OLD PHILADELPHIA: REDEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

WILLIAM E. LINGELBACH
Librarian, American Philosophical Society; Professor Emeritus of Modern European History, University of Pennsylvania

FEDERAL STATE AND CITY PLANS

The extraordinary awakening of civic interest in Old Philadelphia in the last decade seems now to have emerged from the blueprint stage. Federal, state, and city governments have not only inaugurated projects of rehabilitation and conservation, but they are coordinating their respective programs where historic structures and sites are involved, in accordance with approved canons of city planning. The movement, which has attained real momentum, has been years in developing. Many private citizens, cooperating with civic and patriotic organizations, have been increasingly active in their efforts to arouse public opinion to a sense of the opportunities, as well as the responsibilities, in Old Philadelphia, particularly in and about Independence Square.

In December 1942 a City Planning Commission was created by an ordinance of City Council. While its duties, as defined in the ordinance, are largely advisory, it has, under the chairmanship of our fellow-member, Edward Hopkinson, Jr., been very influential, not only in promoting a large-scale program for the development of the Philadelphia metropolitan area, but also emphasizing the extraordinary opportunities for rehabilitation and conservation in Old Philadelphia, and in securing through Mayor Samuel municipal cooperation in the execution of the federal and state projects in the historic areas of the city. Earlier in the same year, a group of nearly one hundred interested persons, many of them representatives of fifty-two civic and patriotic organizations, met in the Hall of the American Philosophical Society and organized the "Independence Hall Association."¹

Under the direction of Judge Edwin O. Lewis as President, a vigorous campaign, carried on with great energy, perseverance, and political wisdom, during the past six years, has resulted in stimulating official action in several important directions. Within a year, Independence Square was made a National Shrine in accordance with the terms of a contract between the city and the Department of the Interior. Two years later, in 1945, Governor Martin and the Legislature at Harrisburg, already concerned about the lack of dignified approaches to Independence Hall, and the fire hazards from antiquated buildings on the north, were induced to set aside a sum of from four to eight million dollars for a great Concourse, or Mall, between Fifth and Sixth Streets from Race Street at the Delaware River bridgehead to Independence Square. By the acquisition of the properties in these nine city blocks, and their demolition to make room for landscaping, parking, and the reconstruction of historic buildings, an appropriate and dignified approach to the National Shrine from the north will be created. For a time, progress on the project, which is now under the direction of the Departments of Highways, and of Forests and Waters, was delayed because of the hardships incident to dispossessing owners and tenants at a time of intense housing shortage. Early in December, however, Mayor Samuel reported to Council that a complete agreement as to procedure on the North Mall had been reached between the city and the state with the understanding that the state would spend between seven and eight million dollars on the Concourse, the Department of Highways widening Fifth and Sixth Streets, and the Department of Forests and Waters securing the properties in the area from Chestnut to Race Streets for redevelopment and the transformation of the area into a park. In a letter submitting the draft of an ordinance, the chairman of the City Planning Commission, and the Director of Public Works said:

Completion of the Independence Mall will provide an impressive approach to Independence Hall and a setting worthy of that great historic shrine. It will constitute a major advance in the city's program for the redevelopment of the older areas of the city, and in conjunction with the authorized Independence National Historical Park and other contemplated projects in the vicinity will result in major improvements of the surrounding area.

¹ Officers of the Association were: Hon. Edwin O. Lewis, President; Miss Frances A. Wister, Roy F. Larson, and William E. Lingelbach, Vice-Presidents; Edward M. Biddle, Treasurer; and D. Knickerbocker Boyd, Executive Director.
Meanwhile, the urgent need of improving the rest of the environment of Independence Square, especially the approaches from the east, as a complement to the North Mall, was vigorously urged upon Pennsylvania representatives at Washington, through whom an act was passed empowering the President to appoint a commission to be called the "Philadelphia National Shrines Park Commission." The Commission was duly appointed, and began work promptly.

Numerous meetings were held, and a report on a thorough survey of the area was made. Armed with this Report, the Commission enlisted the cooperation of Pennsylvania congressmen, the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service in the passage of a bill which was signed by the President in April 1948. Known as

PUBLIC LAW 795—80TH CONGRESS [H.R. 5053]

An Act
To provide for the establishment of the Independence National Historical Park, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, for the purpose of preserving for the benefit of the American people as a national historical park certain historical structures and properties of outstanding national significance located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and associated with the American Revolution and the founding and growth of the United States, the Secretary of the Interior following the consummation of agreements with the city of Philadelphia and the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia as prescribed in section 2 of this Act, is authorized to acquire by donation or with donated funds, or to acquire by purchase, any property, real or personal, within the following-described areas, such park to be fully established as the "Independence National Historical Park" when, in the opinion of the Secretary, title to sufficient of the lands and interests in lands within such areas, shall be vested in the United States: Provided, That the park shall not be established until title to the First United States Bank property, the Merchants' Exchange property, the Bishop White house, the Dilworth-Todd-Moylan house, and the site of the Benjamin Franklin house, together with two-thirds of the remaining lands and interests in lands within the following-described areas shall have been vested in the United States.

The four separate areas which are to constitute the Independence National Historical Park as described in the Act are: first, the three city blocks between Walnut and Chestnut from Fifth to Second Streets; second, a memorial thoroughfare from the south side of Walnut Street to the north side of Manning Street; third, the site of the residence of Benjamin Franklin, called Franklin Court; and fourth, Christ Church and certain land and buildings adjacent to it. Sections 2, 3, 4, and 5 deal with the execution, or "furtherance of the general purposes" of the Act—among others, a provision for an "advisory commission not to exceed eleven members." The last section provides for an appropriation not to exceed $4,435,000 for the acquisition of the properties in the respective areas. To complete the picture it should be recalled that at different times in recent years the Federal Government, through the Department of the Interior and its National Parks Service, has also acquired possession, or partial control, of several historic sites—Old Swedes, the Old Custom House, and Independence Square.

The historic sections in Old Philadelphia in the federal and state projects are clearly indicated on the accompanying plan (fig. 1). The North Mall, as conceived by the engineers and architects, is a two-way tree-lined boulevard from Independence Hall (A) north to the Delaware River Bridgehead. The East Mall starts on Fifth Street directly opposite Independence Square, its axis passing the Old Custom House (B), encircling Carpenters' Hall (C) and the Girard Bank (D) and then swinging south passing the Merchants' Exchange (E). It is expected that eventually all the properties between Walnut and Chestnut, and Fifth and Second Streets will be taken over by the federal government. While the Old Custom House (B) has been in the custody of the Department of the Interior since 1939, the large new Custom House (F) on the corner of Chestnut and Second, although within the area described, is not included in the proposed park. Franklin Court (G), a strip of one hundred feet in width, starts from the north side of Chestnut Street and runs to Market (High) Street. Christ Church (H) stands on Second Street north of Market and has no direct contact with either the East or North Mall. The large squares at the top and bottom on the left of the plan are Franklin Square and Washington Square, two of the five open spaces provided by Penn for his "greene towne." Of all the areas under consider-

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2 The members of the Commission: Mr. George McNaney, Hon. Robert N. McGarvey, Hon. Hugh Martin Morris, Hon. Francis Myers, Dr. Carl Van Doren, Mr. Albert M. Greenfield, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Edwin O. Lewis, Chairman.

