

# John Dickinson Group Elects

J. E. F.  
Sept. 9, 1952

## Justice J. M. Tunnell, Jr., Heads Newly Organized Friends of Old Mansion

The recently organized Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, a society dedicated to familiarizing Delawareans with the life of Dickinson, and promoting interest in his former home near Dover, have elected Justice James M. Tunnell, Jr., of Georgetown as president.

Justice Tunnell, associate on the Supreme Court of Delaware, was elected at a recent meeting of the organization in Legislative Hall, Dover. Other officers are:

Mrs. Charles L. Reese, Jr., Wilmington, and former Chancellor W. W. Harrington, Dover, vice presidents; Mrs. William A. Worth, Wilmington, secretary-treasurer.

The directors are: Theodore Marvin, Kennett Square; Mrs. George R. Miller, Jr., Frederica; Mrs. Laurence N. Thomas, Wilmington, and Gov. Elbert N. Carvel, ex-officio, Laurel.

Membership in the new society is open to anyone interested in its objectives. All donors to the fund now being conducted by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Delaware for the purchase of the John Dickinson mansion automatically become members of the society. Mrs. Reese is chairman of the historic activities committee of the Colonial Dames which is in charge of the fund.

## \$1,546 Donated for Purchase Of John Dickinson's Silver

A total of \$1,546 has been contributed or pledged toward the purchase of John Dickinson's silver coffee pot it was announced today by Mrs. William A. Worth of Greenville, Del., who is treasurer of the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc., and is also serving as treasurer of the fund raising drive.

The largest portion of the fund has been contributed by friends of the late John Marshall Phillips, in memory of the director of the Winterthur Museum and director of the Yale Art Museum, who died this month.

Mrs. Worth said one contributor, who wishes to remain anonymous, pledged a sufficient sum to purchase John Dickinson's silver tray, for which funds are also being sought.

Another donor, Mrs. Edna T. Franklin, has offered to contribute a pair of Philadelphia tea tongs to accompany the silver pot and tray when they are acquired for the John Dickinson Mansion.

*J. E. E., May 27, 1953*

Dr. and Mrs. H. Clay Reed of Newark have presented to the mansion a rare book entitled "Sketch

See SILVER—Page 4, Col. 6

## Silver

(Continued From Page One)

of the Finances of the United States" by Albert Gallatin. The book, published in New York in 1796, has the signature "John Dickinson, 1797" inscribed on the title page.

The fund raising group has until July 1 to raise the \$2,500 needed to purchase the silver coffee pot and the \$350 required to buy the silver tray. Both are in the hands of a New York dealer.

Shortly after the project was announced, Mr. Phillips died, and a number of his friends decided that contributions to the purchase fund would be an appropriate way to honor his memory since he was the foremost authority on American silver and had been closely associated with this area during most of his lifetime.

M E M B E R S H I P   A P P L I C A T I O N

FRIENDS OF THE JOHN DICKINSON MANSION, INCORPORATED



*Formed to aid in the restoration, maintenance, and extension of public interest in the John Dickinson Mansion.*

MRS. WILLIAM A. WORTH  
Secretary - Treasurer  
Greenville, Delaware

PLEASE ENROLL ME AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE JOHN DICKINSON MANSION.

ENCLOSED IS \$2.00 FOR THIS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP.

YOURS VERY TRULY,

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

# OLD GUNSTON HALL

## George Mason's Eighteenth Century Home Has Been Restored and Reopened

By BESS FURMAN

WASHINGTON—Those who enjoy stepping back into the historic past will find an authentic gem in old Gunston Hall, home of George Mason, author of the Bill of Rights. This plantation house on the Potomac River has reopened after being closed for almost a year for restoration to the period in which it was built, 1755 to 1758.

Room-by-room research preceded its restoration under the direction of Fiske Kimball of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, authority on early American architecture, and his assistant, Erlung H. Peterson.

From this capital city, the route to Gunston Hall is via the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway to Alexandria, Va., then out U. S. 1 until it meets State Route 242, which leads to Gunston. Old Pohick Church, attended by George Washington, is a handy milestone en route. Gunston lies about three miles beyond Pohick.

The \$75,000 just put into the Gunston Hall restoration is part of a \$230,000 project undertaken by the National Society of Colonial Dames, permanent custodians, and the state of Virginia, to which it was deeded in 1933 by its former owner, the late Louis Hertle.

Mr. Hertle bought Gunston Hall in 1912 and lived there until his death in September, 1949. He retained a life tenancy when he gave the property to the state, so not until after Mr. Hertle's death were the restoration plans started.

### Modern Additions

The Colonial Dames already have built a \$30,000 modern frame structure for the superintendent, and brick comfort stations. All plumbing has been taken out of Gunston Hall, as not appropriate to the period in which it was built, and the only electric facility left in the mansion is an outlet near the fireplace for emergency purposes. There is a new and modern heating system, though, for Gunston Hall is open for gate receipts every day of the year except Christmas.

Future building plans include the rebuilding of two flanking dependencies which originally stood twenty feet north of the building. One is to be used as a museum for relics of the Mason period, the

other as the superintendent's office and a souvenir shop.

Partitions were returned to original locations in the Gunston Hall restoration. A small stair leading into the library was removed when research revealed that it had been added years after the original construction. The main stairway, which had been painted white, was found to have been walnut. All paint was removed, leaving the original walnut balusters and step ends.

### Original Marble Mantel

In the most dramatic room of Gunston Hall, the Palladium Room overlooking the Potomac, deep red satin damask has replaced the pine paneling used while Mr. Hertle lived there. The original statuary marble mantel (which has been pronounced of English origin, 1760) was returned to Gunston Hall by its owner. It is the only known English example of that date and style in this country.

The entire first floor is well furnished and the second floor partly furnished in antiques of the eighteenth century, some of which actually belonged to George Mason. Notable is the table on which George Mason is said to have written the Bill of Rights. It is on loan from the Virginia Historical Society. On the walls are many of the portraits of the Mason family, including two of George Mason and his wife which are copies of the original paintings by Hesselius. The materials for curtains, wall coverings and upholstery of some of the furniture was donated by Franco Scalamandre of the Scalamandre Museum of Textiles in New York, which also furnished the documentary prints used in the redecoration of the White House.

New entrances were made at both east and west sides of the house, the east stoop and its surrounding garden taking the place of a modern kitchen wing which had been built by Mr. Hertle, and which was razed.

The pride of Gunston Hall is its boxwood, more than 200 years old and eleven feet high, which makes an archway leading down into the flat gardens. The gardens have been restored by the Garden Club of Virginia under the direction of Alden Hopkins, landscape architect of Williamsburg.

April 30, 1952

Mrs. C. L. Reese, Jr.  
Old Kennett Road  
Wilmington, Delaware

Dear Mrs. Reese:

Following our conversation on Monday evening, I communicated with Mrs. Ridgely early on Tuesday, and the meeting of our Commission has been called for Thursday afternoon, May 8, at 2:00 p.m., for the sole purpose of considering and acting on the proposal contained in the draft you submitted as Chairman of the Historic Activities Committee.

I do not see anything objectionable in this draft and I ask that you please submit it in writing to me for consideration by the Commission but please omit the acceptance that had been typed in below your signature and title, as our Commission will wish to indicate its acceptance in another form. You can readily understand that our Commission can not take formal action on a draft of a letter.

If you will send us this letter with the amounts filled in, the spaces of the second paragraph, we can take definite action at that time.

If you have other thoughts or desires requiring our action, please communicate with me in advance of this meeting.

Mrs. C. L. Reese, Jr.

April 30, 1952

Dear Mr. Reese: I am in advance of this meeting.

It is a great pleasure to hear of the wonderful work you and your Committee have done! We hope that we will soon be able to draw these details to a conclusion and let you forget about your fund-raising campaign for awhile. With best regards, I am,

Cordially yours,

State Archivist

I do not see any objection in this regard and I have referred the matter to the Committee. I am sure that you will be satisfied with the results of the meeting on Monday evening. I am sure that you will be satisfied with the results of the meeting on Monday evening.

I do not see any objection in this regard and I have referred the matter to the Committee. I am sure that you will be satisfied with the results of the meeting on Monday evening. I am sure that you will be satisfied with the results of the meeting on Monday evening.

Mrs. C. L. Reese, Jr.  
One Kennerly Road  
Mrs. C. L. Reese, Jr.

APR 30 1952

MRS. CHARLES M. LEVIS  
1401 DELAWARE AVENUE  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr. de Valangis -

The letter to the Commission will go  
off this morning after I have signed it at  
Ed. Steele's office -

I have learned that our treasurer is  
going away Friday, so if a definite decision  
is made by the Commission, would you mind  
telephoning me after the meeting? Tel-45491 -  
Then I can make sure that the check can be  
handled by someone else -

What I want now is to find \$5,000.  
under a rock!

Best regards -

Sincerely,  
Harriet E. Peese

1952

May 9 1952

Mrs. Charles L. Reese, Jr.  
Chairman  
Historic Activities Committee  
National Society of the  
Colonial Dames in the State of Delaware  
Old Kennett Road  
Wilmington, Delaware

COLORED COPY

Dear Mrs. Reese: At a special meeting of our Commission held May 8 for the consideration of your letter of May 6, I am pleased to tell you that a motion was presented and properly passed authorizing the officers of the Public Archives Commission to enter into a trust agreement with your Committee, which will embody the provisions set forth in your letter of that date. It was also agreed that the Commission accept the money and deposit it in the Trust Fund in accordance with the purposes embodied in the letter of May 6. David F. Anderson, Esq., Secretary of our Commission, will, in consultation with E. D. Steel, Jr., Esq., prepare the trust agreement embodying essentially the same language contained in your letter of May 6. In accordance with our telephone conversation of the late afternoon of May 8, we will expect to receive checks and other disbursements from the Treasurer of your Committee made to the order of the Public Archives Commission. These checks

Mrs. Charles L. Reese, Jr. May 9, 1952  
will be deposited with the State Treasurer in the Trust Fund of  
this Commission in accordance with the provisions of chapter 265,  
volume 48 of the Laws of Delaware.

As you indicated to me in the same telephone conversation,  
I am communicating with the President of the University of Delaware,  
Board of Directors of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum  
and the President of the Historical Society of Delaware asking them  
to appoint a member of the Advisory Committee as soon as possible.  
Will you please attend to having a member appointed from the Friends  
of the John Dickinson Mansion Society. With these four appointments  
we can then arrange to have the three other appointments made. I  
explained to you the urgency of these appointments if this Advisory  
Committee is to be consulted regarding the purchase of the land.  
It seems to me that their advice would be valuable in this instance.

We are very much pleased that the preservation of the  
John Dickinson Mansion is becoming an actuality and you and the  
members of your Committee can not be given too much praise for  
your efforts.

Charles L. Reese, Jr.

Cordially yours,

State Archivist

LdeV:csa

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

J.E.E.

Aug. 28, 1953

## Man About Town

**L**ISTEN TO State Archivist Leon DeValinger for a while on the subject of John Dickinson, and you're likely to come away convinced, as Mr. DeValinger is, that the Revolutionary War figure has had considerably less fame than was his due.

Dickinson, although he opposed the war, was one of the first two members of the Continental Congress to take up arms. He drafted enough of the important documents of the period to earn the title "Penman of the Revolution." And he was the moving force in producing the constitutional revision in Delaware's government, after that war, which is still largely in force today.

Born in the first half of the 18th Century, Dickinson grew up at the home in Kent County now being restored under the guidance of Mr. DeValinger and the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc.

Dickinson's father sent him, with his younger brother, to read law with the King's Attorney in Philadelphia, at that time the most important legal post in the colonies. Later he went to London and studied for four years at the Middle Temple Bar.

Returning to Philadelphia in 1758, he set up in practice. He seems, Mr. DeValinger says, to have been a rather indifferent lawyer, but much of his attention was directed to pamphleteering in behalf of colonial rights which were then, in his opinion, being infringed by the mother country.

In 1760, after the death of his father, Dickinson returned to the Kent County property, and served a term in the Legislature. He was married to Mary Norris, a Philadelphia heiress, in 1770.

Dickinson was a delegate to the Stamp Act Congress and the First and Second Continental Congresses, where he drafted the petitions to the English government for a redress of

grievances and wrote the first national anthem, called the "Liberty Song."

At the time of the Declaration of Independence, however, he was leader of the party which favored peaceful negotiations and the avoidance of violence if possible. The warlike party was victorious, and Dickinson became the object of violent abuse for Toryism in Philadelphia.

Nevertheless, he formed a militia company, and was one of the only two delegates to the Congress who took the field at once against the British in New Jersey. When the enlistment time of his militiamen expired and the company was disbanded, he returned to Delaware and enlisted in a company there as a private. Later he was made brigadier general and placed in charge of procurement of materiel in the peninsula.

Later, Dickinson was placed in charge of drafting the Articles of Confederation. Although he was virtually their author, he did not hesitate to discard them some years afterward when it became apparent that they were unworkable as a frame of government.

At the constitutional convention in 1787, Dickinson strongly defended the rights of the smaller states, and it was largely through his efforts that each state, regardless of size, was given two senators in Congress, and that Delaware became the first state to ratify the new Constitution.

Dickinson was elected Governor of Delaware and then governor of Pennsylvania in the early 1780s. He also was author of the Constitution of Delaware.

In spite of this record, Dickinson's name in Delaware seems to have been largely eclipsed by that of Caesar Rodney and some other notables. Mr. DeValinger thinks it's unjust, and after hearing Dickinson's story, we're inclined to agree with him.

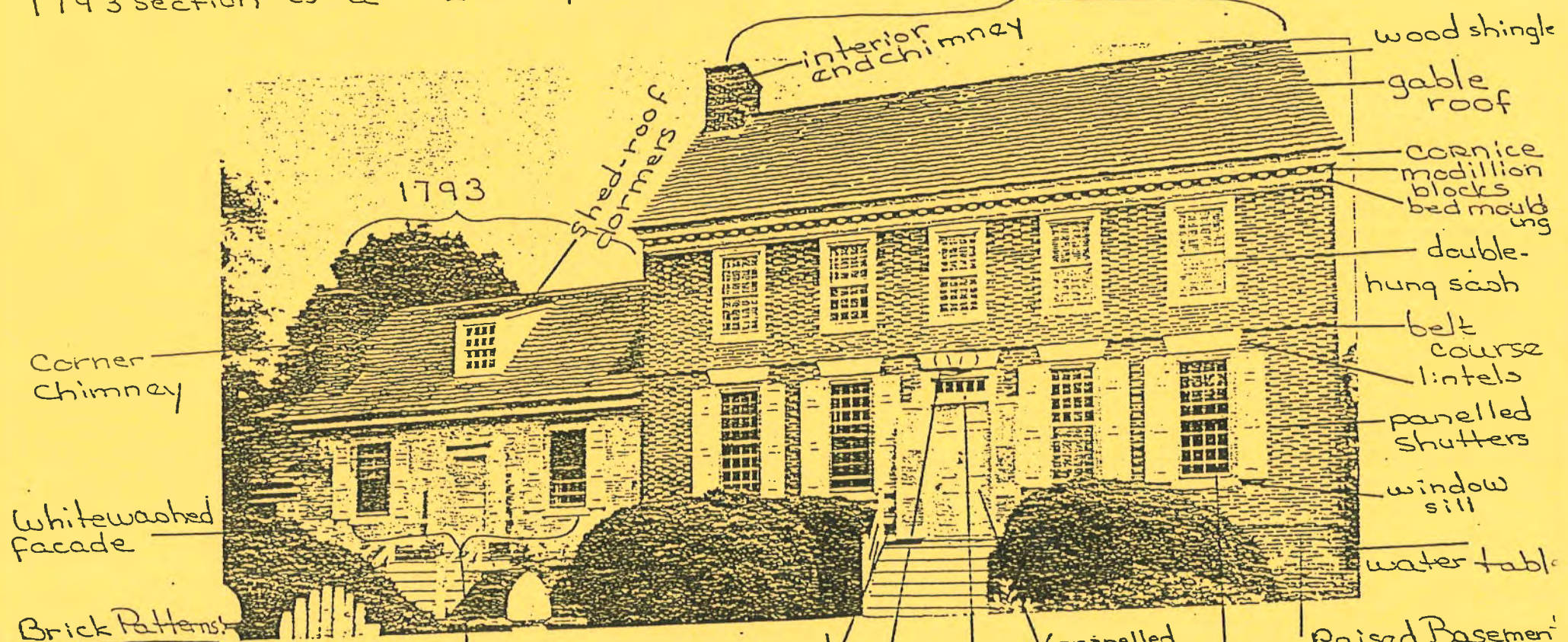
UF: John Dickinson

# Architectural Details - Exterior of Dickinson Mansion

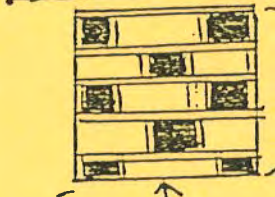
DOVER, DEL.

1740 section is a 2 1/2 story building.  
1793 section is a 1 1/2 story building.

Built 1740. Roofline modified - 1804

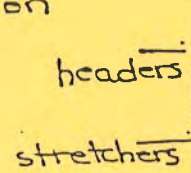


Whitewashed facade



(facade of Dickinson Mansion)

3-bay facade (3 openings on facade)



Common Bond Pattern (rear wall of Dickinson Mansion)

(COPY)

Law Offices  
Of  
MORRIS, STEEL, NICHOLS & ARSHT  
Du Pont Building  
Wilmington 41, Delaware

April 16, 1952

George Fisher, Esq.  
Dover  
Delaware

Dear George:

Mrs. C. L. Reese, Jr., has advised me that she has spoken to you on one or more occasions concerning the possibility of the Colonial Dames purchasing the John Dickinson Mansion and giving it to the State of Delaware in the care of the Archives Commission for repair and ultimate restoration.

It has occurred to me that before any proposal is made by the Colonial Dames to the Commission it should be in such form as will meet with the approval of the Commission. With this end in view I am enclosing a draft of a proposal which I have prepared for the Colonial Dames to send to the Commission. I should appreciate it if you will review the enclosure at your convenience and advise me whether if it is sent to the Commission you will recommend its approval. If you have any suggestions concerning the form or the substance of the proposal, I wish you would telephone me collect so that we can clear the matter at the earliest possible time.

