

RECOLLECTIONS  
OF THE  
Old Borough of Chester

From 1834 to 1850



OF THE STREETS, HOUSES, PLACES OF BUSINESS, INHABITANTS, AND GENERAL SURROUNDINGS; TAKING IN PART OF THE OLD WILMINGTON ROAD AND OF THE OLD CONCORD ROAD.



By Geo. E. Darlington

BEFORE

The Delaware County Historical  
Society

MAY 31st, 1917

# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE OLD BOROUGH OF CHESTER

## FROM 1834 TO 1850

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It seems proper to begin in the part of the town first settled, after the landing of William Penn, and when the place was called Upland; which settlement appears to have been on the east side of Chester, or Upland, Creek, near the shore-end of the present Lower Pier, on the northern bank of the Delaware River. The first landing place is fixed as on west side of the creek, near the south end of the present Penn Street, where a mark has been set, and near which John M. Broomall, in later years, erected a brick residence.

What is now Second and Edgmont Streets is the location of the first erected buildings; unless some were located to the west of the mouth of Chester Creek, on what was later known as the Kerlin Farm; as tradition fixes buildings on the west side of Penn Street, near the river; and in recent years, in building operations, an old well was found, that is said to have belonged to an old destroyed Public House. At the southwest corner of Penn and Third Streets was an old, long, frame building, reputed to have been another old tavern, but which was, in 1830, the residence of the Bags family; and on the north side of Third Street, opposite Penn Street, stands the old Brobson house, also said, by some, to have been another old tavern; but neither the approach to it, or the building itself, would lend credit to this reputation, nor was it so reputed by the old residents of Chester, as it was a private house long before 1830; but the old frame building opposite, did bear the tavern reputation, and it is hard to conceive why the Quaker William Penn, or his followers, required so many Public Houses.

### East Side of Chester Creek

Going back to the east side of the creek, there was, in old Chester, an old wharf on the creek side, at the end of the present Second Street, formerly Front Street. This evidently was used as one of the first regular landing places for vessels, and it had an old frame storing house on it, standing along the creek side and also near the south side of Front Street; another old building for storage stood on the south side of this wharfage, which faced along the creek side; the wharf logs extending on the creek side, as well as on the north and south ends.

On the southeast corner of Edgmont and Front Streets, stood the old brick "Logan" house, two stories high, as the houses of that time were built, with English-made brick; the front faced on Front Street, with its substantial front door, with brass knocker, and stoop covering.

On the east side of Edgmont Street, south from the rear of the Logan House and extending toward the river, stood old brick houses, in a row; one occupied by William Grubb, his wife and daughter, Anna Eliza; others at times, by Martin Wolf and family and William Blizzard and family. Later a small frame dwelling was erected on this east side, near to the high-water mark of the river, probably occupied by Captain James Moulder, and family. The river tides flowed to near this house.

The old "Lower Pier," as it was called, extended out into the river beyond low-water mark, to give depth of water, when built, for the landing of vessels or steamboats; the two outer, blocks reached by two bridge-ways, under which the tide waters flowed. There were two such piers, one being at the foot of Market Street, and called the upper pier—built in a similar manner; this upper pier was the one mostly used for steamboat landing in the eighteen thirties, as it is to this time; the waters between the two piers, being a harbor for ice-bound vessels, sea-going ships, barks, and brigs, in the winter time.

#### Front Street From Edgmont to Market Street

East of the old Logan House, and between that and Market Street, from the south side of Front Street to the high-water line over the marsh flats of the river, was an open lot; bordered along the flats by a row of basket willow trees. This lot was used generally in the summer and spring as a pasture lot, and by fishermen, for the drying of shad and herring nets, stretched on pole frames. In the eighteen thirties it was also used as a drill ground by the "Light House Troop," composed of men of the borough and vicinity, who drilled there on horseback. Major Aldrich Price was an active officer.

#### East and West Sides of Edgmont From Front Street to the Railroad

At the northwest corner of Edgmont and Front Streets and near the creek was a large building, known as the "Grannery" or "Grainery," no doubt used at an earlier date for the storing of grain from vessels, as well as from Pennsylvania farms; as an old log wharfage was along the creek side, for landing purposes. In the eighteen thirties this building was used as a room dwelling for numerous families of laboring men; their children, as well as those of that neighborhood being known as "Wharf rats." In later years, this building was reconstructed into and used as a grist mill.

North of this old building and on the west side of Edgmont Street was a row of very old two-story English brick dwellings with dormer-windows, the rears extending close to the creek, on the side of which the old wharf logs, still, were well preserved. These houses were also occupied by the families of laboring men, fishermen, and watermen; many of whom were originally from the State of Delaware; among these were Andrew Wheaton with his family, his sons named Andy, Job and Lewis, and two daughters; William Blizzard and family, at one time; Samuel Dutton and his family,

his son being known as "Sammy John," from the frequent calls for him under that name, by the shrill voice of his mother. All these houses had open access to the creek in the rear.

Andrew Wheaton, Jr., was a rail bird pusher and gunned extensively, in the fall and winter months, for wild ducks—raising tamed ducks, for anchoring out, near his blind, as decoys; the quacking of these ducks attracting the wild ones in their flights.

Still to the north of these old houses was an old, well-preserved stone house, two stories and an attic, occupied by an old lady, Mrs. Richards, and her daughter. The location of several old jails, said to have been built in Penn's time, appears uncertain; but it is clear that a Court House with a jail was erected on the west, or creek side, of the Edgmont road or street, north of Second Street, of the present City of Chester, in the time of William Penn; described as being near a passage way leading to a landing on Chester Creek. The location of this Court building was lost sight of and apparently unknown to the generation of Chester people born after 1830. This Richards dwelling was at the north end of corn-cracker row and near the coal and lumber yard of Joshua P. and William P. Eyre; and was torn away in recent years, to make room for the present market buildings; the market now or recently occupied by Copple, being on the site of the Richards house. In removing this house, in the cellar, on the creek side, were found the remains of the old prison cells, with their iron-grated doors; and the workmen found in these cell ruins, several old English copper pennies of ancient date. These facts establish the certainty that this Richards' building had once been a Court House and jail, as jails were located in the court buildings in those old times.

On the north side of this building was a passageway to the creek landing and to the north of this way stood a one-story log building, near the street, known as "Penn's First Council House." This in the 1830's was used by Samuel Long as a cooper shop, and when torn down in 1853, furnished canes, from the well-preserved oak, for some of the older residents, the inscriptions on which show this building erected in 1680, the year Penn received his grant of Pennsylvania from King Charles the Second. The author has one of these canes, which was presented to his father.

From the "History of Delaware County," compiled by Dr. George Smith, we learn of other places used for the Court meetings, one being in the "House of Defense," which was in existence prior to the building of the Penn Council House, and was near Upland Creek, as Chester Creek was then known, and this was before Penn received his Pennsylvania grant from the crown. It appears from the records that the earlier established English Courts were at New Castle, on the Delaware; the Pennsylvania Courts at that time being presided over by unlearned Justices and not by law Judges.

The boundaries of the Counties of Philadelphia and of Chester (which included what is now Delaware County) were fixed in 1685, and it is not likely that the then Chester County was a separate judicial district, with

its own Courts; but in this 1685 year, there were Court orders for a "New Court House and Prison," and a tax imposed for the building thereof. The dissatisfaction continuing in 1686, the Court ordered Court buildings sold to Robert Wade and further ordered another Court House and Prison to be erected on land presented by James "Saunderlaine." The sale to Wade was not completed before 1701, or the title from Sanderland made before that year.

In 1689, by order of Court, a landing place and open street was laid out from the northwesterly corner of the Court House to low-water mark, by Chester Creek, and so of the same breadth by the said creek, down to the Delaware River, to low-water mark; thence and also from the first-mentioned corner of the Court House, a public street thirty feet wide through Chester Town.

This would show the westerly end of that Court House, at that time, to be near the creek, with an open way along the creek, south to the River Delaware, below and near the present Second Street. The street north from this old Court House was the present Edgmont Avenue.

In 1686, a Court House and Jail must have been on the site of the old Richards House, and Edgmont Street later changed. Doctor Smith, in his history, says, speaking of the year 1700, "That everlasting subject, the Court House and Prison, again claimed the attention of the Court and Grand Jury," and, they ordered them repaired and that a pair of "stocks" and a whipping-post be added.

Before 1704, this Court House and Jail was damaged by fire and the Court, in that year, ordered it pulled down. Where the Courts were held from that time until 1724, is not known; but in that year the old Court House on Market Street, between Fourth and Fifth Streets, was erected on the Sanderland land, presented to the county for that purpose. The old workhouse on Fourth Street, no doubt, was built and occupied before that, and, in fact, Doctor Smith was of that opinion, and that it was erected in 1702, and that it was the western end of the prison building, standing in 1850. He also says that a new Court House was not erected until 1724.

The old Penn Council House, in the 1830's, and up into the 1850's, stood on the southeast corner of a large lot of ground of Joshua P. and William P. Eyre, extending northward from the alley way at the Richards house, or old Court House building, and along the west side of Edgmont Street and east side of the creek, to the rear of the buildings fronting on James Street.

On this Eyre lot, and on the west side of Edgmont Street, south from James Street, was the old counting house, or office, of said Eyres; and to the west of this, on the creek side, was their old frame ware or storage house, used for storage of goods and wares, brought to and from Philadelphia, in the old sloop-rigged vessel "Jonas Preston," reputed to have been built at Ship Creek Woods, higher up the creek; this vessel had for its captain, Humphrey Gibson, later Richard Ross. Later another sloop vessel was added to this trade, named the J. G. Johnson, of which John Phillips

was the captain. This frame warehouse was later replaced by a substantial stone storing house. A log-faced wharf extended along this side of the creek from the old Richards house to the James Street bridge over the creek.

To the northeast, and near this store house, stood an old two-story and attic stone dwelling, occupied by Samuel Long and family, and to which he, later, removed his cooper shop.

The old Eyre store building at the southwest corner of James and Edgmont Streets had an attached brick dwelling house in the rear, that fronted on Edgmont Street and bordered on this old warehouse lot.

To the north of James Street, continuing the west side, stood shedding of the stables of the National Hotel and next above the frame two-story cabinet shop of Job Rulon, where he did cabinet work and also made coffins for funerals, as ordered. Next came his brick two-story house, with a porch in front, in which he and his family dwelt. The family consisting of his wife, Abigail, or Abby, as she was called, and children, Isaac E., who followed the sea and was lost on the coast of China; Hannah, Ann, who married Colonel William C. Gray; Nathaniel and Arabella.

Next north was the entrance to the tan yard of William Brobson, where he cured and tanned hides for leather, and which yard extended to Chester Creek, as did the Rulon lot.

On the northeast corner of the Brobson Yard, stood an old brick two-story house, then used as a dwelling for the foreman of the tan yard and his family, James Bell being one of the earlier of these. One of the workers in this yard was a young white man, Bill Pike, son of Isaac Pike, usually known as "Ike"; another was Thomas Lytle, colored, and a favorite dish of his were the skinned ox-tails, which he carried home in a bunch, like skinned eels. Tom was a celebrated raiser of game fowls, the fighting qualities of which, in the cock-pits, had a celebrity; favored boys in the town were permitted to have at their homes a few of his hens and a cockerel, for raising fighters for Tom. North of this brick house was the little old frame blacksmith shop of John Grounsell, an old Englishman.

North of the Tan Yard and of the old blacksmith shop was the old pebble-dashed white dwelling of two stories of William Gehhard and his wife; this house much earlier appears to have been known as the Sanderlands. The Gehhards were both old people and their grounds extended south along Edgmont Street to a pasture lot, separating it from the Tan Yard, and extended back toward Chester Creek. A garden of old-fashioned flowers and box-wood was on the south side of the house, always kept in a neat and showy condition, in summer months.

Jonathan Pennell occupied this house later, with his family; and with his brother, Charles D., established a coal and lumber yard on the lot next the Tan Yard, with a landing and wharfage on the creek side, the office being on the site of the old blacksmith shop.