3 "Final Report to the United States Congress" by The Philadelphia National Shrines Park Commission (Manuscript).
Fig. 1. Plan of the North and East Mall and adjacent areas. (Courtesy of the Fairmount Park Association.)
ation Independence Square, with its superb group of colonial buildings, is unique, and properly the center with which the others are all to be definitely integrated. The remarkable role of this historic square in the stirring formative events of the nation's history is so well known that any attempt at summary would be superfluous. Nevertheless, Dr. Carl Van Doren's preface to the final report of the Philadelphia National Shrines Park Commission to the United States Congress is so pertinent that, with his permission, the following excerpts are repeated here:

The United States was created in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, when the Continental Congress voted the final form of the Declaration of Independence. The United States was perpetuated on September 17, 1787, when the Federal Convention completed its work on the Constitution and referred it, through Congress, to the individual states for ratification. Both these great decisions were made in the same chamber in what is now called Independence Hall, but was then the Pennsylvania State House. It would still be merely the old State House if independence had not been achieved and if the Constitution had not been ratified and put into effect. The noble building, so venerable to later ages, might not even have survived, but might have been swept away in the surging growth of a modern city. In that case, a few students of history would sometimes remember the site as the stage of those lost causes. Instead, Pennsylvania's State House has become Independence Hall for the entire United States. Nor is that all. On account of the Declaration of Independence, it is a shrine honored wherever the rights of men are honored. On account of the Constitution, it is a shrine cherished wherever the principles of self-government on a federal scale are cherished.

Speaking of the Constitutional Convention, he adds:

In the white-paneled room familiar to most of them, the best minds of America had given themselves to the cause of the United States for the past thirteen
years. No other deliberative chamber has ever been the scene of so much public courage and political wisdom. This room is the tap root of American life and history...

Tall buildings look down on Independence Hall and the other ancient structures in the Square and neighborhood, but cannot overshadow their plain honorable dignity. Abraham Lincoln, speaking at Independence Hall on Washington's birthday in the troubled year 1861, said what many have felt but nobody else so well expressed.

"I am filled with deep emotion at finding myself standing in this place, where were collected together the wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle, from which sprang the institutions under which we live . . . ."

Independence Hall and the familiar Square remain today a symbol of freedom and liberty throughout the world. But despite its glorious past, and the great historic events associated with it, the section of Old Philadelphia in which it lies, has been neglected for years. Happily, the Square itself, with its fine group of buildings, has been an outstanding exception. But even the nation's most historic shrine received no formal recognition by the federal government until the action of 1943, just mentioned. Owned and built by the State, and known as the State House, at the beginning of the Revolution, it soon became known as Independence Hall. In 1816 the city bought it for seventy thousand dollars—a financial and spiritual investment unequalled in the history of American cities. A later proposal to sell the Square fortunately came to nothing, and the city still holds the formal deed executed in 1816. Since then, Philadelphia has protected it, and although it has at times given it somewhat grudging care, the city has performed an inestimable service in preserving the Independence Hall group for posterity. It is difficult to imagine Philadelphia, or the nation, without Independence Square, or to realize the loss, even though unconscious it might be, to many thousands 4 of Americans and foreigners, who visit the city annually to find pleasure and inspiration in the environment of the historic Square (fig. 2).

HISTORIC OLD PHILADELPHIA

But Old Philadelphia is not confined to Independence Square. Neither is it just another city.

4 The number of visitors has been growing steadily till it now approximates a million annually. Significant also is the fact, that during the war years the number of adults, especially among the armed forces, was very noticeable.

or the usual geographical area, in which historic sites and buildings are located. It is the old Quaker city, developed during the century and a half after its founding by William Penn on a well-chosen site between two rivers—the Delaware and the Schuylkill—with a beautiful country to the west and north as perfectly adapted to the manorial system as was the city proper, with its fine waterfront, to commerce and industry. With its rectangular street system, a central square of ten acres, and four others of eight acres each, it was the first formally planned city in the British Colonies. Its growth was rapid. Although founded sixty years after New York, and half a century after Boston, it soon outstripped them, and became the first city of the American Colonies, with a population of forty thousand, second only to London in the British Empire at the beginning of the Revolution. Referring to it in his "Proposal" for the founding of the Philosophical Society in 1743, Franklin suggested:

That Philadelphia being the City nearest the Center of the Continent-Colonies, communicating with all of them northward and southward by Post, and with all the Islands by Sea, and having the Advantage of a good growing Library be the Center of the Society.

Franklin knew his Philadelphia. As postmaster for the colonies, he knew the other American cities, and was, therefore, able to make comparisons better than any other man. Although the city may not have been officially declared the capital of the country, it was the seat of the government during most of the Revolution and the decade from 1790 to 1800, and the real metropolis of the nation till the second decade of the nineteenth century. It was noted for its schools, colleges, hospitals; its preeminence in science and medicine; its libraries, among them the old Library Company, started by Franklin "to bring books to every citizen," the Library of the American Philosophical Society, designed more particularly for scientific and scholarly ends; popular bookshops, famous book auctions, artists' supply shops catering to artists like Charles Willson Peale, Gilbert Stuart, and others; and an amazing number of fine churches of every faith—Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish—all enjoying the broad religious toleration established by the Founder; two theaters; and the first great natural history museum in America. Its homes and places of business were usually of red brick. Those that stand today—and there are surprisingly many—speak quite as eloquently as do the journals, contemporary newspapers,
diaries, and correspondence preserved in manuscript or early imprints in our libraries and archives, of the extraordinary intellectual and cultural life of this busy industrial and commercial city.

As the crisis with the mother country drew near, the political ferment became intense. Although the Loyalist element was strong, the atmosphere was on the whole as highly charged with the revolutionary spirit as that of any other city in the Colonies. There were many "patriots in purple," many more among the city's large middle class, and many more still in "leather aprons." The city quickly became the principal stage for the momentous political drama in which the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence and the adoption of the Constitution were so conspicuous. Eight of the signers were from Philadelphia. Among the members of the American Philosophical Society, fifteen signed the Declaration, while twenty served as delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

No other city contributed so much to the development of a national attitude of mind—the American as opposed to the colonial of New England or of the South. In all this, the American Philosophical Society was an effective ally. As Van Wyck Brooks expresses it in *The World of Washington Irving*, in a paragraph following the enumeration of the great men that gathered in Philadelphia:

There was the American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned society and the most distinguished; and it was generally known that Franklin had first created, in founding this, the public opinion of the country. He had brought together the leading minds of all the colonies, giving them a forum and a focus, so that a web of correspondence, spreading north, south, east and west, distributed fresh ideas through all the regions.

Largely by means of this society, the American mind had found itself and knew it was no longer the New England mind or the Southern mind but the mind of a nation *in posse* and partly *in esse*.

All of the public buildings and churches that survive, and many of the private houses are rich in their associations with the great men and events of this period of the nation’s history. This, and the fact that many of the survivals are in themselves artistically and architecturally beautiful, constitute a basis for rehabilitation and conservation in city planning that is unequalled in this country (fig. 3).

### THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND THE PROGRAM

While federal, state, and city plans for rehabilitation and conservation in Old Philadelphia have an import that is both national and international in character, the local and community aspects of the program should not be overlooked. Even in these United States, the inauguration and execution of civic improvements may readily assume a certain paternalistic character not unlike that which prevailed in the great modernization of Vienna in the 1860's, and of Paris by Baron Haussmann under Napoleon III and the Second Empire. The interest of the American Philosophical Society in the development of the national heritage, and its lively interest in the program described above, form a happy illustration of the democratic process at work through a scientific and scholarly society in support of that heritage. In addition to this broader basis for its concern for the success of the program, however, the Society has several very practical reasons for its interest in the reclamation plans for Old Philadelphia.