From the standpoint of the Commission, does it make any difference whether the present owner of the Mansion conveys title directly to the Commission or whether title is conveyed to the Colonial Dames and by it reconveyed to the Commission? I am inclined to believe that I prefer the latter procedure if this is acceptable to you.

Sincerely yours,

EDS:mw

E. D. STEEL, JR.

Enclosure

(COPY)

April 25, 1952

Edwin D. Steel, Jr., Esq.,  
duPont Building,  
Wilmington 41, Delaware.

Dear Ed:

I received your letter of April 24 enclosing copy of a letter addressed to Mrs. Henry Ridgely, President of the Public Archives Commission, concerning the John Dickinson Mansion.

I thought perhaps a meeting of the Commission would be called to consider the proposals contained in the letter but I have not received any notice of such a meeting. I cannot speak for the whole Commission but so far as I am concerned I think the property should be deeded to the Colonial Dames and after enough money has been collected to make the necessary repairs it should be conveyed to The State of Delaware, In Trust as you suggest, either in the deed or by a separate agreement. Personally I think a separate agreement would be sufficient. The other proposals are satisfactory to me.

Sincerely yours,

GMF:mhm

(COPY)

Mrs. Henry Ridgley, President  
Public Archives Commission  
Dover, Delaware

My dear Mrs. Ridgley:

For the past three months a committee of our Society has been engaged in raising a fund for the purchase and preservation of the John Dickinson Mansion and approximately ten acres contiguous thereto near Dover, with the end in view of giving it to the State of Delaware in the custody of the Archives Commission.

The purchase price of the Mansion will be \$15,500. It is estimated that by the expenditure of an additional \$9,500 the Mansion can be made water-tight. The restoration itself will, of course, entail the expenditure of a substantial additional amount. To date we have in hand \$\_\_\_\_\_ and pledges believed to be readily collectible of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

On April 3 a meeting of the contributors and of the Historic Activities Committee of the Society was held, at which time it was decided that the Archives Commission should be informed of our plans and the approval of the Commission requested. It was likewise decided that a society should be formed to be called the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion which would help to keep alive the interest in the Mansion and to spread knowledge of John Dickinson and his importance to the State and the Nation.

Subject to the approval of the Archives Commission, we propose:

1. To purchase the Mansion and to make payment therefor in full. The deed obtained from the present owner would either name the State as the grantee or, if it seemed desirable from a legal standpoint, the Society itself might obtain title to the property in the first instance and then reconvey it to the State.

2. To turn over to the State, simultaneously with the conveyance of the Mansion, such funds as the Society then has in hand so that repairs can be begun at once.

3. To turn over to the State for the repair of the Mansion such additional funds as are from time to time collected by the Society. It is the intention of the Society to continue with the solicitation of funds until an aggregate of \$25,000 has been raised, including the amount thus far collected and pledged.

4. To provide either in the deed to the State, or by a separate agreement of trust to be entered into with the State, that:

(a) The Mansion shall be held by the State in trust in perpetuity, and all money currently or subsequently donated to the State for the repair, restoration and maintenance of the Mansion shall likewise be held in trust and expended for those purposes.

(b) In the repair, restoration, maintenance and utilization of the Mansion, the Archives Commission shall consult and advise with an advisory committee of seven persons consisting of one person appointed by each of the following: the President of the University of Delaware, the Board of Directors of the Winterthur Museum, the Historical Society of Delaware and the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion Society, and three persons appointed by, or appointed or selected in such manner as the aforementioned four persons shall determine.

Won't you kindly advise us as promptly as possible whether you are willing to accept title to the Mansion and to the monies referred to, upon the foregoing terms.

Very sincerely yours,

Chairman  
HISTORIC ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

If you are willing to accept title to the Mansion and to accept the funds referred to upon the foregoing terms and conditions, won't you kindly so indicate by signing the attached copy of this letter.

PUBLIC ARCHIVES COMMISSION

By \_\_\_\_\_  
President

COPY

P. O. Box 710  
Dover, Delaware

May 27, 1952

Mr. Harold Donaldson Eberlein  
2201 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Eberlein:

At our meeting on Sunday I caught glimpses of you from time to time but you were either engaged or I was busy with some of the local details so that I did not have an opportunity to talk with you. I remember on a previous visit to Dover when you brought Charles Peterson with you to see the Dickinson House that you described in detail to him the unusual architectural features of the windows of that House. I am hoping that you still remember those details and will send me a note of what you said, as we would like to preserve this important information pertaining to the House.

We will soon begin planning our restoration and any other thoughts which you may send us regarding this project would be most helpful, I assure you.

Cordially yours,

Director

Ldev:csa

COPY

JAMES H. HUGHES III  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
DOVER, DELAWARE

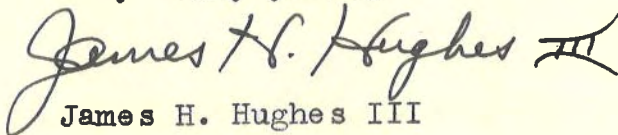
May 28, 1952

Mrs. C. L. Reese, Jr.  
P. O. Box 1086  
Wilmington, Delaware

Dear Mrs. Reese:

Because of my Father's illness he is not able to attend to the affairs of the Kent County Bar Association. I am referring your letter of May 27 to Mr. John B. Hutton, our Vice-President and asking him to call a meeting to consider a gift or contribution to the Dickinson Mansion Fund.

Very truly yours,

  
James H. Hughes III

JHH:jw

Grantor: National Bank of Germantown & Trust Co., Phila.,  
Executor & Trustee under will of Marie Dickinson  
Logan. (Died Feb. 12, 1939)

Grantee: Chas. L. Terry, Jr.

All that certain farm or tract of land situated in  
St. Jones Neck in East Dover Hundred ... on the road from  
Dover to the Delaware Bay at Kitts Hummock, bounded by lands  
formerly of John J. Connors ( & others) ... containing about  
225 acres besides the marsh; ...

Beginning at a stone on the southerly side of the  
hard surface public road leading from Dover to Kitts Hum-  
mock aforesaid being the southwest corner of this tract:  
thence running in a southerly direction six degrees sixteen  
minutes west nine hundred and twenty-eight feet, ... to an-  
other stone in a small ditch, thence running south sixty de-  
grees thirty-three minutes west four hundred and eighty five  
feet; thence down and with the meanderings of a large ditch  
... in a southerly direction until it meets a large gut:  
thence still in a southerly direction until said gut meets  
the St. Jones Creek, approx. a distance of 3600 feet from  
said small ditch: thence in an easterly direction along the  
meanderings of said creek approx. 7218 feet to a point ...  
thence north twelve degrees East 5874 feet to a fence post  
in said hard surface road ... thence north 60 degrees 45  
minutes west along said road 2441 feet to the place of begin-  
ning and containing 342 acres and 123/1000 of an acre ...

... Being land conveyed unto J. Dickinson Sargent ... May 2,  
1872 ...

The improvements thereon being the historical brick mansion of the late Honorable John Dickinson, deceased, stables, barns and other outbuildings ...

Dated Sept. 21, 1940

---

Reel #156 Volume R-16, page 242 Deed dated Aug. 25, 1944

Grantor: Chas. L. Terry, Jr. (\$14,250.)

Grantee: Alford T. Moore

All that land ... situated in St. Jones Neck in East Dover Hundred ... containing about 225 acres besides the marsh. Beginning at a stone on the southerly side of the hard surface public road leading from Dover to Kitts Hummock being the southwest corner of this tract; thence in a southerly direction 6 degrees 16 minutes West 928 feet ... to another stone in a small ditch, thence running south 60 degrees 33 minutes west 485 feet to a corner for this land ... thence down and with the meanderings of a large ditch ... in a southerly direction until it meets a large gut, thence still in a southerly direction until said gut meets the St. Jones Creek approximately a distance of 3600 feet from said small ditch, thence in an easterly direction along the meanderings of said Creek approximately 7218 feet to a point, thence north 12 degrees East 5874 feet to a fence post in said hard surface road ... thence north 60 degrees 45 minutes west along said road 2441 feet to the place of beginning and containing

approximately 342 acres.

---

Reel #175 Grantor: Alford T. Moore  
Grantee: Island Farm Inc.

the family at Jones Neck, and the Maryland-Delaware-Philadelphia life. But I do have one other speech that ought to be given in Delaware, and that is NewCastle Town as the Naval Headquarters, in 1797-1800. It is a good talk, which arises from the Anne Carson material, and if there is some occasion of the Historical Society in the spring -- the late spring -- of next year when they are hard up for a speaker, and want a NewCastle subject, you may think I might be able to fill a need. If so, let me know.

Isn't it too bad Dickinson retreated within himself in his last years, so that he becomes impossible to write about? Oh, well . . .

Affectionate regards,

Faithfully yours,

*Jack Powell*



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Independence National Historical Park Project  
Old Custom House  
420 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

August 5, 1952

Mr. Leon de Valinger, Jr.  
State Archivist of Delaware  
Dover, Delaware

Dear Mr. de Valinger:

We recently were requested by our Regional Office to have our Mr. Charles E. Peterson, Resident Architect, get in touch with you in response to a request which you had addressed to Mr. Elbert Cox, Regional Director, Richmond, Virginia, on July 14 for advisory assistance in connection with the Dickinson House at St. Jones Creek, Kent County, Delaware.

As Mr. Peterson no doubt informed you at the time he and Mr. Lipari of this office visited and consulted with you on July 30, he has now departed for an extended European visit. Before he departed, he brought to my attention the draft of a set of recommendations which he indicated had been reviewed with you on July 30. These recommendations and suggestions which were reported to have been considered and discussed between yourself and Mr. Peterson are noted as follows:

1. The documents you have recently located relative to the fire of 1804 are very valuable in understanding the structure as it now exists. It is quite clear that the upper part of the house built by Judge Samuel Dickinson about 1735 -- with its "peaks" front and back and the third floor rooms with garret above -- was of a distinctly different character. The informally arranged openings in the rear, set in English bond brick walls are definitely pre-Georgian in feeling. The old roof lines seen in the attic of Addition No. 1 are also remains of earlier structures not readily understandable.

2. As I believe you suggested, the most practicable date for restoration is the 1805 period after the fire. The house as it now stands has been little changed since that time. The interior trim is almost complete for that period. It seems quite evident from Dickinson's letter of April 4, 1804, that the house had been completely gutted during the fire.

3. It seems certain that there is not room in the old house for quarters for a custodian and public comfort station facilities too. For that reason I would pull off Addition No. 2, even though it has a

certain picturesqueness. It is so far gone that it cannot be stabilized without considerable expense.

4. As to new buildings: They could be conjectural restorations of old structures now gone. As you point out, in an old but undated document, Dickinson had 25 negroes. That indicates a large farm layout with quite a few outbuildings. If the grounds were systematically trenched, foundations would probably prove the locations of these buildings, which could be reconstructed. Perhaps it would be better in the end to build them in a frankly modern style at a decent distance from the old house, especially since there seems to be no old farm groups to study for precedent.

5. In any case, I would (a) carefully pull off the two porches and cut down the nearby weeds so as to allow an unimpeded view; (b) prime paint all old woodwork now weathering fast; and (c) prepare a careful set of measured drawings as the basis for the restoration studies. A full set of the latter should be made - not only for the guidance of the mechanics but for the approval of the various parties concerned with the promotion. The drawings would show clearly the proposed work on paper so as to avoid misunderstandings which could otherwise develop.

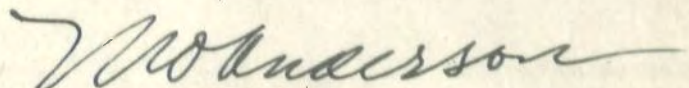
6. The present main cornice, front and rear, is a later replacement and out of character. A new one should be designed, using precedent from nearby houses of the period - in case old photographs or other data are not found. It would seem worth while to conduct an extensive campaign to locate such material.

7. It takes a great deal of time to really study an old building and to understand it. The above recommendations should be evaluated, knowing that the writer has seen the house only twice (very briefly at that) and is not familiar with Delaware architecture.

As has been previously suggested to Senator Frear and yourself by representatives of the National Park Service, it is believed that efforts by you to arrange for the employment of a local architect to carry out restoration work on the house would be the logical procedure to follow. While Mr. Peterson and possibly other members of our staff would be happy to assist with occasional consultation and advice, the pressure of their duties here prevents them from being able to consider spending time in connection with actual on site supervision or carrying out of the plans which he might be of assistance in helping you develop.

Mr. Peterson expects to return about the middle of September and if his advisory services are desired subsequent to that date, it would be appreciated if you would get in touch with us.

Very truly yours



M. O. Anderson  
Superintendent



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Independence National Historical Park Project  
Old Custom House  
420 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

August 5, 1952

Mr. Leon de Valinger, Jr.  
State Archivist of Delaware  
Dover, Delaware

Dear Mr. de Valinger:

We recently were requested by our Regional Office to have our Mr. Charles E. Peterson, Resident Architect, get in touch with you in response to a request which you had addressed to Mr. Elbert Cox, Regional Director, Richmond, Virginia, on July 14 for advisory assistance in connection with the Dickinson House at St. Jones Creek, Kent County, Delaware.

As Mr. Peterson no doubt informed you at the time he and Mr. Lipari of this office visited and consulted with you on July 30, he has now departed for an extended European visit. Before he departed, he brought to my attention the draft of a set of recommendations which he indicated had been reviewed with you on July 30. These recommendations and suggestions which were reported to have been considered and discussed between yourself and Mr. Peterson are noted as follows:

1. The documents you have recently located relative to the fire of 1804 are very valuable in understanding the structure as it now exists. It is quite clear that the upper part of the house built by Judge Samuel Dickinson about 1735 -- with its "peaks" front and back and the third floor rooms with garret above -- was of a distinctly different character. The informally arranged openings in the rear, set in English bond brick walls are definitely pre-Georgian in feeling. The old roof lines seen in the attic of Addition No. 1 are also remains of earlier structures not readily understandable.

2. As I believe you suggested, the most practicable date for restoration is the 1805 period after the fire. The house as it now stands has been little changed since that time. The interior trim is almost complete for that period. It seems quite evident from Dickinson's letter of April 4, 1804, that the house had been completely gutted during the fire.

3. It seems certain that there is not room in the old house for quarters for a custodian and public comfort station facilities too. For that reason I would pull off Addition No. 2, even though it has a

certain picturesqueness. It is so far gone that it cannot be stabilized without considerable expense.

4. As to new buildings: They could be conjectural restorations of old structures now gone. As you point out, in an old but undated document, Dickinson had 25 negroes. That indicates a large farm layout with quite a few outbuildings. If the grounds were systematically trenched, foundations would probably prove the locations of these buildings, which could be reconstructed. Perhaps it would be better in the end to build them in a frankly modern style at a decent distance from the old house, especially since there seems to be no old farm groups to study for precedent.

5. In any case, I would (a) carefully pull off the two porches and cut down the nearby weeds so as to allow an unimpeded view; (b) prime paint all old woodwork now weathering fast; and (c) prepare a careful set of measured drawings as the basis for the restoration studies. A full set of the latter should be made - not only for the guidance of the mechanics but for the approval of the various parties concerned with the promotion. The drawings would show clearly the proposed work on paper so as to avoid misunderstandings which could otherwise develop.

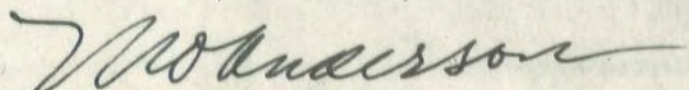
6. The present main cornice, front and rear, is a later replacement and out of character. A new one should be designed, using precedent from nearby houses of the period - in case old photographs or other data are not found. It would seem worth while to conduct an extensive campaign to locate such material.

7. It takes a great deal of time to really study an old building and to understand it. The above recommendations should be evaluated, knowing that the writer has seen the house only twice (very briefly at that) and is not familiar with Delaware architecture.

As has been previously suggested to Senator Frear and yourself by representatives of the National Park Service, it is believed that efforts by you to arrange for the employment of a local architect to carry out restoration work on the house would be the logical procedure to follow. While Mr. Peterson and possibly other members of our staff would be happy to assist with occasional consultation and advice, the pressure of their duties here prevents them from being able to consider spending time in connection with actual on site supervision or carrying out of the plans which he might be of assistance in helping you develop.

Mr. Peterson expects to return about the middle of September and if his advisory services are desired subsequent to that date, it would be appreciated if you would get in touch with us.

Very truly yours



M. O. Anderson  
Superintendent

May 12<sup>th</sup> 1952

OLD KENNETT ROAD • WILMINGTON 99 • DELAWARE

Dear Mr. de Salinger -

What a beautiful, condensed  
and expressed resolution! I'm sure  
you must have written it - The  
members of my committee and  
of the Colonial Games will be as  
pleased as I am -

After our talk Tuesday, I presume  
you will write also to Chief Justice  
Souterland asking him to make  
the 4<sup>th</sup> appointment to the advisory  
committee -

The newspaper notices will come out  
Thurs. or Friday -

Best wishes

Naniet C. Teese -

November 6, 1952

Dr. John H. Powell  
5721 Morris Street  
Philadelphia 44, Pennsylvania

Dear Jack:

I was certainly pleased to receive your letter of November 1 but you were too hard with yourself regarding the delay in replying to my letter. It was only after I had written to you that I learned of your trip to Iowa; consequently I knew you would respond when you returned and there was the opportunity to do so.

I am much obliged to you for examining your notes for information regarding the carpenter's work to the Dickinson Mansion in Jones' Neck. I am also pleased to learn what you know of furnishings that were formerly Dickinson's. Marian Carson has in addition to the rug a lowboy, a pair of brass andirons and possibly something else which I do not recollect.

We certainly appreciate your kind offer to speak before an organization in Wilmington and present the fee to us as a contribution toward the restoration. Not knowing exactly which organization it was, I can not tell you the status of that situation. If it was the Colonial Dames, I can easily inquire about it for you. The Historical Society of Delaware usually has their Annual Meeting in April. I can place before them the suggestion

DL\* JOHN H. POWELL

November 6, 1952

Dr. John H. Powell

-OAGL-  
-2-

November 6, 1952

UNUSUALLY INTERESTING IN YOURS. I CAN BY NO MEANS PREDICT THE REACTION  
that you be their speaker on the subject New Castle Town as the  
you know. THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE HAS BEEN  
Naval Headquarters in 1797-1800. They will not be making a  
decision. IT IS NOT THE SOCIETY'S BUSINESS I CAN SAY THE REASON FOR THE  
decision on this for some little time; but, as soon as I hear  
something definite, I shall surely let you know. In making your  
plans before getting away to write on John Dickinson, I think you  
should plan to spend a day or so here to pick up some loose ends

BEFORE YOU GET AWAY. ALSO, MAY I CAUTION YOU NOT TO SELECT TOO  
ATTRACTIVE A HIDEAWAY WITH TOO MANY DIVERSIONS DURING YOUR PERIOD  
of writing because we will be looking forward to a fine book from  
you on this great man.