North of the Gehhard-Pennell House was an old house, called the Bernard House, occupied by the Bernard family, the daughter, Mary, being what was called "cross-eyed," and an old maid.

These houses on the west side of Edgmont Street, above the old Tan Yard, stood on a bank from six to ten feet above the bed of that street; the walk or pathway in front of the houses being stoned to protect pedestrians from the mud; tan bark from the Brobson Tan Yard was also largely used on such walks in the borough. The bank along the west side of the street, extended above Fifth Street, increasing in height as it went north.

Opposite Fifth Street and on the west side of Edgmont Street, Archibald Dick, a Chester lawyer in the 1820's, built a large new brick dwelling house, three stories high, with an imposing doorway in the middle of the front; with stone steps leading to it, and a portico over the doorway. After his death, John Kerlin, of the Foundry and Machine Company of Kitts & Kerlin, occupied this house, with his wife and two sons, Charles and Frederick, up to the time of the death of John Kerlin; the residence was then taken by Joshua P. and William P. Eyre; Joshua being unmarried and William's wife being Anna Eliza, the daughter of Dr. Job Terrill; they had one son, named Joshua P., who later married Martha, a daughter of Edmund Pennell. The lands of this house extended to Chester Creek and as far south as the Bernard grounds.

To the north of this stood the frame foundry and machine shops of Kitts & Kerlin, afterwards conducted by the Cornogs. Above this was an open lot to the railroad lands, more recently occupied as a lumber and coal yard by Joseph Hinkson.

The east side of Edgmont Street, south of said railroad, was unbuilt on, other than some small scattered buildings, to Fourth Street. At the southeast corner of Fourth and Edgmont Streets was an old frame stable; with open lots south of this, to the Abby Eyre old brick two-story dwelling, which adjoined the rear of the National Hotel, and standing back from the hotel building line; this old house had a portico in front, the doorway being in the center of the building, with rooms on each side of it. The family consisted of Grandmother Eyre, who was then a widow, and her three daughters, Sally, Jane and Elizabeth or Betsy, as she was called. Mrs. Job Rulon was another daughter. A dark covered alley way led from the street to the rear of the house, located on the hotel side. The garden of this house had the usual cherry, plum, gage and pear trees and currant and gooseberries, as other old places of the town, and home-made wines and good old-fashioned cakes were liberally served to visitors.

Continuing south, on the east side of Edgmont Street, from James Street, was the one-story stone house of old Sally Sullivan, who sold root beer, cakes and candies.

Next came a lumber yard of Joshua P. and William Eyre, having an old frame stable in the rear, which abutted on the rear lot of Edward Darlington's house.

This lumber yard extended to the Graham or Smith lot, and the southern boundary being what is now Graham Street.

To the south of this Graham Street was the property of Henry Hale Graham, a noted lawyer, his law office being a one-story building on the northeast corner of the lot and near the south line of what is now Graham Street, and being back from Edgmont Street; his house was on the south end of the lot, a fruit orchard being on this lot between the office and the house. The house faced Edgmont Street and was on the opposite side of the street from the old Penn Council House. The first floor of the dwelling was above the street level, and the doorway approached by stone steps, over which was the old time stoop, or roof cover, supported by wooden pillars. This building was two stories and one of the larger of the Chester dwellings. William Graham, the son of Henry Hale Graham, also a lawyer, occupied the building and office after his father's death, with his family; Edward Darlington's eldest son, William Graham Darlington, was named for him. Samuel Smith and family resided in this house after the death of William Graham, and within the recollection of this writer, and his daughter, Martha, taught school in that old law office building.

To the south of the Graham-Smith house was the old yellow brick house occupied in the eighteen thirties by Captain Robinson, his wife and family. The captain was a navy man of the 1812 war, and sailed with Commodores Decatur and Porter, on their Tripoli Expedition, in the Mediterranean. His daughter was Sarah Combs, and she and her husband, Ben Combs, with their family of daughters, were part of this family, and lived in this house after the death of Captain Robinson and his wife; Kate Combs, a daughter, married Ned Clyde, dying early; Emma married a Pottsville man; Susan married a man named Harris, afterwards Joseph Engle, as her second husband; and Sarah, the youngest, grew up in Chester. Captain Robinson and his wife were intimate in the family of Preston Eyre, and of Edward Darlington, and the old captain made bows and arrows for the children; also jumping-jacks from the breast bones of geese; the slender hickory stick made fast on a twisted string and drawn back to adhere to shoemaker's wax on the bone, for a few seconds, making the jack jump as the released stick struck the floor, or ground, on which it rested. This house was noted for its green gages and plums, grown on its grounds.

At the northeast corner of Edgmont Street and Front, now Second Street, was a vacant lot, used in connection with an old tenant house fronting on Front Street, east of Edgmont. This building was tenanted by families of laboring men.

#### North Side of Front Street to Welsh Lane

To the east of this, and on the north side of Front Street, stood an old two-story brick building, then occupied by Mrs. Finch and her maiden daughter, Eliza, who taught an infant school in a one-story office building, located on the lot, and to the west of the northwest corner of the back of



the dwelling. This was the first school the writer of this attended, in his infant years, and received his first lessons in geography by hearing the recitations of the older scholars; and which he repeated to his father at home, as he understood, the Capital of "Mechicken," (Michigan), as "De-trot" (Detroit). Later this dwelling was the home of Captain Richard Ross and his second wife, who had been the Widow Lampson. The captain had a son, Richard, or Dick, who had a sweet voice for singing; and this second wife had a son, William Lampson.

To the east of this old Finch house was a large vacant lot; then came a more modern two-story brick house, occupied in the early thirties by a Medical Doctor Van Dyke; later by the Reverend Mortimer Talbot, pastor of the Episcopal Church, and his family; still later by Major Aldrich Price and family; still later by Y. S. Walter and family, and still later by the Reverend Anson Hard, pastor of the Episcopal Church, and his family.

To the east of this house was a vacant lot, in which Isaiah Pike dried his shad nets; his house being to the east of it, a low frame building, where he lived with his wife, three daughters, Lydia, Mary and Ellen, and a son, Isaac. Isaiah was a tall, athletic man, and as a rail-bird pusher, could send his skiff boat through the reeds, on the tide, with the best of them, with a quick eye to mark the fallen bird. Other pushers of that time were Bill Rump, colored; Bill Blizzard, and Tom Mason, white, and later, Dick and Sam Brown, John Stewart and several others.

To the east of the Pike house, at the northwest corner of Market and Front Streets, was the old frame house of Becky Buck, with her little candy, cigar and tobacco shop. Becky was a widow and a character well known; with a tongue that could wag, strong and was feared, still she had her good points and reared several children of other people, out of kindness of heart; one was a girl named Barbara, dark hair and eyes and good looks; another was John Postell, a wild, reckless boy, but later became a member of the Methodist Church and a good workman in a shipyard, his reformation being attributed to the influence of a Pennsylvania German dressmaker, young woman, whom he later married.

At the northeast corner of Front and Market Streets stands an old English brick two-story house, reputed to have been a tavern in the early days of Chester; but certainly is a licensed house now, for a colored landlord, and has been since Judge Clayton first granted the Lytle license, for political work rendered him, Chester having a large colored population. This old house in the eighteen thirties was the home of old Phebe Mellon, or Malin, and her daughter, Sally, and had a yard of fruit trees extending north along the east side of Market Street.

Next, to the east of this, on the north side of Front Street, were some frame houses; then came the frame Methodist Church, which stood somewhat back from the street and was used by the white Methodists of the town until the time their newer church was erected, on the north side of Fifth Street, west from Market Street; then it passed to the ownership and use as a colored peoples' church, an advanced congregation from the old Haiti Meeting, on Welsh Lane.

Bethel Court, east of this Methodist Church, was unknown by that name in those earlier times. This Court, or short street, and the north side of this Front Street, east of the Court, and the west side of Welsh Lane, north of Front Street, was the part of the town most inhabited by the colored population of Chester, the Nugents, Murphys, Browns, Lytles, Rumps and other families well known to the white inhabitants.

An old frame, colored church, with its shouting congregation, was located on the west side of Welsh Lane, north of Second Street.

At the eastern terminus of Second Street and on the east side of Welsh Lane was the dwelling and property of Commodore David Porter, where his wife lived, with her family of children, David, William, Evelyn, Og, Hamilton, Harry and Imogene. David became Admiral Porter during the Civil War; Evelyn married Dr. Heap, of the Navy; Og and Hamilton were both killed in the old Mexican War, either under General Scott, or General Zach Taylor; and Harry was with the Walker Nicaragua Expedition, and suffered from wounds received, for the balance of his life. As an incident of the reckless character of these Porter boys, it was told of them, that Og Porter and his brother Harry were gunning along the river bank, east of their home, and meeting an Irish quarryman on the pathway, on top of the bank, neither would give the other the right of way; the Irishman, becoming angry, attempted to force the boys from the path and seized hold of the gun in Og's hands. Og called to Harry, back of him, to shoot the man, and Harry promptly raised his gun and fired, the load taking effect in the side of the man's head, badly tearing his ear. George Piper, the druggist, patched him up and to him the man told the story.

The south side of Front Street, from the Crossman Lyons Hotel property to the Porter grounds, was the marshy flats of the river, and so, on to Ridley Creek.

#### Market Square

In the center of the town of old Chester, in my earlier recollection, stood, at Market Square, at the junction of Market and James (now Third) Street, the old open Market House, extending north and south, with a town council chamber and library over the north end, for town meeting holdings, and with a belfry on top, the bell being also rung in cases of fire.

On the northwest corner of this square, the old frame store of J. Ashmead Eyre stood, fronting on Market Street; later this building was occupied by Samuel Ulrich for cigar manufacturing; on the James Street front was another old frame building, in which was Vance's barber shop in the basement; this building was, later, replaced by the brick Penn Buildings.

On the northeast corner of the square, fronting on Market Street, an old frame building stood, occupied as a general store by Thomas Clyde; afterwards by John G. Dyer, and later by Charles D. Manley. Back of this and on the east side of the square, and extending to James Street, was a double, white pebble-dashed two-story house, with dormer windows, occupied by Thomas Clyde and his family; and, later, the southern end by John G. Dyer, who married Mr. Clyde's daughter, Arabella.

On the southwest corner of the square was the old Delaware County Bank Building, fronting James Street, the present site of the Delaware County National Bank Building. We learn from the published history of this Delaware County Bank, that it was opened for the transaction of business on December 5, 1814, in a house owned by Preston Eyre (the grandfather of this compiler), near Market Square. The first directors of the bank were John Newbold, President; Pierce Crosby, Joseph Engle and John Cowgill, Jr.; Preston Eyre being the first cashier; the bank building at Market Square not being erected and occupied until about November, 1815. In the eighteen thirties this bank building fronted on the square and faced James (now Third) Street, with the dwelling part in the rear of the bank room, facing on Market Street, and adjoining the Friends' Meeting lot.

The kitchen part of the house was to the rear, with a vegetable garden back and a garden of old-fashioned flowers extended west along James Street, to the old house which was occupied later by Eliza Finch and her mother; and still later by Jeremiah Flickwir and his family. The old bank watch-box stood on the grounds, between the bank building and James Street; and in 1837 or 8, William Grubb was the watchman of the bank, used a watchman's rattle, and called the hours of the night. About 1840, he had a desperate fight with a supposed bank robber, who in the tussle on the pavement, in front of the bank, picked, with his nails, the face and hands of Dad Grubb, until he was piteously scarred. Dad's loud cries alarmed the neighbors and the robber was landed in the old Fourth Street jail.

