

MAY 26, 1956 #21

A NEWS LETTER FROM The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Incorporated



VOL. 1, No. 1

SPRING, 1956

RESTORED MANSION OPENS

With its official opening as a branch of the Delaware State Museum on May 2, 1956, a fresh career begins for the onetime country home of John Dickinson, "Penman of the American Revolution." Now handsomely restored, the Georgian brick house in Kent County stands as a tangible symbol of Delaware's great historical heritage. Hundreds of the State's citizens have contributed generously over the past four years that this dedication as an historic shrine might come to pass.

The home which Samuel Dickinson built before 1740 was purchased in 1952 through private contributions of \$25,000, collected through the activities of the Historic Activities Committee of the National Society of Colonial Dames in Delaware. An act of the General Assembly in 1951 had paved the way for acceptance of the gift through creation of a trust fund under the jurisdiction of the Public Archives Commission. Sufficient funds remained after the purchase price was paid to carry out important preliminary repairs.

On September 17, 1952, the 165th anniversary of the Constitution which John Dickinson labored so hard to make a reality, the home and twelve acres of surrounding land were formally presented to the State of Delaware. By this action the danger that the mansion would eventually be lost to posterity was avoided.

Once begun, the program for restoration of the house at Jones Neck gained state-wide interest and support. In 1953 the General Assembly appropriated \$25,000 for the project. Mr. Leon deValinger, Jr., State Archivist and Director of the State Museum, began a meticulously authentic restoration of the

house and grounds. His diligent and sympathetic handling of all details relating to the rehabilitation soon resulted in high praise for its quality and completeness. Fortunately, Dickinson correspondence and records still existed to provide invaluable information; for Dickinson's love for his "plantation in Kent" led to frequent mention of his plans for the farm. Mr. deValinger and his staff, therefore, carried out a careful study of historic materials as well as the building itself.

Time had been fast running out for the Mansion at the time of its acquisition by the Colonial Dames in 1952, but a few years later much progress had been made in repairing the serious structural faults from which it had suffered, and in installing a new roof. Electric lines were placed underground so as not to detract from the early American appearance of the home. Water lines and a deep well were constructed. Wherever modern material would have been incongruous, search was made for old structures which could be salvaged to provide material contemporary to the original. Careful painting of both interior and exterior was completed, and missing hardware replaced.

To lend support and assistance to the restoration and management of the house, a group of interested citizens incorporated themselves in the fall of 1952 as the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion. The objectives of the organization were stated in the Certificate of Incorporation. In part they read:

"To stimulate and endeavor to perpetuate interest among the people of Delaware and elsewhere in John Dickinson, president of the State of Delaware under the Constitution of 1776, and a signer of the Constitution of the United States, and in the mansion located in Kent County, Delaware, near the St. Jones River, where he resided during a portion of his life, through the collection and dissemination of data with reference thereto;

"To encourage and sponsor the acquisition of the mansion by the State of Delaware, to the end that it may be repaired, restored, held and maintained in perpetual trust by the State as a

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The annual meeting of the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion was changed this year from May 1st to May 2nd in the Senate Lounge, Legislative Hall, Dover, to coincide with the official opening and private showing of the Mansion.

THIS NEWS LETTER . . .

The officers of the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc. have felt for some time that an informative communication should be provided for members. Consequently, this Newsletter was decided upon, and the first issue planned to coincide with the official opening of the Mansion. Issues will be forthcoming at least annually. They will report on the life and accomplishments of John Dickinson, the progress of the Mansion as a public museum, and other matters of interest to the membership. Copies will be sent to libraries and high schools in the State.

Mr. Joseph P. Monigle of the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, Mr. John Sweeney of Winterthur Museum, and Mr. Robert M. Lunny of the Delaware State Museum have agreed to serve as a committee to prepare the Newsletter.

PUBLICATIONS . . .

The booklet by Dr. J. H. Powell entitled "The House on Jones Neck: The Dickinson Mansion" which was commissioned by the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion has been favorably reviewed:

History News: "The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion have published an attractive 26-page pamphlet . . ."

The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography: "The John Dickinson Mansion, near Dover in Kent County, Delaware, is being restored and will soon be open for exhibition. Beautiful in itself, and distinguished by its owners, this notable house has a fine history. In an attractive pamphlet, J. H. Powell, an authority on John Dickinson, has written pleasantly and colorfully about the Dickinson family and the "house on Jones Neck" they loved so well."