I AM SURE BY THIS TIME YOU WILL KNOW OF THE  
Cordially yours,  
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE, A MEMBER OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE

I AM SURE BY THIS TIME YOU WILL KNOW OF THE  
State Archivist

LEAVING WITH YOU THE BEST OF WISHES AND THE OBVIOUSLY TO GO TO  
LdeVicsa

THEY I FEEL OF YOURS TO BE CONSIDERABLE I KNOW YOU WILL  
IN REGARD TO THE MATTER. IT IS NOT MY BUSINESS I CAN SAY THE REASON FOR THE  
REASON FOR THE MATTER YOU WILL KNOW THE REASON FOR THE MATTER

I AM SURE BY THIS TIME YOU WILL KNOW OF THE

DEAR JACK:

BY THE WAY, I AM SURE BY THIS TIME YOU WILL KNOW OF THE  
DR. JOHN H. POWELL

NOVEMBER 6, 1952

1 November, 1952

Dear Leon,

This letter is a shame-faced answer to yours of the twenty-third -- not the twenty third of October, but of July. I am filled with the miasmas of guilt. When I returned from Iowa, your letter was already a month old, and having neglected it so long, by my absence, it became easier and easier to let it slip to the bottom of the pile.

I did write some Wilmington organisation, who asked me to speak, and said how much would I charge, that I would speak to them on John Dickinson (which was what they wanted) and they could pay me as much as they could afford, and draw the cheque to you, to help you with the expenses of the Dickinson mansion. I think it was the colonial dames.

I do not have the instructions of Dickinson to his carpenter or builder. Nor can I find anything about the woodwork or furniture of the Jones Next mansion. I did have the Logan Papers letter of April 30, 1804, which you found.

Marian Carson has a Dickinson rug, which she bought from Robert Logan. And Harry DuPont has Dickinson furniture. But both were in the Wilmington house. As a matter of cold fact, I don't seem to have anything that would be helpful to you at all.

But if those people ask me to speak, I shall have to go over all my notes again, and I shall then pull out everything relating to the house and its use by Samuel and John Dickinson that I can find.

I am in a period of my life when thousands of people are asking me to do thousands of things besides write John Dickinson. Next February first, I intend to go away and hide, for at least three months, and put the first draft of the book into shape. I am planning now where and how to go. Between now and then, I hope to be able to finish five articles on other subjects, and two books, Anne Carson and Pat Lyon. Then my commitments will be all discharged. Gosh, I am anxious to deal with the Dickinson material, for it is the best stuff I shall ever have, and the best subject, and the material I know best.

Incidentally, if the Delaware Colonial Dames or whoever they are ask me to speak, I shall talk on

July 23, 1952

The Insurance Company of North America  
Home Office  
1600 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Gentlemen:

Recently the National Society of the Colonial Dames in the State of Delaware raised a sum of money which they presented to us for the purchase of the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. The intent is to restore and make an historic site of the home of "The Penman of the Revolution", who was also one of the great founders of our Country. In attempting such a restoration, we are naturally trying to obtain all the facts we can regarding this house. Among Dickinson's correspondence we find the draft of a letter from him, under date of April 30, 1804, addressed to Charles Petit, President of your Company, acknowledging receipt of \$2,000 to rebuild the house in Jones' Neck which had recently burned. We are interested to know if this letter is still in existence so that we might obtain a photostat copy of it. It would undoubtedly be in a much clearer hand than Dickinson's draft. Are there any other letters in this exchange of correspondence which might disclose architectural or historical features of this house?

The Insurance Company of North America  
- over -

July 23, 1952

We have your Company's policy 3090 issued to John Dickinson for a three-year term from December 29, 1803, covering a two-story brick dwelling house and one-story brick addition at this location. Any information you can give us will certainly be appreciated. If necessary, I can come to Philadelphia to examine any records which you may make available to us for this purpose.

Very truly yours,

State Archivist

Ldev:csa

gentlemen:

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
1900 Vico Street  
Home Office  
The Insurance Company of North America

JUL 23 1952

August 5, 1952

Mr. C. A. Palmer  
North America Companies  
1600 Arch Street  
Philadelphia 1, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Palmer:

I am much obliged to you for your kindness in giving us the information contained in your letter of July 29. We were pleased to have this information and we availed ourselves of your offer to make a copy of the photostat, and we are accordingly returning your negative of this old survey.

The information you sent us is helpful and is much appreciated, but we had hoped that your records or subsequent policies on his mansion in Jones Neck, Kent County, Delaware, might have given us more information which would be of value to us in making this restoration.

Very truly yours,

State Archivist

LdeV-mb

# North America Companies

1600 Arch Street, Philadelphia 1,

INSURANCE COMPANY OF NORTH AMERICA  
INDEMNITY INSURANCE COMPANY OF NORTH AMERICA  
PHILADELPHIA FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY

July 29, 1952

Mr. Leon de Valinger, Jr., State Archivist  
State of Delaware  
Dover, Delaware.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of July 23, asking for any information we might have relating to the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. We have examined what records we have and am sorry to state that we find no letters addressed to Mr. Charles Pettit, President of our Company at that time, relating to this property, as most of our old records have, unfortunately, been disposed of.

We did, however, turn up a record of policy #3090, dated December 29, 1803, which you have in your possession. We also turned up records on the following policies:-

December 29, 1803 - Policy #3088 - John Dickinson, Borough of Wilmington, \$1,000. on 1 story frame house, situate in Jones Neck, Dover Hundred, Kent County and State of Delaware, to the northeastward of the road from Dover to the Bayside, formerly in the tenure of Josiah Wharton, 3 yrs. \$27.67.

December 29, 1803 - Policy #3089 - John Dickinson, Borough of Wilmington, \$1,000. on 1 story frame house situate in Jones Neck, Dover Hundred, Kent County and State of Delaware to the southwestward of the road from Dover to the Bayside, formerly in the tenure of Jenkins Murphy and Charles Murphy, 3 years \$26.67.

December 29, 1803 - Policy #3091 - John Dickinson, Borough of Wilmington, \$1,000. on 2 story stone dwelling, house situate in Brandywine Hundred, County of New Castle and State of Delaware, about 2 miles and 1/2 from Wilmington, on the east side of Concord Road near the junction of that road and Foulk Road, formerly in the tenure of William Little but now in the tenure of Daniel Chapman.

December 29, 1803 - Policy #3092 - John Dickinson, Borough of Wilmington, \$2,000. on 2 storey stone dwelling, north side of the Philadelphia road, in Brandywine Hundred, County of New Castle and State of Delaware, about 1/4 mile from the village at Brandywine Bridge, formerly in the tenure of Charles Henry Wharton, now John Wethered

December 29, 1803 - Policy #3093 - John Dickinson, Borough of Wilmington, \$2,000. on 2 story brick dwelling house and brick kitchen, adjoining, formerly occupied by Jesse Harris as an Inn, but now by John Elliott.

(2)

July 29, 1952

I also found an original copy of an old survey of part of the Brandywine Creek, dated January 14, 1797, and attached herewith please find a photostatic copy of same, which I though might be of interest historically. If you wish to make a copy of this photostat you may do so, and I would appreciate the return of same when you are through with it.

Regretting that I am unable to give you any further information,  
I am

Very truly yours



C. A. Palmer.

P:M  
Enc.

THE  
Pennsylvania  
Magazine

OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY



JULY 1959

- JOHN TATHAM, ALIAS GRAY *Henry H. Bisbee* 253  
"THE GREAT AND STATELY PALACE": INVENTORIES OF THE  
ESTATE OF JOHN AND ELIZABETH TATHAM *Lois U. Given* 265  
✓ JOHN DICKINSON, HISTORICAL REVOLUTIONARY  
*H. Trevor Colbourn* 271  
CHARLES CRAWFORD, A FORGOTTEN POET OF EARLY PHILA-  
DELPHIA *Lewis Leary* 293  
TWO LOCKOUTS IN PENNSYLVANIA, 1873-1874  
*Herbert G. Gutman* 307  
GIFFORD PINCHOT'S YEARS OF FRUSTRATION, 1917-1920  
*M. Nelson McGeary* 327  
BOOK REVIEWS 343

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877 BY THE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

VOLUME LXXXIII

NUMBER 3

## BOOK REVIEWS

	PAGE
BOORSTIN, <i>The Americans: The Colonial Experience</i> , by H. Trevor Colbourn	343
WALLACE, ed., <i>Thirty Thousand Miles with John Heckewelder</i> , by John Joseph Stoudt	345
JAMES AND STOTZ, <i>Drums in the Forest</i> , by Milton W. Hamilton	346
HAMILTON, ed., <i>The Papers of Sir William Johnson</i> , Vol. XII, by Nicholas B. Wainwright	348
LOVEJOY, <i>Rhode Island Politics and the American Revolution, 1760-1776</i> , by Frederick B. Tolles	348
CALLAHAN, <i>Henry Knox, General Washington's General</i> , by Willard M. Wallace	349
DECONDE, <i>Entangling Alliance: Politics &amp; Diplomacy under George Washington</i> , by Felix Gilbert	351
CUNLIFFE, <i>The Nation Takes Shape, 1789-1837</i> , by S. W. Higginbotham	352
VAN DEUSEN, <i>The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848</i> , by Wallace Evan Davies	353
WINWAR, <i>The Haunted Palace. A Life of Edgar Allan Poe</i> , by Colonel Richard Gimbel	355
CROMWELL, <i>Lucretia Mott</i> , by Elizabeth M. Geffen	357
GARDNER, <i>Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War</i> , by Nicholas B. Wainwright	358
WHITE, <i>The Republican Era, 1869-1901. A Study in Administrative History</i> , by Jeannette P. Nichols	359
MARTIN, ed., <i>Charles Kingsley's American Notes: Letters from a Lecture Tour, 1874</i> , by Howell J. Heaney	361
KELLER, <i>In Defense of Yesterday. James M. Beck and the Politics of Conservatism, 1861-1936</i> , by M. Nelson McGeary	363
DOLL, <i>The Ephrata Cloister. An Introduction</i>	364
WILSON, <i>Fort Delaware</i>	365
NICKALLS, <i>Some Quaker Portraits, Certain and Uncertain</i>	365
<i>M. H. S. Miscellany</i> , No. 5	366

---

THE PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY is published each quarter in January, April, July and October by THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia 7. Yearly subscription, \$5.00; single numbers, \$1.50. Communications should be addressed to the Editor. The Editors do not assume responsibility for statements of fact or of opinion made by contributors.

Second class postage paid at Philadelphia, Pa.

## *John Dickinson, Historical Revolutionary*

A TWENTIETH-CENTURY jurist is credited with the wise observation that "if a man steals from one book it is plagiarism; if he steals from a hundred books it is research." The dividing line may seem rather arbitrary, but if this distinction is accepted, John Dickinson must stand convicted of research, and much of it was in history.

Dickinson is not particularly famous for his historical studies, but historians rarely are either. His fame rests more upon his reputation as a penman of the American Revolution, a founder of the college bearing his name, and later executive head of the independent state of Pennsylvania, and of Delaware. But he is also widely remembered as one of America's most distinguished and perplexing conservatives, a political personality replete with challenge and apparent paradox. An intellectual who believed that men should "Think for Themselves," Dickinson obeyed his own requirement of educated men,<sup>1</sup> and while able to rationalize resistance to Great Britain in the 1760's, could not bring himself to sign the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Bred a colonial aristocrat and born to large wealth, he was raised in a setting perfectly complementary to his innate conservatism. Always thoughtful and cautious, he instinctively reacted against change, and rarely saw politics in the clear-cut battle lines of the professional politician. As one recent writer has put it, Dickinson was "too careful, too refining in thought to see an issue in black and white."<sup>2</sup> Dickinson himself wrote in 1767: "We cannot act with too much caution in our disputes. Anger produces anger; and differences, that might be accommodated by kind and respectful behaviour,

<sup>1</sup> John Dickinson, *Political Writings* (Wilmington, Del., 1801), II, 302.

<sup>2</sup> John H. Powell, "John Dickinson and the Constitution," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (PMHB), LX (1936), 5.

may, by imprudence, be enlarged to an incurable rage."<sup>3</sup> At another time, in a more metaphorical mood, he warned against rashly venturing "our *little vessel* . . . upon the *midst* of the *untry'd deep*, without being first fully convinced that her *make* is strong enough to bear the *weather* she may meet with, and that she is well *provided* for so long and so dangerous a voyage."<sup>4</sup>

Dickinson's inherent conservatism made him appear almost Hamlet-like in his moments of indecision, and many of his friends were baffled and distressed by his extreme concern for prudence and seemingly illogical hesitation. Benjamin Rush is well known for his belief that "Prudence, where *honor* was concerned, was a rascally virtue," and John Adams' caustic comments about Dickinson's "piddling genius" were even less kind.<sup>5</sup> Yet the really remarkable feature of John Dickinson was less his reluctance to take decisive steps than his willingness to consider movement at all. His enormous commitment to stability, to the preservation of property, his personal disinclination to radical change, are less puzzling than his emergence as a leading figure in the American revolutionary drama. Immensely active in stirring opposition to British policy as represented in the Stamp Act and the Townshend duties, by 1776 Dickinson had become one of the most popular and famous of the contributors to the literature of revolution. And yet he could not and would not sign the final announcement of separation from England; although, once independence was proclaimed, he fought actively to make the new nation a victorious reality.

Obviously, John Dickinson came from a different political mold from that of a Sam Adams or a Thomas Jefferson. He was essentially a conservative sort of a rebel, a rather reluctant revolutionary whose adherence to his own political logic and conviction in 1776 cost him most of the popularity accumulated during the previous decade. It is this apparent ambivalence, this seemingly unnatural combination of conservative and radical, which is of immediate concern; and it is suggested that at least a partial explanation for the political enigma of John Dickinson can be found in an understanding of his historical perspective—a feature of his intellectual biography that has been

<sup>3</sup> *The Writings of John Dickinson*, ed. by Paul Leicester Ford (Philadelphia, 1895), 326, hereinafter cited as *Writings*, ed. Ford.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters of Benjamin Rush*, ed. by L. H. Butterfield (Princeton, N.J., 1951), I, 342; *Works of John Adams*, ed. by Charles Francis Adams (Boston, 1851), II, 411 (note).

sadly neglected. Even the briefest review of his revolutionary writing indicates a wealth of historical allusion, a sincere concern for the past, and an impressive reliance upon history as a vital guide to political thought. By examining the type of history to which Dickinson was exposed, the full measure of his reliance can be better gauged. By establishing the particular perspective that his favorite books supplied him, it is possible to suggest how Dickinson's historical viewpoint could lead a convinced conservative to become an ultimate revolutionary without perhaps being quite aware of the political progression.

John Dickinson was not trained or educated to be a historian; yet even had he wished to be, it is significant that his education could hardly have been improved upon. He was to be a Philadelphia lawyer in the better sense of that abused term, but in the process of becoming one he was exposed to an impressive historical schooling. In fact, the high degree of Dickinson's historical sensitivity stemmed from his being born in the eighteenth century into a wealthy family able to furnish him the best of legal training.

The Age of Reason was distinguished by a new devotion to the past, and modern platitudes about the need for history in order to understand the future would have been neither insincere nor banal in Dickinson's day. The elevation of man's reason brought with it an exaltation of history as a dignified and essentially useful field of study. The past was viewed as an extension of experience breeding greater wisdom, as a storehouse of examples to be dipped into for illustrations of modern political problems. Seventeenth-century England had become particularly conscious of the political utility of history when parliamentary leaders had found an appeal to ancient rights enormously effective in opposing the claims of the Stuart kings, and in the process evolved what is best known as the whig interpretation of history.<sup>6</sup> While its new-found political usefulness

<sup>6</sup> The best short study of the development of whig history is found in Herbert Butterfield, *The Englishman and His History* (Cambridge, 1945); more recent and specialized is J. G. A. Pocock's *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (Cambridge, 1957), and David Douglas, *English Scholars* (London, 1939) has a brilliant sequel in his *The Norman Conquest and British Historians* (Glasgow, 1946). Also of interest is Samuel Klinger, *The Goths in England* (Cambridge Mass., 1952), and Christopher Hill, "The Norman Yoke," in *Democracy and the Labour Movement* (London, 1954). Professor Caroline Robbins' forthcoming book, *The Eighteenth-Century English Commonwealthman* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), will discuss the political thought of many of the writers studied by eighteenth-century Americans.

lent popularity to history, even philosophers like John Locke gave historical study a personal seal of approval by recommending it as "the great Mistress of Prudence and civil Knowledge." Better yet, Locke called it "the proper study of a Gentleman,"<sup>7</sup> and few young men in the eighteenth century cared to exclude themselves from the social class into which they were born by neglecting their historical prerequisites. Most were familiar with Henry St. John's judgment on history as philosophy teaching by examples,<sup>8</sup> which in an age of philosophic pretensions was persuasive justification for historical study on both sides of the Atlantic. John Dickinson was thus born into an age when there was wide agreement upon history's merits as "the exhaustible mine out of which political knowledge is brought up."<sup>9</sup>

His historiographical environment naturally had a profound impact, but so did Dickinson's legal training. In fact, if history had now become a suitable subject for gentlemen to study, it was also one that gentlemen training to be lawyers could hardly avoid studying. For in the eighteenth century a major concern was with the English common law, a structure built entirely upon precedent. To study common law was to study history, since legal scholars were constantly searching for ancient precedents upon which to base current legal opinion. But here, too, the seventeenth century directly influenced the eighteenth century, since it was against the background of Stuart history that the study of common law had achieved its greatest popularity. The varyingly accurate scholarship of the short-lived Society of Antiquaries under James I, and the extended activities of Sir Edward Coke gave immense stimulation to English interest in common law, an explanation for which can be seen in Coke's patient but exhausting investigation of the ancient origins of common law and its evident historical seniority over royal prerogative. From here it was not far to the assertions of politically-minded lawyers that part and parcel of England's ancient legal system had

<sup>7</sup> John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. by R. H. Quick (Cambridge, 1892), 159.