#### James Street

On the south side of James Street, running west from the square, and adjoining the bank garden, was an old two-story dwelling, the Mad-dock house, later occupied by old Mrs. Finch, or "Ma" Finch, and her unmarried daughter, Eliza, who then had a ladies' furnishing store; later this house was occupied by Jeremiah Flickwir and his family. West of this was an open lot used by Major Price for a truck garden, when landlord of the National Hotel; next stood a one-story office building, where Samuel Edwards had his law office, before he built his brick house on Market Street, north of the railroad. Adjoining this office building was a two-story frame house, occupied by Samuel Edwards and family, later by the widow of Jonas Eyre, Susanna Eyre, and her sister, Lydia Pusey; later by Robert E. Hannum, a lawyer, who married 'Squire Bartram's daughter, Georgianna; and still later by Charles Williams, a tailor, and his family; he used, as a shop, the said Edwards' office building.

Then came the two-story hipped-roof house of Edward Darlington, with an old Lombardy poplar tree on the street front, and a one-story frame office building adjoining on the west side, and with an enclosed yard lot; extending to the double two-story frame house of Thomas Minshall and his family, later still, occupied by his widow, "Molly," and still, by her, af-

ter her marriage to Charley Fox; the next occupant was Harry Abbott, osler at the National Hotel Stables, and his family; Harry was a Yorkshire Englishman, broad in his dialect. The Darlington house, after 1850, was occupied by Tom Moore, the front for a hardware store.

Then came the two-story brick dwelling erected by David Abbott and to which he moved from the north side of James Street; next a row of small one-story buildings, used as dwellings and shops; and on the southeast corner of James and Edgmont Streets stood an old two-story brick house then occupied by Charles Lodomus, a German, and his family. He had a watch and jewelry store on the James Street front, the house entrance being on Edgmont Street.

On the southwest corner of Edgmont and James Streets was the old store building of Joshua and William P. Eyre, afterwards of Jesse M. Eyre (replaced later by the National Hall building), with a passage way on the creek side, to the creek wharf landing below the old bridge. This wharfage was used by shad and herring fishermen, for sales, and by Jersey truckers, for selling farm produce, including sweet potatoes, water-melons and canteloupes.

Then still west was an old pebble-dashed storehouse, used by the Eyres for storing feed, salt, &c.; the basement for barrels of liquor, American Whiskey being the cheap drink for the fishermen and watermen, gentlemen using only French Brandy and Imported Wines.

Adjoining was the pebble-dashed dwelling, near the creek, occupied by an old ostler, who had charge of the National Hotel Stables, known as Barney; afterwards this house was occupied by Jack Hanley, who married the Widow Hough. Jack was a character well known. Each of these men had a porter and ale room in the basement, with entrance from the wharf.

This completed the buildings on that south side, to the bridge over the creek; which bridge was a structure swung on iron chains, supported by iron corner posts, and raised high enough above the water to permit vessels, with lowered masts, to pass under.

Taking the north side of James Street, west from the square: First from the northwest corner, was, the before alluded to frame building in the basement of which was the barber shop, with a popular colored barber; this building was replaced by the brick Penn buildings, fronting on Market Street and extending along the west and north sides of the square, and on Market Street; also on and partly along the north side of James Street, westwardly. That store building on Market Street had been the store of Preston Eyre and afterwards of his son, J. Ashmead Eyre. Y. S. Walter had his printing office for the Delaware County Republican on the second floor of the James Street front of the Penn building; the third floor of this end was used as a ballroom; the first floor being clothing stores fronting east on the square; the entrance stairway to the second and third floors being from James Street, at the western end of this front. On the second floor, in a room back of Walter's printing office, Joseph Taylor, after

the termination of his term as Prothonotary and Clerk of Court, Register of Wills and Recorder of Deeds, had a Private School and taught English studies and mathematics to boys of the town, including his own sons. The eastern basement room was a barber shop, and in the western basement room was the Oyster Restaurant of David Morrison and his wife, with porter and ale as the drinks.

Next west of this Penn building site, on the north side of James Street, was a double frame dwelling, one part occupied by William Doyle and his family; his widow, Charlotte, was afterwards the Post Mistress, on Fourth Street, west of Market Street.

Then, going westwardly, next, was the brick two-story plastered house of Captain Isaac Eyre Engle, with its side yards east and west, having plum and green gage trees therein, and grass sod, on which crawled, in the writer's recollection, a huge sea turtle, captured by the captain in an East India voyage; and on the back of which favored children took short rides on the grounds. To the west of this house, its yard through double gates, led to the frame stable back. Captain Engle married Sarah Ann Crosby and had two children, Lucy and Edgar. Edgar was severely wounded in the Civil War on the Peninsula, and lost his shattered arm by amputation.

Next came a large two-story brick house, occupied by David Abbott and his wife, in the eastern part of which was his saddler shop, before he moved to the south side of James Street. This house was afterwards occupied by Y. S. Walter and his family, his printing office, for the Delaware County Republican, being in the old saddler shop rooms; this before the Penn building erection. David was an exhorter in the Methodist Church and a devout leader in the revival meetings. Next was an open lot, extending back to the gardens of the houses fronting on Fourth Street, on which lot, in 1840, was erected a large Log Cabin for Whig meetings, in the William Henry Harrison Presidential Campaign, with its tall poplar flag-pole, and barrel of hard cider at the door.

Prior to 1840, there was a large, old, two-story granary building standing, up to 1833 or 4, and occupied by families of the poorer working men of the town; in the basement of this was an ale and porter cellar, kept by an old man called Scotty; this building was burned to the ground; the old "Liberty" Fire Engine served at this fire. It being a cold night, hot coffee, as well as strong drink was served to the citizen firemen, who, before morning, were singing the popular songs of that day; some none too delicate in their wording. The cold north wind, sending flame and sparks, set fire to other buildings, and to the home of Edward Darlington, opposite, which was saved by men on the roof with water and wet blankets. The writer well remembers being taken from bed and held to the window facing our yard, to see the inmates of the burning building, with their household goods, which they had saved and were standing over, while the sparks and

burning pieces of wood were carried, by the wind, over their heads. The old poplar tree in front of our house aided greatly in the saving of it.

Next was the old National Hotel, at the northeast corner of Edgmont and James Streets, with its side yard to the east on James Street, in which were its wood-shed and chicken houses. This hotel was noted as receiving General Lafayette, after the Battle of the Brandywine, where he was wounded; and in the early thirties had the exchange stable place, for horses used for the pony express; this being before railroads, the President's Messages and Lottery Drawings were carried in this manner from Washington to New York. Mrs. Mary Engle was one of the early landladies of this hotel; afterwards John J. Thurlow was the landlord; and later Major Price, Morris Deshong and George Wilson.

West of the Hotel, and west from Edgmont Street, were the long frame stable buildings and shedding of this hotel, extending to a wharf on Chester Creek; here horses from this stable were washed at high tide, and made to swim, under the guidance of a long rope, attached to the halter, and of a whip in the hands of the ostler, or caretaker. This stable was one of the relay exchanges of horses for the pony express between Washington and New York, by which important despatches were carried by the rider, on horseback, also the President's messages.

### The Old Market House

Before running Market Street, north from old Market Square, it is well to give a more detailed recollection of the old Market House.

The Chester Market business was in the old Market House, in the center of the square, extending in length north and south, from the northern side, to the southern side of the square, leaving a street width for passage ways on both ends of this Market House. The sides were uninclosed and the stalls were ranged along the east and west sides, and were paved with brick, the entire length and width; with brick paved passage ways outside the stalls, on each side. A stairway on the east side, outside the stalls, led to a second-story room over the north end of the Market House, used as a council chamber and a public library; this enclosed second story had a cupola on top of its roof, and when this old Market was later destroyed by the City of Chester, this second-story structure was removed by Alderman Edward Clyde to its after location on Fifth Street, east of Market Street, and used there as his office. The Chester Markets were held in this Market House, on Wednesdays and Saturdays of each week, and it was noted for the good beef, mutton, veal, lamb, poultry, butter and vegetables, sold there, as well as fish, melons and canteloupes. Jonathan Vernon and Jonathan Esrey were the favored butchers; Jacob Evans sold veal, chickens and eggs; Sammy Lockwood and Governor White were two of the noted Jerseymen who sold truck, sweet and Irish potatoes, corn, melons and canteloupes, brought from their Jersey farms, in their batteaux, either under sail or oars; White's mountain sweet melons were noted.



### Market Street

Taking Market Street, north of Market Square, and on the west side, stood, above the Preston Eyre frame store, a house, in 1834 or 5, occupied by Preston Eyre and his family, after he retired from the cashiership of the bank and before he removed to Illinois. Next north was the old Maddock brick house; and still north, the Lydia Clark frame house; the old Bevan brick house, which Davis Bevan Stacey, with his family, wife, sister-in-law, four sons and four daughters, later occupied; its enclosed yard extended south to the Clark house. The adjoining brick house next, to which the Lodomus family later moved their residence and watch shop; and next the Irwin Hotel on the southwest corner of Fourth and Market Streets, which was later occupied by Edward R. Minshall, as a residence and wooden-ware store. The Irwin Hotel earlier had old John Irwin for its landlord, and after his death, his widow, Jane Irwin, and her sons, William, John and Samuel (known as Skeeter), and daughters, Jane and her two sisters, the younger named Elizabeth, remained there; William, or Billy, as he was known, was then the landlord.

### Old Jail and Workhouse

Above Fourth Street, then known as Work Street, was the County Sheriff's house; the old jail being in the rear and on Work Street. The side of the old jail, extending along Fourth Street, had grated windows in the second story, out of which prisoners could look on the street, talk to passersby, and pass a string for the supply of tobacco from the town boys, in exchange for jail crackers, a coarse, large, hard, round biscuit, like pilot bread. John Larkin was one of the early Sheriffs remembered. The old workhouse on the west end was in ruined condition and not in use for such purpose in the early thirties.

### Court House and Trials

On Market Street, an open space in front of the Sheriff's house, extended to the Court House, with rows of shade trees; the old Court House stood at the north end, as at present located (being now the Town or City Hall), which building was erected in 1724, with its small belfry; the court room on the first floor, Judges' raised bench, for the president and two associates at the north end, with the Prothonotary's desk and lawyers' bar in front of it, and jury box on the east side; outside of this bar and across the room were rows of benches for those attending court sessions; the entrance doors being on the south end, with a narrow door at the northeast end for the Judges' entrance. Judge William Darlington was one of the earlier Judges, with Judges Engle and Leiper as his associates, and John Kelly as the Cryer of the Court; Judge Bell, later, was a President Judge; both noted Judges.

One of the interesting and exciting trials at the old Court House was that of a man named Michael Monroe, alias James Wellington, for the murder

of William Bonsall, May 22, 1824, at Darby. Bonsall had a small store and he and his wife lived in the adjoining house of Mary Warner. Wellington, with two other men, Abraham Boyce and Washington Labbe, tramps, stopped at the house in the evening, for robbery, tied Bonsall and his wife fast, in chairs, robbed the store and house and in leaving, one of the men (somewhat uncertain whether Wellington or Boyce, from the testimony taken), without provocation, plunged a knife in Bonsall's stomach, leaving it in the wound, until it was removed by Dr. Morris C. Shallcross, some hours later, Bonsall being ignorant that the knife was in him, the handle only was showing. Wellington and the other men afterwards robbed a store in New Jersey and were captured there, some things taken from Bonsall being found on them, when examined at Woodbury. Wellington was convicted of the Bonsall murder and hung at Chester. On the scaffold he said, "You boast, I hear, you have never hung an innocent man, but this day you lose that reputation." Abraham Boyce was tried at October Sessions, 1824, and acquitted. Archibald Dick, Esq., and Edward Darlington, Esq., were the prosecuting attorneys.

A man named Craig was later tried and hung for the murder of 'Squire Hunter, in the upper part of the county. This was a cold-blooded murder, with a shot-gun, to prevent the 'Squire from testifying in a will case, he being shot from ambush in going from his house to his barn. The gun was found hidden near the shooting place and traced as the property of Craig. He was executed at old Chester.