The Society traces its origin to Benjamin Franklin and his famous "Proposal" for the formation of a Society to be called "The American Philosophical Society." Organized in 1743, after the pattern of the Royal Society, it was not very active till 1768, when rivalry with another Society, "The American Society for Promoting Useful
Fig. 3. Old Philadelphia—Central Area, looking south. (Courtesy of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.)
Knowledge held at Philadelphia" seemed to awaken its latent energies. Early in 1769, after a rather hectic race by both of these organizations to increase their membership, the two Societies united to form “The American Philosophical Society held at Philadelphia for Promoting Useful Knowledge.” Franklin was at once elected president, and annually thereafter till his death in 1790. He was succeeded by America’s famous astronomer, David Rittenhouse: At his death in 1796, Thomas Jefferson was chosen president to be re-elected annually for the next eighteen years.⁵

The Charter and early acts of the American Philosophical Society are shot through and through with the ideals and principles which these early presidents of the Society did so much to formulate and incorporate into the political and cultural life of the nation. Granted in 1780, while the Revolution was still in progress, the Charter emphasizes the universality of science, and the importance of the freedom of research and communication. The preamble reads in part:

... the experience of ages shows that improvements of a public nature, are best carried on by societies of liberal and ingenious men, uniting their labours, without regard to nation, sect or party, in one grand pursuit, alike interesting to all, whereby mutual prejudices are worn off, a humane and philosophical spirit is cherished, and youth are stimulated to a laudable diligence and emulation in the pursuit of wisdom, ...

Even more pertinent are the statements in the last sections of the Charter:

⁵ For a succinct and understanding history of the Society, see Conklin, E. G., Brief history of the American Philosophical Society, Yr. Bk. Amer. Philos. Soc. for 1946: 7-26, 1947, and since.

And Whereas nations truly civilized (however unhappily at variance on other accounts) will never wage war with the Arts and Sciences, and the common Interests of humanity:

Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall and may be lawful for the said Society by their proper officers, at all times, whether in peace or war, to correspond with learned Societies, as well as individual learned men, of any nation or country, upon matters merely belonging to the business of the said Society, such as the mutual communication of their discoveries and proceedings in Philosophy and Science; the procuring books, apparatus, natural curiosities, and such other articles and intelligence as are usually exchanged between learned bodies, for furthering their common pursuits; Provided always, That such correspondence of the said Society be at all times open to the inspection of the Supreme Executive Council of this Commonwealth.

Space does not permit even a sketchy review of the manner in which the principles of the Charter were implemented in the policies and activities of the Society in the decades following the Revolution. Reference may, however, be made in passing to the growth of an intense interest in everything American, in which nationalism at times threatened the broader outlook of science. The Society became the mother of a number of other societies and associations like the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (1824), and the Academy of Natural Sciences (1812). In the last war, it fostered and housed the Pennsylvania Commission for the Conservation of Cultural Resources under the chairmanship of the writer, and contributed materially to the development of local history societies among junior, and senior high school students throughout the state. A little over a year
Mr. Hartley.

Philadelphia, March 31, 1784.

We have now the Pleasure of acquainting you, that the Ratification of the
Definitive Treaty is arrived here by an Express
from Congress. You have already been informed
that the Treaty of the Winter in America, which
brought Trouble, had occasion'd a Delay in
the assembling of the States. As soon as a suf-
ficient Number was got together, the Treaty was
taken into Consideration, and the Ratification pro-
nounced unanimously. Indeed you have Copies of the De-
claration signed to the occasion, and of the Recomma-
datory Resolution. The messenger was detained at New
York near a Month, by the Sea which prevented the
Basket careers sailing; otherwise he would probably have
been here in February. We are now ready to exchange
the Ratifications with you, whenever it shall be conv-
enient to you. With great VINCI S. ELESM, ead
we have the Honour to be, etc.,

John Jay,

Your Excellency's most obedient Servant,

[Signature]

FIG. 5. Franklin and Jay to Hartley, March 31, 1784. An interesting example from the
Franklin Collection.
ago, it gave a grant of four thousand dollars toward the development of a nationwide program by the National Association for State and Local History.

From these illustrations of the Society's concern for the perpetuation of the American heritage, it is obvious that a keen interest in the plans for the rehabilitation and conservation of Old Philadelphia would be assured from the beginning. Indeed the Society has already taken the lead in carrying the program into effect by putting its own house in order, as it were, in restoring its Hall to its original condition. To appreciate this, it must be recalled that for the entire period of its existence, the Society's home has been in the heart of Old Philadelphia (fig. 4). Its Hall, built by Franklin and his friends, is the only privately owned building on Independence Square. From the beginning its Library has been collecting and conserving the publications of scientific and learned societies at home and abroad, and the writings of statesmen, scholars, and scientists of the colonial and early national periods. It has much the largest collection of the original manuscripts of Benjamin Franklin (fig. 5); a great

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\text{FIG. 6. Penn Cash Book.}
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many William Penn documents (fig. 6); the diaries, and letter-books of Charles Willson Peale; the original journals of Lewis and Clark; and other more recent manuscript collections like the Elihu Thomson (fig. 7) and the Boas Papers.

**PHILOSOPHICAL HALL**

Physical evidence of the Society's understanding of, and cooperation in, the rehabilitation and conservation of Old Philadelphia appears in its decision to restore the Hall to its original appearance, and thus bring it again in line architecturally with the other buildings on Independence Square. The import of this decision appears clearly when it is considered in connection with the alterations to the Hall in 1890 by imposing a heavy third story superstructure on its modest eighteenth century building (cp. figs. 8 and 9).

At the meeting of the Society in January 1890, the one hundredth anniversary year of Franklin's death, the Minutes record that the President was authorized to appoint a committee to ascertain if additional space for the Library could be obtained in the vicinity of the Hall. On April 18, the Committee known as "The Committee on Extended Accomodations" reported that,

they have carefully considered various propositions referred to them; and after due deliberation, concluded to request from J. M. Wilson Esq., architect plans for the alteration of the present building, such as would render it completely fire-proof, harmonise with its surroundings, [italics are mine] and provide for the Society's needs as well as its prospective ones for a period of at least twenty years to come.

Mr. Wilson's plans were submitted and approved by a vote of 21 to 5, at a special meeting called for that purpose on April 25, and the Committee was ordered to "proceed with the business." This was apparently done with considerable dispatch as shown by the following note between the minutes for May 16 and November 7:

About the beginning of June the Society temporarily removed and stored its possessions, library etc., etc. and vacated its building to enable alterations to be made that would render the same more commodious and fire-proof. The interior was remodeled, the two Southern meeting rooms thrown into one, as also were the two Northern rooms, and a new third story to contain the books and mss. of the Society was added. No meeting was held until November 7, 1890.

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The Society came together in the new meeting room. Present 31 members.

At the stated meeting on April 3, 1891, the Trustees of the Building Fund reported on the execution of the instructions voted on April 25, 1890, for the sale of certain securities held by the Society to defray the expenses of remodeling the Hall.7

The addition violated all accepted archaeological and architectural canons, and reflected a curious disregard for the environment of the historic Square. It is all the more surprising, because years earlier the Minutes tell of a similar proposal which was roundly denounced by a Special Committee composed of the Librarian John Vaughan, William Strickland, and Peter S. Du Ponceau. In their report under date of Dec. 5, 1823, they said:

\[\text{bid., 351.}\]

The committee appointed to consider the propriety of raising an additional Story to the Society's Hall, are of opinion that if the plan proposed were executed the external appearance of the building would be injured.