<sup>8</sup> Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (London, 1752), 14.

<sup>9</sup> James Burgh, *Political Disquisitions* (London, 1774), I, vi.

been a House of Commons with rights infinitely superior to the pretensions of the Stuart kings.<sup>10</sup>

Since lawyers of necessity continued to be historians as well, legal scholars a century after Coke were insisting upon the study of ancient history as a means of better grasping the origins of contemporary English law. Sir William Blackstone, first Vinerian law professor at Oxford, repeatedly warned law students that they should be careful historians as well as cautious lawyers, that they should examine the very fountains of English law, namely "the customs of the Britons and the Germans as recorded by Caesar and Tacitus," with particular attention to the legal practices of "our own Saxon princes."<sup>11</sup> A conscientious and responsive student of law, Dickinson fully met this requirement, and consequently met with and accepted a view of England's past which substantially eased his road to revolution, if not to independence.

Just when Dickinson's historical exposure began is difficult to say, but if to study law was to study history, then he must have suffered his first serious encounter with history by his eighteenth year when he entered John Moland's law office. Moland himself was a product of London's Inns of Court, and as one of Pennsylvania's few distinguished lawyers at that time assuredly introduced his young student to the rigors and mysteries of Coke's *Institutes* as well as the background of the seventeenth-century legal giants.<sup>12</sup> It was natural that from Moland's office Dickinson should go to Moland's alma mater, the Middle Temple. In London by 1753, Dickinson was at first a typical American tourist, smitten with the antiquity of English institutions. Writing to his father, Dickinson described how he trod the same walks "frequented by the Antient Sages of the Law"; perhaps, he reflected, he was even studying in the same chambers Sir Edward Coke himself had used a century before. And he reported a sort of

<sup>10</sup> Butterfield, *The Englishman and His History*, 37, 37-54.

<sup>11</sup> William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (Oxford, 1770), I, 35-36. It is worth noting that Jefferson, after reading Blackstone, concluded: "This shews that English liberties are not infringements merely of the king's prerogatives, extorted from our princes by taking advantage of their weakness; but a restoration of that antient constitution, of which our ancestors had been defrauded by the art and finesse of the Norman Lawyers." See *The Commonplace Book of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. by Gilbert Chinard (Baltimore, Md., 1926), 192-193.

<sup>12</sup> Charles J. Stillé, *The Life and Times of John Dickinson, 1732-1808* (Philadelphia, 1891), 19-20.

mystical communion with great legal heroes like Hampden, famous for opposing "encroaching Power" in the person of Charles I. Dickinson confessed he was "filled with awe and reverence," and related rather breathlessly how "I fly to Books, to retirement, to Labour, & every Moment is an Age, till I am immersed in Study."<sup>13</sup> In London, Dickinson developed his habits of scholarship, discovering the English custom of using the academic vacations for preparation by reading; and he would often report "At present, I am wholly taken up with reading," even during vacations.<sup>14</sup> It was while studying at the Middle Temple that he laid the foundation for a lifetime devotion to books that earned Dickinson his later reputation as "a Scholar, and . . . a Man of extensive information."<sup>15</sup> And as a London law student he must have rediscovered the virtual impossibility of confining his reading to law books, since they led him directly to a necessary study of the English Constitution for which he developed an enduring admiration and historical curiosity. To his mother, Dickinson announced his considered opinion that "the English Constitution and the English Laws are strictly united,"<sup>16</sup> and it was obvious that to understand either demanded an understanding of their history.

While there is no known catalogue of Dickinson's private library, the character of his historical reading can be readily established, although not with the inclusiveness possible with his colleagues Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.<sup>17</sup> The basic books consulted by colonial lawyers are familiar enough, as are the historical inclinations

<sup>13</sup> Dickinson to Samuel Dickinson, London, Mar. 8, 1754, Dickinson Manuscripts, Library Company of Philadelphia (Lib. Co.). Dickinson's letters from England have been rarely used, and are too little known; it is hoped that these Inns of Court letters will be edited for publication.

<sup>14</sup> Dickinson to Samuel Dickinson, Mar. 29, 1754, *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> "William Pierce on the Federal Convention of 1787," *American Historical Review*, III (1898), 329. Pierce thought Dickinson "An indifferent Speaker."

<sup>16</sup> Dickinson to Mary Cadwalader Dickinson, June 6, 1756, Dickinson Manuscripts, Lib. Co. Already politically alive, Dickinson was also developing a felicity of phrase: "I hope My Honoured Mother, will excuse my Politicks; if she cant approve them, & will forgive my dabbling in them."

<sup>17</sup> Both Jefferson and Adams read more than Dickinson, and both were avid book collectors, making careful catalogues of their libraries. See William Peden, "Thomas Jefferson: Book Collector," unpublished dissertation, University of Virginia (1942), and John Adams' 1790 library list (manuscript) in the Massachusetts Historical Society. Benjamin Rush also left a library catalogue (manuscript), dated 1790, in the Rush Manuscripts, Lib. Co.

of the authorities respected by Dickinson. Like most of his legal generation, Dickinson was raised on the inherited wisdom of Sir Edward Coke, who in turn referred his readers to his own authorities, such as the fabulous *Mirror of Justices* and the *Modus Tenendi Parliamentum*, books which completely supported Coke's conclusions on the antiquity of both common law and Parliament. Admittedly these sources would be discounted by modern scholars as utterly unreliable,<sup>18</sup> but the issue of the historical accuracy of Coke or his supporters is somewhat irrelevant to the question of what was available to Dickinson. After all, even Blackstone accepted most of Coke's legal interpretations, redigesting much of the *Institutes* into the more palatable *Commentaries*, which Dickinson owned by 1769, five years after purchasing Blackstone's *Law Tracts*.<sup>19</sup>

Dickinson, however, was reading books of a more immediate historical complexion in his student days. He was already acquainted with the best-seller, Rapin's *History of England*, by 1756, when he was citing it in letters to his mother.<sup>20</sup> He made occasional notes in his sparsely filled commonplace books, disclosing a persistent interest in the writings of Robert Molesworth, Bolingbroke, and Tacitus, and his fortunate habit of footnoting his published work confirms his indebtedness to these authors. In fact, Dickinson's footnoting amounted almost to a mania, with notes written upon other notes, nearly obscuring the original text material. Consequently, Dickinson leaves little doubt as to the authors he most admired, and happily other sources survive to demonstrate in greater detail his historical awareness.

While there is no known library list, there are many books from Dickinson's original collections currently reposing in such Philadelphia institutions as the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Library Company. Indeed, it seems likely that the impressive hold-

<sup>18</sup> William S. Holdsworth, *A History of English Law* (London, 1938), II, 328; V, 459; Sir Edward Coke, *Reports* (London, 1738), Preface. For example, referring to Parliament, William Hakewell's *Modus Tenendi Parliamentum* (London, 1671), n. p., told the reader that "This great council hath been always held to be the Bulwark of our liberties, the main boundary and bank which keeps us from the inundations of tyrannical power."

<sup>19</sup> The first edition of Blackstone's *Commentaries* was published 1765-1769, and Dickinson received a bill for volume three from David Hall on Jan. 26, 1769. Logan Papers, XXXIV, 54, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP). A bill for Blackstone's *Law Tracts* (Oxford, 1762) came from David Hall, Sept. 6, 1763, *ibid.*, XXXIV, 11.

<sup>20</sup> Dickinson to his mother, June 6, 1756, Dickinson Manuscripts, Lib. Co.

ings of "Franklin's Library" were frequently used by Dickinson while he was practicing law and politics in Philadelphia. He purchased a share in the Library Company in 1762, and within a year was elected to a directorship.<sup>21</sup> The known contents of the Library Company in the 1760's were both heavily historical and almost consistently whig in interpretation.<sup>22</sup> Dickinson also enjoyed convenient access to another library quite as remarkable in its way—the collection of Isaac Norris, Jr., Dickinson's father-in-law. Most of this library was inherited by Dickinson, and later donated to his college at Carlisle.<sup>23</sup> What is known of the historical content of the collection indicates a similar viewpoint to that of the Library Company's and Dickinson's own history books. In 1752, for example, Norris was ordering Mackworth's *The Vindication of the Right of the Commons*, and Petyt's *The Ancient Right of the Commons*, books completely in accord with the historical assumptions of such later Dickinson acquisitions as Catherine Macaulay's *History of England* and James Burgh's famous *Political Disquisitions*.<sup>24</sup>

With such detailed information available on Dickinson's historical education, there is afforded an extraordinary opportunity to reconstruct just what Dickinson was persuaded had happened in his own past. By looking at the books that he read, cited, owned, and recommended, the actual historical perspective enjoyed by Dickinson can be re-created: such a reconstruction lends a fresh significance to his own frank admission that "I spend a good deal of [my time] in a library, which I think the most valuable part of my small estate."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Deed, June 30, 1762, signed by Abram Taylor, who was paid £17 for his share sold to Dickinson, Logan Papers, VIII, 63, HSP; Dickinson to his mother, Mar. 7, 1763, Maria Dickinson Logan Manuscripts (Miscellaneous), HSP.

<sup>22</sup> Edwin Wolf 2nd, "The First Books and Printed Catalogues of the Library Company of Philadelphia" *PMHB*, LXXVIII (1954), 45-70; see also *The Charter, Laws, and Catalogue of Books, of the Library Company of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1770).

<sup>23</sup> James W. Phillips, "The Sources of the Original Dickinson College Library," *Pennsylvania History*, XIV (1947), 110-113.

<sup>24</sup> List of books ordered by Isaac Norris, Jr., for the use of the Pennsylvania Assembly, Mar. 16, 1752, HSP. Few of Norris' own history books survive, but this list would seem to reflect his interests. Norris' copy of Paul Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent*, which discusses "the practices of the court of Rome, to hinder the reformation of their errors," is found in the Dickinson Collection, HSP. The Norris list of 1752 also included Thornhagh Gurdon's *History of the High Court of Parliament* (London, 1731), a copy of which was owned by Dickinson. See Note 32. Dickinson's copies of Burgh's *Political Disquisitions* (London, 1774-1775) and Macaulay's *History of England* (London, 1769), donated by the authors, repose in HSP.

<sup>25</sup> *Writings*, ed. Ford, 307.

Books mattered to Dickinson, and history books particularly. What they told him in turn informs deeply on his political thought and action.

Not yet turned into a profession, history in Dickinson's day was far from the limited fields of specialization often obtaining today. But if asked to name his main area of historical interest, undoubtedly Dickinson would choose the history of England. Colonial concern for the history of the mother country was natural enough, since English history was properly an extension of America's limited recorded past, and at one time Dickinson threw modesty to the winds by asserting, "I have acquired, I believe, a greater knowledge in history, and the laws and constitution of my country, than is generally attained by men of my class."<sup>26</sup> American reliance upon English common law as a basis for colonial law made Dickinson's seeming immodesty a rather logical consequence of his London education. But eighteenth-century gentlemen were also well versed in the classics, which led to a fairly intimate acquaintance with ancient Greek and Roman history. Allusion to the classical past was commonplace to colonial conversation, but for Dickinson, at least, classical references were more matters of simile and illustration than sources for vital information and political persuasion. He could cheerfully turn to the conquest of Greece by Philip of Macedon to demonstrate the perils of striving for freedom separately, and he could find the same lesson in the records of Carthage, Rome, and even Spain.<sup>27</sup> But this classical lesson was one already learned by Dickinson without benefit of classical history: these were merely examples of an obvious truism that in unity there is strength, and in historical illustration there is color. Of course, there were also occasions when Dickinson would skillfully combine Roman with English history for similar purposes, as with his observation that "*Julius Caesar* and *Oliver Cromwell*, did not dare to assume the title of *king*." But this, too, was to underline the patent fact that "there are things, which, at some times, even *slaves* will not bear."<sup>28</sup>

There was one ancient historian, however, who claimed Dickinson's admiration and allegiance—a Roman, who supplied not only

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 492 ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 393-394.

convenient instances of where "each state resisted singly, all were subdued," but even more persuasive information for students of English history. Tacitus made a major contribution to Dickinson's historical outlook in preparing him for more recent commentators upon the English scene. As a lawyer, Dickinson frequently turned to Tacitus for details of the Germanic customs that constituted precedents for English habits of government, and he praised the Roman as an "excellent historian and statesman . . . whose political reflections are so justly and universally admired."<sup>29</sup> In Tacitus' *Germania* Dickinson found a fascinating portrait of his ancient German ancestors, forefathers of the Saxons who emigrated from northern Europe to England.<sup>30</sup> This rare contemporary account of German customs of free government was the common source for most of Dickinson's favorite historians who wrote on ancient English history; Rapin was but one of many who cited Tacitus in presenting the same general picture of liberty-loving German ancestors for the Anglo-Saxon settlers of England.<sup>31</sup> Almost all the pertinent historians consulted by Dickinson echoed the praises of the noble Saxons and their finest leader, King Alfred; and at least one historian of Parliament reminded his reader that English common law "did visibly spring from the old *Saxon* statutes."<sup>32</sup>

This concept of ancient Saxon England was the foundation for the whig historical perspective offered Dickinson in his reading. Its charms were not hidden, for it presented with a blatant pride a sort of historical utopia, replete with liberty, representative government with an annually elected House of Commons or its equivalent in the Saxon *witenagemote*, kings who were often elected, and all defended by a popular armed militia. But as Dickinson pursued the course of England's development, he discovered that the Saxon militia were hardly up to their task of defending their freedom, since the Normans came to England in 1066, bringing feudal tyranny with them. Sir Henry Spelman, one of Dickinson's most respected legal authorities, insisted flatly that with the Norman conquest "all things resounded with the feudal oppressions, which in the time of the Saxons had

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, ed. by Thomas Gordon (London, 1751), II, 325, 362, *passim*.

<sup>31</sup> Paul de Rapin-Thoyras, *History of England*, translated by N. Tindal (London, 1732-1733), I, 27, 46, 59.

<sup>32</sup> Gurdon, *History of Parliament*, I, ix, xiii.

never been heard of."<sup>33</sup> And other writers told Dickinson that the Norman conquest was really the product of craft and deceit, that the noble freedom-loving Saxons were not defeated in a fair fight, and therefore had not surrendered their rights and privileges.<sup>34</sup> As a result, Dickinson found post-conquest history generally depicted as a persistent struggle by Englishmen for their ancient Saxon rights, partly regained from King John with the signing of Magna Charta in 1215, and more substantially restored during the struggle with the Stuarts in the seventeenth century. Dickinson was familiar with Coke's insistence that Magna Charta was "no new declaration," but was "for the most part declaratory of the principal grounds of the fundamental laws of England."<sup>35</sup> And historians like the ever-popular Rapin repeated the same theme, emphasizing that the Great Charter merely began to reduce royal authority to the level obtaining among the Saxons before the Normans came.<sup>36</sup> Significantly, Dickinson's interest in Magna Charta was renewed in 1763, when he selected a new edition of it from David Hall's Philadelphia bookstore.<sup>37</sup>

Important and encouraging as Magna Charta appeared, Dickinson's whig historians generally agreed that the seventeenth century saw a high water mark in English restitution of ancient liberties. Stuart history was to hold a lasting fascination for Dickinson, and the views of his favorite writers on the period explain why. Catherine Macaulay's multivolume treatment of the Stuart dynasty was among the later works studied by Dickinson, but her interpretation was not essentially different from that offered by most whig writers. Called "our incomparable female historian" by admiring colleagues,<sup>38</sup> Mrs. Macaulay's personal enthusiasm for the colonial cause did not reduce her historical charms for American readers like Dickinson, to whom she sent her more ardent pamphlets as her expression of esteem. Certainly her attitude toward the Stuart princes of seventeenth-

<sup>33</sup> Sir Henry Spelman, *Works*, ed. by Edmund Gibson (London, 1723), Pt. II, 5.

<sup>34</sup> Blackstone, *Commentaries*, II, 45-53; Roger Acherley, *Britannic Constitution* (London, 1731), 168; Henry Care, *English Liberties* (London, 1680), 8-9. Widely read, Care's work was reprinted in Boston in 1721, and in Providence, R. I., in 1774.

<sup>35</sup> Sir Edward Coke, *Institutes of the Laws of England* (London, 1681), II, "Proeme," n. p.

<sup>36</sup> Rapin, *History of the Whigs and Tories*, translated by Ozell (London, 1717), 13-14; also included in Rapin's *History of England*, where there is further comment on Magna Charta, I, 276.

<sup>37</sup> Bill from David Hall to Dickinson, Sept. 6, 1763, Logan Manuscripts, XXXIV, 11, HSP.

<sup>38</sup> Burgh, *Disquisitions*, I, vii.

century England was representative of more extreme whig opinion, and passed beyond the stage of showing monarchs as mere men rather than exalted symbols. Charles I, for example, she described as a brutal tyrant, lewd, unchaste, and the father of "one or two natural children." She saw Cromwell in little better light, since he used his standing army against the popular privileges so recently wrested from Charles.<sup>39</sup> And after Cromwell had come the humiliating restoration of the Stuarts with Charles II, and a return of un-Saxon oppression best illustrated by widespread accounts of the notorious Judge Jeffries. Mrs. Macaulay was only one of many who regaled Dickinson with a harrowing narration of the martyrdom of Algernon Sidney, and stories of the iniquities of Judge Jeffries' henchman Colonel Kirk, who devised music to hang men by.<sup>40</sup> Bishop Burnet supplied Dickinson with a contemporary account of Stuart misrule, telling how Jeffries' "campaign" under James II led to the hanging of some six hundred innocent people after Monmouth's abortive uprising.<sup>41</sup> And the faithful Rapin included the popular story of the same Colonel Kirk as a seducer of innocent maidens eager to save the lives of equally innocent but gray-headed parents.<sup>42</sup> Obviously, there was no end to injustice under the Stuart princes. Indeed, Dickinson discovered that even the lonely historical defender of that unfortunate dynasty, David Hume, was obliged to concede James II was "more imprudent and arbitrary than his predecessor."<sup>43</sup> In this sort of historical context, the Revolution of 1688 was not hard to justify.

Theoretically, the succession of William and Mary to England's throne should have brought a return to Saxon liberties since this was the chief objective of resistance to earlier Stuart kings. But most of the writers consulted by Dickinson argued otherwise. Thomas Gordon, the popular translator of Tacitus and Sallust, devoted his

<sup>39</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, IV, 419, 422 (note); V, 215, 390.

<sup>40</sup> Gilbert Burnet, *History of His Own Time* (London, 1850), 371-372. Dickinson's edition was probably that of 1724-1734. For his citations from Burnet, see the *Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain* (Philadelphia, 1774).

<sup>41</sup> Burnet, *History*, 416.

<sup>42</sup> Rapin, *History of England*, II, 750.

<sup>43</sup> David Hume, *History of England* (London, 1762), VI, 402. The tory complexion of Hume's history has been much exaggerated—by Jefferson, among others—and his treatment of Sidney's trial, the "violent and inhuman" Judge Jeffries, and the "easy and generous lover" Charles II is not much different from conventional whig descriptions.

surplus energies to publishing *Cato's Letters*, where with John Trenchard he described to Dickinson the evident failure of eighteenth-century England to re-enter her Saxon heritage. Instead, contemporary England was frequently shown racing toward economic, moral, and political collapse, ridden with corruption, and afflicted with an unrepresentative Parliament. Gordon told his reader of the "little beggarly Boroughs" which were, he said, "Pools of Corruption."<sup>44</sup> In fact, one imaginative commentator suggested that the best way for eighteenth-century England to recover from her enormous indebtedness would be for the government to cure and sell the skins of all adulterers in the country; despite declining prices for commercially cured human hide resulting from an anticipated oversupply, it was thought that more revenue would accrue than from unjust taxes on the American colonies.<sup>45</sup>

Dickinson was thus given a disturbing portrait of a mother country on the high road to ruin, oblivious of her ancestral liberties, and mostly unaware that the way to salvation lay in a return to Saxon simplicity, with annually elected and uncorrupted parliaments, and a people's militia rather than a dangerous and expensive standing army. This composite picture of England's past and present hardly made for lively expectations for the future, and Dickinson's sojourn at the Middle Temple only made for a readier acceptance of this alarming perspective. While in London in 1755, he noted that "There are above seventy controverted Elections this Parliament, One of the greatest Proofs perhaps of the Corruption of the Age." From personal observation he concluded that "Bribery is so common that it is that there is not a Borough in England where it is not practis'd."<sup>46</sup> He was no less worried over the growth of the standing army in England, seeing it, too, as a dangerous increase of royal influence; this was one truth, he told his mother, learned from "a moderate Acquaintance with the English History."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters* (London, 1748), I, 97, 117; III, 18. This work was frequently cited by Dickinson, who referred to "the excellent Gordon" in 1774. See also *American Archives*, ed. by Peter Force (Washington, 1837-1853), *Fourth Series*, I, 561 (note), for citations from Burnet and Burgh.

<sup>45</sup> Burgh, *Disquisitions*, III, 140. It is not surprising that John Adams praised Burgh's work as "the best service that a citizen could render to his country in a great crisis." Adams, *Works*, IX, 351.

<sup>46</sup> Dickinson to [probably his father], Jan. 25, 1755, Dickinson Manuscripts, Lib. Co.

<sup>47</sup> Dickinson to his mother, June 6, 1756, *ibid.*

If history was adding to Dickinson's sense of distress in the 1750's, it substantially colored his responses in the next decade when this corrupt British Parliament was dispatching a standing army to America. And as the colonial crisis mounted, Dickinson could not only find guidance in his historical perspective of the mother country, but he was encouraged to find some of the very authors he consulted rallying to his cause. More and more books and pamphlets reached him in the 1770's from the circle of English writers whose historical ideas he shared. Volumes sent Dickinson by Catherine Macaulay and the illustrious James Burgh, offered "As a Small Token of Respect for His Patriotic Virtue,"<sup>48</sup> still survive, and a regular correspondence developed between Dickinson and Edward Dilly, the London publisher of so many of his whig books. Dilly opened the exchange in March, 1774, sending, at the author's request, the first two volumes of Burgh's *Political Disquisitions*. As Dilly observed, this work contained "many useful hints . . . [on] the origins of Parliaments and . . . the necessity of frequent Appeals to the People." Dilly also confirmed Dickinson's fears for the political health of England by commenting at length on the dangers of long parliaments and septennial elections wherein "Bribery, and Corruption . . . engenders Swarms of Placemen and Pensioners . . . [which] like Leeches suck the very vitals of the Constitution."<sup>49</sup> But this was typical of the sort of dinner conversations enjoyed by Dilly and his friends, among whom he listed Benjamin Franklin and Mrs. Macaulay's brother, Alderman Sawbridge. Mrs. Macaulay herself was reported indisposed and taking the waters at Bath before launching upon the final phase of her attack on the Stuarts.<sup>50</sup> Dickinson responded to Dilly's informative letter in the summer of 1774, expressing thanks for Burgh's books, and subsequently being rewarded with a prepublication copy of the third and final volume of the *Political Disquisitions*, along with recent pamphlets by others of Dilly's whig circle.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Inscribed on title page of Dickinson copy in the Lib. Co.

<sup>49</sup> Edward Dilly to Dickinson, Mar. 7, 1774, Dickinson Manuscripts, Lib. Co.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* It is interesting to recall John Adams' observation on Benjamin Rush, written Sept. 24, 1775: "He is a republican; he has been much in London, acquainted with Sawbridge, Macaulay, Burgh, and others of that stamp. Dilly sends him books and pamphlets, and Sawbridge and Macaulay correspond with him." Adams, *Works*, II, 427.

<sup>51</sup> Dilly to Dickinson, Jan. 28, 1775, Dickinson Manuscripts, Lib. Co.

This literary exchange between London publisher and colonial author not only establishes Dickinson's interesting connection with the whig authors he read and admired, but has a special significance in his introduction thus to Burgh's writings. The *Political Disquisitions* held a natural attraction for Dickinson, an attraction that extended to his subscribing to yet a second set when a Philadelphia edition was issued in 1775.<sup>52</sup> Burgh was offering Dickinson, in effect, a digest of much of the historical and legal reading already accomplished, a compendium of whig history based upon the maxim shared by Sir William Temple and John Dickinson, that "None can be said to know things well, who do not know them in their beginnings."<sup>53</sup> Burgh had read, like Dickinson, "the best historical and political writers," not to strengthen his own assertions "by the authority of established writers," but rather to find out what these writers said, what, briefly, was the historical basis for English liberties now in jeopardy. Burgh and Dickinson read the same books, and attained the same general historical perspective as a result. Citing Thomas Gordon's *Tracts*, Burgh sought to write "in the spirit of a true independent whig," and described in detail "the subversion of the [English] constitution, and ruin of the state," with additional discussion

Of corruption in general; of degeneracy in this country; of manners, education, luxury, adultery, duelling, &c. of liberty in general; of various forms of government, their respective advantages and disadvantages; of *British* liberty; danger of the loss of liberty, and consequences . . . of law, and its grievances; of colonies, and the proper methods for encouraging them; of the army, and dangers from it; advantages of a militia . . . a view of the arts of wicked ministers, and favourites; character and conduct of kings . . . of redress by the people, when government refuses it. . . .<sup>54</sup>

Burgh's timeliness naturally enhanced his indictment of Dickinson's mother country; in many ways the *Political Disquisitions* comprised a superb refresher course in English liberties, their historic origin and

<sup>52</sup> The subscription list for Burgh's *Disquisitions* reads like a "Who's Who in the American Revolution." Washington headed the list, which included Christopher Gadsden, John Hancock, Jefferson, Rush, Roger Sherman, and James Wilson. Rarely was a work reprinted in America within a year of English publication as was Burgh's *Disquisitions*.

<sup>53</sup> Burgh, *Disquisitions*, I, xiii; Sir William Temple, *History of England* (London, 1740), II, 528.

<sup>54</sup> Burgh, *Disquisitions*, I, viii, xvi, xxii-xxiii.

their current decline. And it was in Burgh that Dickinson could read such warnings as "When a country is to be enslaved, the army is the instrument to be used"; "No people ever lost the spirit of liberty but through the fault of their government." "Liberty," insisted Burgh, "cannot be preserved, if the manners of the people are corrupted."<sup>55</sup> Dickinson was in every sense prepared to agree.

The occasion for Dickinson's major political debut in Pennsylvania was not in defense of English liberties, but in support of the proprietary government of the Penn family. The question of seeking a royal charter for Pennsylvania, which would translate the colony's status from that of a mismanaged private estate of the Penns to that of a potentially mismanaged crown colony, was not new. But Dickinson's response to the issue on its resurrection in 1764 has a peculiar significance: he sided with the *status quo*, not because he believed proprietary government was satisfactory, but because he knew its faults, and he did not know what worse evils might develop from a closer connection with the Crown. But if he thus reacted in a typically conservative manner, fearful of exchanging a known for an unknown evil, he also disclosed an equally interesting and instinctive employment of history to justify his caution. Tacitus, in fact, was cited to lend prestige to Dickinson's basic conservatism, demonstrating how good men "with fatal speed rush upon their own destruction." And the dangers of a neglect of prudence were illustrated from Molesworth's *Account of Denmark*, wherein Dickinson found "the commons of *Denmark*, smarting under the tyranny of their nobility, in a fit of vengeful fury *suddenly* surrendered their liberties to their king; and ever since . . . have detested the *mad moment* which slipt upon them the shackles of slavery." Turning to English history, Dickinson suggested that through similar rashness the Duke of Monmouth had failed in his revolt against James II, whereas William III, "with a *wise delay*, pursued the same views and gloriously mounted a throne."<sup>56</sup>

Dickinson's historical emphasis shifted substantially within a year of this proclamation of the virtues of patience and prudence: the Stamp Act of 1765 provided his first opportunity to show that

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 349; III, 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Writings*, ed. Ford, 24. It might be argued that Dickinson was already resisting closer control by Britain in opposing the abolition of the proprietary regime in Pennsylvania.

history had greater uses than merely supporting and illustrating arguments against dispossessing the Penns. In opposing the Stamp Act as an internal tax he significantly turned to "the principles of the English Constitution," making these principles the basis for colonial rights. In the process, he necessarily discussed his concept of the English Constitution, pointing up its historic representative character, and the liberties under the common law, which he called "the Birthright of Englishmen, and the Safeguard of their Persons and Properties."<sup>57</sup> Since, under the original English Constitution, Englishmen had the privilege of taxing themselves, Englishmen were entitled to the same historic rights in America. The colonial equivalent to Parliament in England was obviously the colonial assembly, which was clearly entitled to decide on colonial taxes. He cited from Gordon's *Cato's Letters* to urge "a little prudent conduct" by Great Britain, lest her colonies be driven to unite against their mother country,<sup>58</sup> and he insisted that the basic principle was constitutional. Magna Charta, he argued, had confirmed the historic rights of Englishmen, rights which crossed the Atlantic with Englishmen migrating to America. The colonial governments were patterned after the English Constitution, and the colonists claimed rights to representative government known anciently in England.<sup>59</sup> The only proper and directly discernible ties between colonies and mother country, Dickinson concluded, should be "*those of affection*; which alone *can* . . . form an everlasting union."<sup>60</sup>

Thus, in his first open disagreement with British policy, Dickinson the conservative was emerging as Dickinson the penman of revolution. As early as 1765 he was insisting on virtual self-government for Englishmen in America as an inherited right, a position Dickinson took as a logical consequence of his legal and historical reading. And as the Stamp Act crisis dragged on into 1766, he came to portray colonial rights in increasingly the same way his favorite English historians described their Saxon constitution—as historically indestructible, no matter what a misguided British government might attempt. The strikingly repetitive theme to his writing at this time

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

was the emphasis upon the essential Englishness of Americans: "I glory in my relation to [Great Britain]," he announced, adding, "Every drop of blood in my heart is *British*."<sup>61</sup> Nor was there any reason why he should not admit his pride: the English connection was the very core of Dickinson's argument for rights by ancestral descent, and his political writing in the next decade demonstrated the consistency and coherence of his historical perspective as enlisted on behalf of colonial rights.

At least one reason for such consistency was the sustained nature of British efforts to raise a revenue from her American colonies. Having abandoned the Stamp Act in 1765, Britain turned to an external tax in the form of import duties contained in the famous Townshend Acts of 1767, and prompted Dickinson's strenuous protest, *The Farmer's Letters*. Here Dickinson pointedly observed that "The people of *Great-Britain*, in support of their privileges, boast much of their antiquity," and it became clear that he was quite delighted to accept such a boast. "It is true they are antient,"<sup>62</sup> Dickinson cheerfully conceded, and in *The Farmer's Letters* ranged far and wide in discussing the antiquity of the privileges of Englishmen, carrying his remarks over into later pamphlets in the 1770's. Looking back to pre-Norman England, Dickinson was happy to proclaim the ancient Germans "the *Fathers of Englishmen*," since the Germanic tribes supplied both the English people and their habits of free government. He deplored the fact that modern English descendants of these original German emigrants to Britain on coming to America found "*arbitrary Government and a standing army* pursuing them even into these woods,"<sup>63</sup> with the rights once enjoyed under the Saxon King Alfred forgotten. Dickinson was frank in his affection for Alfred, whose virtues supplied such a contrast to the behavior of George III. "To one who studies the Anglo-Saxon history," noted Dickinson later, ". . . it is impossible not to contract the fondest and most enthusiastic admiration of his character."<sup>64</sup> But then, under Alfred there had been no standing army such as now faced Englishmen in America, and moving to more recent history Dickinson sug-

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 336.

<sup>63</sup> Dickinson, *Essay on Constitutional Power*, 66 (note).

<sup>64</sup> Dickinson, *A Caution; or, Reflections on the Present Contest Between France and Great Britain* (Philadelphia, 1798), n. p. Dickinson's copy, HSP.

gested that a Tudor king, Henry VII, was responsible for introducing such armies to Britain—in reality to suppress discontent, but "disguised under pretence of majesty and grandeur."<sup>65</sup>

Dickinson was quite attracted to the history of English kings who had, like Henry VII, sought to subvert the ancient privileges of Englishmen, and became "possessed of an unconstitutional power"—again, like George III. Particularly fascinating were the Stuart kings, whose varying fates Dickinson found replete with encouraging political lessons. Charles I he described as a monarch whose head was so filled with "mistaken notions of his own authority" that he literally lost it. Citing Rapin as his source, Dickinson went on to review the melancholy restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, when "the *English* themselves *delivered up* these very rights and privileges to *Charles* the Second, which they had so *passionately* . . . defended against the designs of *Charles* the First."<sup>66</sup> He found that both the second Charles and the second James had violated the "*express rights of their subjects*," seeking to tax Englishmen without their consent, and for this crime James was properly deposed.<sup>67</sup> Historical logic suggested a similar fate for George III unless he respected the rights of Englishmen in America.

Certainly his history had not given Dickinson much room for faith in Englishmen in England. They had signally failed to restore their ancient liberties in the seventeenth century, and too many had seemingly forgotten their heritage in the eighteenth century. The Parliament which in 1688 was supposed to restore the Saxon constitution was now wallowing in bribery and corruption; and with a mother country in advanced stages of political decay, perhaps British misrule was less surprising. Indeed, Dickinson thought, Britain seemed to be applying her own decadent domestic developments to transplanted Englishmen across the Atlantic; the British mistake was their failure to realize that the colonists had better cultivated historical memories, and thus strengthened, were prepared to resist. Actually, Dickinson argued, British tyranny in America was as much a threat to England herself as to her colonies, since America was apparently the last refuge of Englishmen aware of their

<sup>65</sup> *Writings*, ed. Ford, 390-391. Dickinson is citing Rapin again.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 387, 393.

<sup>67</sup> Dickinson, *Essay on Constitutional Power*, 40.

historic rights. In this context, Dickinson was able to argue that "We should be guilty of treason against our sovereign and the majesty of the people of *England*, if we did not oppose [tyranny]." Here was, in effect, a historical mandate for resistance which permitted Dickinson to offer the rather unique argument that opposition to legitimate government was a legitimate and historical duty and not radical or treasonable. "*England*," he insisted, "must be saved in *America*." Furthermore, Dickinson predicted, "she will rejoice that we have resisted—and thank us for having offended her."<sup>68</sup>

This was a wonderfully comforting notion for a cautious man like John Dickinson. He could see himself as being in historical step; it was the British government that was not. He was being true to his inherited rights, and as he repeatedly quoted from Sallust, "I will assuredly contend for that glorious plan of *Liberty* handed down to us from our ancestors."<sup>69</sup> His history revealed that eighteenth-century England was fast approaching the distressing condition known earlier under Stuart despotism, with the added feature of a Parliament no longer in opposition, but kept by and co-operating with the Crown. Failure to resist, concluded Dickinson, "would place us exactly in the same situation the people of *Great-Britain* would have been reduced to, had *James* the first and his family succeeded in their scheme of arbitrary power." In fact, the historically-minded Dickinson went so far as to suggest a change in names to better illustrate the political problems facing colonial America: substitute the Stuarts for Parliament, Britons for Americans, he urged, and the arguments of the seventeenth century "apply with inexpressible force and appositeness in maintainance of our cause, and in refutation of the pretensions set up by their too forgetful posterity, over their unhappy colonists."<sup>70</sup> Obviously, British administration, be it represented by parliament, monarch, or both, could not win against Dickinson's history. Both reminded him too vividly of past tyrants, and both were faithless to their historic heritage.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 62 (note).

<sup>69</sup> *Writings*, ed. Ford, 9, 406. His translation differed slightly when employing the quotation in the last of his *Farmer's Letters*: "For my part I am resolved to contend for the liberty delivered down to me by my ancestors." Note Dickinson's insistent claim to rights by racial descent: "we are not Sea Poys, nor Marattas, but *British Subjects*, who are born to Liberty, who know its Worth, and who prize it high." *Ibid.*, 460.

<sup>70</sup> Dickinson, *Essay on Constitutional Power*, 70-79.