The next hanging in Chester was that of Thomas Cropper, alias Hall, colored, his trial taking place in that old Court House, at May Sessions, 1841, for the murder of Martin Hollis, also colored, Edward Darlington being the prosecuting attorney, assisted by P. Frazer Smith, Esq., of West Chester, and Townsend Haines, Esq., for defense; Judge Thomas S. Bell, presiding Judge. This murder was the outcome of a jealous quarrel between two negroes, Cropper shooting Hollis with a shot-gun. Much sympathy was shown for Cropper, both at and after the trial. Cropper attempted escape from the old Fourth Street Jail, by sawing off the hobbles, fastening him to the floor of his cell; and afterwards by severing the iron bars built across the large chimney flue, to let him escape to the roof; this all done in the night time. His escape was prevented by the frightened screams of a woman prisoner in an adjoining cell, who could not be quieted by him. Next day the cutting of the bars and of his hobbles was discovered by the Sheriff prison keeper. At the hanging, Cropper, a powerful man, tore his arms loose from the rope binding, as the trap fell; seized the rope over his head and swung his body for the top of the jail-yard wall, which he narrowly missed, and as he swung down, he was seized by the Sheriff's deputies and held by the arms and legs until life was extinct. The instrument he cut the irons with was discovered hidden in his woolly head mop, being a saw made from a watch spring; but it was never discovered how he got it. The cutting of the hobble was hidden by softened bread plastered in the cuts.

There were other noted trials before all these, one of a young woman who killed her child; at the hanging, at Mundy's Run, on the Philadelphia road, near Chester, her brother, who had secured a pardon from the Governor, at Philadelphia, and was delayed in his horseback ride back to Chester, by floods in the creeks, arrived in sight of the scaffold, waving his pardon, just as his sister was swung in the air, and too late to save her.

#### Prothonotary's Office

The old Prothonotary Office Building, standing at the southwest corner of what is now Fifth Street, was two stories high, the two upper-story rooms being occupied, one by the County Commissioners, the other by Edward Darlington, for his law office. The first floor was the office of Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, Register of Wills and Recorder of Deeds, all in one officer; John K. Zeilin was the first remembered such officer, followed by Joseph Weaver and Joseph Taylor. The back of this building of brick furnished the hand ball wall where many a hard game was played. Ned Clyde, though lame, being one of the noted ball players.

On the southwest corner of Fifth and Market Streets was Dr. William Gray's old dwelling of two stories and a dormer window roof, with its extensive cultivated grounds to the north and west and his one-story office on Fifth Street. Doctor Gray was one of the few old practicing doctors of the town; after his death, his wife occupied the house for some years and was fond of the old-fashioned round waltz; without children, she had many canary bird pets.

North of the Gray property was a recently built frame house occupied by Richard Taylor and his family; wife, Eliza, and two children, Enos, and a daughter.

The new frame house of Captain Elijah Howes, to which he moved when he left the hotel at Fifth and Market Streets, was next. Attached to which was a vacant triangular lot, extending pointedly northward, to where Market and Edgmont Streets join, near the railroad. He had in family, a wife, daughter and sister-in-law, Margaret Burns, with her father, James Burns. Margaret had a millinery shop adjoining.

#### The P., W. & B. Railroad

This Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad was completed from Wilmington to Philadelphia in December, 1837, and opened for travel the following January, with the frame Depot House located to the west of Edgmont Street and on the south side of the tracks, with a store house in the east end. This building was so used until the Depot was moved to the east of Market Street. A letter from Doctor William Gray to my father of January 6, 1837, shows the selling of the Gray's Ferry property to the railroad company for a terminus.

#### North of Railroad

The next building north of that railroad, on the west side of the so-called Edgmont road, above its junction with Market Street, was the newly-built brick house of Samuel Edwards, with grounds extending to the north side of the railroad lands; this brick building, with its front and entrance in the center, was erected about the time the railroad was constructed and Mr. Edwards had his law office in the east front end corner of the building, to time of his death. His family consisted of his wife, son and daughter, Henry B. and Mary E.; she married Lieutenant Edward Beale, afterward known as General Beale.

Next, north, was the Hicksite Quaker Burying Ground, as still located; and in this were the graves of many of the Quaker residents of Chester.

On the west side of Edgmont road, above the open lots of Mrs. Mary Engle, which extended to the creek and up to the old Caldwell house, property, north of the junction of Edgmont road with the Providence road; which would be now north of the Baltimore and Philadelphia Railroad.

Above that, on the west side of the Edgmont road, was an old brick house in which Edward Engle lived.

The only other house on the west side was an old stone one, that stood near Chester Creek, not far from the Ship Creek Woods, to the northwest from the present Deshong Library property; which old house was unoccupied and said to be haunted, from a reputed murder committed in or near it.

Now, taking the east side of Market Street, going north, above the Square, and from the old Clyde store, was a one-story frame building, where the "Upland Union" newspaper was published, for a number of years, under Lescure, and by McKiver, as editors; then came some very old two-story brick houses in which lived Zedekiah Flower, Thomas Spear and Brinton Dick, with their families. Henry L. Powell had a shoe store, later, in one of these houses, and John Brooks had a harness shop; also, Entwisle had a bakery. Flower had two daughters, Hannah, who married Samuel B. Thomas, Esq., and Mary, who was unmarried. Tom Spear had four children, a daughter, Phebe Ann, who married William Dyer; Thomas, who learned a trade and left Chester; Emma, who married a Philadelphia man; and Edward, or Ned, who was a "ne'er-do-well".

Next came the John Martin old two-story brick house. He had a son, Thadeus, and other children, not remembered. John had some palate trouble and talked in manner, people designated, as through the nose; he had been a soldier in the 1812 war.

The Dr. Job H. Terrill house, with its enclosed lot of ground, filled with box bushes and shrubbery, came next, to the north, the open ground extending to Fourth Street; his stable for horses and his gardens being in the rear, on Fourth Street. The old doctor was the father of Mrs. John O. Deshong and of William P. Eyre's first wife. The doctor had a noted talking parrot, which was the terror of street dogs, and could swear like a

trooper, or as people said, like the doctor, the dogs being scared by its loud cries of "Git out!" and the stable man, George Nicholson, saluted by its cries of "George, George! Here, you black rascal."

On the northeast corner of Fourth and Market Streets stood the old store building and dwelling of John O. Deshong, the store being grocery and dry goods, and George Baker one of his clerks. Distilled whiskey was largely sold by all country stores, to working men and for harvest fields. His dwelling was over, and to the east of, the store room. In later years this store room was the drug store of Dr. J. M. Allen, with Mortimer H. Bickley as his clerk; and now it is the site of Bickley's new drug store.

Above this was a white pebble-dashed dwelling, known as the Crosby House, in which Robert E. Hannum afterwards lived and had his office, up to the time he purchased the old Pierce Crosby house, on the Providence Road, south of the forks of the Sharpless mill road.

Then came the George W. Piper frame drug shop, and north of it the two-story brick dwelling, occupied by the Piper family, and later occupied by Charles W. Raborg, then the druggist.

#### Washington Hotel

Next north was the present old Washington Tavern House, with Peter Piper as landlord, and later with Major Samuel A. Price as its landlord. This tavern was opposite the old Court House and was headquarters for Judges and Jurymen, and was where the lawyers "settled the docket" for the trial of cases, before the court term. It was reputed to have entertained General Washington during the Revolutionary War. The stabling was to the east of the hotel. Above the hotel was an open adjoining yard or lot, extending to Fifth Street, the noted Crozer Building being now erected on this lot, in place of old frame buildings that had been later put up thereon.

#### Columbia Hotel

On the northeast corner of the present Fifth and Market Streets stood an old hotel, known only in those days by the name of the landlord who kept it, such as "Howes' Hotel," "Hill's Hotel" and "Appleby's Hotel," the correct name being "Columbia Hotel." Captain Elijah Howes, who had married a daughter of James Burns, an old fox-hunter of the borough, being the first proprietor in the memory of the writer; followed by Harrison Hill and by Thomas Appleby. This house was celebrated for its excellently provided table board, as the hotels of that day prided themselves more on the table service than the bar. Above this hotel were its stables.

Next above were small frame houses, occupied by the families of George Morris, Morris Burns, a printer on the "Upland Union," and James Talley, a plasterer. A barber shop was in one of these houses. Then came an open lot to the railroad line. On this Samuel N. Smith later erected his brick hotel, adjoining the railroad land. Somewhere north of the hotel stables, the Upland Union was printed at one time, by Lescure.

Above the railroad, on this east side, was an open three-cornered pasture lot, extending to the junction of Edgmont Street with Welsh Lane, and having a width along the railroad ground from Edgmont Street to Welsh Lane.

The only house near the present Philadelphia and Baltimore Railroad line, on this east side, being a white, plastered, stone house, south from the Providence and Edgmont Roads junction, owned by a family of Mortons. Above this were the farm lands of John Cochran, extending from the railroad, far up the Providence Road; the farm buildings being located near what is now Potter Street, below Thirteenth. He was a noted drover. The old Cochran farm house being then in the middle of the farm and approached through a gateway on the Providence Road. John Cochran maintained a race track on this farm for running horses. His family consisted of two sons, J. Engle and John, and three daughters, Sarah, who married Herman Lombard, a railroad man; Elizabeth and Margaret Cochran.

#### Market Street South From Square

Taking Market Street south from the old square, the east side thereof, below the southeast corner of the square, stood an old brick, two-story and an attic house, fronting on Market Street, occupied by 'Squire George W. Bartram, and his family, his one-story office being to the north of the house; his family consisted of his wife and two daughters, Georgianna and Pocahontas.

On the southeast side of the square, on the south side of James Street and adjoining a corner of the old Episcopal Grave Yard, was a small frame building, used for a fire engine house; afterwards used as a painter's shop by Samuel Lampleigh, Daniel Thompson, and later by Thomas Forsythe.

The Grave Yard of the old Episcopal Church, located on the south side of James Street, east of the square, had a gate-way entrance on Market Street, south of the Bartram house; the grave yard also extended along the east side of Market Street, as far as the brick house of David and Priscilla Wilson (colored); also around the east end of Bartram's lot, and east, along James Street to and along Welsh Lane. This grave yard was well filled with many very old graves and vaults, as the stones indicated; among others that of John Morton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The old Episcopal Church was then located on the westerly end of this grave yard, and east of said paint shop, and fronted on James Street; one of its older pastors was Reverend Mortimer Talbot; later Reverend Anson Hard. The old church was a plain building with a belfry; and old 'Squire Bartram was a vestryman and took up collections in an old mahogany, covered box. This building was torn down, after the more pretentious church building was erected, opposite, on the north side of James Street.

Next south from the Bartram house was the brick house of David and Priscilla Wilson, two much-respected colored people, who had a cake, candy and ice cream store, where boys largely spent their pennies for these goodies, as well as good old-fashioned molasses candy, horse-shaped ginger bread

and ground or peanuts; some of which, on Sundays, unthoughtful boys attending Friends' Meeting, opposite, took with them, and choked over, behind the high bench-backs, during the quiet service.

Next, south, came the old frame house of Charley and Sophy Lear, one of whose sons was William, a shoemaker, and another Charles, called "Chat," who excited the enthusiasm of his family, by marching in a Democratic procession with a live game rooster, crowing on his shoulder, or head; old Charley Lear was the grave digger of the town, and particularly for the old Episcopal Church Grave Yard, as well as sexton of that church.

Back from this house, on a vacant lot below, that fronted on the street, was a stone stable, used by Preston Eyre for his horses and cows; and next to this, on another vacant lot, was a frame stable, used later by Edward Darlington, in winter, for his cow; and on the front of this lot Y. S. Walter sometime later erected his frame two-story dwelling, fronting on Market Street.

Then came two other more recently built frame houses, in which William Pyewell, the undertaker, and Isaiah H. Mirkil, a peace officer, lived.

Next were several old one-story houses, standing back from the building line, where lived Peggy Williams and her son, Samuel; Archy McCarthy and his stout, jolly wife; Archy MacNeal, a shoemaker, who married Mrs. Richards' daughter, of Edgmont Street; Dave Bowers, a shoemaker, and perhaps some others.