In passing it may be mentioned that during the decade of 1890 Independence Square narrowly escaped a more serious intrusion in the form of a large equestrian statue of Washington in the flamboyant style of the period, presented by the Society of the Cincinnati. The agitation of several patriotic organizations, and a number of petitions against the plan convinced a reluctant Mayor and Council to abandon the project. The Washington monument has found a suitable place on the Franklin Parkway, and the colonial dignity and simplicity of Independence Square, now that the Society's Hall is being remodeled, will be unspoiled by any inappropriate additions save one.
The period of “twenty years,” mentioned by the Committee in 1890, passed rapidly, and nearly twenty more before the Society’s “prospective needs,” as they appeared at the time, so overcrowded the “extended accommodations,” that more space was absolutely necessary. This, and the recognition of the fact that the fire hazard had become very serious, was greatly stressed in the late twenties of the present century, in the campaign to remove from the Square altogether, sell the Hall to the city, and establish the Society on the new Parkway. Fortunately, the plans were abandoned, the Society deciding to continue permanently in its old home.

But the Library continued to grow. Many books, and especially manuscripts, had to be kept in dead storage. Finally, in 1934, new quarters were found in the former home of the Philadelphia Stock Exchange, across the street from the Hall. For the time being, this removed the pressure for space. On the other hand, ideas as to what constitutes a fire-proof building had become more rigid, and, what is equally important, tastes and canons as to alterations to historical buildings, especially in an environment such as Independence Square, had become embarrassingly exacting. These two factors, especially the latter, weighed heavily in the decision to restore the Hall to its original lines.

At the Annual Meeting of the Society, in 1946, it was voted to remove the third story and remodel the interior making it as fire-proof as possible. During the following year the Officers and the Committee on the Hall conferred frequently on the subject with Mr. Sydney Martin, the architect.

Plans for sweeping alterations in the interior as well as the exterior of the Hall were discussed and submitted, and, after certain modifications, they were adopted by the Council, and referred to the Society for its approval at the Annual Meeting in April 1948. By a unanimous vote, the plans were approved, and the Officers authorized to proceed with the work as promptly as possible, the cost to be defrayed out of the Building Fund. Work was started immediately. During the year, the addition was taken down and rapid progress made in remodeling the interior, installing new electric wiring, new heating and ventilating systems, and a large fire-proof vault in the basement. But in spite of these tangible improvements, and the modernization of the Hall, the plan would be open to serious criticism because of the loss of already

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8 Minutes of the Annual Meeting, April 22, 1948.
limited space and the heavy outlay at a time when building costs are skyrocketing, if it were not motivated, as it were, by the determination of the Society to cooperate in every way in the rehabilitation and conservation program. As the late President Gates expressed it in his Annual Report on April 22, 1948:

The developments to the north and east of Independence Square are, of course, of vital importance to the Society, and your officers have kept in close touch with both State and Federal authorities with constant conferences so that we may be aware of and assist in every way we can in the fulfillment of the projected park and areas involved. Your officers have had the benefit of the helpful and complete cooperation of the authorities pressing forward the federal project under the leadership of Judge Edwin O. Lewis; with the City Planning Commission under the leadership of its chairman, Edward Hopkinson, Jr. Your President appeared before the Committee on Public Lands in Washington on March 1 in company with these gentlemen and others, in urging that steps ahead be taken as promptly as possible. The report of the committee appointed to consider the matter is of noteworthy value, laying emphasis upon the public relationship our Society bears toward the country at large and the significance of the development as a national shrine. . . .

FRANKLIN COURT

One of the projects of the Independence National Historical Park in which the Society has a very particular interest is Franklin Court. It is the site of Franklin's home in which the Society occasionally met during the last years of his life; where he was escorted by his enthusiastic countrymen when he returned from France in 1785; and where Washington called to pay his respects in 1787, upon his arrival in Philadelphia to attend the Constitutional Convention.

The site is on Market (High) Street in the middle of the block between Third and Fourth Streets. By an inheritance from Deborah's parents, Franklin had acquired one of the lots. The others were secured by purchases. As shown in the accompanying plan (fig. 12), the entrance was by a driveway immediately to the east of Charles Thomson's lot and the rear of the popular hostelry, the Indian Queen. At the turn of the drive on the left was the coach house, a little distance from the main house, which stood in the center of Franklin Court as it was called later.

A rich and important group of primary sources relating to Franklin Court is found in the Society's Library. There are early patents, leases, and deeds, the earliest one under date of 7 April, 1707, being a patent from William Penn, through his Commissioners of Property, to Henry Hayes for a plot of ground situated in Philadelphia between High and Chestnut and Third and Fourth Streets. There is a "deed of 10 April, 1734, from Sarah Read to Benjamin Franklin and his wife for lot on south side of High Street . . . recorded Febr. 21, 1757." But these documents on the location of the lots, and the acquisition of the land on which Franklin built his home and at least four
other houses, are rather spotty, and the record has to be pieced together from sources found in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, the Surveyor's Office, and other depositories. In a thorough search under the auspices of the Philadelphia National Shrines Park Commission, Mr. Fred J. Gorman has assembled the materials for the history of what might be called, the real estate aspect of Franklin's properties on High Street.

Of greater interest to many, however, than the records of land transfers, surveys and the like, is the evidence on the house and the layout of Franklin Court in which it stood. Here, too, some of the problems are quite baffling. Despite the fact that Franklin, the most widely-known American in the world, himself designed the house and arranged to have the plans carried out, no adequate plans of the interior, or front or rear elevations have been found. The family occupied the house continually from the time it was built in 1765. In 1775, on his return from England, Franklin joined them, and the place became the center of intense political activity after the news of Lexington and Concord reached Philadelphia. The next year he left for France where he remained for nine and a half years, returning in September of 1785. The remaining five years of his life he occupied the home in Franklin Court, surrounded by his daughter's family and his many friends.

Fortunately there is a great deal of incidental information on which an approximate description of the house can be based. The fact that Franklin left for England the year after work on the building was begun, made it necessary for him to keep in touch with it by correspondence. More than a score of letters between Franklin and Deborah in the Society's Franklin Papers testify to his continued concern, not only in the construction of the building, but in its furnishings and other appointments. Among numerous letters to others, there are several to his favorite sister, Jane Mecom, which, like the Autobiography, give considerable detail about the addition to his home and the construction of several other houses. In a letter written as late as April 27, 1789, to Francis Childs less than a year before he died, Franklin wrote of his 'late heavy Expense in building five houses (which cost much more than I was made to expect).'

Before going abroad, in 1765, he arranged with Messrs. Foxcroft to supply Deborah £30 a month, which, as he wrote her in 1771, he thought sufficient, when added to the 'rent from seven houses' which she was also receiving. A close friend, and member of the Junto, and later mayor of the city, Samuel Rhoads, was entrusted with overseeing the erection of the building. From his records, Franklin's Receipt Book of 1764–1766, a volume of Miscellaneous Accounts, and other sources, it appears that Rhoads acted on behalf of Franklin and Deborah in the building of the house, paying bills, engaging David Rose to supply bricks, Will Anderson to do the plastering, and David Beard to dig the well. There is a good deal about the cost of labor, and what, in the parlance of today, would be called sub-contracts for masonry, brick work, building of the brick wall along three sides of the court, etc.