To his good friend Thomas McKean, Dickinson once commented, "I have from the first outset in public life been deeply affected by the Charms of Liberty,"<sup>71</sup> Dickinson's political career amply testifies to the truth of this admission. But the charms that so permanently seduced Dickinson were not merely historical. As an intelligently alive young man in the eighteenth century, he had been well exposed to the political philosophy that his history usually took for granted. He was deeply aware of "the immutable and unalienable rights of human nature"<sup>72</sup> which preceded political privileges inscribed in ancient constitutions, and once criticized those whose worship of precedent ignored man's God-given natural rights. "The Error of those who reason by precedent drawn from antiquity," Dickinson observed, ". . . is that they do not go far enough into antiquity." And he explained that "If we go back far enough we come to the time when man came from the Hand of his Maker"; this, Dickinson insisted, was "the origin of Man" and "the Origin of his Rights."<sup>73</sup> In a sense, he viewed history as a confirmation of John Locke's political theory, blessed with a persuasiveness less common with the abstractions of philosophy. A conservative who always believed in political prudence, Dickinson was reluctant to engage in a debate on ideals or principles, fearful of departing from his preferred path of moderation. "Moderation in every thing is the Source of Happiness," he commented in 1762, even courageously extending this maxim to "too much loving," and "too much Reading."<sup>74</sup> But he frankly enjoyed reading history, and always found it "entertaining and instructive."<sup>75</sup> History instructed Dickinson in his constitutional rights and their ancient derivation, and gave him a vital foundation upon which to base his resistance to British interference with colonial government.

However, if his history tended to open the door of revolution to this cautious conservative, it should be remembered that Dickinson did not pass through to sign the Declaration of Independence. His major contribution to the American Revolution was in supplying a

<sup>71</sup> Dickinson to Thomas McKean, Mar. 4, 1801, McKean Manuscripts, HSP.

<sup>72</sup> Dickinson, *Essay on Constitutional Power*, 67-68. And yet he returned again to the rights of Englishmen: "We claim in the colonies these and no other rights." *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>73</sup> Dickinson "On Government," Logan Manuscripts, HSP.

<sup>74</sup> Dickinson to Thomas McKean, June 8, 1762, McKean Manuscripts, HSP.

<sup>75</sup> Dickinson, *Writings*, II, 117.

sustained historical justification for resistance to a mother country he believed had forgotten too much history. His keynote was the legal and historical propriety of resistance, and at the same time a warning to England of the risks her policies entailed. But conservative though he was, Dickinson became in a sense a prisoner to his own historical logic, a victim to his own historical persuasion. His hesitation upon the brink of independence came mainly from a lack of conviction on the positive political prudence of such a move at that moment. He knew too well the consequences of a rash neglect of prudence, and if George III was another James II, Dickinson had no overwhelming ambition to become another beheaded Duke of Monmouth.

Dickinson never faltered in his devotion to the past as a guide to the future and an aid to understanding the present. He always found history a source of political wisdom, significantly returning to the past when discussing the new constitution to be framed in 1787 for the new nation he helped create. "Reason may mislead us," Dickinson still insisted, and urged instead that "experience must be our only guide."<sup>76</sup> Without his own vicarious experience, without his personal historical perspective, perhaps John Dickinson would never have been even a reluctant rebel.

*Pennsylvania State University*

H. TREVOR COLBOURN

<sup>76</sup> *Writings of James Madison*, ed. by Gaillard Hunt (New York, 1902), IV, 186-187.



*The*  
*John Dickinson*  
*Mansion*



THE  
JOHN DICKINSON  
MANSION

By LEON DEVALINGER, JR.  
Delaware State Archivist

JOHN DICKINSON, the eldest child of Samuel and Mary (Cadwallader) Dickinson, was born November 2, 1732, at their estate "Crosia-doré" in Talbot County, Maryland. Here he lived until January of 1740 when his father, Samuel Dickinson, moved his family to Kent County, Delaware, where he had purchased large tracts of land for his plantation. Included among his landholdings were the tracts "Town Point," "Kingston upon Hull," "Burton's Delight," "Mulberry Swamp," and part of "Poplar Neck." It was upon a part of "Kingston upon Hull" that Samuel Dickinson built the brick mansion where he resided while First Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Kent County, and where he reared his family. It was here also where he was buried following his death on July 6, 1760.

*Dickinson's Boyhood Home*

Here too his sons, John and Philemon, were carefully educated by William Killen, a young Irish tutor who later became Chief Justice and the first Chancellor of Delaware. In 1750, when John Dickinson was eighteen years old, he went to Philadelphia where his father had arranged for him to read law in the office of John Moland, Esquire, the King's attorney in the Province of

Pennsylvania. His studies continued there until 1753 when Judge Dickinson permitted him to go to London where he studied law at the Middle Temple. There he continued his studies until 1757, when he returned to Philadelphia and began the practice of his profession. He undoubtedly visited his parents in Kent County and maintained his contacts there, for in October of 1760 he was elected a member of the Assembly from that county.

Two years later he was elected a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly from the City of Philadelphia where he married on July 19, 1770, Mary Norris, the daughter of Isaac Norris of "Fairhill." Although he continued to see his old friends George Read, Thomas McKean, and Caesar Rodney from the Three Lower Counties in the Stamp Act Congress, the First and Second Continental Congresses, where he helped represent Pennsylvania, his interests and residence were in the State until 1776. In this year he continued his advocacy of a general confederation of all American colonies under a constitution with continental control before resorting to armed force to gain independence. Having failed in his political struggle with John Adams and his faction to achieve this, Dickinson absented himself from Congress and refrained from signing the Declaration of Independence.

Within a week of the Declaration of Independence he marched to Elizabethtown at the head of his regiment of Pennsylvania militia against the enemy who were invading the State of New Jersey. Later that year when his regiment's period of enlistment expired, he returned

to Philadelphia. On December 10, 1776, when he knew that Congress would adjourn to some other place and when it was generally believed that the British would capture Philadelphia, he decided to move his wife and family to his farm in Kent County. At the end of the six-day carriage trip, Dickinson stated: "On the sixteenth of December, I arrived at my house in Kent, where my tenant spared me two rooms; and I was enough employed in procuring necessaries for those I carried with me."

*Dickinson A Brigadier General*

Apparently their stay at the mansion in Kent was extended through most of the next year, for early in 1777 he enlisted as a private in Captain Stephen Lewis's Company of Delaware militia and served "... with my musket upon my shoulder during the whole tour of duty performed that summer by the militia of that State, when the British army landed at the Head of Elk, and was advancing towards this city [Philadelphia]." Following this he went about the State collecting arms and ammunition to help supply the militia. In recognition of his efforts, Delaware in October, 1777, commissioned him a brigadier general of the militia. The following year he was back at his old role as "Penman of Revolution" when he drafted the Articles of Confederation and signed as a delegate from Delaware.

It is not known how long Dickinson and his family remained at the mansion near Dover, but apparently they had returned to Philadelphia before August of 1778 as a child was born to them there at that time. In all probability his

visits to Kent County were limited to annual inspection trips of his thirteen-hundred-acre plantation until August of 1781. At that time a party of sixteen Tories from New York landed from a whaleboat in the vicinity of Kitts Hummock and marched inland to the Dickinson Mansion. They frightened his slaves and stole the silver, a large quantity of his wife's clothes, all of his meat supply, and other provisions; and, although they did not destroy his library, they marched away with one of his slaves after greatly disturbing the whole countryside.

*Dickinson Returns to Mansion*

Dickinson hastened from his home near Philadelphia to determine the loss and set his affairs in order. What he thought would be a short trip turned into a sojourn of sixteen months. While staying at his estate to correct the losses by pillage the smokehouse was resupplied with meat, undeveloped fields were grubbed and cleared, a road to a neighbor was straightened, a domestic problem of his tenant was solved, and the majority of his slaves were manumitted.

Although he made plans early in the fall of 1781 to return to his home and family in Philadelphia, his old friend George Read persuaded him to stand for election as a member of the Council from New Castle County in place of Samuel Patterson. He was elected on the first of October and took his seat on the twentieth of that month when the Assembly and the Council met in Dover. In this body he worked assiduously, drafting bills which would correct a number of the weaknesses in the State's governmental

structure. Toward the closing days of the session at the end of October, he wrote to his wife of his approaching return to Philadelphia and she replied urging him to come home at the first opportunity. She also wrote regarding the safe-keeping of their possessions at the mansion in this manner:

"If thy fr[ien]d [William] Killen would Lend thee a room in his House, or Dr. [Charles] Ridgely, and thee would have our things packd and placed in it for a little while, wd it not be best; there is a great deal of China queens ware & Pewter, that was I there I would try to secure, and that Large bed could not be purchased for £50. ye Glasses are valuable so is ye Kitchen furniture, & flat Irons & innumerable things."

One of the last and most important duties of that legislative session was the selection of a new president or governor. The two houses met together on November 6, 1781, when Dickinson was declared elected despite his protests, by a vote of twenty-five to one: the one vote obviously being his own. The next day he wrote to his wife of the news of his unanimous election and of his attempts to avoid acceptance of this office. It meant, of course, that he would not return to "Fairhill" and that they would take up their residence in Delaware.

Through the remainder of 1781 and most of 1782, until he resigned to accept the Presidency of the State of Pennsylvania, he resided at this mansion.

In 1786, John Dickinson was living in Wil-

mington and from there he journeyed with other delegates from this state to the capital of Maryland to attend the Annapolis Convention. That meeting, of which Dickinson was chosen chairman, did not accomplish its intended purpose but it did pave the way for the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia the next year. Delaware's delegates of John Dickinson; George Reed; Jacob Broom; Gunning Bedford, Jr.; and Richard Bassett went instructed to Philadelphia not to surrender any of the state's rights of representation. Each of these delegates represented Delaware well in the Convention but that is another story.

#### *Dickinson at Constitutional Convention*

Dickinson was especially active in advocating equal representation in the Senate for all states. His advocacy of this and the support it received from the Delaware delegates and the other small states is largely responsible for our having two Senators in the Congress today.

After the Constitutional Convention had completed its work, and the delegates had signed this great document, Dickinson with the other members from Delaware returned home and began working to acquaint the citizens of Delaware with the provisions of the Constitution. As he had drafted the Articles of Confederation, no one was in a better position than he to recognize the weaknesses of that frame of government. By addresses and his writings, for which he was noted, he urged the public in a series of stirring letters signed "*Fabius*" to hasten in the ratification of the new Federal Constitution.

The fact that Delaware was the first state to ratify on December 7, 1787 is not accidental. Our delegates, who attended the Annapolis Convention and the Constitutional Convention, knew of the need of a new frame of Federal government and they had carefully instructed the citizens of Delaware in the desirability and necessity of this newer, stronger system of government. In this Dickinson was a leader. This was his last great public act on a national scale. In 1791 and 1792 he was again to lead the people of Delaware in drafting a Constitution which replaced the early stop-gap frame of government adopted in 1776.

Following his term of office as Chief Executive of the State of Pennsylvania, he returned to Delaware and took up residence in Wilmington, where he lived for a while in houses which he rented until about 1800 when he built a mansion at Eighth and Market Streets, the site which was later occupied by the Wilmington Institute Free Library. He was, in the meantime, continuing his visits to his boyhood home to inspect the plantation and care for its many needs.

In 1804 a disastrous fire swept the old mansion house with the result that not much remained but the four walls. In his correspondence with the Insurance Company of North America, Dickinson pointed out that it was the most substantially built house in the state, having brick walls eighteen inches thick at the watertable and fourteen inches thick from there on up. As he apparently intended that the mansion should thenceforth be used only by the tenants, he decided to replace the interior woodwork in a plain

substantial manner. His correspondence reveals that this work was completed in 1806, and much of the information for the present restoration of the mansion was gleaned from his instructions and correspondence of that period. During much of the two-year period when the fire damage was being corrected, he was living either with friends in the neighborhood or at the mansion.

He died in 1808 at his home in Wilmington, where he was buried in the Friends Meeting yard at Fourth and West Streets.

#### *Restoration*

A careful study is being made of historic materials as well as the building itself before undertaking the full restoration. Those materials of the original mansion which are found to be in good condition will be re-used in the restoration. An effort will be made to restore and re-furnish the mansion as faithfully as possible of the period when John Dickinson last knew it. Some of the old hardware, missing from the mansion, has been kindly presented for its restoration and other old hardware we hope to obtain by gift or purchase.

The history of this historic house is being developed by Public Archives Commission research. However, it is believed additional information can be added from early photographs, sketches, diaries, or from personal recollections of tenants who have lived in it. Such data will be welcomed by Leon deValinger, Jr., Director of The Delaware State Museum, 316 South Governors Avenue, Dover, Delaware. (Telephone: Dover 4297).

## FRIENDS OF THE JOHN DICKINSON MANSION

INCORPORATED

### *Directors*

HON. JAMES M. TUNNELL, JR., President

MRS. CHARLES L. REESE, JR., Vice President

HON. W. W. HARRINGTON, Vice President

MR. THEODORE MARVIN

MRS. GEORGE R. MILLER, JR.

MRS. LAWRENCE N. THOMAS

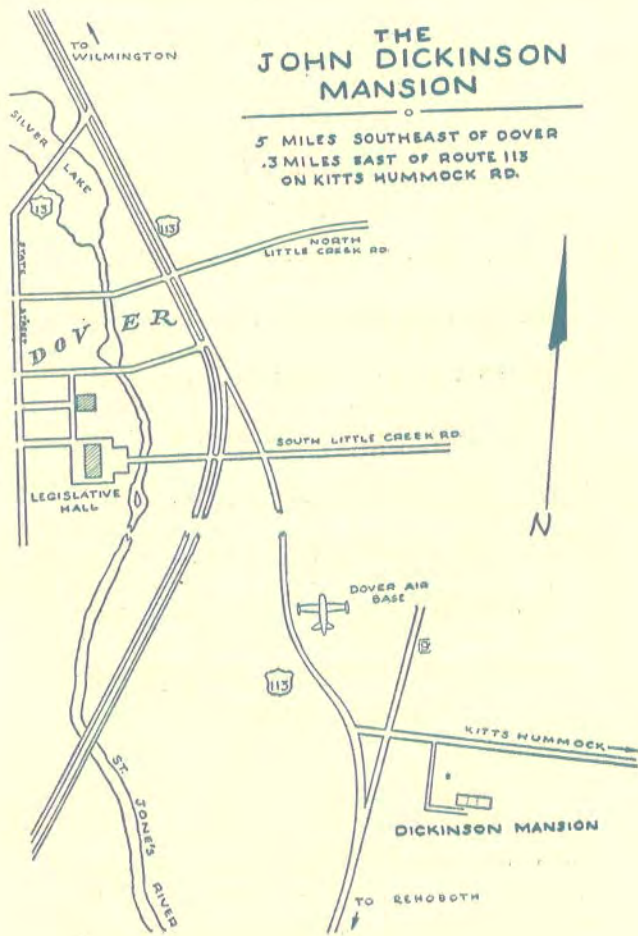
GOVERNOR ELBERT N. CARVEL, ex-officio

MRS. WILLIAM A. WORTH, Secretary-Treasurer,  
Greenville, Delaware

*Persons interested in John Dickinson and his mansion are urged to become members of Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion. Annual dues are two dollars, payable to Secretary-Treasurer.*

# THE JOHN DICKINSON MANSION

5 MILES SOUTHEAST OF DOVER  
.3 MILES EAST OF ROUTE 113  
ON KITTS HUMMOCK RD.



## THE HOUSE ON JONES NECK

By J. H. POWELL, PH. D.

**I**N THE VERY HEART of the Kent County flatlands, five miles down St. Jones River below Dover, stands the Dickinson Mansion. It is an old house, as we measure age in America, for it is well into its third century. And it is a handsome place, with all the calm, neat dignity, the balanced elegance and poise of the Georgian period to which it belongs.

No high point rises in the landscape hereabouts, no pedestal from which to take a long view. But such prospect over the flatlands as the streambank offers, this house commands. It is perfectly placed, the home of a land-owner who would survey his fields and his stock. And it is perfectly designed to fit on its site.

Once there was a river-landing here, and wharves. Once this house was the center of a great agricultural enterprise, and Delaware shallows plied up and down the St. Jones, bringing Philadelphia goods to the Dickinsons, taking cargoes of wheat and corn in return. This was in the amphibious age of America, an age long gone. But through the years of decay the house has stood, as solidly as it stood in the years of its brisk, bustling greatness. In and around its walls, the processes of birth and death, the flush of life and the annual repetitions of nature's cycle have endlessly flowed. Nothing in the changes of the generations has had more permanence than this strong facade men's hands have shaped.

For this house is Delaware history in brick and mortar. Roaming these fields, the visitor is brought to think of that ancient struggle of Lord Baltimore to seize the Delaware bayside from the Duke of York, later from William Penn; the fine Mansion itself evokes the stable world of George II, when the British Empire was at its zenith; and the rank marsh rushes growing in the sandy bottom suggest another American picture, for these grasses were gathered every year in the 1880's and 1890's, and sold to the traction companies of Philadelphia, who strewed them on the floors of horse cars to keep the feet of the passengers warm.

Scenes of this house are peaceful scenes — the turkey buzzards sunning and marsh herons postured in a pool, scenes of tillage and husbandry, of trade in good season and bad, the episodes of the farmer's year. But there have been touching moments, too — the return of the young John Dickinson from his studies in England, that return his father had feared he would never see; and moments of violence, such as the great fire, or the time the Tories sacked the house in the midst of the Revolution. Two hundred years is a long, long time.

The fame of this house is John Dickinson's fame. Here he was raised from his eighth to his eighteenth year, here he began his public career in the busy matters of men and measures, here was always throughout his life the very core of his landed fortune. "My plantation in Kent," Dickinson called it, "my house on Jones Neck." Even after his removal to Philadelphia, he would interrupt his strenuous life for regular spring and fall visits here; his correspondence was full of the management of his great estate; Jones Neck was his healing, refreshing root in the soil.

Someone once said of John Dickinson, the "Penman of the Revolution," that it was he who "first opened the Eyes of Americans to see their Rights and contend for them." He was spokesman for all the colonies during the Stamp Act year. His pamphlets organized American opposition, and defined the cause of resistance to British measures. Then he propounded his original theories of empire in his "Farmer's Letters," after the Townshend Acts; the "Farmer's Letters" was his greatest work, a major event in the history of the American mind. All the rest of his life, Dickinson was popularly called "The Farmer." He dominated the First and Second Continental Congresses, was the voice of lawful and orderly resistance. Then, because his way was the middle way, he opposed independence in 1776, and by this stand lost his popularity. Slowly he regained it — as a colonel in the field with Pennsylvania troops, as a private in the Delaware militia, as brigadier general in Delaware, as a congressman from this state and from Pennsylvania, as President of Delaware, then President of Pennsylvania; as a leading member of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and defender of the new government, as a principal author of the new constitution of Delaware of 1792, as a Jeffersonian republican, and elder statesman of the Revolutionary generation.

Though he was born in Maryland, and spent most of his time for thirty years in Pennsylvania, Delaware was his first constituency, and his last; "my affection and gratitude to this State," he wrote, "I never will

resign but with my life." Dickinson was many things in his time — assemblyman, lawyer, judge, statesman, pamphleteer, philanthropist, religious enthusiast. But always he remained what his father had made him, one of America's largest, busiest, richest landowners. This house on Jones Neck was his seat.

"With Delight," he wrote once, "I recall, I dwell upon those chearful happy Scenes I have spent with my Honour'd Parents: Like Roses, they Preserve their Sweetness, tho faded, and entertain in Idea, as they once diverted in Reality. Tho past, they are not forgot, & as long as they are remembred, they will be pleasing."

The story of this Mansion begins long before John Dickinson. It is his father Samuel's story, and it involves elements dim in John's background, which shaped his heritage and his character, but which were far removed from the life of the "Pennsylvania Farmer" himself. Kent County history cannot start in Jones Neck. Neither can the story of this Mansion.

It is a great thing in a man's life when he builds a house. Samuel Dickinson, rich landowner though he was, in all his seventy years built only one, this one. It is with Samuel Dickinson the visitor on Jones Neck must begin — begin that day long ago when, after a hard overland journey of more than seventy miles the Maryland planter and lawyer opened the big Family Bible he kept his records in, and wrote a laconic sentence:

"I and my wife and Children Came up to my Plantation  
in Kent to live this 18th Day of January 1740 Old  
Stile which is the 29th Day of January 1741 New Stile."

It was Samuel Dickinson who planned that this house should be his dwelling place, and the seat of his family forever.

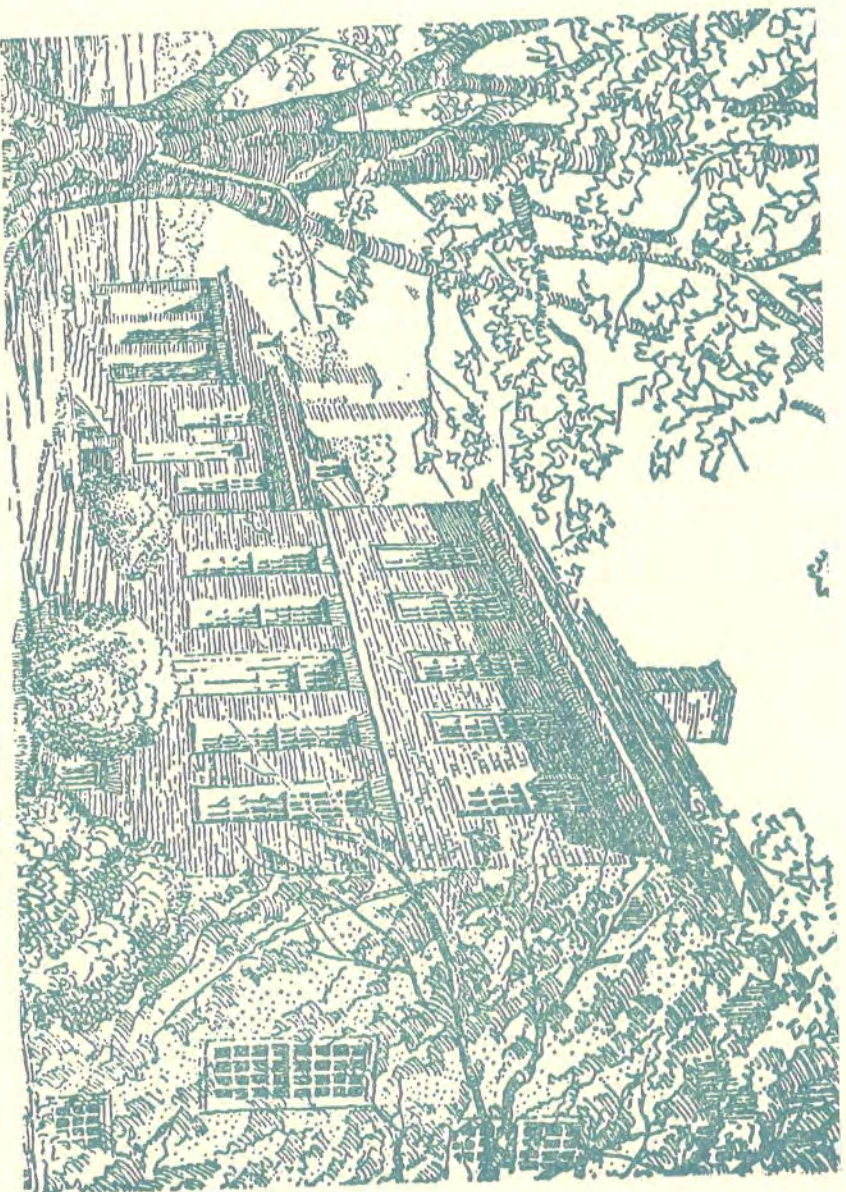
Now all kinds of Americans people our past — the sea captain, the pioneer, the Indian scout, the inventor, the lawyer in court and assembly, the explorer alone on the vast flat prairie. America offers a rich host of images to the imagination. But Samuel Dickinson's world was a firm, secure world, fixed in its terms and surely permanent. He was born as William and Mary ascended their troubled thrones; he died the year young George III became king. His life spanned the stable Hanoverian period, in the stable parts of colonial America — spanned its victories, its prosperity, its *Pax Britannica*. Samuel Dickinson conquered no wilderness, he only conquered himself. He made a good, rich life, and in his prosperity prepared the same future for his children. It was not in his dreams that their world should cast all that stability aside, abandon the house he had built on his land, as well as the house he had built in his heart.

When he came up to his plantation in Kent, he was already fifty-two years old, already a successful man of great wealth. He thought he knew what he was doing. He thought he was converting his wealth from tobacco to wheat, playing the best of both markets, and assisting himself by moving closer to his entrepot, Philadelphia. He was also pleasing his wife. His fifty-two years had been a careful preparation. Samuel Dickinson was not the sort of man whom life takes unawares. To him, America was already an old, long-lived-in place, an environment he had mastered. He was, after all, the third Dickinson to dwell in these provinces.

He had never seen his grandfather, the first Dickinson, who died eight years before he was born. One time Samuel entered in his great Bible all he knew of Walter, in one sentence: he "Came Into Virginia and Married a Wife named Jane." This Walter did indeed do, when he was past thirty years old, and he moved twice more — to Anne Arundel County in Maryland, and then finally to the banks of the Choptank on the Eastern Shore, near the village of Trappe in Talbot County, where he purchased four hundred acres of land and built a great house which he called "Crosiadore" — which is to say, Cross of Gold. The house was a typical Maryland cross house, the gold was the Orinoco leaf tobacco. There three generations of Dickinsons were born; there the plantation is today in the hands of a Dickinson descendant.

Walter Dickinson harvested his dusty yellow gold with energy and success. He was no friend to the Lord Proprietor, he took part in uprisings against him, but still he played My Lord Baltimore's game in one respect, for in September, 1676, he purchased two farms clear across the peninsula on the Delaware Bay — eight hundred acres in lands Lord Baltimore claimed but which Charles II had also granted to the Duke of York. This was the start of the Jones Neck patrimony in the Dickinson family.

Baltimore subsidized migration thither, hoping that squatters under his patents would fill the Delaware land and buttress his claims. He did so more earnestly after 1682, when William Penn received a charter to the Delaware coast. It is a fascinating story, this vendetta of squatters and patents by which Baltimore sought to vitiate Penn's charter. Walter Dickinson was part of it. But in 1685 the Lords of Trade ruled against Baltimore, and thereby Walter Dickinson's lands came to lie in two separate provinces, Maryland and Delaware. They also came to lie in two separate families; for when Walter died in March, 1681, he left "Crosia-



VIEW OF DICKINSON MANSION FOLLOWING RESTORATION  
—Sketch by Albert Kruse

child Dickinson's own age who grew up with him on the plantation. The young master and servant doubtless enjoyed their adventures over to "Crosiadore" to confer with Henry and Cousin Charles Dickinson in Dorset. Samuel supervised his Chesapeake lands as carefully as he could, but no amount of care could forestall the decay that inevitably followed absenteeism. Henry acted for him in Talbot County, Charles Dickinson in Dorchester; both received detailed directions from the Judge in Jones Neck. Still, things did not go well with the tobacco interest. In 1747, when he was fifteen, John was sent by his father to Talbot County with bills of exchange drawn on the London factor John Hanbury to pay his Michaelmas quit-rents. Apparently his Maryland tobacco had not borne even that fixed cost. He carried a letter to Thomas Bozman, collector, in which Samuel detailed all his lands and the rents due on them; he took back a receipt from Friend Bozman.

Young John made these trips regularly. Some of the rent collections from the Maryland farms involved difficult finance: at Christmas time there was frequently as much as five thousand pounds sterling-worth of London bills to be brought back to Kent. And distance of the owner from his farms created all sorts of problems. One time the Judge was so exasperated as to accuse his cousin Charles of cheating, to which the Dorset collector rejoined that though he was a man of humble station, he despised sharp dealing as much "as thou of Superior Estates or Degrees." On another occasion Charles had discouraging news of the Dorset tenants for the distant owner: "Tregoe pays well. Arnett is far behind & unless he Can Do Something this year (altho its a bad one on us all in General) I must Call on him. They are plagueing me for nails but will Give them none without orders . . . Smith's note I got from Henry some time agoe but you'll be Set to Get any thing for it [*i. e.*, tobacco] has Gone to the Doggs . . . All whole Gold (German excepted) Goes at 3.17. pound Sterling; German will not pass at any thing with us . . ." In these lands and these problems, John Dickinson received his apprenticeship. From land, after his father's death, he would receive much of his wealth.

In Delaware, the youth had an even more extensive experience in land management than in Maryland, and what he learned about the Jones Neck plantation was to be useful to him all his days. Wherever he was, whatever the state of his public career, he always had to spend much of his time with his lands — writing leases and renewals of leases, authorizing the building of fences, draining of swamps, or erection of

barns, planning the marketing of crops and the operations of the next year, confronting the manifold problems of little lives.

In the midst of a critical election in Philadelphia he must turn his attention to listing the cows, oxen, horses, mules, sheep and hogs on one of his properties. From addressing the Pennsylvania Assembly he must retire to his study and write a soothing letter to his litigious and envious Jones Neck neighbor Thomas Rodney. He could not attend the Federal Convention of 1787 until he had spent a month in Kent on his regular spring trip. From his retirement in Wilmington, he must make a journey to Philadelphia to dicker with the insurance company over repairing the Mansion after it has burnt.

He must deal with hundreds of incidents, vignettes of human experience, which contain both tragedy and comedy in the brief glimpses they give us into his Jones Neck affairs. Mary Hays, widow, two weeks after her husband's death has been put off the Kent farm she had supposed was Dickinson's, by a man who claims to be the new owner; she writes for advice and help: "now I have neither house nor home to put my head in now I have nothing to trust to but the Almighty God and your honour . . ." Deborah White, also a widow, petitions to clear the land for a turnip field; her Negroes will not obey her, the peach orchard is a den of thieves, her slaves full of mischief: "If the old Blacks say that I Picked the Woll I offered them it is notorious false for I weighed all the woll that Come off the Sheep Except three fleecis to make their Compliment which I never opened, to See Whether it was good or bad the artickles mentioned Clean well but I Expect no Cleaner than Come of the Sheeps Back."

During the War of the Revolution, when the British marched into Philadelphia to occupy the city, the famous John Dickinson was one of their principal targets. His fine seat "Fairhill" on the Germantown Road was burned, and he himself was hunted by Howe's troops. But the Mansion on Jones Neck furnished a refuge; he sent his family down here to Kent while he followed his public employments at Dover, Wilmington, and with the itinerant Congress. During the occupation of Philadelphia, Deborah Logan (cousin of John Dickinson's wife) wrote a letter from "Stenton" behind the British lines to "Mary Dickinson, near Dover." As she sealed it, Debby added this endorsement below the address:

I hope if this letter falls into the hands of any in Authority they will excuse every thing in it, that is not Agreeable to their minds when they reflect that it comes from a giddy girl — who has no intentions of hurting any one, and she hopes they will be so polite As to Seal it up again & send it to the person to whom it is directed.

Mary received the letter in the house on Jones Neck.

Occupation of Philadelphia closed the traffic on the Delaware River, one immediate result of which was that the poor of the city during the hard winter while Washington was at Valley Forge could get no firewood. Dickinson sent two hundred cords from Kent as a donation; he sent grain and meat, too, that Philadelphians might not starve.

Long after the Dickinsons were safely back in the liberated city, the war reached Jones Neck. It was in August, 1781; the Board of Associated Loyalists in New York planned a raid which would strike both at John Dickinson and at the patriots in Delaware. About seven o'clock on a hot, sultry morning, a well-armed party of sixteen Tories, led by one Nash, landed from whaleboats on the shores of the Delaware Bay near the mouth of St. Jones River. They marched up past the tenant farms clear to the Mansion, where they demanded the keys from the terrified Negro servants. For two hours they systematically looted the house. Chests of silver, all the plate except a few teaspoons, Mrs. Dickinson's clothing, Dickinson's too, and a great quantity of linens, "all your Bottled wine—two barrels of Cherry bounce—your whole stock of Salted Meat, and your Negro Man Isaac, who went voluntarily with them," they carried to Kitts Hummock, where a boat had been hauled up. One of the marauders was heard to say to Dickinson's Negroes that "they would rather have their Master than all they had taken."

It was a shocking episode. Mrs. Dickinson was concerned to know what was lost: "there is a great deal of China queens ware & Pewter — that was I there I would try to secure, and that Large bed could not be purchased for £50, ye Glasses are valuable so is ye Kitchen furniture — & flat Irons — & innumerable things —"

John Dickinson came down at once to put his pillaged estate in order. While he was here, to his genuine surprise, he was chosen President of The Delaware State, and though he returned to Pennsylvania after only a single year, still the inflation and depression of the post-war period brought him more and more into Kent. He grubbed and cleared new

land, he acquired even more farms, he straightened the road down the Neck, he let contracts for breaking and swingling flax, he rearranged all his tenant leases, providing for payment in wheat, Indian corn, wool, Delaware money — whatever his tenants could find to pay in. And also in 1781 he freed all his slaves, Violet among them, by manumission — and then gave them permanent, paid employment at the Mansion House and on the plantation.

Maryland had been the place of John Dickinson's birth, Philadelphia the center of his public life, Wilmington the scene of his retirement. But the House on Jones Neck was his longest home, the background from which he came, the hub and center always of his fortune. John Dickinson's world was far different from his father's. Colonial America with its elegant stability and British-oriented culture was quickly supplanted in the turmoil of the son's Revolutionary age. These men, father and son, spanned in their two lives the years between 1689 and 1808, the years between Locke and Jefferson, between James II and Napoleon, between Dryden and Shelley. The whole of the eighteenth century passed before them as they developed their Jones Neck plantation. It was Samuel Dickinson, the father, a whole generation older than his brilliant son, who built the conditions of both their living. He built well and solidly, both a life and a profession, that endured even though the upheaval of his world.

Samuel was the genius of the Jones Neck estate. He saw his son grow to manhood, sent him to England, saw him return; he lived till John Dickinson was established as one of the brightest and busiest lawyers in Philadelphia.

Then one day, when none but his wife was about in the great house on Jones Neck, Samuel Dickinson's chronic illnesses suddenly seized him with something worse than gout. Fast riders were sent off to Maryland and Philadelphia, but neither Henry nor John nor Philemon arrived in time. Samuel Dickinson died quickly and unexpectedly. But even for this he had carefully prepared. His elaborate will described his whole life, and what he had planned for his sons. Samuel Dickinson had committed John forever to the land — to the pattern of proprietorship, the vigorous realities of the soil and the people who tilled it.

Perhaps it was this pattern and all that it meant, all that his father had done in his life on the land, that John Dickinson held in his mind when he began his most famous work with the words, *I am a Farmer . . .*

Adapt.  
vol II, p 1078  
Del. Guide  
# 396.

52  
21  
59

## The Dickinson Mansion

John Dickinson, the eldest child of Samuel and Mary (Casswell) Dickinson was born November 2, 1732 at their estate "Cocoa-dore" in Talbot County, Maryland. When he lived with January of 1740 when Samuel Dickinson moved with his family to Kent County, Delaware where he had purchased large tracts of land for his plantation. Included among his landholdings were the tracts "Town Point," "Roxington upon Hill," "Buxton's Delight," "Marlberry Swamp" and part of "Poplar Neck". It was upon a part of "Roxington upon Hill" that he built the brick mansion where he resided as Judge Dickinson, Chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Kent County, and where he raised his family. It was here also where he was buried following his death on July 9, 1760.

When too his son John was Dickinson was carefully educated by William Ritten, a young Irish tutor who later became Chief Justice and the first Chancellor of Delaware. In 1750, when John Dickinson was eighteen years old, he went to Philadelphia where his father had arranged for him to read law in the office of John Woodard, Esquire, the King's attorney in the Province of Pennsylvania. His studies continued there until 1753 when Judge Dickinson permitted him to go to London where he studied law at the Middle Temple. When he returned until 1757, when he returned to Philadelphia and began the practice of his profession. He undoubtedly visited his parents in Kent County and maintained his contacts there for in October of 1760 he was elected a member of the

Assembly from that County.

Two years later he was elected a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly from the City of Philadelphia where he married on July 19, 1770, Mary Morris the daughter of Isaac Morris of "Fairhill". Although he continued to see his old friend George Ross, Thomas McKean and Isaac Rodney from the Blue Lanes Counties in the Stamp Act Congress, the Street and Read Continental Congresses, when he helped represent Pennsylvania, his interests and residence were in that State until 1776. In this year he continued his advocacy of a general confederation of all American colonies under a constitution with continental control before meeting to armed force to gain independence. Having failed in his political struggle with John Adams and his faction to achieve this, Dickinson absented himself from Congress and refrained from signing the Declaration of Independence.

Within a week of the Declaration of Independence he marched, <sup>to Elizabethtown</sup> at the head of his regiment of Pennsylvania militia against the enemy who were invading the State of New Jersey. Later that year when his regiment's period of enlistment expired he returned to Philadelphia. On December 10, 1776 when he knew that Congress would adjourn to some other place and when it was generally believed that the British would capture Philadelphia, he decided to move his wife and family to his farm in West County. At the end of the six day coverage trip, Dickinson states: "On the entrance of

77  
December, I arrived at my house in Kent, where my  
tenant spared me two rooms; and I was enough employed  
in procuring necessaries for those I carried with me,

Apparently their stay at the mansion in Kent was  
extended through most of the next year for early in  
1777 he enlisted as a private in Captain Stephen Ferris's  
Company of Delaware militia and served "... with  
my musket upon my shoulder during the whole  
term of duty performed that summer by the militia  
of that State, when the British army landed at  
the Head of Elk, and was advancing towards the  
city [Philadelphia]." Following this he went about  
the State collecting arms and ammunition to help  
supply the militia. In recognition of his efforts ~~the~~  
~~the~~ Delaware in October 1777 commissioned him  
a brigadier general of the militia. The following  
year he was back at his old role as "Pennsylvanian  
of Revolution" when he drafted the Articles of  
Confederation and served as a delegate from Delaware.  
It is not known how long Dickinson and his  
family remained at the mansion near Dover, but apparently they  
had returned to Philadelphia before August of 1778 as a  
child was born to them <sup>there</sup> at that time. In all probability  
his visits to Kent County were limited to annual  
inspections of his thirteen hundred acre plantation  
until August of 1781. At that time

Logan Mss. Dickinson  
Notes, Vol. 7, Folder 11  
Hist. Soc. Penna.

The plainest Chair is Doolan a Dogen  
The others with Rolling Rock 36 Doolan a  
Dogen.

The arm chair is Doolan rock,  
The other Ten Doolan,  
Joseph Bunker, Windsor Chairmaker  
South Third Street, No. 97 Philadelphia

## The Dickinson Mansion

John Dickinson, the eldest child of Samuel and Mary (Cadwallader) Dickinson was born November 2, 1732 at their estate "Crosia-doré" in Talbot County, Maryland. Here he lived until January of 1740 when Samuel Dickinson moved with his family to Kent County, Delaware, where he had purchased large tracts of land for his plantation. Included among his landholdings were the tracts "Town Point", "Kingston upon Hull", "Burton's Delight", "Mulberry Swamp" and part of "Poplar Neck". It was upon a part of "Kingston upon Hull" that he built the brick mansion where he resided as Judge Dickinson, First Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Kent County, and where he raised his family. It was here also where he was buried following his death on July 6, 1760.

Here too his sons John and Philemon were carefully educated by William Killen, a young Irish tutor who later became Chief Justice and the first Chancellor of Delaware. In 1750, when John Dickinson was eighteen years old, he went to Philadelphia where his father had arranged for him to read law in the office of John Moland, Esquire, the King's attorney in the Province of Pennsylvania. His studies continued there until 1753 when Judge Dickinson permitted him to go to London where he studied law at the Middle Temple. There he continued his studies until 1757, when he returned to Philadelphia and began the practice of his profession. He undoubtedly visited his parents in Kent County and maintained his contacts there for in October of 1760 he was elected a member of the Assembly from that County.

Two years later he was elected a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly from the City of Philadelphia where he married on July 19, 1770, Mary Norris, the daughter of Isaac Norris of "Fairhill". Although he continued to see his old friends George Read, Thomas McKean and Caesar Rodney from the Three Lower Counties in the Stamp Act Congress, the First and Second Continental Congresses, where he helped represent Pennsylvania, his interests and residence were in the State until 1776. In this year he continued his advocacy of a general confederation of all American colonies under a constitution with continental control before resorting to armed force to gain independence. Having failed in his political struggle with John Adams and his faction to achieve this, Dickinson absented himself from Congress and refrained from signing the Declaration of Independence.

Within a week of the Declaration of Independence he marched to Elizabethtown at the head of his regiment of Pennsylvania militia against the enemy who were invading the State of New Jersey. Later that year when his regiment's period of enlistment expired he returned to Philadelphia. On December 10, 1776 when he knew that Congress would adjourn to some other place and when it was generally believed that the British would capture Philadelphia, he decided to move his wife and family to his farm in Kent County. At the end of the six-day carriage trip, Dickinson stated: "On the sixteenth of December, I arrived at my house in Kent, where my tenant spared me two rooms; and I was enough employed in procuring necessaries for those I carried with me".

Apparently their stay at the mansion in Kent was extended through most of the next year for early in 1777 he enlisted as a private in Captain Stephen Lewis's Company of Delaware militia and served "... with my musket upon my shoulder during the whole tour of duty performed that summer by the militia of that State, when the British army landed at the Head of Elk, and was advancing towards this city [Philadelphia]". Following this he went about the State collecting arms and ammunition to help supply the militia. In recognition of his efforts Delaware in October 1777 commissioned him a brigadier general of the militia. The following year he was back at his old role as "Penman of Revolution" when he drafted the Articles of Confederation and signed as a delegate from Delaware.

It is not known how long Dickinson and his family remained at the mansion near Dover, but apparently they had returned to Philadelphia before August of 1778 as a child was born to them there at that time. In all probability his visits to Kent County were limited to annual inspection trips of his thirteen hundred acre plantation until August of 1781. At that time a party of sixteen Tories from New York landed from a whaleboat in the vicinity of Kitts Hummock and marched inland to the Dickinson Mansion. They frightened his slaves and stole the silver, a large quantity of his wife's clothes, all of his meat supply and other provisions; and, although they did not destroy his library, they marched away with one of his slaves after greatly disturbing the whole country-side. Dickinson hastened from his home near Philadelphia to determine the loss and set his affairs in order. What

he thought would be a short trip turned into a sojourn of sixteen months. While staying at his estate to correct the losses by pillage the smokehouse was resupplied with meat, undeveloped fields were grubbed and cleared, a road to a neighbor was straightened, a domestic problem of his tenant was solved and the majority of his slaves were manumitted. Although he made plans early in the fall of 1781 to return to his home and family in Philadelphia, his old friend George Read persuaded him to stand for election as a member of the Council from New Castle County in place of Samuel Patterson. He was elected on the First of October and took his seat on the Twentieth of that month when the Assembly and the Council met in Dover. In this body he worked assiduously, drafting bills which would correct a number of the weaknesses in the State's governmental structure. Toward the closing days of the session at the end of October he wrote to his wife of his approaching return to Philadelphia and she replied urging him to come home at the first opportunity. She also wrote regarding the safekeeping of their possessions at the mansion in this manner:

"If thy fr[ien]d [William] Killen would Lend thee a room in his House, or Dr. [Charles] Ridgely, and thee would have our things packd and placed in it for a little while, wd it not be best; there is a great deal of China queens ware & Pewter, that was I there I would try to secure, and that Large bed could not be purchased for £50. ye Glasses are valuable so is ye Kitchen furniture, & flat Irons & innumerable things."

Insert

In 1786 John Dickinson was living in Wilmington and from there he journeyed with other delegates from this State to the Capital of Maryland to attend the Annapolis Convention. That meeting, of which Dickinson was chosen Chairman, did not accomplish its intended purpose but it did pave the way for the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia the next year. Delaware's delegates of John Dickinson; George Read; Jacob Broom; Gunning Bedford, Jr.; and Richard Bassett went instructed to Philadelphia not to surrender any of the state's rights of representation. Each of these delegates represented Delaware well in the Convention but that is another story. Dickinson was especially active in advocating equal representation in the Senate for all states. His advocacy of this and the report it received from the Delaware delegates and the other small states is largely responsible for our having two Senators in the Congress today. After the Constitutional Convention had completed its work, <sup>and the delegates signed this great document</sup> Dickinson with the other members from Delaware returned home and began working to acquaint the citizens of Delaware with the provisions of the Constitution. As he had drafted the Articles of Confederation, no one was in a better position to recognize the weakness of that frame of government than he was. By addresses and his writings for which he was noted, he urged the public in a series of stirring letters signed "Fabius" to hasten in the ratification of the new Federal Constitution. The fact that Delaware was the first state to ratify on December 7, 1787 is not accidental. Our delegates who attended the Annapolis Convention and the Constitutional Convention knew of the need of a new frame

of Federal government and they had carefully instructed the citizens of Delaware in the desirability and necessity of this newer, stronger system of government. In this Dickinson was a leader. This was his last great public act on a national scale. In 1791 and 1792 he was again to lead the people of Delaware in drafting a Constitution which replaced the early stop-gap frame of government adopted in 1776.

One of the last and most important duties of that legislative session was the selection of a new president or governor. The two houses met together on November 6, 1781 when Dickinson was declared elected despite his protests, by a vote of twenty-five to one: the one vote obviously being his own. The next day he wrote to his wife of the news of his unanimous election and of his attempts to avoid acceptance of this office. It meant, of course, that he would not return to "Fairhill" and that they would take up their residence in Delaware.

Through the remainder of 1781 and most of 1782, until he resigned to accept the Presidency of the State of Pennsylvania, he resided at this mansion. Following his term of office as Chief Executive of the State of Pennsylvania, he returned to Delaware and took up residence in Wilmington, where he lived for a while in houses which he rented until about 1800 when he built a mansion at Eighth and Market Streets, the site on which was later occupied the Wilmington Institute Free Library. He was, in the meantime, continuing his visits to his boyhood home to inspect the plantation and care for its many needs.

In 1804 a disastrous fire swept the old mansion house with the result that not much remained but the four walls. In his correspondence with the Insurance Company of North America Dickinson pointed out that it was the most substantially built house in the State, having brick walls eighteen inches thick at the watertable and fourteen inches thick from there on up. As he apparently intended that the mansion should thenceforth be used only by the tenants, he decided to replace the interior woodwork in a plain substantial manner. His correspondence

reveals that this work was completed in 1806 and much of the information for the present restoration of the mansion was gleaned from his instructions and correspondence of that period. During much of the two-year period when the fire damage was being corrected, he was living either with friends in the neighborhood or at the mansion.

He died in 180<sup>8</sup>/<sub>4</sub> at his home in Wilmington, where he was buried in the Friends Meeting yard at Fourth and West Streets.

### Restoration

A careful study is being made of historical materials as well as the building itself before undertaking the full restoration. Those materials of the original mansion which are found to be in good condition will be re-used in the restoration. An effort will be made to restore and refurnish the mansion as faithfully as possible of the period when John Dickinson last knew it. Some of the old hardware, missing from the mansion, has been kindly presented for its restoration and other old hardware we hope to obtain by gift or purchase.

The history of this historic house is being developed from research, but it is believed much can be added from early photographs, sketches, diaries, or personal recollections of tenants, who may have lived in it. Such information will be welcomed by Leon deValinger, Jr. Director of The Delaware State Museum, 316 South Governors Avenue, Dover, Delaware (telephone Dover 4297).

Historical Data  
of the  
John Dickinson Mansion

Samuel and Mary (Cadwallader) Dickinson, the parents of John Dickinson (Penman of the Revolution), moved from their estate in Talbot County, Maryland, in January of 1740, to Jones Neck, Kent County, Delaware, where Samuel Dickinson had previously purchased large tracts of land. On one of the tracts, known as "Kingston Upon Hull", he built a large brick mansion. This was John Dickinson's boyhood home and where he was educated by his tutor, William Killen, who was later to become Chief Justice and the first Chancellor of Delaware.

When John Dickinson was eighteen years old, he went to Philadelphia where he read law in the office of the King's Attorney. Three years later Judge Dickinson permitted his son to go to London where he studied law at the Middle Temple. In 1757 he returned to Philadelphia and began practicing law in that city. He most certainly visited his parents upon his return from England, and frequently thereafter until his father's death in July of 1760. John Dickinson must have still considered his residence Kent County, as in October of the same year he was elected a member of the Assembly from that County. Two years later in 1762 he was a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly from the City of Philadelphia; and in July of 1770 he married Mary Norris, the daughter of Isaac Norris, of "Fairhill", near Philadelphia. From then until the time of the signing of the Declaration of In-

dependence in July of 1776, he was closely associated with that State.

Dickinson believed in a joint confederation of all American Colonies under a constitution with continental control before resorting to armed force to gain independence. When he failed in his political struggle with John Adams and his faction to achieve this, Dickinson absented himself from Congress and refrained from signing the Declaration of Independence. He did, however, within a week of the Declaration of Independence march at the head of his regiment of the Pennsylvania Militia to Elizabethtown, in New Jersey, when the enemy invaded that State. On December 10, 1776 when he learned that Congress would adjourn to a safer meeting place and when many of his neighbors were making preparations to leave Philadelphia, as it was expected that the British would capture that city, he decided to move his wife and family to his former home in Kent County. He arrived there on December 16 and states "... my tenants spared me two rooms and I was enough employed in providing necessary for those I carried with me".

He and his family apparently stayed at the mansion for most of the next year, for early in 1777 he enlisted as a private in Captain Stephen Lewis' Company of Delaware Militia and served with it all through the summer preparatory to the Battle of Brandywine after the British had landed at the Head of Elk. Later he spent much time with the Delaware Militia attempting to collect arms and ammunition to keep them supplied at this critical time. In recognition of this service the State of Delaware, in October of 1777, commissioned him a Brigadier-General of the Militia. In the

next year, 1778, he drafted another one of the important documents of our country, namely, The Articles of Confederation; and he signed it as one of the delegates from Delaware. By August of that year his family had moved back to Philadelphia but he made periodical visits to inspect his plantation in Kent County.

In August of 1781 a party of sixteen Tories from New York landed from a whaleboat in the vicinity of Kitts Hummock and marched inland to the Dickinson Mansion. They frightened his slaves and stole the silver, a large quantity of his wife's clothes, all of his meat supply and other provisions; and, although they did not destroy his library, they marched away with one of his slaves after greatly disturbing the whole country-side. Dickinson hastened from his home near Philadelphia to determine the loss and set his affairs in order. What he thought would be a short trip turned into a sojourn of sixteen months. While staying at his mansion to correct this trouble, he was asked to stand for election as Governor of the State and he was successful in the election. Through the remainder of 1781 and most of 1782, until he resigned to accept the Presidency of the State of Pennsylvania, he resided at this mansion. Following his term of office as Chief Executive of the State of Pennsylvania, he returned to Delaware and took up residence in Wilmington, where he lived for a while in houses which he rented until about 1800 when he built a mansion at Eighth and Market Streets, the site on which was later occupied the Wilmington Institute Free Library. He was, in the meantime, continuing his visits to his boyhood home to inspect the plantation and care for its many needs.

In 1804 a disasterous fire swept the old mansion house

With the result that not much remained but the four walls. In his correspondence with the insurance company Dickinson pointed out that it was the most substantially built house in the State, having brick walls eighteen inches thick at the watertable and fourteen inches thick from there on up. As he apparently intended that the mansion should thenceforth be used only by the tenants, he decided to replace the interior woodwork in a plain substantial manner. His correspondence reveals that this work was completed in 1806 and much of the information for the present restoration of the mansion was gleaned from his instructions and correspondence of that period. During much of the two-year period when the fire damage was being corrected, he was living either with friends in the neighborhood or at the mansion.

He died in 180~~7~~<sup>8</sup> at his home in Wilmington, where he was buried in the Friends Meeting yard at Fourth and West Streets.



SOCIETY OF COLONIAL WARS  
IN THE STATE OF DELAWARE  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF COLONIAL WARS IN THE STATE OF  
DELAWARE

Subject: Contributions for the purchase and essential repairs of  
the John Dickinson Mansion

Gentlemen:

At the General Court on May 5, I discussed a letter from Mrs. Charles L. Reese, Jr., Chairman of the Historic Activities Committee of the Delaware Colonial Dames Society. Summarizing for those absent as well as those present, the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover was built in the latter half of the 18th Century for John Dickinson, and especially because of his renown, is of great historic interest. During the last 10 or 15 years, many unsuccessful attempts have been made to work out a plan to preserve it as an historical monument.

Early this year, the Historic Activities Committee of the Colonial Dames Society set about to collect the sum of \$25,000 with which to purchase the Mansion and the adjacent 10 acres at the price of \$15,500 and to apply the remainder to essential repairs. The Committee proposed to give the Mansion in a watertight condition to the State of Delaware in the custody of the Archives Commission which is authorized to receive historic buildings deemed worthy of preservation. The Committee envisages that complete restoration may be postponed to be accomplished over a period of years, but that

expenditures are now imperative to prevent rapid disintegration from the weather.

The Committee has thus far collected contributions of more than \$18,000. Some members of our Society of Colonial Wars have contributed generously. This seems a worthy purpose and it was recommended that as many members as possible make contributions. Mrs. Reese reports that contributions now are coming in slowly and that any sums whatever will be appreciated.

We are advised that such contributions will constitute charitable deductions for tax purposes. Moreover, anyone desiring to do so may contribute securities and obtain tax deductions in the amount of the value of the securities at the time they are contributed. As you know, under such circumstances, this may be done without incurring a tax because of any appreciation in value of the securities. Negotiable securities may be delivered and cash contributions may be made by checks payable to -

Aileen M. du Pont, Treasurer  
West of Rising Sun Lane  
Wilmington, Delaware.

Non-negotiable securities may be transferred to National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Delaware.

We hope that contributions from many will be promptly forthcoming.

Sincerely yours,

  
George Burton Pearson, Jr.

GBPjrSRS



Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.

Immediate efforts should be made to acquaint the members of the Legislature with the general public interest in the restoration work at the John Dickinson Mansion near Dover. Built by his father, Judge Samuel Dickinson in 1740, the house was in recent years neglected and would have soon deteriorated to the point of destruction. Public-spirited citizens throughout the State, realizing that the home of one of the great founders of our Country and "the Penman of the Revolution" would be lost to posterity, generously contributed the sum of \$25,000 to the State for the purchase of the property and to make it weathertight.

The donors of this fund confidently expect that the authorities of the State in accepting this gift will appropriate sufficient funds to restore the Mansion and open it to the public as an historic shrine. The agency of the State charged with the custody of the John Dickinson Mansion is the State Archives Commission. The Commission had Senate Bill 327 introduced to appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the restoration and furnishing of this historic site. There is danger that the bill may be lost unless its passage is urged. Will you please write or telephone to your Senator and Representative advocating the passage of Senate Bill 327.