Oley Baum and his family occupied a frame house below; that later extended out to the building line and was then occupied by Mose Hewit and his wife, Suse, who had a candy and cigar shop; then next, an open lot in which was the remains of an old apple orchard; on this was the large old brick two-story house, on the corner of Front Street, occupied by Sallie Mellon and her daughter, Phebe; this is reputed to have been a tavern in older times.

#### Steamboat Hotel

Below Front Street on the east side was an enclosed lot with apple, pear, plum and green gage trees, belonging to the Steamboat Hotel, on the southern end of which was its frame stables, where Crossman Lyons, then landlord, had a Livery Stable; an open space between the stables and the hotel was used as a yard for the stables and hotel; in the rear of which was a much-used Ten Pin Alley. The hotel building, with its first and second-story porches, fronted on Market Street, had a lawn on the river side, shaded by water willow trees, standing along the river edge, where was the remains of an old wharf within twenty-five feet of the hotel, up to which the high waters of the river came, of sufficient depth to float gunning skiffs; the flats to the low water mark of the river being covered with reeds in summer. The hotel had two stories, with a wide front, and was a neat, attractive building.

The river marshes, covered with reeds, extended along the upper side of the steamboat pier, from the river mud flats; and also between the upper and lower piers; and on up above the upper pier to Ridley Creek;

there not being any wharfage on the marsh land above this pier, to the time William T. Crook filled in the marsh adjoining the east side of this upper pier, for the constructing of his wharfage, and the erection of his storehouse, for his New York Trading Schooner business.

The steamboats plying between Philadelphia and Wilmington, the old "Hudson," worked with an up-and-down piston, followed by the lever boats, "Balloon," Captain Whildin, and the "Rainbow," a rival. The Cape May boat was the "Robert Morris," a double lever; she took on Baltimore and Washington passengers at New Castle, to which point they came by rail from a point on Chesapeake Bay.

#### River Sports

Before leaving the river front, it is well to show features of it for the sports of those days.

The river was teeming with rock and perch fish, and these were caught by rod and line from the piers or wharves; and the white perch, from the flats, as the flood tide came up among the growing reeds and docks; worms, being used for bait for perch catching, as well as for catfish and eels; but for the rock fish from the piers, was used the cane-pole, with line, and one or more hooks, on which was twisted pieces of raw cotton, trolled on the surface of the tide water, at the pier draws; the fish rising to snap at it, as for a minnow; and hundreds of these fish were caught in this way on a tide. The perch and catfish were caught on the bottom of the stream, either by pole and line, or hand line and dipsy; or by a bow-line, made of horse-shoe shape whale bone, with dipsy in center of the bow, the line being attached above it, with the snooded hooks strung along the outer prongs of the bow; in this way several fish might be caught in one hauling in of the line, the elasticity of the bow hooking them as they nibbled at the bait.

Shad of large size, and herring and large rock fish, as well as sturgeons, were most plentiful, and were caught in both shore seines and floating gill nets; but large sturgeons of four or six feet in length tore large holes in the shad gill nets. Parts of the sturgeon were eaten by many, and parts were rendered into oil. Live sturgeons were frequently put into the shallow waters of the old quarry holes near the creek and the smaller boys, when bathing, had great fun riding on their backs, in the shallow waters.

Rail and reed birds were plentiful in the early fall, feeding on the ripened reeds bordering the river shores and on the islands, and gave great sport to the gunners, with their skilled pushers, the favorite gun being the double-barrel shot-gun; first muzzle-loaders, then breech-loaders, with cartridges, the muzzle-loaders being loaded from the muzzle by small tin loaders for both powder and shot, and cut wads, which held each in place, rammed down by the long ram-rod.

In the fall and early winter and spring months, large flocks of geese and ducks fed on the river islands and shores and gave excellent sport to the skillful, as did partridges in the running bunches, which came to the river banks from the country back, after the first frosts in the fall. Black-

birds flocked in the thousands, and fed on the ripened reeds, and large numbers of these were shot from the old piers as they flew over, as a shot from the gun would double up a flock, so the second barrel brought down dozens. Woodcock were also plentiful along the river sides and neighboring streams, and trained dogs, pointer and setter, were owned for this sport, by all true sportsmen.

Powder was carried, in my first recollection, in a polished cow horn, plugged in the larger end with a wooden bottom, and the smaller end plugged with a wooden stopper, made fast by a string to the horn; this powder horn was slung over the shoulder with a stout string and the load was measured out into the hand, to be poured into the gun barrel; the shot was carried either loose in the pocket, or in a bottle, or a leather bag, and poured into the hand, like the powder, for loading; paper wads were forced down the barrel on top of both powder and shot, by the ram rod, to separate them and hold them in the barrel; the caps used were carried loose in a pocket. Many of the guns were single barrel, and in still earlier times were flint-locked, to the time the newer double-barrel percussioned guns came into use; then also came into use flattened metal powder flasks, with the load-measuring spring top; and the leather shot pouch, with a metal load-measuring top, and these were worn slung over the shoulder on each side of the gunner, or the shot carried in a long leather double shot-bag, slung over the shoulder, with the brass loaders within easy reach, under the arm, or in front. These were used up to the time that cartridges came into use for the loading breech-loading guns. This ended the use of the cut wads, and old percussion caps, as the firing was done by the striking of the hammer, on the end of the percussioned cartridge.

#### Market North From Front Street, West Side

Taking the west side of Market Street, north from Front (now Second) Street, there was a row of old two-story frame houses, occupied by John Chadwick and his wife, Rebecca, or Becky, as she was known; she had in her family a granddaughter, Rebecca, who, later, with Lydia Pike, worked in Ulrich's tobacco shop. The old lady Chadwick was the owner of several of the adjoining frame houses to the north, in which resided Captain Collins, who had two sons, Elias (known as Ducky) and Joe, who both, later, worked at the Ulrich tobacco shop; Captain John Morris, who had a son, John Henry; and a brother, also a seaman, Henry Morris; William, or Bill, Stewart, was one of the occupiers of these houses. He had two sons, John and Jacob; John was a fisherman and rail-bird pusher, and married Isaiah Pike's daughter, Mary; and Jacob, or Jake, was later on the police force of the City of Chester.

One of the northernmost of these houses was occupied in late years of 1908 or 10, by the widow of Archy MacNeal. She was the daughter of Mrs. Richards, of Edgmont Street, and was then a well-preserved, tall, stout woman, with a good memory of past events. She has since died.

North of this frame row of houses was an open lot, part of the property of Samuel Smith, extending from Edgmont Street, and was farmed by him.

Next north came the Friends' Meeting House and its grounds, with an old long shed, under which the horses, to the old chair wagons, dearborns, or carriages, of the meeting folks, were hitched during the meeting hour.

This old Hicksite Friends' Meeting House is on the west side of Market Street, south of Third Street, and adjoins the land of the Delaware County Bank; it was an old building in 1835, the interior being divided by a movable partition in the center, the men Friends occupying the southern half and the women the northern half of the room, during the meeting session. The seating accommodations were long wooden benches with a narrow back just fitting the shoulders of the usual-sized man, and in two rows, in each half of the room, and faced to the west. On the western end of the room were rows of benches, facing the east, for use of the elders; the strict Quakers sitting with broad-brimmed hats on their heads. The rooms were heated by large wood stoves standing midway of the room in the middle aisles. Samuel West and Jacob Hewes were the leading elders among the men, at that time, and broke up the meeting with a hand-shake. The meetings were generally silent, as Chester did not boast of a fluent preacher for this sect; Samuel West learned to quote a passage of scripture to break the silence. Occasionally a well-known strange preacher spoke in this meeting; one of the most eloquent and impressive being John Jackson, of Sharon Hill.

As an attendant of this meeting in my boyhood days, I realized the old wooden benches were very hard and uncomfortable, long before the hand-shaking came; and to break the quiet monotony, the Shaw and Rulon boys with me, ate from our pockets—Prissy Wilson's molasses candy, or boiled chestnuts, behind the tall bench backs in front of us, and in stuffing our mouths, frequently choked on them, and received the disapproving looks of the older members. If a boy went to sleep, he was apt to fall under the back rail of the seat, to the floor.

#### James Street, East

Going back to the center of the town, and taking the north side of James or Third Street, east from the old Thomas Clyde house, there stood a double frame two-story house, fronting south, in one of which Jerry Stevenson and his family lived; the other, I think, was occupied by Daniel Thompson, a house and sign painter, and his family; to the east of this was a vacant lot, on which, at a later date, the new Episcopal Church was erected, and on which lot, that church, previously, had a one-story frame building, used for Sunday School purposes; a passage way, to the west of this school building, led to the rear of a frame livery stable, the front entrance of which was on Fourth Street; this was William Patrick's stable.

To the east of this school house was an enclosed trucking lot, to Welsh Lane.



## Welsh Lane

On the west side of Welsh Lane, near to Third Street, were two small frame houses, and from these to Fourth Street were lots of ground unbuilt on.

The east side of Welsh Lane, from Fourth Street to the Commodore Porter property, near the river, was not built on, but was abutted by the meadowland of John L. Crosby, which extended from the Philadelphia Post Road, now Fifth Street, to high water mark of the river Delaware, being banked in along the river front to keep out the tide waters, the lower lands being ditched for drainage. These ditches were well grown with reeds in the summer months and afforded good sport in reed-bird shooting, as well as for bull-frogs of the large "bloody-nown," order, the legs of which made a delicate dish for the table.

## Fourth Street, East and West From Market

Fourth Street, west from Market Street, on the south side and west of the old Irwin Tavern, had a row of two-story old frame dwellings on it; in one of which old John Kelly and his family lived. On the north side of this Fourth Street, west from the old workhouse, back from the jail, were other two-story frame houses, in one of which, later, Mrs. Charlotte Doyle, then a widow, lived with her son, John, and her two daughters, Lydia and Louisa, or "Loui;" Mrs. Doyle then being the postmistress, with the office in this house.

To the west, in other of these houses, lived a family of Trouts and a family of Belts; James Belt, a son, was, later, a prominent druggist in Wilmington, Delaware.

Fourth Street, east from Market Street, on the south side, to the east of the Terrill property, was not built on to Welsh Lane; other than a small one-story house, near the Terrill property, occupied by John Denant and his wife; and up to the time 'Squire George W. Bartram occupied the new frame dwelling, erected at the corner of Welsh Lane in the 1840's; where he also had his Justice of the Peace office building, to the west of the dwelling.

The north side of this part of Fourth Street, east of the Deshong store building, had few, if any buildings on it, other than the very old frame two-story house, about half way to Welsh Lane, the residence of old Peggy Burns and Kit Kerlin, her companion, with its open lot extending to Welsh Street. Peggy was reputed to be a witch, being old and wrinkled, and walking with a cane, besides having a shrill voice and vile temper. She was certainly the terror of the small school children, who passed her house on the way to the old public school.

## Old Public School

The old brick two-story school house was on the east side of Welsh Lane, between Fourth and Fifth Streets, with its open, unfenced grounds extend-

ing to Fifth Street. The west side of Welsh Lane, between these streets, was not built on, the only building being an old frame stable on the rear of the lot fronting on Fifth Street.

The teacher of the old public school, first recollected, was Caleb Pierce, an elderly Quaker, who believed, as did most teachers of that day, that the hides of scholars required loosening, by threshing, to allow knowledge to penetrate, consequently he always had on hand a goodly bundle of strong limber switches, and required the boys to provide these for him. This whipping disposition was said to be a characteristic of an earlier teacher, William Neal, another scion of the Quaker faith, as grown-up boys of earlier years reported.

Caleb Pierce made quill pens with a sharp pen-knife for the scholars to do their school writing, as this was practically before the steel pens came in use. Caleb was a genius in the flogging game, practicing it on the palm of the bent-back hand, with a flat ruler or stick; on the back and legs, with drawn-off coat, either with the boy standing, or stretched, in bent position, with hands resting on the desk platform; and if two boys were unruly, together, they were called up and required to thrash each other, to the satisfaction of the teacher; otherwise, he took a hand in it; sometimes this threshing was performed by the teacher, with the boy piggy-back on his co-culprit, to draw the clothes tighter to his skin, both boys being whipped in this manner; the author was allowed the satisfaction of flogging a boy, with the teacher's stick, for plastering putty in his hair during school hours.

Later we had for a teacher an elderly Irishman, Jimmy Riddle; but Jimmy could not master the older boys, and soon lost control, and had slates, ink-stands and other missiles fired at him, until the Directors were forced to dismiss him.

The older people told of old Jack Rump and his son, Bill, that upon being reprimanded by the School Board for not sending Bill to school, Jack said, as his reason, that he did send de boy to school till he got to larnin dumber and dumber; that when he first went, he did know de way home from school, but after awhile he got so dumb, he couldn't find his way home. Bill took the advantage to have a good play time, after school hours.

In these, of my school days, the boys were sent for buckets of water to the neighboring springs and we frequently carried it from a spring near the east side of Chester Creek, north of the railroad, on the then property of Samuel Edwards, several squares from the school house. This was near the famous swimming rocks, at the edge of the creek, where boys and men bathed, as it was a secluded point, at that time, only visible from the railroad bridge; the opposite side of the creek being along the farm lands of the heirs of Jonas Eyre.

Among my schoolmates at this old school were the sons and daughter of Samuel Shaw, James G., John Eyre and Emily; children of Job Rulon, Isaac E., Hannah, Ann and Nathaniel; sons of Major Price, Bickem, William, Henry and John; sons and daughters of Joseph Taylor, Henry B.,

John, William, Anne and Kate; Joseph Ladomus, son of Charles Ladomus; the daughter of Crossman Lyons, Josephine; the sons and daughter of Edmund Pennell, Jonathan, Charles D. and Anna; the son and daughter of Spencer McIlvain, Henry and Ann Eliza; Y. S. Walter's daughters, Mary and Virginia; Mary, Sallie, Laura and Anson Hard, daughters and son of the Reverend Anson Hard; Sue Combs, granddaughter of Captain Robinson; Henrietta and Charles Powell, daughter and son of Lemuel Powell; Henrietta, daughter of John G. Dyer; and many other of the Chester boys and girls, the Gibsons, Longs, Pikes, Morris, Collins, Chadwicks, Grounsells, Duttons, Grubbs and others.

In those olden times, few men or boys there were whose first names were not abbreviated, to the people of Chester, or a nick name given to them.

Boys in those days were expected to do their share of the daily work. So, in winter, I made up the grate fires in our dwelling, and my father's office fire and swept the office; fed, watered and cleaned stable of the family cow; all before going to school in the morning, at 8.30 o'clock. In the summer, spring and fall months, I helped with the garden work, weeding and planting; brought the cow home for milking from her pasture, three-quarters of a mile from our house; helped rake, load and mow hay in harvest time, and other odd jobs; still I had time to have a favorite girl, and to gun, fish, and tramp the country at my pleasure.

#### Fifth Street, East

From Fifth and Market Streets, east and on the north side next to the Columbia Hotel, was an old two-story house replaced later by new brick dwellings, one of which was occupied by Robert Dutton, ex-sheriff, and family; the other by George Wilson and family. The grounds and house of Captain William Anderson were next, to the east. As I recollect him, he wore blue spectacles and walked with a cane; his family, consisting of his wife, a son, a daughter, Mrs. John Richards, and a spinster lady, Maria Backster. The old brick two-story house, set back from the street, was large, with the front door in the center of the front and large rooms on each side of the hall entrance. The grounds extended to Welsh Lane and were filled with shrubbery and flowers, and the walks set with box-bush, as were those of most of the old houses.

On the northeast corner of Fifth Street and Welsh Lane stood Joseph Taylor's old wheelwright and blacksmith shops, his frame house being to the east of them.

These were the only buildings on this Philadelphia Post Road, or continuation of Fifth Street, eastwardly, within the limits of Chester; other than an old frame stable, in a lot east of Taylor's house, where old Jim Burns kept and pastured his old grey fox-hunting horse, and in the stable building he packed his hounds in winter months. The author got his first fox-hunting experience, on one occasion, with Jim Burns, when a small school boy, attending the old Chester Public School. Jim Burns, Ned Engle and

Jere Stevenson turned out a bag fox on this old stable lot, during school recess hour. An allowance of time being given the fox for a start, before the hounds were released from the stable building. The sport was too exciting, to be resisted by a few of us school boys, and the writer of this, with one or two others, followed on foot, as well as we could; late in the afternoon we were picked up near the White Horse Hotel, on the Philadelphia road and near the Lazaretta road, in Ridley township, and brought back to Chester by some kind friend, in his buggy wagon. That fox was killed in Car's thicket.

Welsh Lane, north from Fifth Street, was not then built on.

The south side of Fifth Street, east from Market Street, was not built on, until a row of two-story frame houses was erected, half way down, and Crossman Lyons erected his new brick house, west from Welsh Lane, and Thomas Clyde his new brick house near the Washington Hotel grounds.

#### Fifth Street, West of Market

On Fifth Street, west from Market Street, on the north side, west of the Dr. William Gray Office Building and grounds, the only building recollected was the frame house and grounds of an Englishman, Edward Flavelle, and his wife, with their bonnet shop, she being a milliner; her son, William, later being a prominent surveyor and business man of Chester; another son, Edward, did not appear to come to much.

On the south side of this part of Fifth Street were few houses and these very small and old, until James Burns erected his new frame dwelling, adjoining the west side of the old hand-ball grounds, back of the old County office building.

#### Wilmington Post Road

On the south side of the Wilmington Post Road, now Third Street, west from the Chester Creek bridge, was a stretch of farm lands to Marcus Hook. William Kerlin owned the land next the creek and from the river to the Post Road, for a half-mile in length, to a small tract of land owned by Samuel Shaw, extending to the river side and on which was only an old frame barn, near the road. Kerlin's house was near the bridge, an old brick, fronting north; his family consisting of a son, William, who was lame, and his wife, Martha, and children; the son, who was a harness maker, had his shop adjoining the house; his son is John H. Kerlin, the present Superintendent of the County Alms House.

The Kerlin farm had an ice house on it, the ice pond being next the creek and river, banked in and overflowed in the winter months, for freezing. The Chester Creek noted flood of August, 1843, swept over this Kerlin Marsh and up to the house, washing out the street roadway, and making a washed-out hole to the south of the road, just west of the bridge site, into which the tide flooded.

Opposite the old Concord road, now Concord Avenue, was an old red farm gate, which, by a lane, led to the river, where stood an old fish cabin,

the shore being used for seine fishing. Mr. Kerlin had a fine bearing apple orchard near this cabin, which was a great temptation to the Chester boys. The old frame building, spoken of as an old tavern, and near the present Penn Street, was on this Kerlin property.

Before 1843, a row of frame houses was constructed on the south side of Third Street, west from this old tavern building and extending up to near the old Concord road; these houses were occupied by Jerry Stevenson and family; the Bags family, who moved from the old tavern building, and others; Captain John Booth occupying the western-most house, near the terminus of the Concord road.

On the west side of the Chester Creek bridge and on the north side of the Wilmington road, or Third Street, was the Brobson land, banked in from the creek waters; William Brobson's house being opposite the present Penn Street, as described in the early part of this history. His family consisted of a wife and daughter.

To the west of this Brobson House, Captain Humphrey Gibson built a new frame two-story house and lived there with his wife, three sons and a daughter and here he lived for years. His sons were named James, Jesse, Humphrey and William.

Next west is the old brick dwelling of Samuel Shaw, on the east side of the Concord road, with its long front, and set back from the roadway, it had its stoop-fashioned front door, the kitchen end being to the east side. His family consisted of his wife, Mary Ann, and two sons and a daughter, James G., John E. and Emily. He was called 'Squire Shaw, and had a large ice house on his home place, which he filled in winter from his marsh-land pond, below the south side of this Wilmington road; the ice from this house, as well as from Kerlin's, supplied the fishing boats, for the preservation of their fish; also ice cream makers.

The families of the town, having wells, used closed boxes lowered into their water-wells, in which they kept their butter and meats cool and from spoiling. In fact, the family of the writer did this at Media as late as 1863.

Next west, and at the northwest junction with the Concord road, stood the very old brick Birtchell house, in which lived at that time Lydia Birtchell and her brother James; Lydia was an old maid, a school teacher, raw-boned and red-headed. This house had several old locust trees in front. It was among the very old buildings of the town.

Next west was a newly-built frame house, in which lived old Neighbor Price and her daughter, Martha. Mrs. Price was the mother of Mrs. Edmund Pennell and was a plain orthodox Quaker, attending the Sharplessville meeting.

All these mentioned houses, on both sides of this old Wilmington road, or Third Street, were located on banks several feet above the traveled roadway, the foot approach to them being along a narrow pathway on top of the banks.

Next came the apple-orchard field of old Samuel Smith; on the west side of this stood a small one-story frame house in which John Grounsell,

the English blacksmith, lived with his family. He had a well of water, drawn with an old pole and chain bucket. John was a friend of other old English people of that neighborhood—the Thurlows and Jeffries.

This Grounsell house was the last house on that road, before coming to the old farm house of Richard (or Dicky) Flower, located to the west of Lamokin run; this property was later owned by Abram Perkins, a Philadelphia merchant, who lived there for some years, with his family. The Edmund Pennell newer brick farm house stood back from the south side of the road, nearly opposite this Flower house, his farm extending from the Shaw farm to the farm below of a Philadelphia man named Laws, whose yellow house was near the river bank.

In later years, Samuel Ulrich built a square frame two-story house, back from the north side of this road, and just east of what is now Parker Street; to the west of it and nearer the road was a frog pond on the lots purchased by Job Rulon and Edward Darlington, and on which lots they pastured their cows, and harvested hay. Below this were the Bevan lots, to Lamokin run.

West of the Flowers-Perkins property and to the north of this road, John W. Ashmead, a Philadelphia lawyer, who married one of Richard Flower's daughters, later built a large house, which was dashed on the outside with a yellow-colored mortar, and which he occupied in summer, with his family, until he moved to New York; he had two sons, one of whom is Henry Graham Ashmead, now of Chester. Mr. Ashmead, with Lewis C. Lavin, was an active member of the "Native American Party," during the times of those American riots in Philadelphia, when several Catholic churches were burned.

A doctor, William Young, afterwards owned this Ashmead house and lands and lived there to the time of his death. Later it was owned and occupied by William Reaney, of the shipyard.

To the west of this was a private road called Flickwir Lane, as Jeremiah Flickwir, who married another daughter of Richard Flower, lived at the end of it, in a frame house back from the Post Road and on the ridge of land to the north; his children were Henry, Richard, and three daughters, Henrietta, Mary and Sophia. This family later removed to the old house on James Street, in Chester; he then had a drug store in National Hall, near the Chester Creek bridge.

To the west of this Lane was a low frame house in which old Davy Hays lived, and being a shoemaker, he made strong wearing shoes for men and boys of the neighborhood. The writer of this walked from Chester to this house to be measured for the making of such shoes.

Below and west of the Hays house was the farm and residence of William Eyre, known to the writer as Uncle William, as he was a half brother of my grandfather; he had a family of three sons, Randolph, Jesse and Isaac, and three daughters, Sarah, who married a sea captain, and Ann and Susann.

To the south of the Post Road, opposite these described properties of Flowers, Ashmead, Flickwir and Eyre, were the farms of Edmund Pennell, Laws, John Jefferis, John J. Thurlow, and of William Eyre, as his farm extended both north and south of the Post Road; and all these farms bordered the river Delaware. They, as well as all river-bordering farms, fed cattle for market, both by grazing and stall feeding with grain; and the markets on the twenty-second of February made a display of fine fat beef, sheep and pork, that could not be excelled.