Somewhat more direct is the factual survey in the records of the first colonial insurance company—'The Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses and Loss by Fire,' which Franklin helped to found. The survey dated August 5, 1766 (cp. fig. 13), describes it as a building thirty-four feet square, of three stories, with fourteen inch outside walls, nine inch brick partitions on the easternmost part of the house to the garret floor, and three rooms on a floor.

In a letter of September 21, 1786 Franklin wrote to his sister, Jane Mecom, concerning an addition to his house:

I had begun to build two good Houses next the Street instead of three old Ones which I pulled down. But my Neighbour disputing my Bounds, I have been obliged to postpone till that Dispute is settled by Law. In the mean time, the Workmen & Materials being ready, I have ordered an Addition to the House I live in, it being too small for our growing Family. There are a good many Hands employ'd, and I hope to see it cover'd in before Winter. I propose to have in it a long Room for my Library and Instruments, with two good Bedchambers and two Garrets. The Library is to be even with the Floor of my best old Chamber; . . . This Addition is on the Side next the River. I hardly know how to justify building a Library at an Age that will so soon oblige me

\[\text{9 There is among the Library's Franklin Papers an intriguing outline of a plan in pencil on the back of a receipt for paper under date of May 17, 1764. Too sketchy to be definitive, it does, however, raise doubts as to the correctness of the architectural plans developed some years ago for the Franklin House in Chicago.}\]

\[\text{10 Account book of money spent by Samuel Rhoads 1764–1766. Ms. in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.}\]
a house house belonging to Benjamin Franklin, situated on the south side of High Street between the 28th and 29th streets where his family dwelt—

36 feet square — 3 stories high — 14 1/2 inch walls — 3 rooms on a floor — partitions in the east, moulded plaster along 1 inch brick wall at the gable floor — in the west, moulded plaster directly on wall below beams of all rooms, four pediments with pediment door — a rich chimney piece — fluted column — half pilasters with intablature — the other — the rooms and pilasters below — windowed pediment high, with frets and ornamental through out — rooms have a chimney piece with tabernacle frame pediment. The all the second story rooms have pediment high, frets, tondos and plain double cornice through the whole — a chimney piece in one of the rooms with tabernacle frame pediment. The chimney breast includes a sketching and simple cornice, through the third story — gable plastered away out on roof — two stories of stringer framing — bracketed and stained wood — one 20 bracketed — painted inside and out —

 mobilion cases — a large pianoforte with sprung seat — each end — a new kitchen in filler —

$500. deo. 40. nr.

any highest bid to beat 821.6.

FIG. 13. Survey of Franklin's House. (Courtesy of The Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses and Loss by Fire.)
to quit it; but we are apt to forget that we are grown old, and Building is an Amusement.\textsuperscript{11}

Seven months later on May 30, 1787, in response to her inquiries, he goes into more detail:

Dear Sister:

In your Letter of March 9, you mention that you wanted to know all about my Buildings. To the East End of my Dwelling-House I have made an Addition of 16 Feet and an half wide and 33 feet long, that is the whole Length of the old House, so that the Front and Back of the old and new Building range even, and the Row of Windows, Eaves, and Roof are continu'd so as to appear but one Building. By this Addition I have gain'd a large Cellar for Wood, a Drawing-Room or Dining-Room on the same Level with our old Dining-Room, in which new Room we can dine a Company of 24 Persons, it being 16 feet wide and 30½ long; and it has 2 Windows at each End, the North and South, which will make it an airy Summer Room: and for Winter there is a good Chimney in the Middle, made handsome with marble Slabs. Over this Room is my Library, of the same Dimensions, with like Windows at each End, and lin'd with Books to the Ceiling: Over this are 2 lodging-Rooms: and over all a fine Garret. The Way into the Lower Room is out of the Entry passing by the Foot of the Stairs. Into the Library I go thro' one of the Closets of the old Drawing-Room or Bed-Chamber. And into the two new Rooms above thro' a Passage cut off from the Nursery. All these Rooms are now finished and inhabited, very much to the Convenience of the Family, who were before too much crowded.

The two new Houses next the Street are three Stories high, besides the Garrets, and an arch'd Passage is left in the middle between them to come thro' down to my Dwelling, wide enough for a Carriage; so that I have the old Passage Lot left free to build another House. The two Houses are 24 feet front each, and 45 deep. We are all well and join in Love to you and yours. I am ever, your affectionate Brother.

B. Franklin.\textsuperscript{12}

As a result, both the house and the court were greatly improved. Entrance was now direct from High Street through the arch, and the house, which was originally thirty-four feet square, now had a front of fifty feet, the depth remaining as before. In the spacious dining-room on the first floor the American Philosophical Society occasionally met when their president's indisposition made it too difficult for him to go to the Hall. The library on the second floor extending the full depth of the house, the walls lined with books to the ceiling, was spoken of as the largest private library of the day. The house stood in the middle of the garden which, he wrote to a friend, he turned "into grass plots" and gravel walks with trees, flowers, and shrubs, since the market on High Street now supplied all his needs on that score. A mulberry tree and several sycamores afforded shade for the Court which was surrounded on three sides by a brick wall, there being no outlet on Chestnut Street to the south (fig. 14).

\textsuperscript{11} Library of Congress. Papers of Benjamin Franklin, miscellaneous VIII.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.; Smyth, IX: 589.
Even with these details, the picture is incomplete. Unlike the Shippen-Wistar House (fig. 22), the Powell House (fig. 23), and other houses which still stand, Franklin Court has to be re-created on the basis of the documentary materials just described. We know little or nothing about the other houses, the two fronting on the street, the one built on the former driveway, the printing house he built for his grandson, B. F. Bache, between his own home and the backs of the houses on High Street (fig. 14).

Evidence that building had a fascination for Franklin has been noted above, and there is ample proof that he approached it with his usual thoroughness. In a hitherto unused, and undated memorandum on "Mr. Franklin’s Piece of Ground on which he proposed to Build a Dwelling House for a small Family . . ." he describes the lot, soil, depth at which water is found, building materials, etc., and concludes with a suggestion on cheap houses which is as applicable today as it was two hundred years ago:

The Plan of a House . . . in which Plan, Regard is to be had chiefly to these Particulars, Convenience, Security against Fire & Cheapness; so that it may be considered as a kind of Pattern House by future Builders, within the Power of Tradesmen & People of moderate Circumstances to imitate & follow.\footnote{Amer. Philos. Soc. Franklin Papers.}

Even if the document were not in Franklin’s hand, this feeling for the usefulness and social implications of the plan would suggest the author. Nevertheless, its application to his own Franklin Court in a relatively short time after his death would probably have come somewhat as a surprise even to him. In the course of the next two decades the court was cut up into no less than twenty-seven building lots, and in 1811 Franklin’s home was torn down.

What is needed as a prerequisite for the reclamation of Franklin Court is a carefully planned archaeological search for the remains of foundations, cornerstones, the brick wall, and the well; and a scientific analysis of the style and materials of the arched passageway to High Street under the two houses Franklin built in 1786 to replace three smaller ones. The results should add much to the written and printed records. It is a special task that might well be a first consideration for the Advisory Commission appointed by President Truman in connection with the Philadelphia National Historical Park. The support and cooperation of the Historical and Museum Commission of the State, the American Philosophical Society, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Franklin Institute, and other organizations, will obviously be available to the full extent of their separate capacities.