The Maryland History Magazine: "Readers of the Magazine who enjoy our articles on Maryland houses might be interested in this booklet on a Delaware house five miles down the St. Jones River below Dover. Dickinson Mansion dates from the colonial period. John Dickinson, its most famous owner, well known for his "Farmer's Letters", was born in Maryland. The estate has had Maryland connections since the time of the William Penn controversy with the Lords Baltimore over colony boundaries. The close ties between Samuel Dickinson and families on the Eastern Shore will make this interesting reading for many Marylanders."

(Copies of the pamphlet are available at the Mansion, from the Greenwood Book Shop in Wilmington, or from the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Post-Office Box 710, Dover, Delaware. The price is fifty cents.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT . . .

Gifts and services pledged or already provided by interested individuals and groups for the completion of the Dickinson Mansion restoration have been most gratefully received. Following is a partial list of credits. The next issue of the Newsletter will attempt to include additional items.

A fine Chippendale-style Philadelphia Hunt Board; an unusual pair of andirons with claw and ball feet, engraved with eagles; two brass sidelights for the hall; a bracket for the John Dickinson clock; a "Fereghan" rug and pad for the parlor; and a large brass box lock for the front door, all given by Mr. H. F. du Pont.

A splendid tall case clock by "Duncan Beard of Appoquinimink" — a gift of Mr. H. Rodney Sharp.

A handsome ball and claw footed wing chair and a sum of money sufficient for having it covered properly from Mr. Edwin D. Steel, Jr.

An antique bird cage from Mrs. M. Dunham Higgins.

A sum of money from Mrs. Thomas F. Bayard sufficient to purchase all of the edging boxwood necessary for the parterre garden.

A fine tooled leather Visitors' Register with an ample supply of loose leaf pages, from the Delaware Chapter of the Daughters of Founders and Patriots.

A fine bracket clock once owned by John Dickinson kindly transferred on a long term loan basis, by Dickinson College, in cooperation with the Dickinson Club of Delaware.

Funds necessary to furnish the Library contributed by the State Federation of Women's Clubs.

Funds for furnishing the small bed chamber at the front of the Mansion contributed by the Delaware Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Funds for the brass andirons, fire fender and fire-place tools in the main bed chamber contributed by the Daughters of American Colonists.

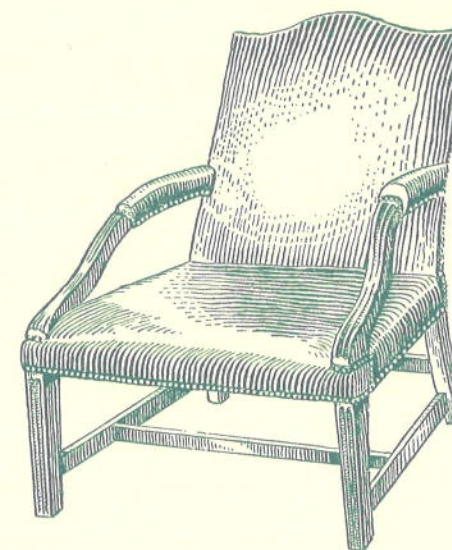
An unusual silver condiment stand, complete with a sugar and two spice casters, with two glass curets with silver tops kindly given by Miss Frances M. Dickinson of Trenton, New Jersey. The casters and the condiment stand are engraved with the Dickinson family coat-of-arms and were made for her ancestor, General Philemon Dickinson, the brother of John Dickinson.

Portrait of Judge Samuel Dickinson, said to have been painted by Hesselius, obtained for the Mansion from the estate of Mrs. Elizabeth Sands Dickinson through the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc. Also, a copy of the portrait of General Philemon Dickinson.

A fine print of John Dickinson, engraved by H. B. Forrest, received from Miss Emily Dickinson Goode.

A sum of money to pay for the foundation planting

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JOHN DICKINSON'S ARMCHAIR

In selecting the furniture for the Dickinson Mansion, the Committee on Furnishings, under the chairmanship of Mr. Henry F. du Pont, has tried to recreate the atmosphere of Dickinson's country home. Therefore, every effort was made to acquire furniture made during Dickinson's lifetime and of the type which might have been used by him. With the exception of a few English pieces, all of the furniture now in the house was made in the Pennsylvania-Delaware area, where Dickinson spent most of his life. While some fine Philadelphia furniture is represented in the Parlor and Dining Room, much of it is of a simple, rather provincial style, as might be expected in a country house. The committee has chosen only antique furniture, but the textiles used for upholstery and window curtains are reproductions of materials popular in the eighteenth century.

