In the 1920's, the house was used for a time as the "Old Stone Tea House." At present, there is a "For Sale" sign on the house.

## BELLEVILLE MANSION

"Belleville," a charming rural retreat dating from Colonial times, stood on a site near where Prospect Street now meets West State. While the history of this mansion and its occupants is somewhat clouded in obscurity, at least we know that two men of title were associated with it—Sir John Sinclair and "Lord" Stirling. Among others whose names were connected with it at one time or another are Robert Lettis Hooper, III, John Rutherford and Joseph Warrell.

Who erected "Belleville"? What noted persons were entertained there? What part did it play in Colonial and Revolutionary history? These are some of the questions which historians have not yet been able to answer.

It seems that Joseph Warrell, Attorney General of New Jersey, was the first occupant at "Belleville." According to the records, he was living in the mansion in 1751 and claimed to have resided there for many years. In 1758, the mansion was advertised for sale as "the seat of the Joseph Warrell, Esq., late deceased."

In August, 1785, the Trenton Gazette announced the death of "Ebenezer Erskine, nephew of the late Robert Erskine, F. R. S. and Geographer to the Army of the United States, at the seat of Robert Lettis Hooper, near Trenton, and was interred in the Presbyterian ground."

Sir John Sinclair (St. Clair), a baronet of Nova Scotia, is credited with being an early occupant of this rural retreat. Concerning a person of that name, Dr. John Hall, in his History of the First Presbyterian Church, has the following to say:

"There was a Sir John St. Clair in Braddock's Army, who arrived in January 1755; was Lieutenant-Colonel of the Twenty-seventh Regiment and Deputy Quarter Master-General for all the forces in America. In 1762 he was made a full Colonel. On the list of the wounded at the defeat (July 9, 1755) he was put down as 'Sir John Sinclair, Baronet, Dep. Q.M.Gen.' (Winthrop Sargent's History of Braddock's Expedition) . The death of 'Hon. Col. Sir John St. Clair, Bar't' is announced in the newspapers of the day as having taken place at Elizabethtown, December, 1767. There was a Captain Rutherford with St. Clair in the expedition."

It is supposed that the first icehouse in New Jersey was built on the estate by Sir John Sinclair about 1760, according to a correspondent in The Federalist and New Jersey Gazette, March 30, 1802.



THE EMLEN HOUSE IN THE 1920's

"Lord" Stirling, who according to Dr. Hall was the owner of "Belleville" following the occupancy of Sir John Sinclair, had a unique place in Revolutionary history for the reason that he was an American with a British title and a General in the American army. "Lord Stirling," William Alexander by name, claimed title to landed estates from the English crown, which that government would not acknowledge, although American lawyers considered that he made good his title. General Washington considered him a very able soldier and always addressed him as "my lord." "Lord" Stirling took a leading part in the Battle of Trenton. He was a resident of Somerset County and commanded the New Jersey Continental Line at the beginning of the conflict.

John Rutherford, a prominent churchman and U. S. Senator from 1791 to 1798, was the owner of the house, following the occupancy of Robert Lettis Hooper, III, who was deputy Quartermaster General in 1778, a judge of Hunterdon County in 1784 and later Vice President of the State. Robert Hooper, III, died at "Belleville, July 30, 1797, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. In 1806, John Rutherford advertised the house as his summer residence, with three-hundred-and-thirty acres on both sides of the river, and one of the lots between the new street and Calhoun's Lane, including Prospect Hill.

In an advertisement published in the State Gazette, December 16, 1840, the estate was offered for sale by Mary Rutherford, and is described as the Green House Farm, lying between the River Road and the raceway of the Delaware Falls Company.

#### THE MCCALL-MONTGOMERY ESTATE

"Berryville," formerly the Montgomery estate, with its fine trees, shrubbery and hedge-lined paths, was the unofficial name given to this particular tract, beginning at Prospect Street along the northerly side of State Street, nearly to Murray Street, when it was purchased in 1886 by Patrick J. Berry, well-known contractor, politician and coal dealer, and at one time, a member of Common Council. Mr. Berry developed the fifteen-acre tract into a new residential district, which comprised rows of brick dwellings on State Street, West End Avenue, Montgomery Place and North Fisher Place, several scores of houses in all. The larger and more pretentious houses were erected on the West State Street side of the property. The old mansion, which is said to have been built by Robert McCall, a wealthy bachelor, and uncle of Henry McCall, who later built the mansion house in Cadwalader Park, was the showplace of the section for many years. The original part of the house is believed to have been built about 1848. McCall sold it to Charles H. Higginson, and after his death in 1871, it was bought by Augustus R. Montgomery, who added a wing to it. The old mansion, which stood directly at the end of Montgomery Place, was torn down when the new Cadwalader School was erected on Edgewood Avenue in 1962.

## THE HERMITAGE

On the opposite side of State Street, a short distance west of "Berryville," was the property known as the Dickinson estate. The original mansion, called the "Hermitage," was built and occupied by the Rutherford family previous to the American Revolution. It was purchased by General Philemon Dickinson in 1776, shortly before the Battle of Trenton, and housed about fifty Hessian mercenaries prior to the Battle. The Dickinson family occupied the house for many years after the Revolution and during that time, such famous persons as John Adams, George Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Livingston, Franklin, Clymer, Lafayette, von Steuben, Rochambeau, Louis Phillippe and Joseph Bonaparte were entertained there.



In 1850, Philemon Dickinson sold the mansion and its beautiful grounds to Edward J. C. Atterbury who largely rebuilt the house, although the part nearest State Street remained as in Revolutionary days. At that time, most of the property lying between State Street and the Water Power was covered with barns, stables and other outbuildings centering around the main house. In the grove known as "Atterburys Woods," the Sunday schools of the city held their outings for some years. When the property was sold to Harry C. Valentine in 1904, substantial alterations were made to the mansion house to turn it into the apartment house which still stands on Colonial Avenue. The gardens, fields and woodlands were laid out with appropriately-named avenues: Atterbury, Colonial, Hermitage, Murray and Boudinot.

## CADWALADER PLACE

The land west of Overbrook Avenue, comprising about one-hundred-and-fifty acres, was for over a century and a half in the possession of the Cadwalader family. Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, who came to Trenton from Philadelphia in the 1740's, had a town house on what is now the northwest corner of Broad and State Streets, and a country seat called "Greenwood" in the western end of the town. In 1746, when Trenton was incorporated as a free borough town, Dr. Cadwalader appears to have been living permanently at

"Greenwood." The famous physician was the Chief Burgess under the borough charter and was also active in all that pertained to the material and cultural progress of the town. In 1750, he gave five-hundred pounds to found the Trenton Library Company, which gave Trenton the honor of having the first "public" library in New Jersey. This library was almost totally destroyed by the British in 1776, but was reorganized in 1797. Dr. Cadwalader and his son Lambert Cadwalader both died at "Greenwood" and are buried in the Friends' burying-ground on East Hanover Street.

In January, 1872, the greater part of "Greenwood" was destroyed by fire. Soon after the volunteer firemen arrived at the scene, they discovered the stock of rare old wines and liquors in the cellar and accordingly, so much time and attention were paid to this particular portion of the place that "Greenwood" itself suffered very badly.

When the new "Greenwood" was erected upon the ruins of the older house, little of the original was left in the remodeled structure. The house remained in the Cadwalader family until after the death of General Thomas Cadwalader, and later his heirs had the tract laid out into large suburban lots by Frederick Olmstead & Company, landscape gardeners, with roads, paths for pedestrians, sewers, gas and water, in keeping with a plan mapped out by Edmund C. Hill, who was largely instrumental in its development. The first dwelling built on the tract was at 904 Riverside Avenue. On January 16, 1896, the electric street car line was extended to Cadwalader Place.

"Greenwood," which was later known as the Cadwalader Mansion, stood on the north side of West State Street between Gouverneur and Parkside Avenues and served for a time as a community house for Cadwalader Place. Mrs. Mary Hall conducted a fashionable boarding house there for many years, and later, it passed into the hands of Mrs. Charles Bateman, who closed it in 1934. It was demolished in the late 1930's. During the one-hundred-and-fifty years that "Greenwood" was occupied by successive generations of the Cadwalader family, Lafayette,



THE SKATING RINK

*Showing in background, the Lovers' Lane Entrance to Cadwalader Park, 1897.*

Washington, Robert Morris, John Jay and many other men of prominence were entertained in the gracious mansion with its thirty large rooms.

The gradual westerly development of State Street is also shown by the paving records of the city. Sidewalks and paving were laid from the canal to Calhoun's Lane, by Ordinance, April 7, 1851, and from the Lane to the waste weir (south side) July 19, 1854. On September 10, 1872, an ordinance was passed which called for the same on the north side, from the Lane to Prospect. On December 1, 1885, the south side of the thoroughfare from the waste weir to Clark Fisher's lot (near Montgomery Place), was ordered curbed and paved. On March 21, 1891, the curbing and paving was extended from Montgomery Place to Murray Street. From this point, the work was extended to the city line, July 20, 1892.

## LOVERS' LANE

Beyond "Greenwood" was the roadway known as "Lovers' Lane" leading to "Ellarslie," the original name of the Calwalader Park mansion. This shaded lane, with its sentimental memories, was worthy of the recognition given to it in the following tribute taken from an article written by Colonel Lewis Perrine, and published June 12, 1910 in the Sunday Times-Advertiser:

"Few Trenton swains and their sweethearts of the past forty years have not whispered words of love to each other while strolling in the sombre and romantic shade of Lovers' Lane,

and there are few youngsters of the same period, now grown to manhood, who did not seek during their early days to hand down their names to fame by the questionable process of carving their initials on the trunks of the trees that line that pretty byway. Laid out straight as the crow flies from the Old Post Road (now West State Street) to the feeder of the Delaware and Raritan Canal, and thence by a series of graceful curves but still bordered by growths of heavy shade trees, Lovers' Lane was for many years the avenue leading to beautiful "Ellarslie," the summer home of Henry McCall."



"ELLARSLIE"  
*Home of Henry McCall, still standing in Calwalader Park.*

As the city grew and traffic on the Belvedere division of the Pennsylvania Railroad increased, the dangerous nature of the Lovers' Lane crossing became more and more apparent, until public sentiment demanded a change. The danger was lessened by giving the park an entrance from the rear, but this did not satisfy the public, and the tunnel entrance from Parkside Avenue was constructed in 1934.



Henry McCall was a wealthy resident of Philadelphia who owned and operated the stone paper-mill which stood on the site of the Mahlon Stacy gristmill on South Broad Street on the south bank of the Assunpink Creek. He was attracted to Trenton, it is said, by the Cadwaladers, to whom he was related. Mr. McCall built "Ellarslie" as his summer home about 1846, and many of the fine old trees still to be seen in Cadwalader Park were planted by McCall's landscape gardener. It is said that General Thomas Cadwalader and his family occupied the house while their home on West State Street was being rebuilt after the disastrous fire in 1872. For a number of seasons, "Ellarslie" was rented to Ion Perdicaris, and later was sold to George W. Farlee, a New York broker, who laid out and developed the Hillcrest tract. Mr. Farlee remained at "Ellarslie" until he sold the eighty-acre tract to the city of Trenton in 1888 for \$50,000, as part of the Cadwalader Park tract. By that time, "Ellarslie" had grown to be a very beautiful place with many kinds of oaks, maples, pines, beeches, evergreens and cypresses. In the same year, the Cadwalader estate of eight acres adjoining the Farlee holdings, was purchased by the city for \$9,500 and added to the Park.

Bordering the remains of Lovers' Lane at the present time are baseball fields and tennis courts, which are a part of the city park system. This tract was originally prepared by the park authorities as an outdoor skating rink which was officially opened on December 25, 1897, with 1500 skaters on the scene. Across State Street, where Junior High School Number 3 now stands, was the Y. M. C. A. field, which was the scene of many notable athletic events between local and out-of-town teams for some years.

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## XXV. THE WILLIAM TRENT HOUSE

No book concerned with the landmarks of early Trenton would be complete without a brief account and appreciation of the community's oldest house, now restored as one of the outstanding examples of Queen Anne architecture in America.

Mahlon Stacy's little settlement at the Falls of the Delaware was but thirty-four years old when William Trent, a native of Scotland, and a prominent and wealthy merchant and shipowner of Philadelphia, purchased from Mahlon Stacy, the younger, eight hundred acres of land lying on both sides of the Assunpink



THE WILLIAM TRENT HOUSE  
*Before 1936 restoration.*

Creek, then in both Burlington and Hunterdon Counties. On these broad acres, in 1719, he began to build the brick mansion which became his permanent home in 1721. According to the researches of Howard L. Hughes, well-known local historian, William Trent probably lived north of the creek (Hunterdon County), while his house was being built. William Trent later added to his holdings, so that at the time of his death, he owned most of the land on which the town of Trenton, as we know it today, was developed.

William Trent's appearance in the Province of New Jersey was highly pleasing to Governor William Burnet, who soon made Trent a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Hunterdon County, a Colonel of the Hunterdon County militia and, in 1723, the Chief Justice of New Jersey. Trent represented Burlington County in the New Jersey Assembly in 1722, becoming Speaker in 1723. His sudden death on Christmas Day, 1724, deprived this region of one of its most-distinguished citizens of that time.

Five years after William Trent's death, his eldest son, James, sold about three hundred acres of his father's land to William Morris, a wealthy merchant from the West Indies, who occupied the Trent house until 1733, when Colonel George Thomas, sometime Governor of Pennsylvania, bought the property as a speculative investment. From that time on, the house changed hands many times. In 1742, it was leased to Lewis Morris, the first Royal Governor of New Jersey (separate from New York State), who occupied it until his death four years later. In subsequent years, two other New Jersey Governors, Philemon Dickerson and Rodman M. Price, occupied the house. At the time of the Battle of Trenton, Dr. William Bryant was living in the place. He had Loyalist leanings, and on more than one occasion, is said to have warned Colonel Rall of

the possibility of attack on Trenton by Washington. Hessian maps of the period show the mansion as the "Doctor Haus."

From 1778-1792, the house was occupied by Colonel John Cox, Assistant Quartermaster General of the Continental Army, his wife and six daughters. It was Cox who gave the name "Bloomsbury" to the house and farm, a name which it bore for many years. During the Cox family's occupancy of the house, it played its most prominent part in the social life of the town. In 1781 and 1782, the army of Rochambeau camped near the house, while enroute to and from Yorktown, and in June 1783, General Washington and General Greene met in the Trent House while traveling to Princeton, where the Continental Congress was then meeting.

An engaging description of the house in its early days is found in the Pennsylvania Journal, March 12, 1767, when its owner Robert Lettis Hooper, II, advertised the property for sale:

"It is accommodated with a genteel brick house, 40 x 48 feet, two stories high, four rooms to a floor, with a large handsome staircase and entry, with a cellar under the whole building, and a court yard on each front of the house, one fronting down the River Delaware to the ferry, through a large handsome avenue of English cherry trees, the other fronting up the river to Trenton."

During the years following the Revolution, the house was shorn of its once extensive garden, its orchards, fields, and pastures, and the avenue of cherry trees to the river. The interior of the house, with its high-studded rooms and a stair hall where a broad stairway rises in three flights to a balustraded landing, survived intact, although the house underwent extensive alterations in the nineteenth century. Plaster and wall paper had covered the panelling and additions had been added on the Warren Street side in the 1840's, but fortunately no important structural changes had been made. To all outward appearances, however, it was a Victorian house when its last owner, Edward Ansley Stokes, and the third generation of the Stokes family to occupy the house, deeded the property to the City of Trenton in 1929, with the proviso that the house be restored to its original state and preserved either as an art gallery, a branch library or an historical museum.

#### THE TRENT HOUSE TODAY

The restoration of the house was started in 1934, under the direction of the Trustees of the Free Public Library, with Mr. J. Osborne Hunt and Mr. Samuel Mountford as architects, and Mr. Howard L. Hughes, then City Librarian, as coordinator. The work was financed by the United States Government through the Civil Works, the Emergency Relief and the Public Works Administrations. The restored house was formally dedicated with appropriate ceremonies, October 14, 1936. Generously furnished, it was opened to the public, June 1, 1939.

A Trent House Commission of nine members, named by the Mayor of Trenton, and three ex-officio members, manages and controls the affairs of the House. The Trent House Association, which has over three hundred members, was set up by the Commission as a supplementary body. This Association annually elects a Board which has special responsibilities for the furnishings and hospitality of the House, including three evening meetings a year.

Furnishings of the period of William and Mary and of Queen Anne have been carefully assembled through the years by the House Committee of the Association Boani to approximate those of an inventory made in 1726, now on file in the office of the Secretary of State, to settle William Trent's estate. The collection was made possible through private gifts and loans and the generosity of such organizations as the Junior League of Trenton, the Trenton and Pennington chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Society of Colonial Wars, the Trenton Historical Society and the Garden Club of Trenton. Outstanding pieces of American furniture, originally lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Garvan Collection of Yale University, were purchased through a Furniture Fund raised by an extensive community campaign in 1957-59.

In 1938, the Garden Club of Trenton graciously accepted the responsibility of restoring the Trent House garden along early Colonial lines. It still regularly supervises the garden and continually adds to its treasures with many memorial plantings and gifts. The Club is now anticipating the improvement of the landscaping around the house, which is a part of the redevelopment plans of the City of Trenton. It is hoped that the view of the Delaware will be opened once more, with a mall reaching from the house to the river. This would bring back, as far as possible, that close relationship of the early eighteenth century to the river as the main highway of travel and communication.

The Trent House, which is open seven days a week, annually welcomes thousands of visitors from all parts of the United States and many foreign countries. Classes of school children and art classes make special pilgrimages to the house, which is considered one of the most outstanding historic house museums in the United States today.

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were found only in Mr. Podmore's research files, now in the possession of the Public Library, into whose Trentoniana Collection they will eventually be absorbed.

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