THE OLD LIBRARY COMPANY SITE

Among the other important historic sites of the Philadelphia National Historical Park area is that once occupied by the beautiful building of the Library Company of Philadelphia located on the east side of Fifth Street, almost directly across from the Hall of the Society (\textit{cp}.
fig. 4). Built in 1789, according to plans of Dr. William Thornton (fig. 16), later one of the architects of the national Capitol, it was one of the finest Georgian colonial buildings of the period, quite in harmony with the Independence Square group. Speaking of it in 1793 Moreau de St. Méry\footnote{Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey (1793-1798), 352, tr. and ed. by Kenneth and Anna M. Roberts, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1947.} says:

This is situated opposite the Philosophical Society and adds to the beauty of the square on which it fronts. It was incorporated in 1747, and was originally established by subscription in 1731. It has
fifteen thousand volumes. It is open to the public daily except Sunday. Books are borrowed by leaving a sum of money as a guarantee of their return, and to replace them when they are worn out.

In 1792 a decree added to this Library the rare and valuable collection bequeathed to the public by Dr. James Logan. The structure of this Library is well designed. One enters by a door which opens on a circular staircase built as a ramp.

In a niche on the front of the building, above the entrance, is a statue of Benjamin Franklin a little larger than life size. He wears a Roman robe.

The statue to which St. Méry refers is still in existence. It is of Cararra marble, was executed by the Italian sculptor, Francesco Lazarrini, and installed in 1792. It would doubtless be available to any approved reconstruction project along with other objects salvaged when the building was destroyed in 1887, like the ornamental rainspouts and wrought-iron balustrade which led to the entrance up the double flight of stairs from the ground level.

Often spoken of as Franklin's library, it was started in 1731, and the charter of incorporation was obtained in 1742. In 1769 several other library groups "were blended with the Library Company of Philadelphia, the title conferred upon it by the Charter." In a brief "Account of the Library" in the Catalogue of 1789 is the following interesting statement:

A spirit of literary improvement made its way among all classes of people, and the philanthropy of the great and amiable character * who suggested the plan, was gratified by tracing the books as well into the hands of the opulent, with whom literature is sometimes no more then one of the ornaments of civil life, as among those to whom it renders a more substantial benefit.  

* Doctor Franklin.

Franklin's share in initiating the movement for the library, and his continued interest in it appears frequently in his correspondence and in the *Autobiography*. In the latter he tells how, after the experiment by the Junto of "clubbing our books to a common library" he thought of the project for a library on a larger scale:

And now I set on foot my first project of a public nature, that for a subscription library. I drew up the proposals, got them put into form by our great scrivener, Brockden, and, by the help of my friends in the Junto, procured fifty subscribers of forty shillings each to begin with, and ten shillings a year for fifty years, the term our company was to continue. We afterwards obtain'd a charter, the company being increased to one hundred: this was the mother of all the North American subscription libraries, now so numerous. It is become a great thing itself, and continually increasing. These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defence of their privileges.

Franklin printed the first catalogue in 1733, and it was his firm that printed the laws in 1746. It was he who induced the directors to impose a fine for non-attendance at Board meetings of "two bottles of good wine"; consulted with friends and directors, especially the Librarian, Francis Hopkinson, on the acquisition and loan of books. As the first circulating library in America, it functioned on a very humane basis, as is attested by the extension to William Bartram of the use of books without payment of the usual price of a share.

Many of the members of the Company were also members of the American Philosophical Society, and the intercommunications, as well as the rivalries, were not infrequent. Franklin was devoted to the Library, and towards the end of his life he suggested that there be enclosed in the cornerstone of the building a scroll with the names of the young men who started the project. In his excellent "Historical Background" for the Report of the Commissioners referred to above, M. J. McCosker tells of the legend that Franklin's ghost was often seen among the books of the Old Library Company. A charming story with many implications! Among these, the subtle suggestion of Franklin's deep respect for books, and the dynamic force of ideas conserved and perpetuated in our libraries, merits emphasis here for various reasons.

Fig. 17. Proposed East Mall, showing Carpenters' Hall, Old Custom House, and New Custom House. (Courtesy of the Fairmount Park Art Association.)
The possibility of the restoration by the American Philosophical Society of this historical landmark in Old Philadelphia to house our Library deserves serious consideration. I say "possibility" because there may be other solutions. The Society owns the large lot on the southwest corner of Fourth and Chestnut Streets, located in the Independence National Park area. Midway between the Square and Franklin Court, it offers attractive opportunities of its own. Meanwhile, the expenditure of the relatively large sum of money involved will properly be questioned. At first blush, many will doubtless feel that the money should be devoted to research. But the priority claims of the Library are strong. Libraries, particularly specialized libraries like ours, are essential to research. Side by side with the laboratories, they are an integral part of research and the promotion of knowledge. It doesn't matter whether the research is in the mathematical, biological, or social sciences, or in the humanities, the records of past progress and achievement in practice or theory are necessary even to the most individualistic scientist and scholar.

In the case of our Society, there is at present great need for better housing of our manuscript collections and books. Every year the need increases. Indeed if we consider the present rate of accessions over a period of another decade, not to speak of the "twenty years," which, in 1890, led to the mistaken action of temporizing, by adding a third story to the Hall, it will become imperative. Furthermore, in past years, far-seeing members of the Society, impressed with its future needs, provided for just this contingency by creating a Building Fund.

The Founders were not all wealthy men, yet they paid out of their own pockets for the erection of these two beautiful buildings. The Hall of the Society still stands as concrete evidence of their vision and courage. The building of the Old Library Company was demolished in 1887. But the site on which it stood will become available when the Commission of the Philadelphia National Historical Park carries out the program of *Public Law 795 of the 80th Congress*. Probably nothing in the entire plan of conservation and rehabilitation would contribute so much to the realization of the spirit behind the action of our national government, as the restoration of this fine old home of the Old Library Company across the way from the great Square at the entrance to the Independence National Historical Park.

THE EAST MALL

The East Mall is, of course, the main feature, the axis as it were, of the Independence National Historical Park. As described in the Act, it extends from the east side of Fifth to Second Street, occupying the three city blocks between Chestnut and Walnut Streets (*cp.* figs. 3 and 17). The most important building from the
historical and architectural standpoint in the area is Carpenters' Hall. Located almost at the center of the proposed park, it was built by the Carpenters' Company in 1770, and stands today as a monument to the good taste and workmanship of colonial builders. Its association with some of the most stirring events of the Revolution gives it an especial historic significance. This and the story of the building have been made the subject of intensive research by Charles E. Peterson, Regional Architect of the National Park Service, and the results embodied in an excellent manuscript: "Notes on Carpenters' Hall in the Proposed Philadelphia National Historical Park."

During the colonial period, and for some years thereafter, the area in which it stands was mostly occupied by private houses. Among them, to mention only a few, were: the oldest house in Philadelphia; the official house of the President of the Continental Congress; the house of Alexander Hamilton, and the Treasury Department; a row of fine houses on the south side of Chestnut Street below Fifth Street, one occupied by Gilbert Stuart; the Bishop White House; the houses occupied at different times by Benjamin Rush; the Dilworth-Todd-Moylan house; the Friends' Academy, and many others. At the eastern end, on Second Street, was William Penn's official mansion, the Slate Roof House, where he met with his Council. Immediately adjoining it on the south, stands the Drinker House, popularly known today as Kreider's Gun Shop. Tradition has it that the first male child of Philadelphia was born there.