With the opening of the Mansion to the public, it is appropriate to mention some of the furniture associated with John Dickinson. The armchair in the Library was acquired from his descendents and is thought to have been used by him. Called a "French chair" in Chippendale's *Director*, where designs for similar chairs appear, this example has a square upholstered back with a serpentine top, and a broad upholstered seat. The construction of the chair is unusual in the use of sloping arm supports, which are molded in the same manner as the front legs. The taper of the legs would indicate the date of the chair to be between 1780 and 1790.

Also owned by Dickinson was the bracket clock in the Parlor. As it was the practice of Philadelphia clockmakers and jewelers to import clocks and watches from England, this piece was probably made in London, for the dial is inscribed by Thomas Wagstaffe, a London Quaker who traded regularly with his brethren in Philadelphia. The form of the clock, with the domed top and short bracket feet, was pop-

ular in both England and America during most of the eighteenth century.

Another item associated with John Dickinson is the handsome printed cotton bedcover in the Master Bedroom. Inscribed and known by the title "America Presenting at the Altar of Liberty Medallions of Her Illustrious Sons," this rare fabric was printed in England at the end of the eighteenth century. In a soft red design on a white ground, the pattern depicts George Washington standing near an altar where classically garbed maidens hold oval portraits of our Revolutionary heroes, based on engravings by the French artist Pierre Eugene du Simitiere. The portrait of John Dickinson occupies a prominent position among the thirteen being honored, and the bedspread recalls once again the part Dickinson played in the War for Independence. Through objects such as this, as well as things owned by him, the furnishing of the house attempts to recapture the spirit of Dickinson.

LETTERS . . .

John Dickinson had been born in 1732 at "Crosadore" on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Consequently he was only a child when his father, Samuel Dickinson, left his tremendous tobacco plantations and with his new wife and the children of his older age — John and his brother Philemon — journeyed to his Delaware holdings to take up residence in 1740. But John Dickinson spent the next ten formative years at this home, and it was from here that he left to undertake his studies of the law in England.

In light of recent events bearing upon this same house two centuries later, the following quotation from a letter* has an engaging pertinency. It was written in London by young Dickinson to his mother on January 22, 1755:

" . . . I know how much You always exposed Yourself — I am afraid You will venture a little too much now — I should be extremely glad to know how this Winter time agrees with you — & hope that the new Kitchen was finished before the cold Weather set in, that You might not be obliged to go out as much as usual — With Submission, I cannot be satisfied with the Arguments agt. a White Maid — at least my Honour'd Mother will permit a Lawyer to altercation a little — I cannot bear to see with what Ease the Ladies here manage their families while You have so much Trouble. But their Families are not such large ones as Ours: For that very Reason, there should be an Assistant. Tis true London Maids are not easily found in America; but there can be no Damage in a trial — & there are very notable Maids in Philada — I would not have one taken out of Kent indeed, Who is as proud as an Empress, because — She is as poor as a Beggar —."

* The original is located at the Library Company in Philadelphia.

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historical memorial for visitation and enjoyment by the public;

"To furnish financial and advisory assistance to the State of Delaware or the agency thereof charged with the administration of the mansion with respect to the acquisition, repair, restoration, maintenance and utilization of the mansion and the collection and dissemination of data and information pertaining to the mansion and to John Dickinson."

Associate Justice James M. Tunnell was elected president for the first and second years, and succeeded by Mrs. William A. Worth. The current president of the organization is Dr. John A. Munroe, Chairman of the History Department of the University of Delaware.

In 1953 the Friends raised almost \$3,000 through public subscription to purchase a silver coffee pot and tray which had belonged to John Dickinson, and which were presented as a memorial to the late John Marshall Philips, a famed antiquarian and authority on American silver.

The next year the group commissioned Dr. J. H. Powell, historian and expert on the life of John Dickinson to prepare a booklet on the Mansion and its lore. This was accomplished, and "The House on Jones Neck" has been favorably received.