These land owners were so closely identified with the old Borough of Chester that I have given their locations. John J. Thurlow built and removed to his farm after he left the old National Hotel in Chester, and his new residence was called "Sporting Hall." Here he and his wife and daughter, Emeline, entertained in true old English-hall style, and day or night, visitors were served in the most hospitable manner. Here also were held an annual "Harvest Home" frolic and dance, the platform for the dance being built out from the floor of the large barn, and people from far and near attended and enjoyed themselves, both food and drink being supplied in profusion.

#### Old Concord Road

Going back to the old Concord road, now called Avenue, and taking it northwardly from the old Wilmington Post Road, there was a small stone house on the west side, near the frog pond, on the back of Samuel Smith's land and south from the railroad, in which house lived a poor white family with children, none of whom did much work or wore much clothing.

On the east side of the road and south of the railroad, on the Eyre land, was a small frame house, in which the colored family of Byard Buley lived.

Above the railroad the farm of Jonas Eyre extended on both sides of the Concord road and to Chester Creek, his old house being on the east side of the road and back from it.

From that, northwardly, was farm after farm without buildings of note, on both sides of the road. Other than Samuel Lytle's old house, on the west side, above the Eyre house.

This appears to exhaust the places of note, of that day, that were in, or closely near, old Chester, other than the old house of Spencer McIlvain, on the north side and back from the Philadelphia road, and to the east of the Cochran farm, and east of what is now known as Chestnut Street. He lived in this two-story stone white dwelling with his wife and two children, Henry and Anna Eliza. The large old barn near the house and to the west of it is said to have been built in 1828. The Hyatt Military School is now on that farm and near the old residence site.

From the river, Chester has now the appearance of extending from the old Lazaretto to Marcus Hook, with its residences, workmen's houses, mills, shipyards, oil works and other business places, while old Hook has extended herself into the State of Delaware.

#### Impressions.

What should have raised the ire of the quiet Quaker population of the County against Chester is not known to the writer, but true it is, there was the impression among them that Chester was a bad town, while on the other hand the people of Chester were possessed of the conceit that Chester was one of the enlightened spots of the earth, and that a man who once lived there was never contented until he returned to end his days.

As a boy born and raised there, I loved old Chester and did not realize any badness, or unworthiness, if it existed, more than in other places of its size. The boys of the town were not notably bad, or unruly, or given to acts that were cruel or specially injurious to others, and the boys of my day grew up to be useful citizens, of good characters. There was a small population along the river front, both white and black, that were ignorant and uncleanly, but they kept to themselves and did not interfere with the better class population. The only rowdiness the citizens experienced was from the factory boys and young men of Rockdale and the quarrymen's boys and young men from Leiperville; these, on special days, like Fourth of July, would come to the town prepared for a fight, and this was likely to occur, with our town boys and young men. Another rowdy down-town element came from Philadelphia on the excursion boats in summer months, and these occasionally made a disturbance, as they were wilfully destructive to private property.

There were one or two practical jokers in the town, but these were not of the manor-born, being men who had earned their reputations in other places before coming to Chester. But Chester did not produce many of the old jail-birds. Of course, I am speaking of the olden times. Chester, Marcus Hook and Darby were the only towns in the County in those old times, Chester being the larger of the three. The principal cotton mills were located at Rockdale, on Chester Creek, Kellyville, and other mills on Darby and Crum Creeks, at Leiperville, and at Trainer, in Lower Chichester.

I have outlived very, very many of those who were boys and young men of my school-boy days, and but few, yes, very, very few of them are still alive to recall these old scenes.

Out of the few remaining now comes the death of Henrietta Powell Lodomus, the widow of Joseph Lodomus, he having died some six or more years ago; the notice of her death speaks of her as a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church and as a good, charitable woman, active in many good works. Having seen her but a short time before her husband's death, I found her mind and memory to be still active and that she was a well-preserved woman.

Some of the writer's recollections of incidents in the old town may be interesting.

The first that made a lasting impression was the burning of the old so-called "granary," or "grainery" building, on the north side of James Street, between Market and Edgmont Streets; this, when the writer was

a very small and young child, as he well recollects being taken from his bed and held in arms to the rear window, facing west, to watch the removing of clothes and furniture, by the tenants, from the burning building on the opposite side of James Street, to the yard and grounds of Edward Darlington, my father, it being a cold, blustering north-windy night; also, he remembers the alarm in his father's house, from the igniting of the building by sparks and burning shingles, coming into the loft-story, through a carelessly left open roof trap-door, the roof having been protected from the fire by constantly wetted blankets and coverings. The great protection to the house, from the blazing fire opposite, being a large old Lombardy poplar tree, on the street edge, in front of the house; this was entirely destroyed by the heat. The singing of popular songs by the volunteer fire-fighters working their old hand engine, "Liberty," is also well remembered, they being stimulated with hot coffee, and much stronger drinks, for the National Hotel was near and in danger, and few private families, at that day, but had French brandy and wines in their homes. In fact, it was a liquor age, and all taverns, grocery stores, both in Chester and other towns, and in the country parts of the County and State, sold the cheap whiskey from distilleries, in Pennsylvania and other neighboring States; even those kept by orderly members of the Friends, or Quaker Society, for a harvest could hardly be properly gathered, it was thought, without the liquor jug. Home-made wines, for entertainment, were a household requirement. This selling by stores continued up to the time and after the Court did the granting of licenses to Inns or Taverns, etc.

The flood of 1843 came down the valley of Chester Creek from what was said to be a "Cloud Burst." The writer crossed the bridge going west a short time before the flood came, there having only fallen a heavy shower of rain at Chester, being the usual August showers, which did not increase the creek flow. In returning, a short time later, the bridge was gone and all communication with the town, east of the creek, cut off. This flood came in a vast wave, which carried away all bridges over the main stream and its east branch; also all dam breasts on it, in Delaware County. Several persons were drowned, much property and stock destroyed and mills and dwellings damaged. This was the only seriously damaging summer flood, within the recollection of inhabitants of the County, but heavy late winter and spring ice-floods were not infrequent and some quite damaging.

As a boy, the writer knew all residents of Chester, both high and low, and well remembers Tom White, an old soldier of 1812 war, who worked for my father and lived in a loft over our one-story office building, adjoining the residence. Tom was a drinking man and when drunk his brain ran on religious matters. After listening to a church sermon, when in liquor he would preach over the sermon in a loud voice. Tom was run over by the old "Liberty" Fire Engine, when drunk, in a fire alarm and seriously injured, from which he never recovered, and being sent to the

County Poor House, in Upper Providence, he died there and was buried in its old burial ground, located near what is now Jackson and Third Streets, Media; the Baptist Church stands near the spot.

Another old character was an idiotic white man, called "Lick lub lasses," from the fact that he once asked to have a quart of West India molasses he had purchased, poured into his hat; this then placed on his head, and it being a warm day, the molasses ran over his face, eyes and neck, as he walked on the street, without seriously disturbing him.

Nicholas Murphy, colored, had been a southern slave, and was a good workman and gardener. In his working for the family of the writer, we, children, soon discovered Nick was a good story teller, and he received from us many a mug of cider, nuts and ginger bread, in return for the stories told us of the olden times when animals could talk and behave as humans. Many years later the author found a book called "Uncle Remus' Stories," written by a southern man, in which the stories told by the old plantation darkies were narrated. It was then found that Nicholas had learned his animal stories in his old southern home. One being how the rabbit lost his long tail, by scaring the guests at a grand party given by the more noble animals, by the beating of a drum on a distant hill, and how when discovered, he was caught and had his long tail shortened by the bite of the wolf.

The old "Liberty" Fire Engine had a water trough body into which water was poured by buckets and tubs, and the force pump was worked by hand levers, by men standing on the ground and by an up-and-down motion; this old engine was preserved as a sacred relic of the "has been" of the old borough. This, after its place had been taken in the 1840's by the fire engine "Friendship," which was also a hand engine, but of the style then in common use. This one had an enclosed body, for its water compartment and its force pump; also a gallery and a suction hose, to draw water from wells, ponds and creeks. The double levers forcing the water through a hose, also from the branch pipe on the gallery. The levers being worked by relays of men, both from the ground and standing on the platforms of the engine, both front and back, the stream thrown being considered a wonder, in those days, both for distance and quantity. This engine was used for many years.

In the old National Hotel in the Thurlow time there, and later, dancing lessons were given to scholars, by an old dancing master, a Frenchman named "Labbie," and later by his son, "Frank." The room was a large second-story parlor on the east end. Here they taught both ladies and gentlemen in the evenings, and children in the afternoons. The dances were the plain old waltz and the old cotillions; the music, the violin of the dancing master. The elder Labbie, like other teachers, corrected the children by blows; he, however, only cracked their toes with his fiddle bow, to make them turn the toes outward.

Harvest homes and picnics were of frequent occurrence in summer, and in winter, balls and dances, given at the National Hotel, and later in



the third-story room of the Penn building; and these were attended by the younger ladies and gentlemen of Chester, as well as by others from Philadelphia and Wilmington, and frequently by Army and Navy officers, as many of them visited Chester in those days. Bountiful provision was made at these entertainments for a late supper, or other refreshments.

Some of the old officers who lived or visited in Chester in my younger days were Major Waite and his wife; Major Levi Reynolds, Lieutenants Edward F. Beale, Samuel Edwards, Pierce Crosby and William Truxton.

The children and young people also had their balls and dance parties. The musicians came from Philadelphia for all these dances.

Chester was a musical town, at that time, and there were some fine instrumental performers, both male and female, on the piano, harp, violin, guitar, and flute, and even the old accordeon; and there were several fine voices for the good old sentimental songs of that day; among these voices were those of Robert Crosby and his sister, Mrs. Isaac Engle, and of Ned Clyde. These gifted singers frequently gave night street serenades to those who were favored, the singing being in front of the houses at a late hour, accompanied with music.

Political mass meetings, or conventions, were held in Chester and at other places in the county, in those hot old campaign days of the Whig and Democratic parties; and ox roasts not uncommon, the whole ox being roasted in the open, hung over a huge hot fire, on a spit, and being turned over and over to give all sides a thorough roasting, which took hours, day and night. Whole sheep were also served in the same manner. All these were carved and served out, with bread, to the assembled people, on convention day, who had also collected to hear the vigorous speeches of noted orators, and listen to the political songs and the band music, for these were enthusiastic political times.

From family history and old letters, I gather that my grandfather, Preston Eyre, married Arabella Ashmead, of Philadelphia, and that they lived in Chester, and had children, four sons and two daughters, John Ashmead Eyre, George W., Preston, and Edward Engle Eyre, and Ann Preston, my mother, and Henrietta, who married Caleb Booth, at Macomb, Illinois, about 1838, my grandfather having removed to Illinois about 1836 or 1837, with his wife, daughter, Henrietta, and son, Edward; one son being then in the West, John Ashmead, at St. Louis or Jackson; Preston being left in the East, learning machinist trade, and George being a sailor at sea.

Letters from my grandfather and grandmother to my family are still well preserved, and date as far back as February, 1838, showing he was farming in a sparsely settled country, near the then small town of Macomb, and which was still a small place in 1857, when I visited it.

I have in my possession old bonds executed by Preston Eyre to the Delaware County National Bank, in the sum of fifteen thousand dollars for the faithful performance of his duties as cashier; one, dated January 8, 1816, his sureties being Isaac Eyre and Jonas Eyre; the other, dated August, 1827, with William Davis and Samuel Edwards as his sureties.

My grandfather was the owner of the brick dwelling house on Market Street, and the adjoining frame store building; also "a large brick house on Market Square and James Street"; also "two adjoining frame dwelling houses fronting on James Street"; also "a commodious stone dwelling house fronting on James Street, with a large lot and garden adjoining, fronting on James Street"; also "a commodious frame dwelling house, with lot and garden adjoining"; and also "two good stables with lots fronting on Market Street," as described, in his hand bill, for public sale, to be sold January 8th, 1844, at the "Public House of Morris W. Deshong," which was either the old National Hotel, or the old Irving Hotel, as Deshong had that house after he left the National. This I get from the old hand-bill in my possession.

My father and mother were married in April, 1827; he was born in Chester County on September 17, 1795, and died November 21, 1884. She was born at Chester, July 4, 1804, and died December 30, 1843. He studied law under Samuel Edwards, Esq., one of the leading members of the Delaware County Bar; as did Archibald Dick and Joseph Richards. He served in the United States House of Representatives from 1832 to 1839. Other of the members who served with him were Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina; Henry A. Wise, of Virginia; Muhlenberg, of Pennsylvania; Abram McIlvain, of Chester County, and Prentice, of Kentucky.

I have in my possession old Washington invitations received by my father, while in Congress: three from the President, Jackson, one for Thursday, the 2nd of January, 1834, at five o'clock; another for Wednesday (without date) at five and one-half o'clock; and another for Saturday, February 3rd, at five o'clock; one of January 6, from Mr. Cass, to a supper; two from Mrs. Cass, one for Wednesday Eve, February 5th, the other for Wednesday Eve, the twenty-sixth; one from Mrs. Gates for Friday evening, February 21st, 1837, another from Mrs. Gates for Friday evening of February 16, 1838; another from Mr. Seaton, to meet a few friends on a Monday evening in February, 1839; another from Mr. Bodiseo for Tuesday, December 18th, at eight P. M.; one from General and Mrs. Tawson for Tuesday evening, February 20th; also a note from Commodore Hull, dated June 10, 1834, presenting his compliments and asking my father's acceptance of a "Snuff Box," as a memento of the "U. S. Frigate Constitution," and stating "the box is made of the live oak of our country and a part of the original frame timber of that fortunate ship"; together with a copy of my father's acceptance of the present.

Letters from my mother to my father in Washington, written in 1834, and later, show what a great length of time it took for letters to pass from one place to the other, at least a week and that uncertain. In one of her letters she tells of an eloquent sermon she listened to from Edward Hicks, delivered at the Philadelphia yearly meeting. In others she shows her interest in Congressional matters, such as the Delaware Breakwater bill pending, in which Chester people were greatly interested, both quarry

owners and vessel captains; of the admiration she felt for Daniel Webster and how she regretted he could not get the support of his party for the Presidency; also, of her horror at the result of a duel fought by Henry A. Wise; and of an effort to have the harbor piers removed from Chester to a place below Naaman's Creek. She also tells of Joshua P. Eyre moving into his new store at James and Edgmont Streets. A letter from her of March 10, 1834, tells of the recent burning of the steamboat "William Penn," near Chester, and of Chester people on board, John K. Zeilin and his wife; Sally Ann Neal, wife of William Neal; Elizabeth Pennell and her child; and how the passengers were saved with great difficulty, after the boat had been run into the mud flats; and others who leaped overboard and were drowned. Another letter tells of the small-pox raging in Chester in March of 1834. That year my father's house on James Street was being reconstructed.

In those old days and up to a much later time, ox teams were largely in use for hauling heavy loads, for farm work and ploughing. John M. Sharpless used a long team of yoked oxen in hauling dyewood to his mills, in broad-tire wagons.

Philadelphia was but a small city, as cities now are, extending only from Broad Street to the River Delaware, and from above Vine Street to a little below South Street, Kensington extending higher up the river. Boxes, hogsheds and barrels were hauled on a one or two-horse dray.

Market houses were erected on Market Street, from Tenth to Delaware Avenue; and on South Street and Callowhill Street, and farmers carried their produce from the country in their old one or two-horse wagons, and many put up at the old Black Bear Hotel, on the south side of Market Street, near Fifth. The railroads ran their cars into the city with teams of handsome grey horses; the Philadelphia and Baltimore road, from Gray's Ferry, along Broad Street to Eleventh and Market Streets, until they constructed a large depot at Broad and Prime Streets. The fire department of Philadelphia was a volunteer one and used the old hand fire engines and hose carriages, drawn by men, on a long rope; fighting between companies was the exciting event of a fire.

These things all appear to me as a huge panorama, as I look back and recall.

In looking over an old copy of the newspaper, in my possession, the

#### "UPLAND UNION"

or

#### "DELAWARE COUNTY, KINGSESSING & BLOCKLEY ADVERTISER,"

as the paper is called, edited by Joseph M. G. Lescure, dated September 18, 1832, I find a display of the Democratic Republican Candidates, as follows: For President, Andrew Jackson; for Vice President, William Wilkins; for Governor, George Wolf; with George G. Leeper named as the Delaware County Elector.

The County Democratic Ticket being given as: For Governor, George Wolf; for Congress, Colonel Henry Myers; for Senator, James Sill; for Assembly, Peter Hill Engle; for Commissioner, David Trainer; for Director of the Poor, David Lyons; and for Auditor, James McMullin.

The National Republican Ticket is given as: Assembly, Samuel Anderson; Commissioner, Spencer McIlvain; Director, John Sellers; and Auditor, William Martin. The Election Proclamation is made by William Baldwin, Sheriff.

This newspaper contains a number of business advertisements and among these are: J. P. & W. Eyre, advertising The Sloop Chester Packet "Hunter," Captain Harris, running between Chester and Philadelphia on Mondays and Thursdays and returning Wednesdays and Saturdays; also advertisements of George W. Piper, as druggist, and for cupping, leeching and bleeding; also of Samuel Smith, for sale of lumber, bricks and coal; also of Joseph Taylor, as coach and harness maker; also of J. Ashmead Eyre, of store goods; also of Thomas Clyde and Jesse M. Justis, as storekeepers; also of Samuel A. Price, as hatter; also of David Abbott, of his saddlery and harness making, and showing his removal to house formerly occupied by Samuel Smith; also advertisement of Rebecca Chadwick, of sale of lot of ground, "on east side of Market Street, between Market House and river, with two new frame houses on it." Also advertisement of John Wells, of dry goods, groceries and liquors, at his store in Providence; this was his store on Providence Road, opposite the Providence Friends' Meeting House. The liquors advertised are named as "Cogniac and Champagne, Brandy (the latter thirty years old) Holland Gin, Jamaica Spirits, Madeira, Sherry, Port, Lisbon and Claret Wines, old Monongahela Whiskey, New England Rum, &c., &c."

I have in my possession an original manuscript of "The Artful Dodger," which bears the quotation "All the World's a Stage and the Men and Women Merely Players," which appears to have been issued in 1844 and is marked "Pipes, Ed." The writing is in a very fine hand, much resembling the old handwriting of John K. Zeilin. The writer designates himself as "Fancy Hat." This is a humorous sheet and a lengthy article is designated as "that Tea-Fight," and describes the persons alluded to, either by their dresses, or by some peculiarity of the person.

Another article is headed "An Observation from Cape May," dated July, 1844, and purports to be from "The Boy Tomivel Pipes." This is also a humorous sketch; another article is headed, "Arrival Extraordinary"; another "Popping Off"; another "The Boy"; and still another, "Sam Weller." This paper was secretly distributed around the town of Chester.

## MEDIA.

What led to the removal of the Court buildings to Media, was the dilapidated condition of the old jail building at Chester, it then being unfit for safe confinement of prisoners. It was condemned by a Grand Jury and a new jail recommended to be built. The removalists of the County, influenced an act to be passed by the State Legislature, to submit the question of removal of the Courts and jail from Chester, to a vote of the people of the whole County, the place of the proposed removal adroitly not being designated, as several locations were desirous to have the buildings, and this naturally united the voters, outside of Chester, and influenced their voting; the majority vote was in favor of removal to a more central part of the County. The Media location was finally agreed on, as the most central point, after a struggle to have the town located at or near the Black Horse Hotel in Middletown Township; and an act of the Legislature was passed, incorporating the Borough of the "Burgess and Town Council of the Borough of Media," and approved the eleventh day of March, 1850.

When the Legislature incorporated the Borough of Media, the act prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquors in the Borough limits; this embraced territory to a distance of two hundred and fifty feet eastward from the Providence road, and took in "the old 'Anvil,' or 'Providence' Inn," (as it was then called and kept by Peter Worrall, as landlord,) and the licensing of that house ended. The incorporated town of Media then embraced the old County Poor House and its farm lands, the Peter Worrall Tavern or Inn, the store and dwelling of Isaac Haldeman, "the house still standing on the west side of Providence road, and near the location of the John Wells store; on east side, opposite this, is the Friends' Meeting House; a frame dwelling house stood on the west side of this road, near Sandy Bank; part of the Doctor Joseph Rowland farm and its residence; (still near Sandy Bank School House); the John Wade old stone house (still on the north side of State Street, between Plum and Jackson Streets); the old Briggs' house (still standing on the north side of State Street, west from Orange Street), afterwards the residence of Doctor Joseph Rowland; and the William Briggs old stone house, still standing on the north side of West State Street and west from West Street. In the year of this incorporation, the Court House and Jail buildings were erected and the Court Records removed from Chester; but the Court House square was then without tree or shrubbery of any kind; no railing and no paving.

That same year of 1850, the Charter House Hotel was largely completed and Doctor George Smith erected a three-story brick house on Olive Street, east of the Court House Square, which was first occupied by Edward Darlington and family, in the spring of 1851. In that year, William V. Black erected a brick store building at the northeast corner of State Street

and South Avenue, with a dwelling on South Avenue back from his store, the site of the present Charter Bank. Media was then an unpaved town and in rainy times, mud everywhere.

Very soon after, other buildings were erected and the town began to improve. Meats in those days were sold, here, from butcher wagons and vegetables, &c., from huckster carts; but the quality was good, as the meats were all fresh killed, the cattle being fed on our home farms.

Chester was little improved until after the Courts were removed to Media, and particularly in the town proper, for several years after, notably on Market Street. The removal of the County Court business gave rise to the impression that the town was ruined for improvement and business, and would become a back number, as was, then, "Marcus Hook." This induced the farm owners along the river to sell their holdings, and business men took advantage of it, bought up land and erected ship and vessel-building yards along the river front, to the west of the creek; also John Larkin, later, made a smart trade of his Chichester farm for the old Cochran property and he started building improvements on that; factories and work shops also were erected and from that Chester became the great city she now deems herself.

The wonderful changes that have taken place in my lifetime can scarcely be realized. Buildings have gone from frame, stone and brick, two and three stories high, to sky scrapers of iron and steel; vessels and ships from the slow sailing craft, to motor and electric power, and steam, and from short in length to well into a thousand feet; from months for voyages to weeks and days and from plying on the surface of the waters to ploughing beneath the surface, and resting on the bottom to elude danger. Railroads, from small wood-burning engines to huge coal burners; from wooden passenger cars to steel palace cars; from stiff back seats to parlor cars and sleeping berths; from twelve miles an hour to one hundred or more; still more wonderful from steam to electric railways; vehicles and freight carrying wagons, from horse to the automobile and motor, and from ten miles an hour, on the public roads, to from twenty-five to fifty miles; mills, from water-power wheels to steam engine and electric powers, with wonderfully improved machinery; farming, from the old plow and the scythe and hand reaping, to motor power for all, and so on, wonderful improvement in everything; even to leaving the earth and flying in the air on flying machines. Some of these flying machines are water power boats, as well, as I recently witnessed, on the Delaware River, the flying of a one-man machine, soaring over the water like a bird, turning at pleasure, diving to the surface like a duck and resting on the water; then, with its power, skimming along like a motor boat and rising again to a flight through the air; with such speed in air, or on the water, that shamed the fast-running steamer I was on.

From wood and charcoal fuel, we have gone to coal; from coal to gas and to oil for heating and for cooking in our houses; and from the old tallow candle to whale oil, to kerosene, to gas and to electricity, to light our houses, all in my day; to say nothing of the change in preparing food, from the old Dutch oven, the skillet, the spider, the long-handle waffle iron, used in wood fires in the fire place, and later, in the old wood stove for oven cooking.

The alleged enlightenment extends to the destruction of life and property by war implements and projectiles; far-carrying cannon, dreadful bombs and poisonous vapors; until we may feel that an age of destruction of life to depopulate the world has surely arrived.

But why try to enumerate the great advances, for many believe we are still in our infancy, and what the future has for those who may live to see it, is a matter of conjecture and wonder.