But while there were many private homes in the section before the national period, its proximity to the political and commercial centers led to a rapid transformation in the nineteenth century. Financial interests, banks, insurance companies, the Stock Exchange, the Merchants' Exchange, the Customs, and the Post Office invaded and took over the area. The transition was accompanied also by a radical change in architectural style away from the colonial, as shown in the Old

![Fig. 19. First National Bank, later known as Girard Bank. Birch Print, 1800, first state.](image-url)
Custom House on the left of the vista (fig. 18) from Independence Square down to the proposed East Mall. This view also illustrates the nondescript jumble of buildings of the later period which still remain. In addition to the Second Bank of the United States or the Old Custom House, there are two other remarkable structures, built in response to the demands of financial and mercantile interest: the Girard Bank and the Merchants' Exchange. All three remain today as physical survivals, not only of the transformation of the area, but as superb examples of the neoclassical trend in architecture in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Almost within a stone's throw of each other, they are near neighbors to Carpenters' Hall, the only survival of the colonial in the area. The Second Bank of the United States, or the Old Custom House after Jackson took away the bank charter, is usually attributed to Strickland, though the original plans were apparently done by Latrobe. It is a striking reproduction of the Parthenon, the best of three built at the time, the second being in New York, the third in Munich, Germany. The Girard Bank on Fourth Street, with its fine facade of Corinthian columns and pediment, was at one time the financial center of the nation (fig. 19). Untenanted for a time, it seemed in danger of demolition, when it was taken over by the City Trusts, which now occupies it. It could with propriety be made into a national museum of banking and finance. Across the street and less than a block to the south is the Merchants' Exchange (fig. 20). Once the proud headquarters and the terminal of the city transport system, its lower story behind its fine classical colonade is now given over to market stalls. Nowhere else in America are there found such superb survivals of the Greek revival which, despite the strong nationalistic trend in the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century, spread into many American cities and even to Europe. At the eastern end of the National Historical Park, as if setting limits to it, is the site of William Penn's official town mansion, the Slate Roof House. In the immediate neighborhood are Kreider's Gun Shop mentioned above and the large new Custom House, in good modern colonial, as if to put Carpenters' Hall "in countenance."

The heavy inartistic buildings on Chestnut Street between Fifth and Second Streets (fig. 21) will serve at this point as a sort of boundary to
the Mall. The group represents the prosperous decades of the last century. In the opinion of some, the structures ought to come down. Opposed to this is the more generally accepted view, that, since they are the expression of the taste and outlook of a particular period in our history, they should be preserved.

ASSOCIATED AREA TO THE SOUTH

Equally intriguing in its survivals is the area immediately to the south of the proposed national park. In contrast to the latter, it always has been residential in character. Private houses, churches, and markets predominated, rather than buildings devoted to public affairs, finance, and commerce. Furthermore, unlike the area to the north, it has never been subjected to the high pressure demands involved in the transition from one type of community to another. Hence, while financial and commercial interests invaded and took over the district north of Walnut Street, ruthlessly wiping out scores of private residences, it stayed its hand in the area immediately to the south of the East Mall. Business and finance preferred to follow the general trend westward rather than southward which led to nowhere in particular. As a result the section south of Walnut has not changed greatly in the last one hundred and fifty years, save perhaps in a gradual exodus of the older elements of the population and the invasion of new and foreign stocks. There has been no sweeping demo-

![Fig. 22. The Shippen-Wistar House, Fourth and Locust Streets.](image1)

![Fig. 23. Powell House—hall and stairs. (Courtesy of J. B. Lippincott Co.)](image2)

lition of whole areas, but rather deterioration resulting from stagnation. As a consequence, there are an amazing number of fine examples of domestic architecture of the colonial period, some well preserved, but many more in various stages of decay. According to a survey made by the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Architects in 1934, seventy-three structures of historical and architectural interest erected during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries still remained in the ten block area between Walnut and Lombard and Fifth and Sixth Streets.

Merely to enumerate some of the more outstanding would suggest the significance of this section in the city’s cultural and social history, as well as its value as a laboratory for the study of early American domestic and ecclesiastical architecture. More than sixty private houses, five churches, and a charming Market Head House have survived here, while not a single building of this type remains in the Independence National Historical Park area. Unfortunately, however, this condition won’t last unless protection and conservation measures are taken promptly.
Of the seventy-three structures listed by the architectural survey referred to above, eight have been demolished. Others have deteriorated and been dismantled—doorways, interior woodwork, stairs, and balustrades of colonial design and origin have been taken away by private owners, and looters, or purchased by museums. Of the relatively many historic buildings of this area in and about what was known as Society Hill few suggestive examples are shown here by way of illustration: first, the Shippen-Wistar House (fig. 22); second, the hall and stairway of the Powell House (fig. 23); third, the doorway of the Hill-Physick House (fig. 24); and fourth, the Market Head House (fig. 25). The last with its broken windows and neglected appearance graphically suggests the dangers of decay as a prelude to destruction.

Now that the whole character of the section is to be transformed by the intrusion into the region of high-speed transportation, properties lying dormant for decades will be in demand and come to life. Under the authority vested in it by the State Redevelopment Law, the city has presented the entire area from the waterfront west to Seventh Street, and from Vine Street south to Lombard, as “The Old City Redevelopment Area” for special study and action by City Council. And since the city’s annual budget for the redevelopment of blighted areas has been increased to five million dollars, this section, which is geographically and historically so closely linked to the Independence National Historical Park, is expected to receive attention in the not distant future.

Meanwhile, the federal plan for the East Mall carries a modest project for the area in the form of a series of walk-ways along gardens, old streets, and buildings, which tie together points of historic interest and their relationship to the larger features of the rehabilitation program. Unfortunately, it is quite inadequate when examined in light of the wealth of opportunity. Instead of a short walk-way from Walnut Street to the north side of Manning Street, the program should carry through to Pine, if not to Lombard Street. This does not mean, however, that the federal government should do it. The associations of the area are local, rather than national. The prevailing characteristics of the region would suggest that the people of Philadelphia themselves should assume the responsibilities of conservation in the transformation confronting this part of Old Philadelphia.

Indeed, if only church edifices are considered, the need for action is urgent. Colonial survivals of this group, as seen in Old St. Peter’s, Old St. Joseph’s, the Pine Street Presbyterian, St. Paul’s, and St. Mary’s are not only architecturally excellent, but, with their cemeteries, reflect historic associations of especial significance in the city’s and the nation’s social and ecclesiastical history. Like

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the old private houses, the Pennsylvania Hospital, and other historic buildings, they should be protected, lest they share the fate of the First Presbyterian Church (fig. 26) on Washington Square, which was unfortunately demolished ten years ago to make room for a parking lot. For many years it made an attractive colonial background for Washington Square and a reminder of the early years of Presbyterianism in Philadelphia. The conditions that led to its destruction are, of course, inherent in the radical change in the population of this part of the city. Nevertheless one cannot resist expressing the hope that they will not again be allowed to operate in similar cases. It is inconceivable that a like fate should befall Old St. Peter’s, Old St. Joseph’s, the Pine Street Presbyterian, and other landmarks of the early religious life of Philadelphia. Certainly the cooperation of the different ecclesiastical groups for the conservation of these historic shrines could be secured. Meanwhile, private initiative and capital are quite aware of latent possibilities in this area from the real estate standpoint, as is evidenced in the discussions of plans for large-scale apartment house projects somewhat similar to the developments in New York’s East Side. Not a few suburbanites, who spend from an hour and a half to two hours going and coming from suburban homes to the in-town offices, look with interest on the potentialities of attractive apartments overlooking a reclaimed Delaware, yet within twenty to twenty-five minutes actual walking distance, or a ten minute trolley or bus ride, to and from business.