Those who had been following the restoration program were delighted when at its annual meeting in 1954 the Wilmington Garden Club announced its underwriting of a garden plan for the house to be carried out under the direction of Alden Hopkins, who has done much of the landscaping for Colonial Williamsburg. Subsequently, other garden clubs and individuals contributed funds and plants for this part of the program. The State Highway Department assisted by surfacing the entrance drive and parking lot.

The committee on furnishing, under the chairmanship of Mr. Henry Francis du Pont, made excellent progress in outfitting the home in a style suitable to its former role as the country seat of a prosperous, 18th century man of taste. As a result the house and its furnishings harmonize perfectly, and are complemented by the surrounding gardens.

It is expected that the mansion will attract very many visitors from Delaware and from other states who, it is hoped, will absorb from this beautiful setting a new concept of John Dickinson and the forces which molded his activities towards the betterment of a young nation.

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around the Mansion and to undertake some of the other planting in the garden by the Cross Country Garden Club.

Three large pieces of old English boxwood present-

ed by Mr. Jacob W. Brown.

Furnishings for the small bed chamber (north) from the Daughters of Colonial Wars, in the State of Delaware.

A sum of money towards the completion of the garden from the Gordon Heights Garden Club.

A copy of John Dickinson's *Draught of the Constitution of the State of Delaware, 1792*, and of *Laws of the State of Delaware*, both with notations made by John Dickinson, gifts from the late Pierre S. du Pont.

The original certificate of the Cincinnati of John Dickinson, his curley maple desk, and razor, and a copy of his portrait willed to the State by Mr. Robert Logan of Philadelphia.

The writings of John Dickinson in two volumes and a letter signed by John Dickinson given by Mr. J. Stuart Groves.

Boxwood for the garden by Mrs. Mary F. Taylor.

A landscape plan and basic planting for the garden by the Wilmington Garden Club.

A 1730 volume, *The Lutrin*, originally the property of John Dickinson, presented by Mrs. William A. Worth.

The original front door knocker from the Mansion presented by the Honorable C. L. Terry and Mrs. Terry.

Anonymous cash gifts from individuals and organizations for the completion of the restoration.

Persons interested in furthering the work of the friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc. are invited to become members.

Dues are:

- \$ 2.50 Active Membership
- \$10.00 Contributing Membership
- \$25.00 Sustaining Membership

Payable to Miss Elizabeth A. Alden, Treasurer
P. O. Box 1243
Wilmington 99, Del.

DIRECTIONS FOR VISITORS

To reach the Mansion from the north, proceed south on route 113 to the Kitts Hummock Road, five miles south of Dover. The Kitts Hummock Road is marked by a sign pointing to the east. Proceed on this road one mile to the Mansion. Then drive on this lane to the parking area.

For those approaching from the south of Dover, proceed north on Route 113. One mile beyond the bridge over the St. Jones River, bear right on Route 9, go the first stop sign, turn right (east) on the Kitts Hummock Road to the Dickinson Mansion directional sign. Then turn right (south) along the lane to the parking area.

A NEWS LETTER FROM The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Incorporated



Vol. 16, No. 1

W. Emerson Wilson, *Editor*

June 1977

ANNUAL MEETING, DINNER SET FOR JUNE 6

ELECTION OF OFFICERS, DIRECTORS TO FEATURE BUSINESS MEETING

*Friends Observe
25 Years Service
To Mansion Care*

The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc., is observing its first quarter century this year and the organization has grown steadily during that time.

Incorporation took place on July 31, 1952, two years after the mansion had been acquired through funds raised by the National Society of the Colonial Dames in Delaware and turned over to the state. It was felt at the time that an organization should be formed so that furnishing the mansion could start as soon as the restoration being done under the direction of the Public Archives Commission was completed.

Among the objectives stated in the charter were to stimulate and endeavor to perpetuate interest in John Dickinson through the collection and dissemination of facts referring to his career; to see that the mansion be maintained in perpetual trust by the State of Delaware as a historical memorial for visitation and enjoyment of the public; and to furnish financial and advisory assistance to the state in carrying out those objectives.

The three incorporators were Mrs. Newlin T. Booth, Theodore Marvin and Judge Edwin D. Steel, Jr. The officers elected at the first annual or charter meeting were James M. Tunnell, Jr., president; Mrs. Charles Lee Reese, Jr., first vice-president; Judge W. W. Harrington, second vice-president; and Mrs. William A. