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THE  
PHILADELPHIA ASSEMBLIES

## WORKS BY THE AUTHOR.

- Some facts about Alsace and Lorraine, 1895.  
The Brooke Family of Whitechurch, Hampshire, England,  
together with an account of Acting-Governor Robert Brooke  
of Maryland and Colonel Ninian Beall of Maryland, 1899.  
The Alabama Arbitration, 1900.  
Émeric Crucé, 1900.  
The Alaska-Canadian Frontier, 1902.  
The Alaska Frontier, 1903.  
The English Ancestors of the Shippens and Edward Shippen  
of Philadelphia, 1904.  
The Swift Family of Philadelphia, 1906.  
Balch Genealogica, 1907.  
L'Évolution de l'Arbitrage International, 1908.  
La Baie d'Hudson, est elle une mer libre ou une mer fermée?  
1911.  
La Baie d'Hudson est une grande mer ouverte, 1913.  
Différends juridiques et politiques dans les rapports des  
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"Arbitration" as a term of International Law, 1915.  
The Influence of the United States on the Development of the  
Law between Nations, 1915.  
Legal and Political International Questions and the Recurrence  
of War, 1916.

THE  
PHILADELPHIA ASSEMBLIES

BY

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A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

FIRST EDITION

PHILADELPHIA  
ALLEN, LANE AND SCOTT  
1916

F158  
.627  
B34

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DEC 27 1916

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TO THE MEMORY  
of  
The Treasurer and the Managers  
of the  
First Assemblies  
1748-1749  
JOHN SWIFT, Treasurer,  
JOHN INGLIS,  
JOHN WALLACE,  
LYNFORD LARDNER.



Having heard, by fame,  
Of this so noble, and so fair assembly,  
This night to meet here, they could do no less,  
Out of the great respect that they bear to beauty.

SHAKESPEARE, *Henry the Eighth*.



## PREFACE.

AT an Assembly some twenty years ago in the Foyer of the Academy of Music, it occurred to the writer that it would be interesting to collect what available material there might be in existence that would cast light upon those balls in the days when Pennsylvania was still a colony. The quest for facts resulted in revealing more manuscript information than had been hoped for. Gradually, year by year, new items of information turned up or were communicated now by one friend, now by another. The writer read a short paper on April 18th, 1902, before the American Philosophical Society upon the *First Assembly Account Book*, kept by John Swift in 1748-49. Subsequently, in 1906, he wrote briefly about the Assemblies in the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, and again on October 21st, 1914 in a paper read at the annual meeting of the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester, Massachusetts, he had something to say about the Assembly Balls in the past. Meanwhile, in answer to a brief appeal for facts printed in January, 1906, in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* and the following mention by Mr. Perrine in the

*Evening Bulletin*, February 17, in 1906, new information gradually drifted in. The accomplished editor of the *Bulletin* said:

“Mr. Thomas Willing Balch has addressed himself to the task—somewhat difficult by reason of the fragmentary character of the information now available—of preparing a history of the Philadelphia Assembly. Such a narrative as he has in mind will embody in large part the social life of the city in its best estate during a period of four or five generations. The annual gatherings during the past generation are of course well known, but in their early, more interesting and perhaps more significant periods, they have been seldom described, as what is known of them is more traditional than authentic, or concerns a few bare facts here and there. How many of the descendants of the members of the old Assemblies when Philadelphia was the capital of the republic, are aware of the fact, for example, that one or more of the historic balls were given where *The Bulletin* office now stands [612 Chestnut Street], or of the nature of the rivalries which at that time engendered a Second Assembly. The opportunity undoubtedly exists, for the production of a delightful series of descriptions and reminiscences, and Mr. Balch, who undertakes the work solely as a

labor of love and who finds that the co-operation of all Philadelphians who have letters, diaries or manuscripts that may throw light on any phase or period of the subject, will be necessary to the completeness of his plans, has submitted the following communication for reproduction from the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*:

“During the winter of 1748-9 nine Assemblies were given in Philadelphia. They were under the management of Lynford Lardner, John Inglis, John Wallace and John Swift. There were fifty-nine subscribers, and the entertainment was simple. John Swift, who acted as secretary and treasurer, had arranged, about 1740, a number of small dances or “assemblies,” as they were called at that time, at his own house and that of some of his young friends. Since Colonial days the Assemblies have been given with fair regularity except when prevented by war or other interruptions, and yearly beginning with 1866. With the purpose of writing the history of these historic balls, the oldest in the country, I shall be much obliged for the communication of any facts or items relating to them.”

The author put off writing at length on the subject, partly owing to his interest in the study of International Law, and partly owing to the hope

and desire to collect in his drag net more facts. Having an hereditary interest in the balls from their very inception, the author decided in the past summer to write an essay on the historic development of the balls which would be printed as a *first* edition, his purpose being to add to and develop the work for a *second* edition.

The author will be thankful for any fresh facts relating to the Assemblies: also if he has made any mistakes of dates or names or anything else, he will be glad to have them pointed out to him. It may be safely asserted that probably never was a genealogical work published without mistakes creeping into it, and there is much of a genealogical character in the present book.

He has given more or less information concerning a number of the subscribers to the first Assembly Season of 1748-49; he would be glad for information concerning the other worthies whose signatures appear on that list, as well as additional facts about those of whose doings something has already been said. Likewise, he would be grateful especially for any facts that may narrow down the period of years between which the list of graces, whose names will be found at page 70, attended the Assemblies or some other social function.



The writer still has some unused information poked away in odd corners, which he has not had time to round up: and he is on several trails which he hopes will eventually add additional facts.

It may be advisable to point out here, that every social gathering in past times which was called an "Assembly" was not of necessity the *historic* Dancing Assembly. Also the *Legislative* Assembly should not be confused, as sometimes happens, with the *Dancing* Assembly.

In the collecting of the material for this book, the writer has received help from many friends; Mrs. Thomas Balch, Charles Norris, Esq., the late Mrs. Isaac Starr (who was Miss Lardner), the late Miss Elise Willing Balch, the late Charles Morton Smith, Esq., Mrs. George McCall, Mrs. Cornelius Stevenson, Edward Swift Buckley, Esq., to mention only a few. Dr. I. Minis Hays, the Secretary of the American Philosophical Society has helped the author with the information in the archives of that venerable society. And in looking over the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (often times erroneously called by strangers the Pennsylvania Historical Society) and the Ridgeway Library, he has at all times been aided by Messrs. John W. Jordan and Ernest Spofford, respect-

ively Librarian and Assistant Librarian of the former institution, and Mr. Bunford Samuel, Librarian of the latter corporation. To them, as to every one else, he begs to offer his sincere thanks.

As the present work has not been undertaken as a commercial venture, but as a small contribution to the public knowledge of the history of both City and State, any profits that may accrue from the sale of this book, will be given to the binding fund of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, a fund which sorely needs to be enlarged.

This book has been written not in a spirit of fanciful imagination, but with a due appreciation that Clio, the muse of history, is a jealous mistress, who when offended by a careless or willful misstatement of fact, is sure sooner or later to exact an accounting by the light which some future devotee of hers will eventually turn upon such misdeeds as have been done to her injury.

Finally, the author begs to say, that he hopes perhaps that this small book *à propos* of the Assembly Balls in the days before the Civil War, an almost forgotten bit of history in our time, may serve to recall to the possessors of an old set of bureau drawers or an ancient well worn trunk in the attic,

the possibility of finding something relating to the Assemblies of the past. For as Herrick says:

“Attempt the end, and never stand to doubt,  
Nothing’s so hard, but search will find it out.”

T. W. B.

PHILADELPHIA,  
SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1916.



## INTRODUCTION.

PHILADELPHIA and Pennsylvania as City and State respectively have both played important and leading parts, alike in the time of the colonies as well as since the Declaration of Independence, in the building and development of our country.

In colonial days Philadelphia was the largest city of the Keystone Colony as to-day she is the largest city of the Keystone State, and it was within her gates that the First and the Second Continental Congresses met and took counsel together, that the Constitutional Convention which framed the present Constitution of the United States sat and deliberated, that Washington lived during the greater part of his presidency, and that the Supreme Court of the United States organized and began to sit to hear cases. Philadelphia can justly glory in having contributed to the material development and culture of the Nation through the acts of her individual citizens, and by the establishment of institutions which have served as a model to other parts of the country. The Contribution Society,

better known as the Hand in Hand, was started in 1752 to insure its contributors against loss from fire: it is the oldest fire insurance company founded in America. Another similar institution, the Mutual Assurance Company, also known as the Green Tree, was organized in 1784, and is the second oldest fire insurance company established in the country. In the Bank of North America, chartered by the Government in 1782, Philadelphia possesses the oldest bank chartered in the United States. The Philadelphia Club, begun in 1834, is the first gentlemen's club in the country, and likewise, the Philadelphia Cricket Club, started in 1854, is the oldest cricket club in the United States. In the Shakespeare Society of Philadelphia, started in 1851, the city founded by Penn has the oldest Shakespeare Society in existence. The Pennsylvania Hospital on Spruce and Pine Streets, started in 1751, is the oldest hospital within the Union. And in the American Philosophical Society, founded in 1727 by Franklin, Philadelphia is fortunate in possessing not only the oldest learned society within the United States, but also in the new world.

Philadelphia is rich also in the number of her historical monuments. Besides possessing the Old Colonial State House of Pennsylvania, begun in 1732, in which the Pennsylvania Legislative Assembly

began to sit in 1736,<sup>1</sup> and in one of whose halls the Declaration of Independence was voted by the Second Continental Congress, Philadelphia has in the two buildings close to that old State House, the buildings where the First Congress and the Federal Supreme Court under the Constitution of 1787-89 respectively met, the former at Sixth, the latter at Fifth and Chestnut Streets. All that is well known throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is not so well known, however, that Philadelphia possesses also Old Swedes's Church, built from 1698 to 1700 on the site where the Swedes began to hold worship in 1677 in a log block house; and perhaps for historical accuracy, it may be well to remember that the Swedes built within the territory of what is now the State of Pennsylvania, their first church at Nya Göteborg on Great Tenakongh or Tinicum Island, just outside the present city limits, at least as early as September, 1646. Philadelphia also has Christ Church built in the early part of the eighteenth century, where Washington attended; Carpenter's Hall built from 1770 to 1774 where the Provincial Congress of Pennsylvania was held in 1774 and the First Continental

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<sup>1</sup> Frank M. Etting: *The Old State House of Pennsylvania, known now as the Hall of Independence*, 1876, pages 15-16.

Congress sat in 1775; the building that was the home of the First Bank of the United States (1791-1811) of which Thomas Willing was President, now occupied by the Girard National Bank; likewise the building which housed the Second Bank of the United States (1816-1836) of which Nicholas Biddle was President, now serving as the Philadelphia Customs House; the house of John Bartram, built in 1731 and now surrounded by his botanical garden as a public park; and other buildings of historic importance.

Three of the greatest military achievements in the annals of North America occurred within the bounds of Pennsylvania. It was from Philadelphia that a military expedition, made up in good part of Pennsylvania troops started, during the struggle known in Europe as the Seven Years' War and in this country as the French and Indian War, to cross the Allegheny Mountains and the virgin wilderness beyond them and successfully captured in 1758 Fort Du Quesne. Built where the Allegheny and the Monongahela Rivers join in forming the Ohio, which after coursing westward for several hundred miles merges its waters into the Mississippi or Father of Waters, Fort Du Quesne was a place of commanding importance, and until its capture by



the English a barrier to their progress beyond the Alleghenies into the prairie lands of the Ohio. On the site of Fort Du Quesne, at the western end of the Commonwealth, by the energy and skill of Pennsylvanians the great city of Pittsburgh rose, a fitting memorial of the wisdom and skill of a British statesman who successfully led the British Empire through times of stress and peril. At the eastern end of the State, not far from Philadelphia, only a score of years later, our fathers, under Washington, Wayne, Mühlenburg, and other able captains, kept watch along the banks of the Schuylkill, during the bleak winter of 1777-78, in the encampment at Valley Forge. A little more than three quarters of a century later to the westward of the Susquehanna River and near the southern boundary of our State, the famous Mason and Dixon Line, at Gettysburg on the first three days of July, 1863, the Union Army under Meade, a son of Pennsylvania and also a Philadelphian, and his two lieutenants, Reynolds and Hancock, likewise both sons of Pennsylvania, defeated the Confederate Army under Robert E. Lee and so rolled back the high wave of the Confederacy.

It was at Germantown that Pastorius, its founder and three other burghers of that settlement, made

in 1688 the first public protest in America against slavery.

Philadelphia through her individual citizens has made notable contributions to civilization. Benjamin Franklin, founder and President of the American Philosophical Society, besides being a statesman, added much to the scientific knowledge of mankind and to American literature. Of him Turgot wrote the inscription: *Eripuit cælo fulmen, mox sceptrâ Tyrannis.*<sup>2</sup> He was one of those who subscribed funds to send out about 1754 the first American exploring expedition to the Arctic regions. It started from Philadelphia. Rittenhouse observed the transit of Venus of June 3rd, 1769, at his private observatory at Norriton;<sup>3</sup> and calculated the elements of the future transit of December 8th, 1774. In 1791 he succeeded Franklin as President of the American Philosophical Society. In recognition of his contributions to the knowledge of the world, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

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<sup>2</sup> This is the version given by Condorcet on the title page of his *Éloge de M. Franklin, lu à la séance publique de l'Académie des Sciences, le 13 Nov. 1790*, published at Paris in 1791. Condorcet ascribes it to Turgot under the date of 1775. The more generally known version is, *Eripuit coelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis.*

<sup>3</sup> *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Philadelphia, 1771, Volume I., page 8.

Fitch, a Pennsylvanian by adoption, built a steamboat which he navigated as a commercial venture on the Delaware River in 1792.<sup>4</sup>

The poets, Bayard Taylor and Thomas Buchanan Reed, have added to the poetic treasures of the world. The former, who was born at Kennett Square in Chester County, not far from Philadelphia, was a world wide traveller. He attended in 1874 the millennial celebration in Iceland, when an Icelandic translation of a poem he had written for the occasion was read. Besides his poetical works, he wrote *Hannah Thurston* and other novels. And he added a classic to the English language by his translation of both parts of Goethe's *Faust*. Reed, who was a painter of no mean ability, painted the historic picture, *Sheridan's Ride*, and also wrote the poem of the same name as well as *The Wagoner of the Alleghenies*. George H. Boker was the author of the well known play, *Francesca di Rimini*. Benjamin West, who attained a high renown as a portrait painter and eventually was president of the Royal Academy in London, an honor not often conferred on a stranger, was born

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<sup>4</sup> To guard against any possible misunderstanding, it may be well to remember that Rittenhouse was not the first to observe the transit of Venus, nor Fitch the first to invent the steamboat.

in a house which now belongs to Swarthmore College just outside of Philadelphia. He obtained his early education as a painter here in Philadelphia and the many genuine portraits by him in this country give ample proof of the ability of this distinguished son of Pennsylvania. And a tablet on the house at the southwest corner of Spruce and South Sixth Streets tells both native and stranger that there was born the best actor of the American comic stage, Joseph Jefferson.

If Philadelphia, when called upon, has done her share in times of war, she has contributed substantially also to the maintenance of peace between the Nations by means of judicial settlements.

In 1693, after the statesman whose name the Commonwealth bears, had tried for a dozen years in Pennsylvania his theories of government, he published at London, *An Essay towards the present and future peace of Europe, by the establishment of an European Dyet or Estates*. A second edition of this notable publication was printed at London in 1696, it was reprinted at London in 1726 in the collected works of Penn, and again here in Philadelphia in 1858 in the *Publications of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*. He advocated the establishment of a Central Parliament for Europe to

which the European States should send representatives, and urged strongly that all causes of difference which two States could not adjust by diplomatic means, should be referred to the central Parliamentary body for judicial action. In case any State which joined the federation failed to bow before the judgment of the European Parliament and should take up arms, then "all the other Sovereignities, United as one Strength, shall compel the submission and Performance of the Sentence, with Damages to the Suffering Party, and Charges to the Sovereignities that obliged their Submission." In the various plans for world peace which since Penn's time have been urged upon the world, not a great deal that is new has been devised in the manner of *compelling* Nations to keep the peace. And with that rare gift which seems to belong only to the highest scholarship, Penn towards the end of his essay acknowledged his indebtedness to the *Grand dessein* of Henry the Fourth of France, though Penn, no more than other men of his time, realized that Henry's plan really was an attempt to displace the House of Hapsburg from the first place of power in Europe, and that the *Grand dessein* probably was the work of the Duc de Sully. But Penn, who truly aimed to do away with war,

did much then and since by his essay to place for consideration before the English speaking world, the possibility of doing away with war between Nations, always supposing that that is an attainable end.

That great philosopher and many-sided man already mentioned above, to whom Philadelphia is much indebted for having promoted and in some cases originated many of her most valued institutions, and who added vastly to the knowledge of mankind, the author of *Poor Richard's Almanack* was ever eager, while in favor of all needful defensive measures, to advance any sane plan that would help to make war less frequent, or curtail its area once it had broken forth.

It was from a member of the Philadelphia Bar that came the proposal to submit the *Alabama* claims to an International Court for judicial settlement; and that proposal ripened into the great International Tribunal that, sitting in the Swiss city of Geneva in 1871-72, pronounced judgment between the United States of America and Great Britain concerning those claims, and by its decision based upon legal justice ended, by a judicial settlement, in peace and concord, that dispute which had arisen between two of the great powers of the world.

It was with Pennsylvania money, too, made in Pittsburgh, that the *Palais de la Paix* at The Hague was built.

It is to the credit of Philadelphia, that, under the leadership of John Welsh, later on our Minister to England, she successfully inaugurated and carried through in 1876 the Centennial Exposition that was held in Fairmount Park, probably the finest city park in the world, even the Bois de Boulogne not excepted, in memory of the events of a century before. That great undertaking—to which not only all the States of the Union, but also all the Nations of the world, sent splendid exhibits of their industry—she successfully carried through single handed, with the exception of a small loan of five millions of dollars from Congress which the city subsequently repaid to the National Government.

In founding in 1805 the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with George Clymer as first president, Philadelphia established the first school in the country for the teaching of the Fine Arts.

When away from home, however, it is an unusual thing to hear a Philadelphian praise the city, or her great citizens, whether past or present. In 1866, Horace Binney, who added to the luster of the city by attaining to the leadership of the United States

Bar and did many things for the advancement of Philadelphia, commented on the lack of appreciation by Philadelphia of her own. He said<sup>5</sup> that Philadelphia "is wanting in civic personality, or, what is perhaps a better phrase for the thought, a family unity or identity. She does not take, and she never has taken, satisfaction in habitually honoring her distinguished men as *her* men, as men of her own *family*. It is the *city* that is referred to, as distinguished, perhaps, from the rest of the State. She has never done it, in the face of the world, as Charleston has done it, as Richmond has done it, as Baltimore has done it, as New York has done it, or at least, did it in former times, and as Boston has done it and will do it forever. She is more indifferent to her own sons than she is to strangers."

Binney tells us that this comment upon the city was not new, when he made it in 1866, for it had been made off and on before that for at least sixty years earlier. The accomplished editor of the *Evening Bulletin*, who writes under the name of "Penn" has suggested that one reason for this

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<sup>5</sup> Horace Binney: *The Leaders of the Old Bar of Philadelphia*; Philadelphia, 1866, page 111. This quotation was communicated by S. Emlen Meigs, Esq.



lack of civic pride by the city founded by Penn in the deeds of her own may be accounted for in part by the fact that until 1854 the city as we know it to-day was really divided into a number of separate communities.

The failure of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania to properly herald the contributions of their sons and daughters to the civilization of the world may be due in part, too, to the fact that of the original thirteen colonies, Pennsylvania was settled in the beginning by a greater diversity of races than any of the other twelve colonies. That diversity in the population of Pennsylvania, and the consequent difficulty of fusing the various races into one homogeneous people, was long intensified by the Alleghenies. Those mountains running from southwest to northeast across the State, geographically cut the Commonwealth into two parts, until the Pennsylvania Railroad was built and thereby joined the settlements on the two sides of the mountains commercially as well as politically. Consequently, in the beginning in colonial times and afterwards even into the first part of the nineteenth century, Pennsylvania did not have that unity of political thought and ideal which commonly belongs to a Commonwealth whose people all speak one and the same language.

## THE PHILADELPHIA ASSEMBLIES.

## I.

Among the things with a historic past of which the city founded by Penn in 1682 on the shores of the Delaware and the Schuylkill Rivers can be proud, are the Philadelphia Assemblies. Dating from the winter of 1748-49, when they were organized and first given, they far outstrip in the remoteness of their origin any other series of balls which are given in this country with the one exception of balls given by the Saint Cecilia Society of Charleston in South Carolina. And even the beginnings of that venerable southern society, the Assemblies of Philadelphia antedate by fourteen years. For the Saint Cecilia Society was founded in 1762, and incorporated on March 10th, 1784.<sup>6</sup>

The word "Assembly" when used in a social way, meant in the eighteenth century that people who attended an Assembly gathered together in a social way upon a plane of equality.

In the later years of the colonies, and the early days of the Republic, "Dancing Assemblies" were

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<sup>6</sup> Information communicated by Thomas Wright Bacot, Esqr., of Charleston, S. C., whose great-great-grandfather was one of the founders of the Saint Cecilia Society.

not peculiar to Philadelphia. Assemblies were held in many of the important centers near the Atlantic seaboard. Thus, for example, two cards still extant of the "Dancing Assembly," held in Savannah, Georgia, for the season of 1786-87 are the invitations to attend those Assemblies sent respectively to Miss Lawrence of Mulberry Hill, Monmouth County, New Jersey, of the family of "Don't give up the ship" Lawrence, and to Mrs. Le Conte, a member of a Savannah family.<sup>7</sup>

The Washington Dancing Assembly began in December, 1796, almost a half century after the Dancing Assembly of Philadelphia was started.<sup>8</sup> The Rev. Manasseh Cutler—a graduate of Yale, a distinguished botanist, a leader in forming the future State of Ohio and who has been credited with having drafted the "Ordinance of 1787"—when a Federalist member of Congress from Massachusetts, makes a reference in his correspondence with his daughter, Mrs. Poole, "to the Assembly" held in the District of Columbia during his stay in the city of Washington. Writing from the city of

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<sup>7</sup> In the possession of Mrs. Howard Gardiner.

<sup>8</sup> Wilhelmus Bogart Bryan: *A History of The National Capital*; New York, 1914, Volume I., page 292.

Washington, Feby. 21st, 1803, to his daughter, he says:—<sup>9</sup>

“Some little time ago I dined at Mr. Balch's at Georgetown. Our company was large, mostly members of Congress. Miss Anna [King] was there. She is the most intimate friend and companion of Miss Harriet Balch. They attend together the boarding-school, dancing-school, and Assembly. Mr. and Mrs. King were invited, but unable to attend. My health did not permit me, as the weather was, to stay to tea.”

The young Harriet Balch of whom the Massachusetts divine and congressman speaks in his letter, was the eldest child of the notable Rev. Dr. Balch of Georgetown, a graduate of Princeton, who was even a notable figure in the days before Georgetown had been taken from Maryland in 1790 by the creation of the District of Columbia. The young lady in question, even though the daughter of a clergyman, was fond of society and dancing, and in after life, when she had married Major-General Alexander Macomb, the victor on September 11th, 1814, of the battle of Plattsburg, and subsequently

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<sup>9</sup> *Life, Journals and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler, LL.D.*, by his grandchildren William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler, Cincinnati, 1888, Volume II., page 132.

the commander-in-chief of the army of the United States, she was, at their house at the northwest corner of Farragut Square and I Street, one of the leading hostesses of Washington until her death in 1869.

Assemblies were given also in the city of New York. An invitation card to a New York Assembly, dated January 29th, 1841, addressed to the father and mother of Mrs. Gouverneur, gives the names of the managers, twelve in all:

“Abm. Schermerhorn,	J. Swift Livingston,
Edmd. Pendleton	Jacob R. Le Roy,
James W. Otis,	Thos. W. Ludlow,
Wm. Douglas,	Chas. McEvers, Jr.,
Henry Delafield,	William S. Miller,
Henry W. Hicks,	Charles C. King.”

## II.

Like most things which have started from small beginnings and, after the passage of some time, have grown to great proportions, the Philadelphia Assemblies were much smaller and less sumptuous at first than they are to-day: but there is every reason to think that they were just as pleasant and enjoyable then as now.

During the winter season of 1748-49, nine Assemblies were given in Philadelphia under the management of four "Directors," as the managing board was then called: John Swift, John Inglis, John Wallace and Lynford Lardner. Three manuscript relics of those gay and time honored festivities have come down to us:—the rules to govern the dances, the list of original subscribers and the treasurer's account book.

All three of these manuscripts, except the signatures of the signers, are in the handwriting of John Swift, then a young man of twenty-eight. There is a tradition in the Swift family that the first meeting at which the Assemblies originated was held some time in 1748 at John Swift's house.

The first of these three early manuscripts, Charles Swift Riché Hildeburn, a noted antiquary and a descendant of John Swift the treasurer and manager of 1748-49, presented in 1879 to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, an institution that was established in 1824.

At the same time that Mr. Hildeburn presented the original set of rules governing the Assemblies, Richard Penn Lardner, a descendant of the first Lynford Lardner, who was a manager the first season the Assemblies were given, gave to the Historical Society the list of original subscribers.

Concerning the presentation of these two precious manuscripts to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the following letter now in the possession of the author, which was addressed almost forty years ago by the then President of that learned society to a gentleman who not only had been a manager of the Assemblies himself, but also in addition, like the writer of the letter, had a hereditary interest in those balls from their inception, is of such interest that it is given here in full.

“728 SPRUCE ST., Feb. 26, 1878.

“MY DEAR MR. SWIFT:

“Many years ago you were good enough to give to me a copy made, I believe, at your cost, in lithograph of the subscribers to the 1st City Dancing Assembly of this city, A. D. 1748. The original, as I think I understood at the time, was in the possession of Mr. Richard Penn Lardner. I had the fac-simile which you gave me—or one of them, rather, for you gave me more than one—handsomely framed, and hung up in the Hall of our Society. Mr. Lardner’s ancestor was one of the managers of the Assembly; as was John Swift, who I believe was your great-great-uncle.

“Now singularly enough, a few days ago, in the possession of a descendant of the said John Swift, turns up the original rules and regulations of this Assembly—made like the list of Subscribers in 1748. They are rather amusing in this day. The assemblies must begin at 6, and by no means last longer than 12. Card tables, lights and a card room are to be provided for those who wish to play at cards. The regulations about tickets, partners, minuets, etc. etc. are minute and strict. A part of the paper which contained certain prohibitions is unfortunately destroyed; but a great part of the Rules & Regulations are yet legible.

“The possessor of the document brought it to our Society’s Hall; and I urged him strongly to give it to us. He is willing to do so provided Mr. Lardner will give us the counterpart, of the Subscribers. If it had both the Society would have them framed and hung as companion pieces. Our Society is, by degrees, getting to be a State Institution. Under the care of men like Mr. Jordan—and its present librarian, Mr. Frederick Stone,—it is making great and sure progress. Things sent there are sure to be preserved and displayed to the best advantage.

“I write all this that if you think it worth while to bring the matter before Mr. Lardner,—with



whom I suppose that your relations are ancient and intimate—you may do so; & I'wd be obliged by yr doing so.

“I may add that I have given or am giving most things of the same sort as I invite Mr. Lardner to give—of my own—to the Society as the best and surest place to preserve them. I may add also that if Mr. Lardner does not care to part with the property in the paper, he can deposit it in the Society's fire-proof vaults; and can re-demand it when he likes.

“I remain

“Dear Sir,

“With sincere respect and regard

Your friend & Kinsman

JOHN W<sup>m</sup>. WALLACE

“JOSEPH SWIFT, ESQ.,

“Philada.

“Walnut St.”

In 1902 Mr. Edwin Swift Balch and Mr. Thomas Willing Balch, descendants of Charles Willing and Samuel McCall, Junior, both among the original subscribers to the balls in 1748-49, presented to the American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned

society in the new world, the third manuscript relating to the first Dancing Assembly, the account book kept by their great-great-granduncle, John Swift, the treasurer and a manager. Thus these three manuscript relics of colonial Philadelphia are now housed in the buildings of two of the most notable learned societies of the country, where they are reasonably secure against the ravages of time or injury by heedless hands. By looking over these three manuscripts and comparing them together, much light is thrown upon the early Philadelphia Assemblies.

### III.

The subscription list begins in the handwriting of John Swift by saying:

“A List of Subscribers for an Assembly under the direction of John Inglis, Linford Lardner, John Wallace & John Swift: each Subscription forty shillings, to be paid to any of the Directors at Subscribing.”

Then follows the list of subscribers, only fifty-nine all told:

“Alex. <sup>r</sup> Hamilton,	Thomas White,
Tho. Lawrence, Jr.,	John Lawrence,
John Wallace,	Thos. Graems,
Phineas Bond,	John Cottenham,

Ch <sup>s</sup> Willing,	John Moland,
Joseph Shippen,	Wm. Cussens,
Sam. McCall, Jun <sup>r</sup> .,	James Hamilton,
George McCall,	Ro. Mackinen,
Edw. Jones,	Wm. Allen,
Samuel McCall, Sen <sup>r</sup>	Arch <sup>d</sup> McCall,
Redm. Conyngham,	Jos. Turner,
Jos. Sims,	Thos. Hopkinson,
Thomas Lawrence, Sen <sup>r</sup>	Rich <sup>d</sup> Peters,
David McIlvaine,	Adam Thompson,
John Wilcocks,	Alex <sup>r</sup> Stedman,
Charles Stedman,	Patrick Baird,
John Kidd,	John Sober,
W <sup>m</sup> Bingham,	David Franks,
Buckridge Sims,	John Inglis,
John Swift,	Ninian Wischeart,
John Kearsley, jun <sup>r</sup> .,	Abram Taylor,
W <sup>m</sup> Plumstead,	James Trotter,
Andrew Elliot,	Samson Levy,
James Burd,	Lynford Lardner,
W <sup>m</sup> Peters,	Rich <sup>d</sup> Hill, Jr.,
James Polyceen,	Benj. Frill,
Wm. Franklen,	Jn <sup>o</sup> . Francis,
Hen Harrison,	William M <sup>c</sup> Ilvaine,
John Heuston,	Will <sup>m</sup> . Humphreys.”
Daniel Boiles	

In looking at the above list, any one conversant with the members of the Assemblies now, is impressed with the fact that most of those old names have passed away. Thus of the above family names only those of Willing, McCall, Peters, White, Lardner and Hopkinson seem to be still represented on the Assemblies by male descendants bearing the original names. Of course many of those original subscribers are still represented on the Assembly list to-day by descendants through female lines. That is true, for instance, of three of the managers for the season of 1748-49. A comparison of the first Assembly list with that of to-day is a forceful reminder of that rule of nature which Sir Henry Sumner Maine stated so clearly, that families of great prominence tend, after a few generations, to become extinct in the male lines, and to reproduce themselves only through the female lines.

Of the four managers of the first Assemblies, two were of English and two of Scottish descent.

John Swift, the treasurer, was the eldest child of John Swift of a family that came from Bristol, England, and his wife, Mary White. John Swift, the treasurer, who was born in 1720, about 1740 organized some dancing parties, "assemblies" as they were then called, at his own house and those

of some of his young friends. In 1743 he went over to England together with his younger brother, Joseph Swift, where they visited their uncle John White at Croydon, in Surrey. Returning to Philadelphia in 1746, he became a successful merchant. In 1757 he was elected to the Common Council of the city. He was appointed by the Crown, Collector of the Port of Philadelphia from 1762 to 1772, and was afterwards known as the "Old Collector." During the latter part of his life, he lived at "Croyden Lodge," in Bucks County, where he died in 1802, and was buried in Christ Church burying ground, Philadelphia, January 14, 1803.<sup>10</sup>

John Inglis, a Scotchman, settled in Philadelphia, and married on October 16th, 1736, Catherine McCall, of a prominent Philadelphia family. He engaged in business, with his wife's brother-in-law and cousin, Samuel McCall, Senior, who was a subscriber to the First Philadelphia Assemblies. Mr. Inglis was elected to the City Common Council in

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Balch: *Letters and Papers relating chiefly to the Provincial History of Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1855, page LXXXIII *et seq.* This work is often spoken of as *The Shippen Papers*.—Thomas Willing Balch: *The Swift Family of Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Philadelphia, 1906, page 130 *et seq.*

October, 1745, in which he served many years. He was commissioned a Captain of a company of the Associated Regiment of Foot of Philadelphia. He signed the Non-Importation Resolutions of 1765. His portrait was painted by Peale about 1770.<sup>11</sup>

John Wallace, also a director or manager of the First Assemblies, came from Drumellier, Scotland, to Newport, Rhode Island in 1742; a few years afterwards he settled in Philadelphia and became a prosperous merchant. He was a founder of the Saint Andrew's Society of this city and served in the City Councils from 1755 to 1776.<sup>12</sup> His portrait was painted by a Swede, Hesselius.

Lynford Lardner, the other manager of the first Assemblies, was born in London, July 18th, 1715, sailed from Gravesend, May 5th, 1740, and arrived early in the following September and settled in Philadelphia. In 1746 he was made Keeper of the Great Seal of the Province, in 1752 Justice of the Peace for Lancaster and in 1755 he was appointed to the Provincial Council. He was a member of the

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<sup>11</sup> Gregory B. Keen: *The Descendants of Joran Kyn, the founder of Uplands: The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 1881, Volume V., page 335.

<sup>12</sup> Henry Flanders: *Commemorative Address, The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 1884, Volume VIII., pages xiii-xiv.

Library Company of Philadelphia, and was elected to the American Philosophical Society, January 26th, 1768.<sup>13</sup> He died October 6th, 1774, at "Somerset," at Tacony on the Delaware River.

John Swift and Lynford Lardner were very intimate and the following letter of introduction given by the former to the latter to Grosvenor Bedford in London when Lardner was about to revisit his native land, may not be without interest for the relatives of both managers.

"To

"Grosvenor Bedford Esqr

"att the General Excise Office

"London

PHILADELPHIA June 29th 1762

"DEAR SIR

"This will be handed you by my very good Friend Mr. Linford Lardner, who is going to pay a short Visit to his Friends and native Country after an absence of about twenty years. He is a gentleman I have been long intimately acquainted with, and have a great regard for; consequently he must often have heard of you, which makes him desirous

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<sup>13</sup> *List of the members of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, January 17, 1890, page 5.*

of being acquainted with you. Any Civilities you show him will be thankfully acknowledged by

“Your Affectionate

“Hum Servt

“JOHN SWIFT”

Of the subscribers to the first Philadelphia Assemblies, the most influential man in the community was undoubtedly Charles Willing, who in that year of 1748 was Mayor of the City. Sprung from a family originally from County Somerset, England, that was established as successful merchants for two generations at Bristol in Gloucestershire, Charles Willing, about the year 1729 came over to Philadelphia to join his uncle Thomas Willing who had settled here a number of years earlier. After some years the latter returned to Bristol, leaving his nephew in sole charge of the business in America. Charles Willing married Ann Shippen, a granddaughter of Edward Shippen, the emigrant. In 1748 he was elected by the non-Quaker element Mayor of the City and again in 1754, in which later year he died of yellow fever. A copy of his portrait is in the Mayor's room in the City Hall. Of him the Rev. Dr. William Smith, the first Provost of the University of Pennsylvania wrote:



“If to be all the wise and good commend,  
The tender husband, father and the friend;  
At home belov'd and blest, esteem'd abroad;  
Studious to serve mankind, and please his God;  
If this from death one useful life could save,  
Thou hadst not read that Willing fills this grave!”

On the list of the First Assemblies, the Shippen family was represented by Joseph Shippen. Probably he was that Joseph who was born at Philadelphia, November 26, 1706, and died in June, 1793. He married Mary Kearney. In October, 1742, he was elected to the City Council, in which he served some years. He was known in the Shippen family by the name of “Gentleman Joe,” by reason of the gay, luxurious life which he led, and which, as appears from the letters of his brother, Edward Shippen “of Lancaster,” wasted his patrimony. He subsequently removed to Germantown, where he died.

As the Shippens played an important part in shaping the colonial history of Pennsylvania, and the blood of Edward Shippen, the immigrant, runs in the veins of so many prominent Philadelphia families, it will not be without interest to say something about the Shippens, both in England and colonial Pennsylvania.

The Shippens were settled in Yorkshire at least as early as the middle of the thirteenth century, where they were a prosperous yeoman family. In the register of Monk Fryston in the County of York, the christening of Tenet Shippen is recorded on September 22nd, 1539, and on September 15th, 1540, the burial of Robert Shippen is noted. In subsequent years some forty Shippen entries are recorded in the Monk Fryston Register. On July 18th, 1626, the marriage of William Shippen and Mary Nunes or Nunns is recorded in the neighboring parish of Methley. It is possible that this William Shippen came to Methley from Hillom which is in the parish of Monk Fryston, to which confirmation is given by the fact that a William Shippen was living at Hillom in 1612.<sup>14</sup> William Shippen's wife, Mary Nunes, was a member of a substantial yeoman family long established at Methley.

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<sup>14</sup> Francis Laburne of Methley, yeoman, in his will dated August 13th, 1612, says *inter alia*, "Also whereas Thomas Quare of Methley, is indebted and doth owe unto me the sum of xjli. due to be paid upon Martin the bushopp in winter next following, I do give and bequeath it unto Willm Shippone of Hillom, in the prsh of Munk-frieston." *The Registers of the Parish Church of Methley in the County of York from 1560 to 1812*. Transcribed and edited by George Denison Lumb one of the Hon. Secretaries of the Thoresby Society and the Yorkshire Parish Register Society: Leeds, 1903.

William and Mary Shippen had six children, four daughters and two sons. The latter, who were the youngest members of the family, were baptized respectively July 2nd, 1637 and March 5th, 1639, William and Edward. Of these two brothers, the elder remained in England and the younger came to America. Of William's children, his second son, also a William Shippen, was a member of Parliament and a famous leader of the Jacobites. In his speeches he spoke his mind clearly and fearlessly, and to such purpose that on one occasion for reflecting on the policy of the King, he was confined to the Tower of London; and it was of him that Pope wrote,

“I love to pour out all myself, as plain  
As downright Shippen, or as old Montaigne.”

Edward Shippen, the emigrant from Methley, came over to New England in 1668 not to escape political or religious persecutions but to better his fortune. He soon amassed a considerable fortune in Boston. But owing to his having become a Quaker, he found it advisable to move to Providence, that haven of liberty founded by Roger Williams. From there in a few years Shippen moved on to the city founded by Penn on the right bank of the Delaware

River. In his new home he soon rose to high position in both City and State, and began those oft repeated services rendered by the Shippen family for several generations to the State through all of the colonial period and even into the days of the Republic. Like the Brooke family of Maryland, the Van Rensselaer and the Livingston families of New York, and the Lee family of Virginia in the colonial period, and the Adams family of Massachusetts at a later period, the Shippens of Pennsylvania showed the true basis upon which all aristocracies have been founded, to wit, long and continued services rendered through several generations to the State. In 1695 Edward Shippen became speaker of the Provincial Assembly, in 1699 he was chosen Chief Justice of the Province,<sup>15</sup> and in 1701 Penn named him the mayor of the city in the charter that the Proprietor gave to the city of Philadelphia.

To quote from Thomas Balch's *Shippen Papers*:<sup>16</sup> "Penn, as is well known, gave the most anxious consideration to his selection of officers to govern the new city. He thoroughly appreciated the im-

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<sup>15</sup> *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series, edited by John B. Linn and Wm. H. Egle, Harrisburg, 1880, Volume IX., page 629.

<sup>16</sup> *Thomas Balch: Letters and Papers, etc.*, Philadelphia, 1855, pages xvii-xviii.

portance of a correct choice. It was, to borrow a military phrase, the base-line of his operations. The success of his whole enterprise turned upon it: \* \* \* In Shippen he found a man of courage, energy, integrity, intelligence and sagacity; whose unspotted moral character was ample earnest to the citizens that the executive power would be exercised with the strictest justice and fidelity; whose active business habits and bravery equally assured them of the chief magistrate's resolution and promptness; whilst his high social position gave dignity to the office. \* \* \* No one could wish to detract in the slightest degree from Penn's merits; but we are taught to render 'honor to whom honor is due.' In doing so, we must need say that a great portion of the glory of building up the Commonwealth which was 'founded by deeds of peace' is due to Shippen, Norris and Logan, and men like them; the men who here, in the new country itself, fostered commerce, developed the resources of the Province, set the best of examples by disdaining no proper toil in their respective vocations, yet neglected not the refinement and graces of letters and polite society."

The McCall family was represented more largely on the First Assembly list than any other, four of

its members signing their names to that now notable social paper.

One of these was Samuel McCall, Junior, who was born October 5th, 1721, and died in 1762. He was a merchant, and served for a time in the City Councils, to which he was elected October 6, 1747. He married Ann Searle. Of their children, Ann McCall married Thomas Willing in 1763.

Then there was Samuel McCall, Senior, who was a cousin of Samuel McCall, Junior. He was born in Scotland in 1710. In 1747-8 he became Major of the Associated Regiment for the defense of Philadelphia.

George McCall was another subscriber to the first Assemblies. He was born April 16, 1724 and died in 1758.

The fourth McCall to subscribe to the Assemblies of 1748-49 was Archibald McCall, who was born June 28, 1727 and died in 1799. He lived at the corner of Union and Second Streets. He was the leading East India merchant of his day. He married in 1762 Judith Kemble, of Mount Kemble, New Jersey. Of their children Mary McCall married Lambert Cadwalader, Colonel in the American Army during the Revolution, and Archibald McCall was the father of General McCall of the United States

Army, and grandfather of Peter McCall, Mayor of Philadelphia, a leader of the Philadelphia Bar, and a manager of the Assemblies in 1851.

Thomas White came from England to Maryland in the first decade of the eighteenth century, became a lawyer in Maryland, and was a colonel of militia. In 1745 he moved to Philadelphia and resided on Walnut Street near Third Street.

William Plumstead, son of Clement Plumstead, well known in the early annals of the Province, was repeatedly elected mayor of the city in 1750 and afterwards; he married Mary McCall, daughter of George McCall. She was born March 31st, 1725, and was in her twenty-fourth year when she attended the first Assemblies.

Andrew Elliot, a son of Lord Minto of Scotland, came over to Pennsylvania in 1746 with John Swift, and they lived together for the next two years. Andrew Elliot married Eleanor McCall, born in 1732, daughter of George McCall and his wife, Ann Yeates, daughter of the first Jasper Yeates. Andrew Elliot was afterwards Lieutenant Governor of New York. Their only child, Eleanor Elliot,<sup>17</sup> married first in 1774 James Jancey, Jr. of New York, and

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<sup>17</sup> Her portrait by Benjamin West is now in the possession of Mrs. Thomas Balch.

secondly, Admiral Digby of the English navy. While Andrew Elliot was on a visit to London, his intimate friend, John Swift in a letter to Grosvenor Bedford, dated October 25th, 1749, said: "If you frequent the Pennsylvania Coffee House, you will probably meet with a tall, thin Scots gentleman, with a pimply face. He answers to the name of Elliot, and is an intimate friend of mine, one for whom I have a particular regard, on account of several valuable qualities I have discovered in him, we have lived in the same house for nearly two years."<sup>18</sup> Mr. Elliot was elected to the City Councils October 7th, 1755, and served in that body for several years.

Among the subscribers to the first Assemblies were two Jews. One of them, David Franks, was the son of David Franks, who emigrated to New York as early as, or before 1711, and a grandson of Aaron Franks of Germany, who was described as "the companion and friend of King George of Hanover, and as having loaned him the most valuable jewels in his crown at his coronation." Of David Franks, Rosenbach says: "David Franks was quite a prominent citizen of Philadelphia, both socially and in busi-

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas Balch's *Letters and Papers, etc.*, page xciii, foot-note.



ness. He was a member of the Mount Regale Fishing Company, which met at Peter Robinson's tavern, at the Falls of Schuylkill, where fisheries were in full operation."

The other Jewish subscriber was Samson Levy, who was a signer of the Non-Importation Resolutions of 1765.

John Francis was probably the John Francis who was born in 1725, and died unmarried. He was a son of Tench Francis, Attorney General of the Province from 1744 to 1752, who was a first cousin of Sir Phillip Francis, now generally believed to have written the *Letters of Junius*.<sup>19</sup>

James Burd who signed the first Assembly list was doubtless Colonel James Burd of the Revolution. He married Sarah, daughter of Edward Shippen, Mayor of Philadelphia in 1744 (whose portrait hangs in the Mayor's room in the City Hall), but who upon his removal in 1752 to Lancaster came to be known as "Edward Shippen of Lancaster." Colonel Burd and his wife eventually settled on the colonel's estate of Tinian, near Harrisburg.

Redmond Conyngham was born at Letterkenny, Ireland, in 1719 of a family that came originally from

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Balch's *Letters and Papers, etc.*, pages xliii-xliv.

Scotland.<sup>20</sup> He crossed the Atlantic in 1740, and settled in Philadelphia, where he became a merchant, and was one of the signers of the Non-Importation Agreement of October 25, 1765. He was a vestryman of Christ Church, 1754-1766, and a warden, 1754-1759. In 1761, as a vestryman, he took part in the opening of St. Peter's Church at Third and Pine Streets. In a list published by Watson, Conyngham's name appears as a manager of the Dancing Assembly for the season of 1749-50.

William Bingham, senior, a self made man, married Mary Stamper, a daughter of Mayor John Stamper. His chief claim to fame is that he was the father of his far more celebrated son of the same name.

William Allen, was born in Philadelphia, August 5th, 1704, and baptized at the First Presbyterian Church, August 7th. He went to London to study law in the Temple. After his return to Philadelphia, he filled many important positions. In 1735, he was chosen mayor of the city; and in 1750 he was appointed Chief Justice of the Province. Mr. Keith, writing in 1883, says<sup>21</sup> that he was "the

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<sup>20</sup> *Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society*, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, 1904, Volume VIII., page 187 et seq.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Penrose Keith: *The Provincial Councillors of Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1883, page 142.

only Chief Justice before the Revolution who was a native of Pennsylvania, and the only one before or since excepting Shippen or Sharswood who has been a native of Pennsylvania." William Allen was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society, January 19th, 1768.

Joseph Turner was mayor of Philadelphia in 1745.

James Hamilton was mayor of the city in 1746.

Thomas Lawrence Jr. was mayor of the city in 1749 and 1758-59.

Abram Taylor refused the mayoralty in 1745.

#### IV.

An examination of the early Assembly rules shows that the colonial dances of the middle of the eighteenth century from which the present large and handsome balls descend, were very different from the present day Assembly balls.

The rules, which are in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, provided, in quaint language, strict regulations as to the manner of conducting the dances.

"RULES TO BE [OBSERVED AT THE PHI]LADELPHIA  
ASSEMBLY.

"1. The Assembly to be held every Thursday Night from the first Jan'y 1748/9 to the first Day

of May in every Year, and begin precisely at six in the Evening, and not by any Means to exceed twelve, the same Night.

“2d. The Subscribers, consisting of Gentlemen to chuse by a Majority four of their Number to act as Directors under whose Management the whole Assembly is to be during the Season.

“3d. The Directors are to furnish the Ladies with Tickets for the Season, which must admit only the Lady whose Name is first wrote on the Ticket by one of the Directors.

“4th. On Application made to the Directors by any Subscriber, for the Admission of any Stranger, A Ticket is to be given out for every such Stranger particularly the Subscriber who shall apply for such Ticket, paying imediately on the Delivery of it for a strange Gentleman Seven Shillings and six Pence, for a Lady nothing.

“5th. None are to be admitted without Tickets which are to be received at the Door, by one of the Directors every Assembly Night, and returned again except the Strangers Tickets, before the Company are dismissed.

“6th. The Directors are to order every Thing necessary for the Entertainment of the Company as well as those who incline to dance, as those

who are disposed to play cards; for the Accommodation of the Latter Rooms are to be provided and furnished with Fire, Candles, Tables, Chairs, Cards, etc. All which with the Subscribers.

to be allowed No

Night, nor as I ”

Next follow directions for the management of the dances at the balls.

#### “TO REGULATE THE DANCES.

“[1. Each set] to consist of ten Couples. Such Ladies as come first to form the first Set, after which other Sets are to be composed, that is in the order wherein they come to the Assembly.

“2. Every Set of Ladies to draw for their Places only the first Ticket of each Set is to be reserved by the Directors to present to a Stranger if any, or any other Lady who is thereby entitled to lead up that set for the night.

“3. The Director who has the composing of the Sets is whilst the Minuets are dancing, to couple those disposed for Country Dances and provide Partners for such Gentlemen Strangers who come in unprovided.

“4th. If there should be any odd Couples above a Set but not exceeding four Couples, they are to be distributed by the Directors among the compleat Sets, if above four Couples they are to be composed into a Set by taking some out of the other Sets.”

## V.

According to these early Rules of the Assemblies, an Assembly was to be held every two weeks during the first four months of the year; but as a matter of fact John Swift's account book shows that nine Assemblies were held during the winter of 1748-49. It is a small, thin book, and Mr. Swift used it originally for some of his own accounts, and for some land transactions for his younger brother Joseph. On one cover he wrote: "Account book 1746." When the Assemblies were instituted and his fellow-managers chose him the Treasurer, he turned to the other end of this little book and there kept the "Assembly Account." Owing to age and neglect the Account Book is very much worn and somewhat injured. Of the names of the fifty-nine subscribers written down by John Swift in his book, only fifty-three have been preserved, the remaining six having been destroyed by mutilation of the manuscript by Father Time. But the book

✓ of W<sup>m</sup> Bin  
 ✓ W<sup>m</sup> Buck Libby  
 ✓ John Swift  
 ✓ John Hearsley - - - - 20  
 ✓ William Allen - - - - ✓ 20  
 ✓ R. Peters - - - - ✓ 20  
 ✓ R. Wisheart, - - - - ✓ 20  
 ✓ A. McCall - - - - ✓ 20  
 ✓ J. Hopkinson - - - - ✓ 20  
 ✓ D. Baird - - - - ✓ 20  
 ✓ W<sup>m</sup> Plumsted - - - - 20  
 ✓ D. Tranks - - - - ✓ 20  
 ✓ Sam<sup>r</sup> Levy - - - - ✓ 20  
 ✓ Alex<sup>r</sup> Stedman - - - - ✓ 20  
 ✓ Coll. White - - - - 20  
 ✓ Jos. Simms - - - - 20

Extract from John Swift's Account Book.

		£ 86 <sup>11</sup> / <sub>16</sub>
		— — — — — 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
		Spinnamona — — — — — 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
		Cream — — — — — 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>7</sub>
30 <sup>th</sup>	pd Milk & Cream	— — — — — 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>6</sub>
31 <sup>st</sup>	Musick	— — — — — 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>10</sub>
	Bisbet	— — — — — 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>6</sub>
<del>April</del>	pd for Lemons	— — — — — 15
	pd Archer for Attendance	— — — — — 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>9</sub>
April 13 <sup>th</sup>	pd Bisbet	— — — — — 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>6</sub>
	pd Diana for Sundries	— — — — — 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>9</sub>
	pd for 100 Lemons	— — — — — 12 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
	1/2 hundred Lemons	— — — — — 6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>9</sub>
	pd Archer	— — — — — 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>6</sub>
	pd Musick	— — — — — 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>10</sub>
		<u>93<sup>11</sup>/<sub>16</sub></u>
24 <sup>th</sup>	pd for Mr Kiddle	— — — — — 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>17</sub>
	3 Letts Tea cups & Sauc <sup>s</sup>	— — — — — 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>5</sub>
25 <sup>th</sup>	pd Morgan for 8 Gall <sup>s</sup> Rum	— — — — — 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>



is now in the keeping of the American Philosophical Society and has been treated by an expert, and every sheet covered with silk so as to guard it against any future weathering of time.

An examination of the account book shows that the nine Assemblies of 1748-49 were far less costly than the two large balls that are now given annually at the Bellevue-Stratford and before that at the Academy of Music; or for that matter, even the three balls that were held each season about fifty years and more ago at Musical Fund Hall. In one respect, however, those old worthies were not behind the present generation, for taking all things in proportion they provided rum liberally. The record kept by Mr. Swift is somewhat injured, so that it is impossible to state exactly how much he disbursed, but the whole cost of the nine dances seems to have amounted to a little more than £130. As there were only fifty-nine subscribers at forty shillings each, which gave a total of £118, the Managers doubtless, as so often happens nowadays in all sorts of social and philanthropic undertakings, had to put their hands into their own pockets. A few extracts from the expenses show the modest and simple character of the entertainments.

	£	s	d
“ 1 Stick Wax			
5 Gallons Rum & Cask	2	—	—
1 Hhd Wine	15	—	—
Porterage	—	1	6
Cash for Ditto	—	6	—
Scrubbing Brush	}	3	9
Broom & house Cloth			
3 Decanters	1	2	—
2 <sup>to</sup> Coffee	0	3	4
Chairs 3 dozen	7	—	—
Porterage etc.	—	2	—
200 Limes	—	14	—
18 <sup>to</sup> Milk Bisket	—	9	—
14 Bisket	—	4	2
Spice	—	2	3
Ditto	—	1	—”

again:

“ pd. Musick	1	10	—
pd. for Snuffers	—	4	—
pd. Scotts boy for his attend	—	7	6
pd. Jack Error	—	0	—
17th 2 doz. Bottles	—	12	—
Bisket	—	10	—
1 doz. Knives & Forks	—	9	6
150 Limes	—	10	6

	£	s	d
pd. Archer for attendance	-	7	6
pd. for Musick	1	10	-
Porterage of Wine	-	1	-
pd. Diana for attendance	-	15	-"
And again:			
"Ap. 20 p <sup>d</sup> Musick	1	10	-
p <sup>d</sup> Diana for Attendance } 7 nights	1	15	-
p <sup>d</sup> for Limes	1	7	6
p <sup>d</sup> for Mugg Beer	0	-	4
p <sup>d</sup> Archer for Attendance	0	3	9
p <sup>d</sup> Capt <sup>n</sup> Wischeats Man } for Attendance	1	7	-
"p <sup>d</sup> for 2 Gallon Spirit	-	15	-
p <sup>d</sup> Sharper 5 nights Attend	-	18	9
p <sup>d</sup> Greek for Attendance	-	7	6
p <sup>d</sup> Mr. Inglis for rent	20	-	-"

The Managers of the first Assemblies had to pay a tax, both to the city and to the county, as may be seen by turning to Mr. Swift's Account Book; but as the book is there somewhat torn, it is impossible to know how much.

In a letter dated at New Castle May 3d, 1749, and addressed to Thomas Penn, Richard Peters,

writing *à propos* of one of the Assembly dances the first season they were given, says:—

“By the Governors encouragement there has been a very handsome Assembly once a fortnight at Andrew Hamiltons House & Stores wch are tenanted by Mr. Inglis—make a Set of good Rooms for such a purpose: It consists of Eighty Ladies & as many Gentlemen, one half appearing every Assembly night. Mr. Inglis had the Conduct of the whole & managed exceeding well. There happened a little mistake at the beginning, which at some other times might have produced disturbances. The Governor would have opened the Assembly with Mrs. — but she refused him, I suppose because he had not been to visit her. After Mrs. — refusal, two or three Ladies out of modesty & from no manner of ill design excused themselves so that the Governor was put a little to his Shifts, when Mrs. Willing now Mrs. Mayoress in a most genteel manner put herself into his way & on the Governor seeing this instance of her good nature he jumped at the Occasion & they danced the first Minuet.”

From this letter of Richard Peters, as well as the comment of Chastellux, which will be found further

on, it would seem that in the eighteenth century, the directors or managers of the Philadelphia Assemblies took turns to manage the dances, that is, each directed an Assembly night *à tour-de-role*.

In colonial days only the gentlemen and not the ladies, or had we better not say, only the men and not the women subscribed, since those two pairs of words have in recent years largely changed places and have come to mean in large measure to-day exactly the reverse of what they meant in colonial days. And this change in the meaning of the words is the more true that in the best society in this country now, the participants almost invariably refer to one another as women and men.

At the present time, on the contrary, both men and women subscribe to the balls. In those early days too, the managers of the Assemblies were elected each year by the votes of all the subscribers. Also at the first Assemblies provision was made for those members who wished to play cards instead of dancing or only talking.

In colonial days the invitations to the Philadelphia Assemblies were printed on the back of playing cards, because in those times it was impossible to obtain any others. Thus the invitation card of Mrs. Jeykill, Jekyll or Jekyl, a granddaughter of Edward

Shippen, the emigrant of that name, was printed on the back of the ace of diamonds. The card reads:

“Philadelphia Assembly, No. 6  
 “Admit for the Season  
 “Mrs. Jeykill  
 “January 2<sup>d</sup>, 1748/9  
 “John Inglis            }  
 Lynford Lardner       }Direct<sup>s</sup>.”

## VI.

For the second Assembly season, that of 1749-50, Mrs. Jeykill's invitation was likewise “No. 6.” It was printed on the back of the four of hearts, and reads:

“Philadelphia Assembly, No. 6  
 “Admit for the Season  
 “Mrs. Jeykill  
 to begin Oct<sup>r</sup>. 5th, 1749  
 “Joseph Shippen    }  
 James Burd           }Direct<sup>rs</sup>”

Upon becoming a widow Mrs. Jeykill or Jekyll lived in Philadelphia on “Second Street, just below the Shippen or Government House, in a house still standing [1855]; after her death the residence of Thomas Fisher.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Balch: *Letters and Papers, etc.*, page XIX, foot-note.

For the second Assembly season, in 1749-50, there were sixty-five subscribers, six more than for the previous season. Thus at its inception almost, the list of subscribers not only changed, but as in modern days, new names were added to it, some by inheritance, and some as entirely new subscribers. In addition to Joseph Shippen and James Burd mentioned above, the other directors or managers for the second Assembly season were Redm<sup>d</sup>. Cunyngham and Joseph Sims. The subscription also for the second season was increased, something not unknown to present day subscribers, from forty shillings to three pounds. The second Assembly subscription list, as given by Watson is as follows:

"The Governor.....paid	Charles Stedman....paid
William Allen.....paid	John Kidd.....paid
Archibald McCall..paid	William Bingham...paid
Joseph Turner.....	Backridge Sims.....
Richard Peters.....paid	John Swift.....J. B.
Adam Thompson...paid	John Kears'y, Jan <sup>r</sup> ...
Alexander Stedman.paid	William Plumstead..paid
Patrick Baird.....paid	James Burd.....paid
John Sober.....	William Franklin...paid
David Franks.....J. B.	Henry Harrison....paid
John Inglis.....	Daniel Bayles.....paid
Abram Taylor.....paid	Thomas White.....paid

James Trotter.....J. B.	John Lawrence.....
Samson Levy.....J. B.	Thomas Grame.....
Lynford Lardner....	John Moland.....paid
Benjamin Price.....paid	Alexander Barclay..paid
John Francis.....paid	James Young.....J. B.
William Humphrys..paid	Peter Bard.....
Alexander Hamilton.paid	Venables.....
Thomas Lawrence	Thomas Cross.....paid
Jun.....paid	George Smith.....paid
John Wallace.....paid	Thomas Bond.....paid
Phinias Bond.....	Thomas Willing..J.
Joseph Shippen.....	Shippen.....
Samuel McCall Jun.J. B.	John Ross.....paid
George McCall.....	Hugh Dancy.....paid
Edward Jones.....	Daniel Roberdau...paid
Samuel McCall Sen.paid	Joseph Marks.....J. B.
Redm <sup>d</sup> Cunyngham.	Christopher Carnan.paid
Jo. Sims.....paid	John Hisselius.....paid
Thomas Lawrence	Robert Warren.....paid
Sen.....paid	Lawrence Din(?)dy.paid
David McIlvaine...paid	William McIlvaine..
John Wilcocks.....paid	John Nelson.....J. B.”

Forty-two of the above subscribers had subscribed the previous season; consequently the names of twenty-three new subscribers were on the list. Of



the latter, some were relatives of the other subscribers. Thus for example, among the subscribers to the second season, the name of Thomas Willing is found, but not that of his father, Charles Willing, who had subscribed the first season.

The following notice, published as an advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* for September 27th, 1750, shows that the Assemblies were given during the winter of 1750-51. The notice says:—"The Philadelphia Assembly begins Thursday evening, the 4th of October; and this is to give notice that no gentlemen (not a subscriber) can be admitted, without a ticket, first obtained from the directors, by the application of a subscriber, before the time of meeting."

Likewise the dances were given the next season, that of 1751-52, as the following notice, which gives us the names of two of the Directors, shows.<sup>23</sup>

"PHILADELPHIA, October 1, 1751.

"The Philadelphia assembly opens on Thursday, the 3d inst. at 6 a clock in the evening, and notice is hereby given, that no resident, who has not subscrib'd, can be admitted, nor any person for the night without a ticket, which may be had on the

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<sup>23</sup> *Pennsylvania Gazette*, no. 1190. October 3, 1751.

application of a subscriber to the directors, before the time of meeting. RICHARD HILL, junior, ANDREW ELLIOT, Directors."

A curious anecdote *à propos* of the Assemblies during the winter of 1755, is related in this "extract of a letter from Trent Town," New Jersey, dated April 18th, 1755:<sup>24</sup>

"The antient King of the Mohawks, (the same who was in England in Queen Anne's Time) came down with some of his Warriors this Winter to Philadelphia, and assured them of his friendship, though he own'd many of the young Mohawks were gone over to the Enemy; they were entertain'd at the Stadthouse, and made their Appearance also among the Ladies on the Assembly Night, where they danced the Scalping Dance with all its Horrors, and almost terrified the Company out of their Wits. I must tell you they brought with them a beautiful young Lady, who in publick made the Indian Compliment, a Tender of her Person to the Governor; as gallant a Man as he is, he was quite confounded at the Time. I know not if he accepted her."

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<sup>24</sup> *Documents relating to the Colonial History of New Jersey*, Volume XIX, Paterson, New Jersey, 1897, page 488. This item was communicated by the Boston antiquary, Albert Matthews, Esqr.

An invitation card for the year 1755 is here reproduced. It was addressed for that season to Mrs. Jekyll, wife of John Jekyll, younger brother of Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls and Secretary of State to Queen Anne. Mrs. Jekyll was Margaret Shippen, a granddaughter of the first Edward Shippen, whom Penn in the city charter of 1701 named Mayor of Philadelphia. Watson says that she was "the then leading lady of the town" and that "she dwelt in and owned the house next southward of 'Edward Shippen's house' in south Second Street, where is now Nicholas Waln's row." This card belonged many years since to Winthrop Sargent of Philadelphia, from whom it passed to his sister, Mrs. Butler Duncan of New York. The present reproduction of this card was made from a photographic copy in the collections of the University of Pennsylvania taken from the original.

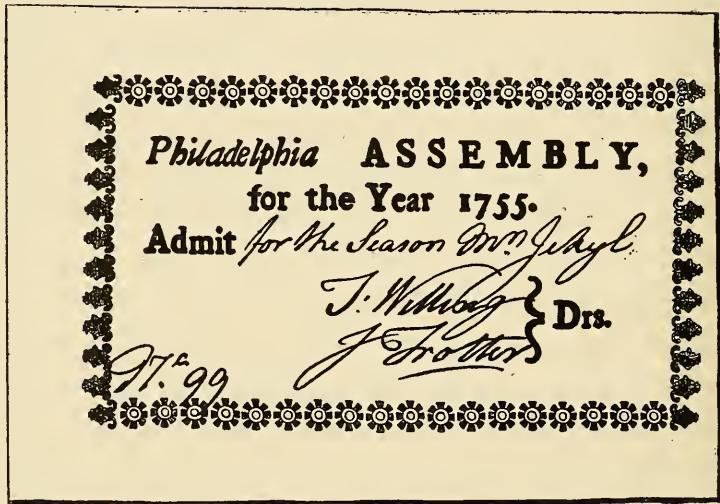
"Philadelphia Assembly

for the year 1755

"Admit for the Season Mrs. Jekyl

"T. Willing }  
J. Trotter } Drs.

"No. 99."



Reprint of an Assembly card for the year 1755.

Another invitation card of the latter part of the year 1755, also addressed to Mrs. Jekyll, is extant. It reads:

“The Gentlemen of the Army present their compliments to Mrs. Jekyll and beg the favour of her company to a Ball at *the State House* on Monday next.

“Saturday Sept. 20, 1755.”

It must not too readily be inferred because the officers of the army of the King gave a ball in the State House, now popularly known as Independence Hall, that the Assemblies were also held in that building of precious memory to all the Nation for events of a later date, and also of reverent memory to Pennsylvania because it was the State House for the last forty years of the Provincial Government.

The following short notice of the Assemblies for the winter of 1755-56 was printed for the benefit of the subscribers:<sup>25</sup>

“NOTICE is hereby given, that the PHILADELPHIA SUBSCRIPTION ASSEMBLY commences on Thursday, the Ninth of this instant October.”

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<sup>25</sup> *Pennsylvania Gazette*. no. 1397. October 2, 1755.

## VII.

Watson gives the following "List of Belles and Dames of Philadelphia fashionables, of about the year 1757. An original list for the ball of the City Assembly."

"Mrs. Allen,	Miss Isabella Cairnie,
Mrs. Taylor,	Miss Pennyfaither,
Mrs. Hamilton,	Miss Jeany Richardson,
Mrs. Brotherson,	Mrs. Reily,
Mrs. Inglis,	Mrs. Grydon,
Mrs. Jeykell,	Mrs. Ross,
Mrs. Franks,	Mrs. Peter Bard,
Mrs. Lydia M'Call,	Mrs. Franklin,
Mrs. Saml. M'Call, senr.	Miss Lucy De Normondie,
Mrs. Saml. M'Call, junr.	Miss Phebe Winecoop,
Mrs. Swift,	Mrs. Harkly,
Mrs. Sims,	Mrs. Clymer,
Mrs. Willcocks,	Mrs. Wallace,
Mrs. Lawrence, senr.	Mrs. Ellis,
Mrs. Lawrence, junr.	Mrs. Alexr. Steadman,
Mrs. Robertson,	Mrs. Hopkinson,
Mrs. Francis,	Mrs. Hockley,
Mrs. Graeme,	Mrs. Marks,
Mrs. Joseph Shippen,	Miss Molly Francis,
Mrs. Dolgreen,	Miss Betty Francis,
Mrs. Phins. Bond,	Miss Osborn,

Mrs. Burd,	Miss Sober,
Mrs. Chars. Steadman,	Miss Molly Lawrence,
Mrs. Thos. White,	Miss Kitty Lawrence,
Mrs. Jones,	Mrs. George Smith,
Mrs. Warren,	Miss Nancy Hickman,
Mrs. Oswald,	Miss Sally Hunlock,
Mrs. Thos. Bond,	Miss Peggy Harding,
Mrs. Davey,	Miss Molly M'Call,
Mrs. Willm. Humphreys,	Miss Peggy M'Call,
Mrs. Pennery,	Mrs. Lardner,
Mrs. Henry Harrison,	Miss Patty Ellis,
Mrs. Bingham,	Miss Betty Plumstead,
Miss Peggy Oswald,	Miss Rebecca Davis,
Miss Betty Oswald,	Miss Jeany Greame,
Miss Sally Woodrop,	Miss Nelly M'Call,
Miss Molly Oswald,	Miss Randolph,
Mrs. Willing,	Miss Sophia White,
Miss Nancy Willing,	Mrs. Venables,
Miss Dolly Willing,	Miss Hyatt,
Mrs. M'Ilvaine,	Miss Betty Clifften,
Miss Betty Gryden,	Miss Molly Dick,
Miss Sally Fishbourn,	Miss Fanny Jeykell,
Miss Furnell,	Miss Fanny Marks."

In the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of January 12th, 1758, there is a slight mention of the Assemblies, which would seem to show that they were

given during the winter of 1757-58. The item is as follows:

“Notice is hereby given to all gentlemen and others, that John Beals from London, at the Sign of the Nets in Fourth Street \* \* \* makes and mends all sorts of nets. \* \* \* He also plays on the violin at the Assembly Balls and all other entertainments. \* \* \*”

In the same paper of October 12th, 1758, occurs the following advertisement, showing the balls were given in 1758-59: “No strangers will be admitted to the Philadelphia Assembly during this Season, but by Tickets from the Directors.”

From a letter of Colonel Joseph Shippen written from Philadelphia May 23rd, 1759, to his brother-in-law, Colonel James Burd at Lancaster, we learn that at the time he wrote there existed in Philadelphia an “Assembly Room.” He says:<sup>26</sup>

“Yesterday the General gave a public breakfast at the Assembly Room; there were forty-two ladies there, and many more gentlemen; all danced after breakfast till near 2 o’clock, and then formed parties with the ladies to Schuylkill and Springetts-berry.”

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas Balch: *Letters and Papers, etc.*, Philadelphia, 1855, page 158.



Writing from Lancaster on February 28, 1760, to Miss Nancy Willing in Philadelphia, Brigadier-General Henry Bouquet asks "Why did you not go to the Assembly? upon such a brilliant night. I am afraid you were not well, tell me I am mistaken."<sup>27</sup>

Edward Burd, says in a letter, dated November 27th, 1767, and addressed either to his sister or his grandfather:<sup>28</sup>

"Some young Gentlemen have subscribed to an Assembly for this Season. Among the Principal Managers are Billy Allen & Jemmy Willing. The Subscribers may send a Tickett to any Young Lady for the Evening; Notwithstanding which Priviledge J. Willing tells me that He is almost tired of it because the Girls are so little."

In another letter of "Neddy" Burd, dated December 15, 1768, he says:<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> George Harrison Fisher: *Brigadier General Henry Bouquet; The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Philadelphia, 1879, Volume III., page 139.

<sup>28</sup> Lewis Burd Walker: *Life of Margaret Shippen, wife of Benedict Arnold; The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Philadelphia, 1900, Volume XXIV., page 410.

<sup>29</sup> Lewis Burd Walker: *Life of Margaret Shippen, wife of Benedict Arnold; The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Philadelphia, 1900, Volume XXIV., page 410.

“The Dutchess of Gordon is to appear to Night at the Assembly & is to be richly deckt with Diamonds & other Jewels & dressed most splendidly in Silver Silk. Neither She or Coll. Morris chuse to dance whenever they can avoid it, and therefore the Company will be deprived of the Honour of dancing with a Dutchess. She has nothing to boast of with Regard to her Face or Person. Yet she is well esteemed as She is pretty sociable and dont seem to require that Preeminence over other Ladies which the York Ladies are so ambitious of.”

#### VIII.

We have seen that in the year 1755 one of the Assembly managers was Thomas Willing. He was not a subscriber the first year the dances were given. He was then only eighteen and would have come in under the subscription of his father, had the son been of sufficient age to attend. But he was a subscriber during the season of 1749-50. In the year 1755, when only twenty-four years of age, Thomas Willing had just begun on his career of oft repeated services to the commonwealth. Having been sent in his youth to England where he studied law in the Temple, he had become recently, upon the death of his father from yellow fever while as mayor the latter was fighting that then

terrible disease, the head of the firm of Willing and Morris.<sup>30</sup> In the previous year he had served as secretary to the congress of delegates which was held at Albany. In 1763 he was mayor of Philadelphia. In 1765 his name headed the list of signers of the Non-Importation Resolutions, in which the signers declared the Stamp Act unconstitutional and against the best interests both of the colonies and Great Britain. In 1767 he was appointed a justice of the Supreme Court of the Province of Pennsylvania, and in that judicial office he was one of the last to act under the colonial form of government. He presided in 1774 in Carpenter's Hall over the Provincial Congress of Pennsylvania, and was elected by Pennsylvania as one of her representatives in the First and Second Continental Congresses. When the vote for independence upon Richard Henry Lee's resolution came up, he voted fearlessly until the end in accordance with the instructions which Pennsylvania had given to her delegates. The growth of the movement for independence was a gradual one.<sup>31</sup> In the beginning,

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<sup>30</sup> Occasionally this firm is erroneously referred to by modern writers and orators under the name of Morris and Willing.

<sup>31</sup> *The Examination of Joseph Galloway, Esq., by a committee of the House of Commons*, edited by Thomas Balch, Philadelphia, 1855, *passim*.

however, the leading men of the colonies were not in favor of a separation from Great Britain.

Nor were the mass of the people, either, in most of the colonies at first desirous of breaking with the mother land. But as event after event followed one another, owing partly to the stupidity of the men who ruled England, the movement for independence, fanned by ambitious agitators who had everything to gain from any sort of a change, and nothing to lose, suddenly began to forge ahead. As a result, as happens now-a-days about other questions, one important politician after another, in spite of himself, was won over to the idea of cutting the bonds that united the thirteen colonies with the mother land. In that way the delegation of colony after colony was won over in favor of independence. But the opposition to a final and absolute break with Great Britain found its chief resistance in Pennsylvania and, as on account of her wealth and geographical position, Pennsylvania was the most influential of the colonies, her favorable action was most necessary to the movement for independence.

Much unfavorable criticism has been aimed at Pennsylvania because she was so slow in favoring a final severance of the political ties uniting the

colonies with the motherland. But her critics should not forget that when she did finally join in the movement for independence, not only did Pennsylvania remain firmly loyal to her sister States during the War of Independence but also later on Pennsylvania was equally faithful to the Union during all of the War of 1812 and the Civil War of 1861-65.

*À propos* of a dinner at Thomas Willing's, at which were present Washington, Jay, Livingston, Patrick Henry, Peyton Randolph, William Paca and Samuel Chase, John Adams in his Diary says:

“SUNDAY, 11 October, 1774.

“There is such a quick and constant succession of new scenes, characters, persons and events turning up before me, that I can't keep any regular account \* \* \* Dined at Mr. Willing's, who is Judge of the Supreme Court here, and the gentlemen from Virginia, Maryland and New York, a most splendid feast again; turtle and everything else. Mr. Willing is the most sociable, agreeable man of all.”

Willing in his Autobiography says: “I voted against the Declaration in Congress, not only because I thought America at that time unequal to such a conflict, as must ensue, having neither

Arms, Ammunition or Military Experience, but chiefly because the Delegates of Pennsylvania were not then authorized by their instructions from the Assembly, or the voice of the People at large to join in such a vote." During the occupation of Philadelphia by the British Army, he remained in the city. But when Sir William Howe sent a person to administer to him the oath of allegiance to George the Third, he refused to take it. "For all this no one ever questioned his political integrity; though many did that of men about him who were vigorous in declaring their devotion to the cause of independence."<sup>32</sup>

That he was not alone in his belief that a final break with Great Britain was not then opportune, is shown by the following extracts from a letter written by his partner, Robert Morris, on July 20th, 1776, to Colonel Joseph Reed. Morris said: "I am not for making any sacrifice of dignity but still I would hear them [the British Commissioners] if possible; because, if they can offer peace on admissible terms, I believe the great majority of *America* would still be for accepting

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<sup>32</sup> *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.*, by his Great Grandson, Horace Wemyss Smith, Philadelphia, 1880, Vol. II., page 511.

it."<sup>33</sup> Further on in the same letter he says: "I have uniformly voted against and opposed the Declaration of Independence, because in my poor opinion, it was an improper time, and will neither promote the interest nor redound to the honour of *America*; for it has caused division when we wanted union, and will be ascribed to very different principles than those which ought to give rise to such an important measure."

Though Thomas Willing, because doubtless he was the leading active representative of the conservative and aristocratic party in the City and the State, and also on account of the way he voted, was not reelected to the Continental Congress in 1776, yet such was the esteem in which he was held, not only in Philadelphia, but also through the country at large, that when the Bank of North America was chartered in 1782, he was chosen its first President.<sup>34</sup> That office he continued to hold until he was taken from it in 1791 to be appointed President of the First Bank of the United States. And when, as a result of political opposition, in spite of the strong

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<sup>33</sup> Peter Force: *American Archives*, Fifth Series, Washington, 1848, Volume I., page 468.

<sup>34</sup> Lawrence Lewis, Jr.: *A History of the Bank of North America, the First Bank chartered in the United States*; Philadelphia, 1882, page 34.

advocacy by the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, Albert Gallatin, of the renewal of the charter of the bank, "its charter ceased and its affairs were wound up, it paid in gold, during the prevalence of a paper currency which placed gold at a high premium, \$116 for each \$100 of its capital."<sup>35</sup>

Among the many honors that came to Thomas Willing, it should not be forgotten that he was elected on January 19th, 1768, to the American Philosophical Society. His portrait, copied after Stuart, hangs in the mayor's room in the City Hall.

He married in 1762 Ann McCall, daughter of Samuel McCall, and his wife, Ann Searle. In the latter years of his life, many people knew when it was twelve o'clock owing to the regularity with which he returned home for lunch. He was in the habit of wearing shoes with broad toes, with the result that among his relatives and intimate friends he was often referred to as "square toes." In his later years, too, he had served in the parlor every evening for those that were there at nine o'clock, cup custard and Madeira wine; and if his

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<sup>35</sup> Horace Wemyss Smith: *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.*, Philadelphia, 1880, Volume II., page 513.



children stayed beyond ten o'clock he would wind up the evening by saying to them that there was "a welcome to come and a welcome to go."

## IX.

Among the manuscripts in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, there is an undated list of ladies who attended undoubtedly some important social function in colonial days. Judging by their names it was probably the Assemblies one season, but there is no evidence to establish this surmise beyond doubt. In order to arrive approximately at the date of this list, the following suggestions are offered. This list would seem to have been prepared between the years 1763, when Ann McCall became Mrs. Thomas Willing, and 1781, the year she died. Further, judging by many of the names on the list, it apparently antedates the beginning of the Revolution; and in addition it would seem that it was written as early as 1774, the year that Polly Franks died. In that case Abigail Willing whose name is on the list was the daughter of Charles Willing the immigrant, she having been born in 1747 and died in 1791. Mrs. Charles Willing mentioned in the list was probably the wife

of Charles Willing, a son of Charles Willing who died of yellow fever while fighting that scourge in 1754. In that case she was before her marriage Elizabeth H. Carrington of Barbadoes. Lydia McCall, Miss McCall, and Polly McCall were doubtless the daughters of George McCall, who was born in April, 1724 and died in 1758, and whose "wife was the Mrs. Lydia McCall in Watson's list of belles."<sup>36</sup> Miss "N. Chew" was doubtless Anna Maria Chew, who was born in 1749 and died in 1812. "Miss Chew" in that case referred either to her older sister, Mary Chew or the youngest, Elizabeth Chew. Perhaps some of the readers of these pages will lend a hand to the author to narrow down more exactly the year when this list was written. The list is as follows:

"Miss Allen [in another hand] alias Governess.  
Miss Allen  
Mrs. Hamilton  
Miss Oswald  
Mrs. Oswald  
Mrs. Franklin  
Miss Franklin  
Mrs. Barclay

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<sup>36</sup> Thomas Balch's *Letters and Papers, etc.*, page lxxxviii.

Mrs. Plumsted  
Mrs. Francis Sen<sup>r</sup>  
Mrs. Francis Jun<sup>r</sup>  
Mrs. Arch<sup>d</sup> McCall.  
Mrs. Saml. Mifflin  
Miss Galloway.  
Mrs. Mifflin.  
Mrs. Dowell.  
Mrs. Ellis  
Mrs. Doct. Shippen.  
Miss Shippen  
Miss Blair  
Mrs. Franks.  
Miss Franks.  
Miss Polly Franks.  
Mrs. White.  
Miss White.  
Mrs. Purviance  
Miss Purviance.  
Miss Polly Purviance.  
Miss Johanna Purviance.  
Mrs. Bond.  
Mrs. Thomas Bond.  
Miss Bond [in another hand] alias Mrs. Martin.  
Miss B. Bond.  
Miss Wayman [in another hand] alias Smith.

Mrs. Gilbert.  
Mrs. Cox.  
Miss Wikoff.  
Mrs. Shippen.  
Mrs. Nixon.  
Miss Davis.  
Mrs. Lawrence [in another hand] Thomas.  
Mrs. Shee [in another hand].  
Miss Lawrence.  
Mrs. Masters.  
Mrs. Larney.  
Miss Kitty Lawrence.  
Miss P. McCall at Arc<sup>d</sup>.  
Miss McCall & her sister.  
Mrs. John Lawrence.  
Miss Lawrence.  
Mrs. Duchi.  
Mrs. Swift.  
Mrs. Jos. Swift.  
Mrs. Col. White.  
Miss White.  
Miss T. J. White.  
Mrs. Wilcocks.  
Mrs. Baths.  
Miss Franks.  
Miss Marks.

Miss Stedman (daughter of Mrs. Charles Stedman?)  
Mrs. Alex<sup>r</sup>. Stedman.  
Miss Stedman.  
Miss Clifton.  
Miss Nancy Clifton.  
Miss Nelly Clifton.  
Mrs. Turner.  
Miss Bird.  
Mrs. Sims.  
Miss Sims.  
Mrs. Wikoff & Miss Ally Cox.  
Mrs. Stephens.  
Miss Flowers.  
Mrs. Hopkinson.  
Miss Hopkinson [in another hand] Mrs. Morgan.  
Miss —— Hopkinson.  
Miss —— Hopkinson.  
Mrs. Wood.  
Mrs. Relfe.  
Mrs. Bell.  
Mrs. Cadwalader.  
Miss Cadwalader.  
Miss Polly Cadwalader [in another hand] &  
her sister.  
Mrs. Richards.

Mrs. Levy.  
Miss Levy.  
Mrs. Dickinson.  
Mrs. Cox [in another hand] Charles Cox.  
Miss Paxton.  
Miss Inglis.  
Mrs. Chew.  
Miss Chew [in another hand] & her sister N.  
Chew?  
Mrs. Ross  
Miss Ross.  
Mrs. Willing.  
Mrs. Thos. Willing.  
Mrs. Chas. Willing.  
Miss Willing.  
Miss Abigail Willing.  
Mrs. Searle.  
Miss Smith, at Searles.  
Mrs. Lydia McCall.  
Miss McCall.  
Miss Polly McCall.  
Mrs. Gilbert Barclay.  
Miss Pearson.  
Mrs. Tillman.  
Miss Tillman.  
Mrs. Walling.  
Miss Shippen.

Miss —— Shippen.  
Mrs. Shippen.  
Miss Abbey Shippen.  
Mrs. Clymer [in another hand].  
Miss Meredith.  
Mrs. Legay.  
Miss Hockley.  
Mrs. Morgan.  
Miss North.  
Mrs. West.  
Mrs. Hoops.  
Mrs. Mease.  
Mrs. Glentworth.  
Miss P. Hoops.  
Miss Kitty McCall, Major's Daughter."

## X.

Among those who attended the Assemblies in colonial days and showed by his life that social amusement and sterling public acts were not incompatible, was Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Shippen, the second son of Edward Shippen "of Lancaster," and grandson of Joseph Shippen, the latter a son of Edward Shippen, the first Mayor of the city. Colonel Shippen who was born October 30, 1732, and graduated at Princeton in 1753, entered the

army and served in the expedition that captured in 1758 Fort Du Quesne.

He was interested in many useful subjects, was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society January 19th, 1768, and was a generous patron and benefactor of Benjamin West. On the occasion of Colonel Shippen's visit to Italy, he and West were crossing the Abruzzi Mountains together on horseback late one day, when two banditti rushed out from their place of concealment. Each bandit seized the bridle of one of the horses, and demanded of Colonel Shippen and West their money. After parleying a little, Colonel Shippen put his hand in his pocket, drew out his money wallet, and threw it on the ground, saying, "Well there, damn you, take it." As the man picked it up, the Colonel drew one of his pistols, fired and killed the fellow. Then the other bandit fled.

Colonel Shippen was appointed in 1789 Judge of Lancaster County, and died February 10th, 1810, after having served his country, and filled with honor many reputable stations, esteemed by all who knew him as an eminently just and upright man. In his career he truly embodied the principles of *noblesse oblige*. To his services as a soldier,



he added the accomplishments of a scholar and a man of taste; and in the following lines that he wrote possibly about the year 1767, he has preserved for us the names of some of the ladies who were the belles in his day.

“Lines Written in an Assembly Room.

“In lovely White’s most pleasing form,  
What various graces meet!  
How blest with every striking charm!  
How languishingly sweet!

“With just such elegance and ease,  
Fair, Charming Swift appears;  
Thus Willing, whilst she awes, can please,  
Thus Polly Franks endears.

“A female softness, manly sense,  
And conduct free from art,  
With every pleasing excellence,  
In Inglis charm the heart.

“But see! another fair advance,  
With love commanding all;  
See! happy in the sprightly dance,  
Sweet, smiling, fair M’Call.

“Each blessing which indulgent Heaven  
On mortals can bestow,  
To thee, enchanting maid, is given,  
Its masterpiece below.

“In Sally Coxe’s form and face,  
True index of her mind,  
The most exact of human race  
Not one defect can find.

“Thy beauty every breast alarms,  
And many a swain can prove  
That he who views your conquering charms,  
Must soon submit to love.

“With either Chew such beauties dwell,  
Such charms by each are shared,  
No critic’s judging eye can tell  
Which merits most regard.

“’Tis far beyond the painter’s skill  
To set their charms to view;  
As far beyond the poet’s quill  
To give the praise that’s due.”

The young ladies mentioned in Colonel Shippen’s *Lines* were the belles of Philadelphia at that time, and as some further notice of them will be of interest, the present writer ventures to

identify them as follows. Of the first of these youthful beauties who is mentioned as "lovely White," the reference is to Miss Mary White, sister of Bishop White, and a daughter of Colonel Thomas White, one of the subscribers in the list of 1748-49. She was born in 1748 and was about nineteen when the verses were written. She married Robert Morris the next year. The Prince de Broglie describing, in his *Narrative* of his visit to this country in 1782, how the French Minister, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, took him to tea at her house, says:<sup>37</sup>

"The house is simple but well furnished and very neat. The doors and table are of a superb mahogany and beautifully polished. The locks and hinges of brass were curiously bright. The porcelain were arranged with great precision. The mistress of the house had an agreeable expression and was dressed entirely in white; in fact everything appeared charming to me.

"I partook of most excellent tea and I should even now be still drinking it, I believe, if the Ambassador had not charitably notified me at the

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<sup>37</sup> *Narrative by the Prince de Broglie of a visit to America, 1782*: translated from an unpublished manuscript by Elise Willing Balch; reprinted from *The Magazine of American History*, 1877.

twelfth cup, that I must put my spoon across it when I wished to finish with this sort of warm water. He said to me, 'It is almost as ill-bred to refuse a cup of tea when it is offered to you, as it would be for the mistress of the house to propose a fresh one, when the ceremony of the spoon had notified her that we no longer wish to partake of it.'"

"Fair, charming Swift," refers to Miss Alice Swift, eldest daughter of John Swift and his first wife, Magdalen Kellock. She was born at Philadelphia, on February 20th, 1750-51 and baptized at Christ Church on April 20, 1752. She married at "Croydon Lodge," Bucks Co., Pa., on November 22, 1778, Robert Cambridge Livingston, son of Robert Livingston, Third Proprietor of the Manor of Livingston.

"Willing, whilst she awes, can please," means Miss Abigail Willing, daughter of Charles Willing and his wife, Anne Shippen. She was born June 17th, 1747, and died unmarried, August 10th, 1791.

Polly Franks was the daughter of David Franks. She was born January 25th, 1747-8, and died August 26th, 1774.

The next of the fair charmers that Colonel Shippen presents to our view was Miss Katherine

Inglis, daughter of John Inglis and his wife, Catherine McCall. She was baptized October 26th, 1749, and lived with her cousin, Miss Margaret McCall, daughter of Samuel and Anne (Searle) McCall about fifty years, the greater portion of the time on Pine Street, opposite St. Peter's Church. Miss McCall died July 10th, 1821, and Miss Inglis in January, 1842. Neither ever married, and they are both buried in the same tomb with the legend upon it "United through life; united in the grave."

"Sweet, smiling, fair M'Call," refers to Miss Mary McCall, daughter of Samuel McCall, Junior; she was born March 13th, 1746-7, and died unmarried at Philadelphia, May 11th, 1773, and was buried in Christ Church ground.

The next belle that Colonel Shippen described, "Sally Coxe," was the daughter of Mary Francis and William Coxe of New Jersey. She married Andrew Allen, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the Province of Pennsylvania.

By "Either Chew," Colonel Shippen undoubtedly referred to the three oldest daughters of Benjamin Chew and his first wife, Mary Galloway, Miss Mary Chew, born March 10th, 1747-8, who married May 8th, 1768, Alexander Wilcocks; Miss Anna Maria Chew, born November 7, 1749, and died

unmarried in 1812, and Miss Elizabeth Chew, born September 10th, 1751, who married May 26th, 1774, Edward Tilghman.

Colonel Shippen married in 1768 the beautiful Jane Galloway of Maryland. Her portrait by West now hangs in the hall of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. It is a splendid example of West and signed all over the canvas by the artist's brush. She was a cousin of Joseph Galloway, who was speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Pennsylvania and one of the early members of the American Philosophical Society.<sup>38</sup>

## XI.

During the War for Independence some attempts were made to keep up the Assembly Dances. Watson says that he saw written upon a "parchment," a list of about seventy names, subscribers to the Assemblies for the winter of 1779-80. The list is preceded by a short statement: "We, the sub<sup>ers</sup> do respectfully promise to pay to C. Pettitt, I. M. Nesbitt, I. Mitchell and T. Lawrence, Managers, and T. Patten, Treasurer of the Philad<sup>a</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> *The Examination of Joseph Galloway, Esq., late Speaker of the House of Assembly of Pennsylvania, by a committee of the House of Commons, originally published at London in 1779. Edited by Thomas Balch for the Seventy-Six Society, Philadelphia, 1855.*

Assembly L 112 <sup>10</sup>/ towards the support of the same, the ensuing year

“Philad<sup>a</sup>. Dec<sup>r</sup>. 31, 1779.”

As Watson remarks, the large sum of the subscription was due to the fact that it was payable in Continental money, which was very much depreciated.

A couple who took a leading part in the social life of Philadelphia toward the close of the War for Independence and in the early years of the Republic were Mr. and Mrs. William Bingham, Junior. He was a son of that William Bingham who was a subscriber to the First Dancing Assembly, and was born at Philadelphia March 8th, 1752. He received the A. B. degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1768. On January 19th, 1787, he was elected to the American Philosophical Society. In 1795 he was chosen one of the United States Senators from Pennsylvania and for a time served as President *pro tem* of that body. He also served his *Alma Mater* as trustee from 1791 to the day of his death, which occurred at Bath, England, February 7th, 1804. He married Anne, a daughter of Thomas Willing. Miss Anne Rawle, writing on November 4th, 1780, to her mother, Mrs. Samuel Shoemaker in New York, mentions

Mrs. Bingham. She writes:<sup>39</sup> "Speaking of handsome women brings Nancy Willing to mind. She might set for the queen of Beauty, and is lately married to Bingham who returned from the West Indies, with an immense fortune. They have set out in highest style; nobody here will be able to make the figure they do, equepage, house, clothes, are all in the newest taste."

One of their daughters, Anne Louise Bingham, married August 23rd, 1798, the Right Hon. Alexander Baring, afterwards Lord Ashburton. A trustee of the British Museum, a member of the Privy Council, and D. C. L. of Oxford University, he was one of the negotiators of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, which, among other things, settled part of the boundary between the United States of America and the Dominion of Canada.

From the Chevalier de Chastellux, who had seen active service during the Seven Years' War and was elected in 1775 for his literary labors one of the forty immortals of *L'Académie Française*, we have, during his time of service in America under Rochambeau, some glimpses of Philadelphia society.<sup>40</sup> He

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<sup>39</sup> *Rawle-Shoemaker Papers*, Volume II., page 38.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Balch: *The French in America during the War of Independence of the United States, 1777-1783*; Philadelphia, Volume II., 1895, pages 77-79.



was elected to the American Philosophical Society on the same day as his famous compatriot, the Marquis de la Fayette, January 19th, 1781.

Chastellux gives an account of a dance or ball at the chevalier de la Luzerne's which he attended.<sup>41</sup> It was "a very agreeable assembly," he says, "for it was given to a private society, on the occasion of a marriage. There were about twenty women, of whom twelve or fourteen danced; each of them having her partner according to the custom in America. Dancing is said to be at once the emblem of gaiety and love: here it seems to be the emblem of legislation and marriage; of legislation inasmuch as the places are marked out, the quadrilles chosen, every proceeding provided for, calculated and submitted to regulation: of marriage, as to every lady a partner is given with whom she must dance the whole evening without taking another. It is true that every severe law requires mitigation, and that it often happens, that a young lady, after dancing two or three first dances with her partner, may make a fresh choice or accept

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<sup>41</sup> Le Marquis de Chastellux: *Voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale dans les années 1780, 1781 & 1782*; Paris, 1786. Volume I., page 233; *Travels in North America in the years 1780, 1781 and 1782*: London, 1787, Volume I., page 276.

the invitations which she receives: but the comparison still holds good, for it is a marriage in the European fashion. Strangers have generally the privilege of being complimented with the handsomest ladies as partners. The Comte de Damas had Mrs. Bingham for his partner, and the Vicomte de Noailles, Miss Shippen." Then after mentioning the "chief Justice of Carolina," Mr. Pendleton, and Mr. Duane, a member of Congress, among those who were present, the Marquis continues, "The ball was suspended, towards midnight, by a supper, served in the manner of coffee on several different tables. On passing into the supper room, the Chevalier de la Luzerne gave his hand to Mrs. Morris and gave her the precedence, an honour pretty generally bestowed on her, as she is the richest woman in the city, and all ranks here being equal, men follow their natural bent, by giving the preference to riches." The ball, he tells us, lasted until two o'clock in the morning.

The Marquis de Chastellux in his *Travels*, says:<sup>42</sup>

"In the afternoon we drank tea with Miss Shippen. This was the first time, since my arrival in America, that I had seen music introduced into society, and mix with its amusements. Miss Rut-

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<sup>42</sup> Chastellux; *Travels*, Volume I., page 293.

ledge played on the harpsichord, and played very well. Miss Shippen sang with timidity, but with a pretty voice. M. Ottaw, secretary to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, sent for his harp; he accompanied Miss Shippen and played also several pieces. Music naturally leads to dancing; the Vicomte de Noailles took down a violin, which was mounted with harp strings, and he made the young ladies dance, whilst their mothers and other grave personages chatted in another room. If music and the fine arts prosper in Philadelphia, if society once becomes easy and gay there, and if they learn to accept pleasure when it presents itself without a formal invitation, then it will be possible to enjoy all the advantages peculiar to their manners and government, without need of envying Europe anything."

Speaking of the subscription Assembly, he says:<sup>43</sup>

"The Assembly, or subscription ball, of which I must give an account, comes in here most appropriately. At Philadelphia, as at London, Bath, Spa, etc., there are spaces where the young people dance, and others where those to whom that sort of amusement does not suit, play different games of cards; but at Philadelphia only games of commerce

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<sup>43</sup> Chastellux, French edition, 1786, Volume I., pages 262-3, English edition, 1787, Volume I., page 314.

are allowed. A *manager*, or master of ceremonies presides at these methodical amusements: he presents to the *danseurs* and the *danseuses*, folded billets which each contain a number; thus it is fate which decides the partner which one is to have for the whole evening. All the dances are arranged before hand, and the dancers are called each in turn. These dances, like the *toasts* which we drink at table, have some relation to politics: one is called *the success of the campaign*, another, *the defeat of Burgoyne*, and a third, *Clinton's retreat*. The managers are generally chosen from among the most distinguished officers of the army; at present this important place is held by Colonel Wilkinson, who is also Clothier general of the army. Colonel Mitchell, a small stout man, fifty years of age, a great judge of horses and who lately was contractor for carriages (*qui avoit dernièrement l'entreprise des voitures*) both for the American and the French armies, was formerly the manager; but when I saw him he had descended from the magistracy and danced like any private citizen. It is said that he exercised his office with much severity, and it is related that a young lady who was taking part in a quadrille, having forgotten her turn, because she talked with a friend, he came up and

said to her aloud: *comme Miss, take care what you are about, do you think you are here for your pleasure?*

“The assembly to which I was taken upon leaving Mr. Wilson’s, was the second of the winter. I was apprized that it would be neither numerous nor brilliant, for at Philadelphia as at Paris, the best society (*la bonne compagnie*) seldom go to balls before Christmas. Nevertheless, upon entering the room, I found twenty, or twenty-five women dancing. It was whispered to me, that having heard a great deal of the Vicomte de Noailles and the Comte de Damas, they were come with the hope of seeing and dancing with them; but the ladies were entirely disappointed, for those gentlemen had left that morning.” Chastellux mentions among those present Miss Footman, as being “a little contraband, that is to say, suspected of not being a very good Whig; for the Tories have been publicly excluded from this assembly.”

## XII.

Shortly after the War of Independence was brought to a successful conclusion by the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the fashionable people of Phila-

delphia revived the "Assemblies." The City Tavern where they were then held was not approved by many of the subscribers, owing to lack of space to give the dances. Accordingly, a fund was started to build a more commodious hall where the "Assemblies" might be held. This "City Dancing Assembly Fund" begins with a subscription list dated October the 19th, 1786. The preamble of this paper reads: "The ladies and gentlemen of this city, having of late repeatedly testified their disapprobation of the present Assembly room at the City Tavern as being in every way inadequate to the purpose, it is proposed to open a subscription for procuring a suitable lot of ground and erecting thereon a convenient building, containing a spacious ball room." The "City Tavern" referred to in this paper, where the Assembly Balls were given, stood on Second Street, above Walnut Street. It was built and opened shortly before the Revolution, and superseded the old London Coffee House as a principal place of resort. At the City Tavern many dinners, receptions and dances were given. A number of people signed the above paper either as subscribers of money or as givers of shares of stock in the tavern. The plan, however, languished for several years.

While the subscription apparently did not grow very fast, the balls seemed to thrive. Among those to attend the Assemblies in 1788 was Mrs. Collins. The Managers that year were J. M. Nesbitt, G. Meade, T. L. Moore and John Craig.

In the year 1790, Colonel Joseph Shippen, who was then living in the country, brought his daughter Mary—better known as “Polly” Shippen—then a young lady of seventeen to the Assemblies. On her invitation card for that year, now in the author’s possession, she is addressed not by her given name but by the initial of her nickname, the phraseology on the card reading:

“Philadelphia Assembly, 1790.

The Favour of Miss P. Shippen’s  
Company is requested for the Season.

J. M. Nesbitt,	W. Stewart,
Geo. Meade,	Jos. Redman,
John Swanwick,	Geo. Harrison,
“Managers.”	

“Polly” Shippen married in 1771 Samuel Swift, a nephew of John Swift who was a member of the first Board of Managers of the Assemblies, and son of Joseph Swift. She died June 2nd, 1809, and is buried with her husband at Old Trinity Church,



Reprint of a card of 1790.



Oxford, Philadelphia.<sup>44</sup> He graduated at the University of Pennsylvania in 1786.

“Polly” Shippen was a favorite in society. A few of the invitation cards from the many which she received have been preserved. At this late date they may not be without some interest, for they were sent by members of some of the notable families of Philadelphia in the past; and one serves as a connecting link with New York. One, probably all of these invitations were sent in the winter of 1791-92, during the first Presidency of Washington.

“Mrs. Mifflin requests the favor of Miss Polly Shippen’s company at Tea and Cards on Wednesday next.

“Wednesday.”

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“Mrs. Livingston requests the honor of Miss Shippen’s company at Tea and Cards next Tuesday evening.

“Tuesday.”

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<sup>44</sup> There is a bronze tablet in Trinity Church, Oxford, put up at the suggestion of Edward Swift Buckley, Jr., Esq., in memory of Samuel and Mary Shippen Swift. The congregation of Trinity Church was formed in 1698; the present handsome little church was built in 1711.

Mr. Livingston requests the honor  
of Miss Shippens company at  
tea & cards next Tuesday evening

Tuesday

Mrs. & The Miss Chews request the pleasure  
of Miss Shippen's company to spend the  
Evening on Tuesday the 31<sup>st</sup> of Jan<sup>y</sup>

Monday Jan<sup>y</sup> 23<sup>d</sup>

Reprints of two invitation cards addressed in 1792 to Miss Shippen.

“Mrs. Powel requests the Favor of Miss Shippen’s company to spend the Evening on Saturday next.

“Wednesday 11th January 1792.”

“Mrs. and the Miss Chews request the pleasure of Miss Shippen’s company to spend the evening on Tuesday, the 31st of Jany.

“Monday, Jany. 23d.”

### XIII.

In December 1791, another effort was made to erect a suitable dancing hall for the Assemblies by starting a new subscription list.

In the new subscription agreement it was said:

“Proposals for Obtaining Subscriptions to Building a Dancing Assembly-Room,” etc.

“I. The sum subscribed shall constitute stock entitled to receive not less than six per cent. per annum, to be paid annually; the same to arise out of the subscriptions to the Dancing Assembly and of the rents received for all other uses to which the building shall be applied.

“II. The stock shall be divided into shares of twenty pounds each.

“III. When one hundred and fifty shares are subscribed, the subscribers shall be required to

meet for the purpose of choosing a Treasurer and Trustees to carry the design into execution."

A meeting of the Assembly subscribers was held February 2, 1792, and the minutes of that meeting read as follows:

"At a meeting held, pursuant to Public Notice, of the Subscribers to the proposals for Building a Dancing Assembly Room, etc., Mr. John M. Nesbit being voted into the chair, it was resolved:—

"I. That seven Trustees shall be chosen by ballot, a majority of whom to be a quorum.

"II. That the said Trustees shall fix upon and procure a lot or lots for the purpose of erecting the building thereon.

"III. That the said Trustees shall determine on a plan for said building, contract for the materials and erection thereof, and rent the same, when completed, for the purpose of concerts, or such other purposes not injurious thereto as they may think fit, subject, however, to the use of the City Dancing Assembly forever, the managers for the time being paying a reasonable annual rent for the same.

"IV. That the said Trustees shall cause the money subscribed to be collected and lodged in the Bank of the United States, subject to the orders

of a quorum of their number, and shall issue receipts for the same in the following form:—

“Received, Philadelphia, \_\_\_\_\_,  
 1792, of A. B., \_\_\_\_\_ Pounds, being for  
 shares subscribed to the Proposals for Building a Dancing Assembly Room, etc., on which sum the said A. B. or the assigns of the said A. B. shall be entitled to receive such annual Dividends as may arise out of the net profits of the institution.’

“V. That in case of death, removal from the State, or resignation of any of the Trustees, a meeting of the subscribers shall be called (giving at least three days’ notice in two Daily papers) to fill up such vacancy and that at all meetings, whether for Elections, or other purposes, the subscribers shall be entitled to a vote for every share they then hold.

“VI. That the Trustees shall close the Annual Accounts and declare the Dividend on the Stock or Shares on the first day of July in every year, and pay the same on demand.

“VII. That the number of Shares to be subscribed to this institution shall not exceed four hundred.

“The subscribers then proceeded to the election of trustees, and the following gentlemen were duly

chosen: Mr. John M. Nesbit, Mr. Jaspar Moylan, Mr. Walter Stewart, Mr. Henry Hill, Mr. Thomas L. Moore, Mr. Thomas M. Willing, Mr. William Bingham.

“Signed by order of the Subscribers,

“JOHN M. NESBIT,

“*Chairman.*

“Philadelphia, Feb. 2, 1792.”

The list of subscribers to this building fund in 1792 and 1793 was as follows:

Thomas P. Anthony, Joseph Anthony, Jr., Joseph Anthony, W. Bingham, Peter Blight, Clement Biddle, B. L. Barendse, Robert Bass, Charles Biddle, Andrew Bayard, John Barclay, Charles Baring, Edward Burd, Herman Baker, Benjamin F. Bache, John Brown, William Cramond, Robert Correy, B. Chew, Jr., James Crawford, D. H. Conyngham, Theop. Cazenove, James Cramond, A. Clow & Co., James Cox, John Craig, Henry Capper, Benjamin Chew, Sharp Delaney, Samuel Dickinson, Philemon Dickinson, Thomas Ewing, Christian Febiger, Thomas Fitzsimmons, William Gibbs, John Guier, Thomas Geisse, Henry Hill, George Harrison, Is. Hazlehurst, Benjamin Holland, Jared Ingersoll, Samuel Jackson, D. Jackson, L. Jacoby, Thomas Ketland, John Kean, Stephen Kingston, Frederick

Kuhl, George Latimer, Moses Levy, P. L. Lemaigre, James Lyle, Thomas Lea, Thomas Leaming, John Leamy, Robert Morris, George Meade, Archibald McCall, William Miller, John Miller, Jr., John Montgomery, James McCurrach, John Morrell, William McKensie, T. L. Moore, William Miller, Jr., John F. Miffin, Jasper Moylan, Archibald McCall, Jr., Samuel Meredith, William Montgomery, Joseph T. Miller, Alex. Murray, John Nixon, John M. Nesbit, John Nicholson, Samuel Powell, Charles Pettit, Michael Prager, C. G. Paleske, Andrew Porter, Mark Prager, Jr., Thomas Ruston, Richard Rundle, James Read, John Ross, Robert Rainey, Walter Stewart, John Sitgreaves, Robert Smith, John Swanwick, Charles Swift, Andrew Summers, Thomas L. Shippen, George Swift, Lawrence Seckel, John Travis, Thomas Tingey, Edward Tilghman, John Vaughan, Vanuxem & Lambert, Thomas Willing, Francis West, Jona. Williams, Alex. Wilcocks, Philip Wager, Thomas M. Willing, John West, John Waddington, John Wilcocks, James Yard.

## XIV.

Assemblies were given on Washington's birthday both in 1793 and 1794. *À propos* of the latter celebration the notice read thus:

## "CITY DANCING ASSEMBLY.

"The subscribers to the City Dancing Assembly are informed that there will be a ball at Oeller's Hotel on Saturday evening, the 22nd inst., being the birth night of the President of the United States. No tickets will be sold for that night. Subscribers who wish tickets for strangers, will please apply to one of the managers previous to the night of the ball.

"February 18."

Wansey, in his *Excursion to the United States, 1794*, thus speaks of the "Philadelphia Assembly, 1794":

"The Assembly Room, at Oeller's Hotel, must not pass undescribed; it is a most elegant room, sixty feet square, with a handsome music gallery at one end. It is papered after the French taste, with the Pantheon figures in compartments, imitating festoons, pillars and groups of antique drawings, in the same style as lately introduced in the most elegant houses in London. To help my readers to form some idea of the state of polished society there, I must subjoin the Rules for regulating their Assemblies, which I copied from the frame hung up in the room:



“Rules of Philadelphia Assembly, at Oeller’s Hotel.

1. The Managers have the entire direction.
2. The ladies rank in sets,<sup>45</sup> and draw for places as they enter the Room. The Managers have power to place strangers and brides at the head of the Dances.
3. The ladies who lead, call the Dances alternately.
4. No lady to dance out of her set without leave of a Manager.
5. No lady to quit her place in the Dance, or alter the figure.
6. No person to interrupt the view of the Dancers.
7. The Rooms to be opened at six o’clock every Thursday evening during the season; the Dances to commence at seven and end at twelve precisely.
8. Each set having danced a Country Dance, a Cotillion may be called, if at the desire of eight ladies.
9. No stranger admissible, without a Ticket, signed by one of the Managers previously obtained.

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<sup>45</sup> “The Room, being so wide, will admit two, or even three sets to dance at the same time.”

10. No gentleman admissible in boots, coloured stockings, or undress.
11. No Citizen to be admissible unless he is a Subscriber.
12. The Managers only are to give orders to the Music.
13. If any dispute should unfortunately arise, the Managers are to adjust and finally settle the same; and any gentleman refusing to comply, becomes inadmissible to the further Assemblies of that season."

## XV.

The money referred to above as having been raised through subscription, in 1792 and 1793, by a little over one hundred prominent citizens of the city, was placed in the hands of trustees who bought a lot of land;<sup>46</sup> but a building apparently was not built upon it for the Dancing Assembly. From correspondence relating to this lot of ground, we learn that in 1797 Henry Hill and William Bingham were members of the Board of Managers of the City Dancing Assembly and in 1798 Henry

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<sup>46</sup> Memorandum of Henry Hill, October 26th, 1796—Letter of John Taylor to Jasper Moylan, February 13, 1798.

Hill and Jasper Moylan.<sup>47</sup> Of the year 1797, an Assembly card, belonging to the late William Read Fisher, is inscribed: "Philadelphia, 1797. City Assembly. Admit William Read to the City Assembly."

A card sent to a member of the Swift family, in the possession of the author, reads as follows:

"1798-9

"CITY DANCING ASSEMBLY,

"The Honor of M Company  
is requested for the Season.

"Thomas W. Francis,	Managers	James Gibson
Thomas Ketland,		Jon <sup>n</sup> Williams
Matthews Pearce,		Stephen Kingston
William McPherson		Sam <sup>l</sup> Murgatroyd."

The following card in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania not only tells something about the balls for the next winter of 1799-1800, but also links a distinguished New York colonial name with the Assemblies.

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<sup>47</sup> Bill rendered by John Taylor to the Assembly Managers, March 8th, 1797;—*ibid.*, March 12th, 1798;—John Taylor to Jasper Moylan, February 13th, 1798.

“1799-1800

“CITY DANCING ASSEMBLY

“The honor of Miss Livingston’s Company  
is requested for the Season

“Philip Nicklin	Managers	Stephen Kingston
John Travis		Henry Wikoff
Wm. Crammond		Richard Wilcox
Sam <sup>l</sup> . Murgatroyd		Daniel Cox”

Miss Livingston was possibly a daughter of the “Fair, charming Swift,” mentioned in Colonel Shippen’s *Lines written in an Assembly Room*, who married a son of the Third Proprietor of the Manor of Livingston. Miss Livingston attended the Assemblies for several seasons, as is shown by two other cards of invitation to the Assemblies in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Those two cards are also evidence that the Assemblies continued to be given in Philadelphia in the early years of the nineteenth century. The cards read as follows:

“1802

“CITY DANCING ASSEMBLY

“The honor of Miss Livingston’s company  
is requested for the Season.

“Thomas M. Willing	Managers	Stephen Kingston
Matt <sup>w</sup> Pearce		Samuel Mifflin
Peter McCall		Henry Nixon.”

“1804-5

“CITY DANCING ASSEMBLY

“The honor of Miss Livingston’s company  
is requested for the Season

“Jasper Moylan	Managers	Edward Shippen Burd
Thomas Cadwalader		Robert Hare Junior
Charles Jared Ingersoll		Nathaniel Chapman.”

In this connection, too, it is of interest to mention that another Miss Livingston, also a descendant of “Fair, charming Swift” attended the Philadelphia Assemblies for several seasons off and on during the early seventies of the nineteenth century.

XVI.

Meanwhile some advance was made in the project of building an Assembly Hall. In a letter of February 4th, 1808, it is stated that two hundred and two shares were subscribed for “and the residue belonging to Mr. Ross and Mr. McCall in the hands of Edward Shippen, Esq., arising from the sale of the City Tavern.” At that time about a moiety of the subscriptions were paid. Among the original subscribers to the Dancing Assembly Fund were, William Bingham, Clement Biddle, Edward

Burd, Benjamin Chew, Archibald McCall, Archibald McCall, Jr., Thomas L. Shippen, Charles Swift, George Swift, Edward Tilghman, Thomas Willing and Thomas Mayne Willing.

Although a considerable sum was subscribed and over a hundred shares paid for, again the project to build an Assembly Hall came to nothing, as no building was erected.

During the season of 1812-13, in spite of our war with Great Britain over her attempt to impress our seamen into her service, the Assemblies were given. A set of the Assembly Rules for 1812-13 are in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and are as follows:

“RULES

“of the

“PHILADELPHIA ASSEMBLY

“Season . . . . . 1812 & 13.

“1. The Assembly shall consist of forty subscribers.

“2. The subscribers shall be under the direction of five managers, who shall have the entire management of the assembly.

“3. Each subscriber will be entitled to two ladies' tickets.

“4. The treasurer shall exhibit a regular account of receipts and disbursements, which account shall be open to the inspection of the subscribers.

“5. No gentleman's ticket transferrable except by consent of the managers.

“6. The assembly rooms to be open at six o'clock, and the dancing to commence at seven, and conclude at one.

“7. No refreshments admitted in the assembly room, but by order of the managers.

“8. No subscriber admitted in boots.

“9. Ladies or gentlemen shall not leave their places after dancing down a country dance until the end of the dance, except in cases of absolute indisposition; and if they dance again during that dance, they are to take their places at the bottom.

“10. The managers, and the ladies who dance with them, may stand up and take their places as second couple, and may retire when at bottom.

“11. The managers will be distinguished by a white ribbon.

“12. Should any improper person be introduced, they will be compelled to quit the room and the subscriber introducing such person will be expelled the assembly.

“Laftly. Thefe rules and regulations fhall be printed and placed in the rooms, and every fubfcriber is expected to fubfcribe his name in a book prepared for that purpofe. Any member acting contrary to them will render himfelf liable to be expelled the affembly, and forfeit his fubfcription.”

In looking over the above list, one notices that the list of fubfcribers is even smaller than the lists of 1748-49 and 1749-50. In 1812-13 there were only “forty fubfcribers” under the “Direction of Five Managers.” That reduced the fubfcription list about one third in comparison with the firft list, a procefs juft the oppofite of the prefent day. Perhaps the reduction in the number of fubfcribers in 1812 was due to the exigencies caufed by the war. It was provided that the Afsembly rooms were to be opened at fix o’clock in the evening, and that dancing was to begin at feven and end at one the next morning. Also from the laft rule, it may be inferred that the Afsembly had a fet of rooms where the fubfcribers and their invited guefts were accuftomed to afsemble.

At prefent it is not known whether the Afsemblies were given during the laft two years of the War of 1812, which was fought in behalf of the neutral rights of the United States upon the high



seas. Nor is there proof at hand that the Assemblies were held each season in the years immediately following the cessation of that war.

It is well known from persons now living not only that the Assemblies were not given during the Civil War, but also not in every year of the fifties of the past century. And from a comparison of many manuscripts relating to the social life of the city, it is safe to say that the Assemblies were not held during every year of the first half of the nineteenth century, and they probably were not even given in every year of the latter half of the eighteenth century.

During the winter of 1817-18 a brilliant military ball was given at Washington Hall in honor of Washington's birthday. The cards of invitation read:

“Military

“Birth Night Ball

“the honor of the company of

---

“is requested at a Ball on the evening of the 23rd instant in celebration of the birth of Washington.

## "Managers.

"Col. C. C. Biddle	Col. C. Raquet
Col. A. M. Prevost	Majr. J. R. Ingersoll
Majr. J. G. Biddle	G. Fairman, Esqr.
R. Wharton, Esqr.	Capt. W. Rawle, Junr.
"Capt. Jno. Swift	Capt. J. M. Scott
Capt. C. Stevenson	Capt. C. F. Roberts
Lieut. C. W. Morgan	Lieut. E. S. Fullerton

"Washington Hall,

"February 11,

"1818."

The list of the managers of that ball contain a number of surnames which have been notable both in the history and social life of the city.

An Assembly card of the season of 1817-18, which is still extant, reads as follows:<sup>48</sup>

"PHILADELPHIA ASSEMBLY.

"Library Street.

"The honour of

"Miss A. Coock's

"Company is requested at a Ball on Friday

"Evening the 8 of January 1818

"Introduced by Mr. E. Dutilh

Subscriber.

"not transferable."

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<sup>48</sup> Copied from a card in possession of Mrs. Nicholas Thouron.

## XVII.

About 1824 the trustees of the Dancing Assembly Fund appear to have purchased a lot with a view of building an Assembly Hall, but afterwards to have sold it. And from a report of a committee appointed February 7th, 1824, we learn "That a lot of ground was taken upon lease from a Mr. John Taylor at 150 Pounds per annum; an attempt was made to erect a building thereon for the above purpose (an Assembly Hall) but was not finally carried into execution, and that the plan has proved abortive."

Up to now it has not been possible to determine with any accuracy the dates of the two Assembly cards which immediately follow below. Possibly one or both were of a date earlier than the year 1824 and perhaps they may have belonged to the thirties. The author will be much obliged for any facts that will help to determine their respective dates.

An Assembly card that was sent to a member of the Willing family, now in the possession of the author, reads as follows:

"CITY DANCING ASSEMBLY

"The Honour of \_\_\_\_\_ Company

is requested for the season.

“R. W. Meade		Jno. M. Read
Wm. Meredith	Managers	Geo. C. McCall
E. S. Burd		Levett Harris
C. J. Ingersoll		Thos Moore Willing.”

A card of Mrs. William Rawle reads:

“CITY DANCING ASSEMBLY

“The Honour of Mrs. W. Rawle’s Company  
is requested for the Season

“E. S. Burd		Levett Harris
N. Biddle	Managers	Jno. M. Read
C. J. Ingersoll		Wm. M. Camac
Wm. Meredith		Tho. Moore Willing”

Charles Jared Ingersoll, whose name appears as a manager on the invitation card just mentioned, after studying law, became *attaché* to the American Embassy at Paris when Rufus King was our Minister to France. On his return home, he published *Chiomara*, a poem (1800) and *Edwy and Elgira*, a tragedy (1801). In 1813 he was elected from Philadelphia to the lower House of Congress, and served again in that body from 1841 to 1847. He also wrote *Julian*, a poem (1831) and a *Historical Sketch of the Second War between the United States and Great Britain* (4 vols., 1845-52). He

was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society, April 21st, 1815. He died in January, 1862.

The Ridgway Library has among its manuscript collections the following letter addressed to James Rush by Joshua Francis Fisher:

“DEAR SIR:

“I have been directed to inform you that you have been elected a Manager of the City Dancing Assembly and to request of you the favour to permit your name to be placed on our card. We know too well the value of your time to expect from you any attention to the arrangements for our Balls but we shall esteem it a particular honour to be nominally associated with you.

“I inscribe myself

with the highest respect

“Y<sup>r</sup> ob. ser.

“JOSHUA F. FISHER

“In behalf of the Junior Managers.

“Thursday evening, Nov. 26

“DR. RUSH.”

Probably that note was written about 1829 or 1830. For it shows that Mr. Fisher was writing

as an Assembly manager to Dr. Rush, apprising the latter of his election. From the Assembly card of Mrs. William Rawle for the winter of 1830-31, we know that James Rush was a manager that season, and that card taken with the note of Joshua Francis Fisher shows that the latter was a manager before the winter of 1830-31, very likely for that of 1829-30. James Rush, who was a brother of the celebrated diplomat and statesman, Richard Rush, one of the American negotiators of the treaty of 1818 with Great Britain, was a scientist of distinction. Richard Rush was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society January 17th, 1817. Joshua Francis Fisher, who was a prominent citizen of Philadelphia, was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society April 19th, 1833.

An Assembly account book kept by Henry Ralston in 1830-31 shows that the total income of the Assemblies that winter was \$1480.25, and after Mr. Ralston had paid the expenses of the year, and also \$475.82 for unpaid debts incurred the previous season, he had still left on hand \$182.33. This book begins, "Henry Ralston's account with the Assemblies, November 20, 1830," and at the end is this endorsement, "Correct, Geo. N. Thomson, H. D. Gilpin." From the card of Mrs. William

Rawle for that winter we know the names of the managers at that time. This card reads:

“Assemblies

“The Honor of Mrs. W<sup>m</sup>. Rawle’s

“Company is requested for the Season

“H. Ralston		James Markoe
James Rush		H. D. Gilpin
J. P. Norris, Jr.	Managers	Geo. H. Thompson
Tho <sup>s</sup> . Rotch		P. M. Nixon”

At the foot of this card there is engraved in very small letters the name of the engraver, C. G. Childs, and “Philadelphia, 1830-31.” Upon the back of James Rush’s own individual invitation card for the season of 1830-31, he noted the fact that he was the oldest member of the board and then he went on to say: “It was always found a difficult matter to get persons to accept the office [of manager], so I preserve this card as a mark of the honor I received, to hand ladies to supper and to talk nonsense to young girls.”

William Rawle, the husband of Mrs. Rawle, was a member of a family that has given many gifted men to the Philadelphia Bar and for more than a century has looked after the legal interests

of the Penn family on this side of the Atlantic. William Rawle the elder was the first President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, to which position he was elected in 1825, the year after the society was formed, and in which office he served until his death in 1836. He was elected to the American Philosophical Society July 21st, 1786. His son, William Rawle the younger, was elected to the American Philosophical Society January 15th, 1841, and died in 1858. The latter was also a Vice-President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and a trustee of the University of Pennsylvania. It was probably to the latter's wife that the several invitation cards referred to above were sent.

The Joseph Parker Norris, whose name appears as a manager on the above card, was a descendant of Isaac Norris, the famous speaker of the Legislative Assembly in the middle of the eighteenth century. A Quaker, a statesman, and in addition a Hebrew, Latin and French scholar, Isaac Norris it was who proposed the inscription on the old State House Bell, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." The Joseph Parker Norris who was a manager of the Dancing Assembly in 1830-31, was President of the Bank of



Pennsylvania. He was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society, July 21st, 1815.

Here is another Assembly card whose date is not accurately known.

“Assemblies

“The Honour of		Company
“is requested for the Season		
“N. Biddle		G. C. McCall
J. Rush		H. D. Gilpin
W. M. Camac	Managers	Jas. Markoe
H. Ralston		J. F. Fisher”

“N. Biddle” undoubtedly was Nicholas Biddle, a Philadelphian of much distinction. A graduate of Princeton College, he became Secretary to the American Legation at Paris when General Armstrong was our minister to France, and then filled the same place at London when Monroe was Minister there. Returning to Philadelphia in 1807, Nicholas Biddle began the practice of the Law. He edited the “*Port Folio*,” and compiled a *Commercial Digest*. He represented Pennsylvania in the Lower House of Congress in 1810-11; and was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society,

April 16th, 1813. He prepared the *History of the Expedition under the command of Captains Lewis and Clark to the sources of the Missouri*, which was published at Philadelphia in 1814. He was appointed in 1819 by President Monroe a director of the Second Bank of the United States, and was made President of that institution in 1823, which office he held until the existence of the bank was terminated by the expiration of its charter in 1836. On April 11th, 1827, he read before the American Philosophical Society an eulogium on its late president, Thomas Jefferson.

In 1839 a handsome Bachelors's Ball was given in the hall of the Franklin Institute, an institution founded in 1824 and which has proved of such inestimable service to the manufacturing development of our city. The managers of this dance were, "Edmund S. Coxe, P. McCall, J. Murray Rush, Richard Vaux, H. Cadwalader, Thos. W. Francis, Jas. H. Blight, John T. Lewis, Fras. Peters, W. Chancellor." The following account of the ball appeared in one of the newspapers of the day.

"The Bachelors's Ball given at the Hall of the Franklin Institute, Chestnut Street, on Wednesday evening, was the most splendid entertainment of the kind ever presented in this city. Its manage-

ment was confided to twelve gentlemen who exercised fully their liberality and good taste in supervising the various details of its preparation, and did, too, the honors of the evening to the satisfaction of all the company. There were present from four to five hundred persons, including a number of strangers, and officers of the Army and Navy in uniform. The ladies' dresses and general appearance were of surpassing brilliancy, and distinguished by the correct arrangement of colors and elegant effects, which here are so particularly evident in their costumes. There was much excellent dancing and waltzing to Johnson's brass band, and were we permitted we might indicate some remarkable displays of graceful motion. The four corners of the room were extensively decorated with flowers, from the garden of Mr. Dryburgh, and Fletcher & Bennett's shade lamps shed a soft light through the foliage. At the east end of the room was the orchestra, encircled by a selection of rare plants, and above were figures of Venus and Cupid, surrounded with evergreens. The west end contained a decorated statue of Cupid, and two of Skirving's peculiarly splendid and classic columns surmounted with large vases filled with flowers. Over the several figures were wax candles arranged in the

form of hives, and candles were also interspersed throughout the gas lights. A number of Natt's large mirrors added to the radiance of the scene. The supper room was divided from the dancing hall by a large curtain formed of the American flag. About half past one o'clock this was drawn, and the company entered and enjoyed the richest and fullest collation which has yet been prepared in the assembly room. The table was of a horse-shoe form—each lady had the comfort of a seat and was supplied with *carte du souper* printed on white satin. The supper was served up by Parkinson and Hutchinson, and was a remarkable evidence of their increased skill in the sweetest of all callings. Sugar was wrought in numerous neat and beautiful designs, such as the graces supporting vases of flowers, giving the appearance of elegant alabaster figures; temples; gothic structures, pyramids and so forth. There were plate; glass and china from Mrs. Tyndal's elegant establishment; lamps of Corneliu's best fabric; large antique vases, and in short, everything that adorned the table with effect without an excess of display. At the north end of the room were three flags, the English, American and French interwoven,—the latter was supplied by M. Hersant, the French Consul. The

party broke up about three o'clock, highly pleased with a scene which had all the eclat of a public fete with the domestic elegance of a private entertainment."

### XVIII.

In the middle of the last century, in the forties and the fifties, many of the notable people of Philadelphia lived in Girard Row, that is the row of houses on the north side of Chestnut Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets. It was so called because it belonged to the Estate of Stephen Girard, which he left to the city to found the college which now bears his name. In that row, at the corner of Eleventh and Chestnut Streets lived Robert McCall and his three sisters. Next to them was the Atherton family. At 1109 Joseph Swift lived. Mrs. and Miss Bell lived next door. William Platt and his family also lived in that row, as well as Lawrence Lewis and his family. Mrs. George Blight and her daughter, Emily Blight, who was the first wife of Dr. Carter, had a house in that row. Another Miss Blight married Richard Rush of the navy, and Ellen Blight married Mr. Palmer of the army. Frank Peters and his family lived in that block, and William and Wharton Chancellor and their sister, Mrs. Twells and her

family, had a house in that row. The Henry Paul Becks were near Twelfth Street, and General Thomas Cadwalader had the house at the corner of Twelfth and Chestnut Streets. On the south side of Chestnut Street near Eleventh Street, Thomas Balch and Dr. Charles Frederick Beck lived together. Further west on the same side of Chestnut Street the Hartman Kuhns lived in a large double house which still stood not so long since. Next to them was Miss "Molly" Hamilton, a cousin. Further west in the same block the Isaac Harveys lived, and John A. Brown and his family had the house at the southeast corner of Chestnut and Twelfth Streets. In those days the Cleemanns lived in Girard Street, as also the Rev. Dr. Ducachet of St. Stevens' Church.

Francis S. Lewis, a young man fond of society, gives us in his Journal a few glimpses of the Assemblies in the winter of 1849.

He writes, Jan. 11th, 1849.<sup>49</sup> "Last night the first of the Philadelphia Assemblies came off at Musical Fund Hall. It was well attended and everything went off well. Broke up about 4 o'clock."

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<sup>49</sup> Communicated by Mrs. Edward F. Beale.

Again, April 17th, he writes: "Last night the 3rd and last of the Assembly Balls came off at Musical Fund Hall. It was a beautiful night. Since the last Assembly several deaths have occurred and among those prevented from coming were the Misses Smith, Miss Wharton, Miss Scott, Mockwill, Lewis, etc., etc. The ball opened about 9 ½ o'clk. and broke up about 2 ½ A. M., with three cheers for the managers."

The next autumn, on October 24th, 1849, Mr. Lewis makes this entry *à propos* of the Assemblies:

"Yesterday afternoon a meeting of the members of the Assemblies of last winter was held at Musical Fund Hall for the purpose of electing Managers for this winter which resulted as follows:

"Married	Single
"1. John M. Scott	1. W. W. Fisher
2. Jos. Swift	2. B. W. Ingersoll
3. Benj. Rush	3. Alex. Biddle
4. Man <sup>s</sup> . G. Evans	4. W. C. Twells
5. Thos. Cadwalader	5. Jim Blight
6. Richard Vaux	6. S. Morris Waln."

As we learn, however, from Joseph Swift's journal, as well as an invitation card for the season

of 1849-50, there were some slight changes in this list of managers before the invitations were sent out and the balls were given. Mr. Swift on November 12th, 1849, makes this entry in his journal: "Met the Managers of the Dancing Assembly at the Musical Fund Hall in Locust Street. They are, John M. Scott, Thomas Cadwalader, Joseph Swift, Charles Willing, M. D., Richard Vaux, M. G. Evans, James H. Blight, B. W. Ingersoll, Wm. T. Twells, Alexr. Biddle, Wm. W. Fisher and Bernard Henry, Jr." And an Assembly card for the season of 1849-50, when three Assemblies were given at Musical Fund Hall, at Locust and South Eighth Streets, is thus inscribed:

"ASSEMBLIES

"The Honor of Mr. Thomas Balch's

"Company is requested for the season.

" John M. Scott	:	:	James H. Blight
Thomas Cadwalader	:	:	B. W. Ingersoll
Joseph Swift	:	:	William T. Twells
Charles Willing	:	<small>Managers</small>	Alexander Biddle
Richard Vaux	:	:	William W. Fisher
M. G. Evans	:	:	Bernard Henry, Jr."

Among the list of managers for the season of 1849-50, twelve in number or three times the num-



ber of managers of one hundred and one years earlier, two of the names that were in the original subscription list appear, those of Swift and Willing, and the former of those two names was also among the first Board of Managers. Of the managers in 1849-50, Thomas Cadwalader was at the time President of the Philadelphia Club, and Joseph Swift and Richard Vaux subsequently filled that distinguished position. On January 18th, 1884, Richard Vaux was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society.

Mr. Balch, who had studied at Columbia College and also had been admitted to the Bar in New York City in 1845, upon coming in 1849 to live in Philadelphia, was invited at once to subscribe to the Assembly balls for the season of 1849-50. A Virginian by birth, but a Marylander by descent and so belonging to a family that was divided by the Civil War, Thomas Balch proposed in an interview with President Lincoln in November, 1864, and then in an open letter which was printed in the *New York Tribune*, May 13, 1865, that the *Alabama* claims should be referred for judicial settlement to an International Judicial Tribunal. Thanks to the eminent British jurist, John Westlake, that letter was reprinted two years later

in England in the journal of the Social Science Association, March 15, 1867, thereby placing the idea of submitting the *Alabama* claims to the judgment of an International Tribunal squarely before the men who, like Gladstone and Sir Stafford Northcote, governed Great Britain. And the latter, it should not be forgotten, was one of the negotiators in 1871 of the Treaty of Washington. In that way step by step, the acorn planted in the interview with President Lincoln, gradually grew into the oak or International Tribunal that sat at Geneva in 1871-72, and decided the rights of the United States of America with Great Britain in the *Alabama* claims case by a judicial decision without the shedding of a drop of blood.<sup>50</sup> Those who believe in the influence of heredity, may find some interest in the fact that the original proposer of the Geneva Tribunal not only was the son of a judge, but also that through Robert Brooke of England and Maryland, he descended from Sir Thomas Forster, judge of the Court of Common Pleas of England from 1607 to 1612, and likewise was a kinsman of the great Federal Chief Justice, Roger Brooke Taney. In the words of Milton, truly

“Peace hath her victories

No less renowned than war.”

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<sup>50</sup> Thomas Balch: *International Courts of Arbitration, 1874*: sixth edition, Philadelphia, 1915.

Thomas Balch's history of the French expeditionary force under Count Rochambeau in America during the Revolutionary War, *Les Français en Amérique*,<sup>51</sup> made it possible over two score years ago for the French to read in their own tongue how their fathers aided Washington and his troops to bring about the surrender of Yorktown.

### XIX.

Of the three balls given in the winter of 1849-50, at Musical Fund Hall, Joseph Swift and Francis L. Lewis give us short glimpses. Mr. Swift writes:

"December 19th, 1849. Wednesday.

"The first Assembly at the Musical Fund Hall. I went at 9  $\frac{1}{4}$  and remained until 3 A. M., a large and brilliant party, very pleasant and a success."

Mr. Lewis says:

Dec. 20th, 1849. "Last night the first Assembly came off at Musical Fund Hall. The ball opened about 10 o'clock. I went with Miss Douglas and handed her into the room with the Bridal party [probably Mr. and Mrs. Lewis C. Norris (Miss McKee) married Dec. 5th.] It certainly was the handsomest ball ever given in this city. Breiter's

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<sup>51</sup> Thomas Balch: *Les Français en Amérique pendant la guerre de l'Indépendance des États-Unis, 1777-1783*; Paris, 1872.

Band was engaged and played admirably. He composed a new polka for the occasion. The principal belles were Miss Douglas, to whom I sent a bouquet, Miss Scott, Miss Coleman, Miss McKnight and Miss Wilcox. I. Banker and Bill Camac came home with me 'to smoke a cigar.'"

Mr. Swift makes this entry *à propos* of the second assembly.

"1850, January 16th, Wednesday, 2d Assembly at the Musical Fund. I went with Genl. T. Cadwalder; home at 2 A. M. (17); a large and brilliant party."

Of the same ball, Mr. Lewis writes:

January 17th, 1850. "Last night the second Assembly came off at Musical Fund Hall. It was the most magnificent Ball ever given in this city. The room was decorated with real flowers, Breiter's Band was engaged and there were a great number of strangers from Boston, New York and Baltimore. I was introduced to Miss Lawrence of New York. The supper was very good. After the Ball, Norris, Cox, Camac and Willing went with Shober & I to our Club, where we smoked a cigar."

Mr. Swift, who was one of the managers, barely notes the third Ball as follows:

"1850, April 3rd, Wednesday, 3rd Assembly."

But Mr. Lewis, who was a younger man, and fond of dancing, had more to say of the dance than Mr. Swift. He writes:

April 4th, 1850. "Last night was held the last Assembly Ball at Musical Fund Hall. The room was magnificently decorated with natural flowers. It was rather slim in attendance, but I danced with Miss McKee, Miss Cochran, Miss Snelling, Miss McKnight, etc. Had Breiter's Band who played very well. This ball, like the last of last year, was not well attended owing to a number of deaths which prevented 35 or 40 ladies from being present."

As the city grew in population and the means of communication improved, other forms of entertainment grew up. As a result a smaller number of "Assembly" dances gradually came to be given in any one season. Thus, during the winter of 1849-50, we have learnt from the journals of Joseph Swift, a manager, and Mr. Lewis, that three Assemblies were held in Musical Fund Hall, a building still standing at the southwest corner of Eighth and Locust Street. That was just one-third of the number given one hundred and one years earlier.

The following letter, written in the autumn of 1850, tells something of the management for the

No. 30. South 5<sup>th</sup> Street

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that at a meeting of the Board of Managers of the Philadelphia Assemblies held last evening, you were unanimously elected a member of the Board.

The next meeting will be held at the Office of Peter McCall Esq. tomorrow evening at 6 o'clock.

The favour of an answer is requested.

By order of the Board

W. H. Swift Esq.

Joseph Swift Esq.

Secretary

Nov. 12. 1850.

season of 1850-51 and it is of interest to note that all three of the surnames appearing in the letter are to be found in the first list of subscribers and one also among the first board of managers for the season of 1748-49.

“No. 30 South 5th Street.

“DEAR SIR:

“I have the honour to inform you that at a meeting of the Board of Managers of the Philadelphia Assemblies held last evening, you were unanimously elected a member of the Board.

“The next meeting will be held at the office of Peter McCall, Esq., to-morrow evening at 6 o'clock. The favour of an answer is requested.

“By order of the Board

“W. SHIPPEN, JR.

“*Secretary.*

“Joseph Swift, Esq.

“Nov. 12, 1850.”

That letter tells us the names of two of the managers for 1850-51, those of Joseph Swift and Peter McCall. In view of Mr. Lewis's statement, however, that the previous season the managers were elected by a popular vote of the subscribers, it is not certain that William Shippen, Jr., was a

manager. It was more likely that he was the secretary of the meeting of the subscribers that elected the managers. But in any case, as we shall see further on, William Shippen, Jr., was a manager the next season.

## XX.

On July 15th, 1850, the Philadelphia Club, or "The Philadelphia Association and Reading Room," the name under which it was then incorporated, purchased its present home, 1301 Walnut Street, at the northwest corner of Walnut and Thirteenth Streets. The Club bought in 1850 only the house abutting on Walnut Street, known as the Butler property, covering about one-third of the property which it now possesses. The two adjoining properties opening on Thirteenth Street were acquired subsequently. The deed for the Butler house having been made in the first instance to Joseph Swift, on Monday, November 18th, 1850, he deeded the property over to the Philadelphia Association and Reading Room, the deed being witnessed by Edward Shippen, Charles Willing and Peter McCall; and the same day the Club moved from the Hemphill House to its new quarters. During the winter of 1850-51, to celebrate the occupancy



of its new home, the Club gave a dance or ball. It was the first of three notable entertainments to which the Philadelphia society of those days was bidden. They were all three given on successive Thursdays in 1851. The first was given by the Philadelphia Club in its new home; the second of the series of "private Assemblies," as the late Mrs. William P. Tathem, who attended them all three, as Miss Catherine K. Biddle, once spoke of them, was given by Mrs. George Willing in her house in Girard Row, that is one of the houses on the north side of Chestnut Street, between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets, for her grand-daughter, Miss Emily Swift, a debutante who afterwards became Mrs. Thomas Balch; and the third was given by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cadwalader in their house, likewise in Girard Row, for their daughter, Miss Emily Cadwalader, also a debutante, who later became Mrs. William Henry Rawle. At two of those entertainments at least, as well as at the Assemblies themselves, the musicians and the waiters were negroes.

In the early fifties, Mr. and Mrs. Horace Binney gave a dance in their house on South Fourth Street. It stood on ground upon which the Pennsylvania Railroad subsequently built its offices, between the

house of J. R. Ingersoll at the corner of Fourth Street and Willing's Alley to the north and the house of John Sargent to the south. As the dance was closing a young lady, who is still living, in coming down the stairs, saw Mr. and Mrs. Binney waltzing in the parlor.

The invitation card of Miss Newman,<sup>52</sup> for the winter of 1852-53, the season of her debut, tells who were the Assembly managers that winter.

“ASSEMBLIES.

“The Honor of Miss Newman's

“Company is requested for the Season.

“Thomas Cadwalader, )	( Lewis A. Scott
Henry Ralston, )	( Henry E. Drayton
Peter McCall )	( William Shippen, Jr.
Charles Henry Fisher )	( Winthrop Sargent.”

Miss Newman made her debut in the winter of 1852-53 and married in June, 1853, Dr. Charles Carter, of Virginia.

XXI.

Mrs. Thomas Balch has told the writer that Dr. Alexander Wilcocks was a manager one season in the fifties, the last time they were given before

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<sup>52</sup> Communicated by her daughter, Mrs. George McCall.

the Civil War, and he showed her at one of the balls that season, in the early part of the evening, all over the hall, including the arrangements for supper. The late Dr. Richard A. Cleemann, who was twice a manager after the Civil War, likewise both told and wrote the author that Dr. Wilcocks was a manager the last year the Assemblies were given in the fifties. So it would seem that the balls were given in the winter of 1853-54, and possibly even later in the fifties. In those days the musicians were darkies, and so likewise the waiters and the cooks. And the food our elders all tell us was delicious. It was served at a long buffet table, an idea which had come originally from France in the time of the First Empire. It was only after the Civil War that white musicians were employed, and not until 1905 did the darky cooking and waiting give way to white cooking and waiting.

Dr. Alexander Wilcocks and his two sisters lived with their uncle, Joseph R. Ingersoll, in a handsome double house at the corner of Fourth Street and Willing's Alley. One of the sisters married Harry McCall, the other sister, Mary Wilcocks, after her uncle's death, married Kirk Wells, who came from New England. Dr. Cleemann who was

a manager after the war, was one of twin brothers who, until the doctor shaved his beard, were often mistaken for one another. Thus when they were boys, during a visit one Saturday afternoon to some friends at the country place of the latter on the Delaware River, one of the twins, who was dressed in white, tumbled into the mud and when it was time to leave, the brother whose suit was unsoiled and also white, went up to the host and hostess twice, first to say good-bye for himself and the second time for his brother, without the trick being detected. On another occasion at a party given by Mrs. Benjamin Rush at her house on Chestnut Street, when one of the Cleemann twins, who had been there some time came up to bid her good-bye, she said in her most charming manner: "I am so sorry you are going so soon," mistaking him for his brother who had come but a few minutes before. And in more recent years, at a dinner party at which the doctor was dining, a stranger, to the silent amusement of all present asked Dr. Cleemann whether he was younger or older than his brother, Ludovic Cleemann. The father of the Cleemanns had come to Philadelphia from the Lithuanian Provinces of Russia, where their grand-father, a Lutheran clergyman, had held

the prevotship of a large number of churches. Every one, whether old or young, who knew Dr. Cleemann, will surely testify to the doctor's soft, charming manners. It was William of Wykeham, founder of New College, Oxford, and Winchester School, who said: "Manners myketh man." And Richard Cleemann, who was a good physician, in his manners showed in every respect that he was a thoroughbred as well as, in the best sense of the word, a man of the world.

In the later fifties the Assemblies apparently were discontinued. But a Bachelors's Ball was given several seasons, perhaps every year until the war. The late Travis Cochran told the writer such a ball was held in 1857.

In looking over the history of the Assemblies it is to be noted that the managers have some times been chosen by a vote of the subscribers, and some times they have been a self appointing body. Thus in colonial days, as it is proved by the second rule of the Assembly rules of 1748-49, the managers were chosen by a majority vote of the subscribers. On the contrary, from the note written about 1829-30 by Joshua Francis Fisher to James Rush,<sup>53</sup> it is

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<sup>53</sup> See *ante* page 113.

known that in those times the managers were a self-perpetuating body. A century after the Assemblies began, however, Mr. Lewis in his journal tells us, October 24th, 1849, that the Assembly managers were elected by a popular vote of the subscribers for the season of 1849-50. And the letter written on November 12th, 1850, by William Shippen, Jr., to Joseph Swift, apprising the latter of his election for the winter of 1850-51 as a manager, would seem to point, taken in conjunction with Mr. Lewis's statement, also to a popular election as the manner of choosing managers for the season of 1850-51. Again in later years the managers have chosen their successors.

## XXII.

In the early days of Philadelphia, the important citizens of the town lived on the streets running north and south that were close to the river. Thus Edward Shippen's house was close to Dock Creek, now Dock Street. A picture, showing the Port of Philadelphia in 1720, painted by Peter Cooper, hangs in the Library Company of Philadelphia on Locust Street and shows the location of the homes of a number of leading Philadelphians of that day all close to the river. As time passed, the

notable people of the town all lived south of Market Street and began to move westward. Thus South Third Street became the most fashionable part of the town, though Pine Street was also the home of some important personages. For example, the Rev. Doctor Robert Blackwell, who served as surgeon to the First Pennsylvania Line at Valley Forge and was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society, January 16th, 1784, lived in a house which still stands on the south side of Pine Street between Second and Third Streets. Its red and black brick front stands out conspicuously and the onlooker cannot mistake it. Indeed, it is the finest example of a private dwelling of colonial Philadelphia that has come down to us. It was built originally about 1750 by Mayor Stamper. In Doctor Blackwell's day the garden extended westward all the way to Third Street. Likewise the Powell House still stands on the west side of South Third Street between Willing's Alley and Spruce Street. Then later on, South Fourth Street gained prestige as the abode of the social world. After that Chestnut Street, moving further and further west almost up to Broad, became the most fashionable street of the town. Gradually Chestnut Street

ceded the *première* position to Walnut Street which in turn has been supplanted by Spruce Street. In the last few decades many people have moved out beyond the built up portions of the town, northward and westward, thereby dividing the fashionable quarters of the city into a city quarter strictly speaking and one or more other quarters in semi-rural surroundings, partly within and partly without the legal limits of the town. In all the migrations of the fashionable people of Philadelphia, however, so far as the old city is concerned, they have chosen, except at the beginning when the river front was considered the most desirable quarter, to live south of Market Street. And so to the quarter of the town lying between the Delaware and the Schuylkill Rivers and Chestnut and Pine Streets, a name designating what was in times passed the distinctive aristocratic portion of the most beautiful city in the world may appropriately be applied, that of *Quartier Saint Germain*.

### XXIII.

During the four years of the Civil War, from 1861 to 1865, when the Union was fighting for its existence as one great Nation, and the tide of battle, in the most memorable battle of the



war, rolled close to Philadelphia, the Assemblies as well as the balls of the Bachelors were entirely discontinued. But after the close of that great contest when the long struggle between the States had ceased and peace once more reigned in the land, the Assemblies were revived in the winter of 1865-66 at the American Academy of Music at Broad and Locust Streets. That plain but substantial building was built during the fifties, largely through the energy of George S. Pepper and Mr. Budd; and within its walls many great singers, Brignoli, Gazziniga, Patti, Campanini, Materna, Lehmann, Emil Fischer and others have regaled Philadelphia with much notable and splendid opera ranging from Traviata (with which the house was opened), Martha, and Faust to the Ring of the Nibelungen and the Meistersinger von Nürnberg.

The Academy of Music is so admirable to sing or speak in, that it has ranked *third* among the opera houses and other buildings of the world noted for their acoustic properties, in that respect coming immediately after the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City and La Scala Theater in Milan.

From the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Churchman, that belonged to their son, the late William

Churchman, we learn that three Assemblies were given in 1866. The patronesses, six in number, were Mrs. Hartman Kuhn, Mrs. Harry McCall, Mrs. Charles Macalester, Jr., Mrs. Francis Peters, Mrs. George Blight, and Mrs. Edward Morrell. The managers were Dr. Wilcocks, who was a member before the Civil War, William Henry Rawle, Edward Coles, Jr., Colonel Charles E. Cadwalader, William Platt Pepper and C. Julian Hare. The number of subscribers was limited to three hundred and fifty. Those were individual subscriptions. As the fifty-nine subscriptions for the first season of 1748-49 included for the subscribers who were married invitations for the immediate members of their families, a custom that was kept up until the middle of the nineteenth century, it may be inferred that at the first Assemblies from a hundred and twenty-five up to possibly two hundred individuals were invited to attend. And so the Assemblies immediately after the Civil War were not very much larger than the Assemblies of 1748-49. The subscription was placed at twelve dollars for three balls that were to be given in the Foyer of the Academy of Music on Monday, January 15th, Tuesday, January 30th, and Thursday, February 8th. However, in 1870 only two balls were given; the

first on Friday January 21st, and the last on Tuesday, March 1st. Supper was served at eleven and the cotillion began at midnight.

A feature of the balls at the Academy until about 1897 were the arrangements for supper, which was served on a very long table in the large entrance corridor immediately below the Foyer. Seated on the steps of the two stairs leading up from this corridor to the galleries above were all the girls and young married women. They were served by their supper partners, and looking down from their places of vantage made a beautiful picture to look upon. The patronesses were seated at a small table especially provided for them. Finally, more small tables were introduced for the older matrons. In 1897, the Assembly, having grown very much in numbers, the stage of the Academy and the parquet, which were floored over for the occasion, were used for the supper. But this did not enlarge the dancing floor, which was bound by the size of the Foyer.

When first revived after the Civil War three balls were given each season, but soon the number was decreased to only two. At the Academy of Music they were given with unvarying regularity for almost thirty years, including the winter of

1903-04. In the winter of 1904-05, owing to the increase in the number of subscribers, because of the accretions from the growing up of sons and daughters of subscribers, and the gradual addition of many new families to the subscription list, the pressing need of a greater amount of square inches, caused the balls to be transferred to the handsome and larger ball room of the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, also on South Broad Street. Since that time two balls have been given each year at the Bellevue, except that in the winter of 1914-15, owing to the breaking out of The Great War, but one Assembly was given.

When the Assemblies were given at the Academy of Music, they closed at three o'clock in the morning, doubtless because that was the regulation hour for the closing of the Academy. When they were removed to the Bellevue at first they lasted until five, but after two or three years the Managers made it a rule that they should stop promptly at four. In glancing over the history of these famous entertainments, it becomes apparent that the hour at which the balls have begun has moved slowly but surely nearer and nearer to the day after that for which the invitations were extended, until they now open at the same

hour at which Cinderella lost her fur<sup>54</sup> slipper when she was forced by the decree of the fairy God-mother to leave the Prince's ball.

Since the Civil War times, the balls, keeping pace with the growing city, have grown and grown, as more and more people have sought the "patent of nobility" that the right to subscribe to them is popularly supposed to accord in Philadelphia, until, as compared with the old Assemblies when

<sup>54</sup> The modern popular mistaken version of Cinderella's tale, that, in her hurried flight from the Prince's ball after the midnight hour had struck, she dropped on the Palace stairs a glass slipper instead of one of fur, is doubtless due to the similarity of pronunciation of the two French words *verre* and *vair*. The former word, *verre*, means glass. Of the latter word, *vair*, which means a certain kind of fur, Littré, in his celebrated *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française* (Paris, 1873), says: "Vair; Anciennement, fourrure de la peau d'une espèce d'écureuil, du même nom, qui était colombine par-dessus et blanc par-dessous: c'est ce qu'on nomme aujourd'hui petit gris. Le roi, deux fois par an, distribuait des manteaux rouges fourrés d'hermine ou de menu vair aux chevaliers qu'il retenait auprès de sa personne.

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"Rem. C'est parce qu'on n'a pas compris ce mot maintenant peu usité qu'on a imprimé dans plusieurs éditions du conte de Cendrillon souliers de verre (ce qui est absurde), au lieu de souliers de vair, c'est-à-dire souliers fourrés de vair."

Those who do not read French, will find something interesting on this point in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in the article à *propos* of Cinderella.

John Swift, John Inglis, John Wallace and Lynford Lardner sent out the invitations for the small dances they managed, the present balls, by comparison, have assumed "continental proportions."

#### XXIV.

The foregoing brief account of the Assembly Balls of the past, together with more or less mention of notable Philadelphians of earlier days, many of whom in the hurry and bustle of the every day life of the present are all but forgotten, has suggested that this book might well be ended with some lines from a sonnet of Charles Lamb, which the present writer quoted in a paper he read before the American Philosophical Society on April 18th, 1902, *à propos* of the *First Assembly Account Book*. The poet says:

" 'Tis man's worst deed  
To let the things that have been run to waste,  
And in the unmeaning present sink the past:  
In whose dim glass even now I faintly read  
Old buried forms and faces long ago."









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