OMISSIONS IN THE FEDERAL ACT

One of the canons of conservation and reconstruction in historic areas is a sensitive response to opportunities for reclamation and restoration. On this score the Report of the Commission to Congress is admirable. On the other hand, the law as finally passed omitted several important locations in Old Philadelphia that should, in the opinion of many, have been included. Of these the most outstanding is closely associated with four of the founders of our republic—Washington, Jefferson, John...
Adams, and Robert Morris. It is the site of the Graff House (fig. 28) at the southwest corner of Seventh and High Streets, where Jefferson had his lodgings, and where he wrote the great Declaration. Of its significance in any program of historic restoration in Old Philadelphia, there can be no question. The Commission’s Report refers to it as “one of the most notable historic sites in the world.” Within a stone’s throw of the Jefferson site to the east at 190 High Street, now 526, 528, and 530 Market Street, stood the presidential mansion occupied by Washington while in Philadelphia from 1790 to 1797. After the conclusion of Washington’s second term, John Adams occupied it from 1797 to 1800. Owned by Robert Morris, it had been rented to Washington through the city when the national government moved from New York to Philadelphia. Morris himself lived in the mansion adjoining at the southeast corner of High and Sixth Streets. With the opening of the North Mall, both the Washington and Morris sites will be cleared, affording a remarkable opportunity for cooperation between federal and state authorities. It should be mandatory to link up the Jefferson site with that of the Executive Mansion where the national government was implemented and its administrative machinery developed under the Constitution.

The inclusion of this area in the Independence National Historical Park as a monument to the author of the Declaration of Independence is most desirable for other reasons. By recessing the building line slightly on the south side of Market Street from Sixth to Seventh Street, the Jefferson site would be brought in plain view of that of the Executive Mansion in the Sixth Street block of the State Park and could easily be combined with it into a single project. Moreover, by similarly recessing and landscaping the same side of Market Street eastward for a block and a half, the project could be linked up with Franklin Court which is included in the Act as a part of the National Park. By this modest extension of the area in the federal law, the association of Washington, Jefferson, John Adams, and Robert Morris, as well as Franklin, with Old Philadelphia would be brought out, and their relationship to each other, in a somewhat more personal way than at Independence Square, emphasized.

The more intimate relationships of these national figures resident on High Street is strikingly illustrated in several interesting possessions of the Society, especially three remarkable portraits of the colonial period which now grace the north wall of its main assembly room: Franklin by Charles Willson Peale after Martin (fig. 11); Washington by Gilbert Stuart, painted on commission for the Society (fig. 29); and of Jefferson, late in life, in a masterly painting by Thomas Sully (fig. 27). The Society also has the priceless copy of the Declaration of Independence in Jefferson’s own hand, with Franklin’s and Adams’ slight changes, and the chair with a desk arm which he used while writing the Declaration (fig. 30). Across State House Yard in the National Museum, Independence Hall, is the Peale portrait of Jefferson painted in 1791. Here reproduced from the engraving by Akin and Harrison, Jr., in 1800 (fig. 31), it has a peculiar interest both artistically and historically, for although Jefferson was then forty-eight years old, one cannot resist the feeling that, although Peale was every inch a realist, he nevertheless, in painting his friend, instinctively caught something of the younger Jefferson, and the writing of the great Declaration fifteen years earlier, at the age of thirty-three.

Obviously the Independence National Historical Park would be greatly enriched by the develop-

Fig. 31. Thomas Jefferson by Charles Willson Peale, 1791. (Courtesy of the Atwater Kent Museum.)
ment of the Jefferson site project, while the State Park would be made more impressive and beautiful just at a point where it enters its most historic section from the north. At the same time, it would establish a better balance in the redevelopment of historic Philadelphia, inviting attention to the Christ Church area, and the existence of such unique survivals as Elfreth's Alley, the Betsy Ross House, and other places of historic interest in the section north of Market Street. From every standpoint, the Jefferson-Washington-Franklin project offers an historical park area of national significance not to be found elsewhere in America.

MODERNIZING AMERICAN CITIES AND THE NATIONAL HERITAGE

The modernizing of an historical city is a challenge—a great responsibility and a great opportunity. While the everyday needs of the citizens come first, and must be met, the conservation and care of historical survivals is a patriotic duty. Happily the two are not incompatible. In general, though not always, they can be harmonized. That this has been so frequently overlooked in the growth of our cities has resulted in irreparable loss to our national heritage. Priceless historic buildings and sites have been wiped out almost overnight in the mad rush of an increasingly megalopolitan civilization.

The extraordinary growth and transformation of cities in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century is the most significant characteristic of our civilization. While the city has been a dominant factor in the evolution of society since the earliest historical records, urbanization in the modern sense has gone hand in hand with the industrial revolution. With the progress of machine industry and the factory system, cities began to grow by leaps and bounds, bringing in its wake the modern slum, the gradual dispersion of the well-to-do to the suburbs, and in recent years the substitution of the apartment for the home. This in turn has interjected an alarming degree of biological sterility into the centers of population which once were so prolific. For the most part, our cities today depend on the flow of immigration from the rural districts or from abroad. Among the cultural implications of the process is a steady weakening of the ties with the past, and the loss of that sense for the continuity of the cultural and spiritual life of the people in precisely those places where it is of vital importance that it be understood and appreciated. And yet cities are preeminently the custodians of the cultural heritage of nations. Somehow they live and carry on, when the empires and political systems of which they are a part crumble and die. Even though shattered and seemingly crushed by the savagery of modern warfare, they survive. A new Coventry, and a greater London arise phoenix-like from the ruins, better and more beautiful, because scientifically planned to meet the needs of a new civilization. Moreover in all worthwhile post-war city planning careful attention is given to the conservation of cultural resources.

The Blitz was no respecter of things cultural. Quite the contrary! Next to military targets, they were among the first objectives of the barbarous attacks from the air. By the same token, the stricken peoples, as if sensing the real meaning of these survivals, strove to protect and save them. With infinite patience, they tragically searched the wreckage to salvage all they possibly could of cathedrals, churches, shrines, works of art, precious manuscripts and books—the shattered symbols of the continuity of history—as essentials in keeping alive the national credo. By way of cooperation, our government, acting on the belief that these things are also the cherished evidence of the creative genius of peoples, and the expression of their faith, sent commissions to study and assist in the work of restoration and
conservation. At the same time, special instructions were issued to our armies and navies to protect and respect the cultural monuments of the peoples whose lands they might occupy. Indeed, the safeguarding of these national treasures of enemy, as well as allied countries, became almost an article of faith in the catechism of our soldiers and sailors.

The application of these principles in peacetime to our own cities accounts for the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, the time honored care of Boston and other New England towns for their historic shrines, the great civic development, with federal aid, in honor of Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase in St. Louis, the more modest, but none the less significant, conservation and restoration of Old St. Augustine, and that of historic areas of other American cities. In the face of these things, and the close association of Philadelphia's historic landmarks with the ideals fundamental to our liberty, it would be laboring the obvious to press further the special responsibility for the conservation of the symbols of our national heritage in this city at a time when the propaganda of a ruthless and alien ideology is so aggressively rampant at home and abroad.

Fig. 32. Merchants' Exchange and Market Stalls.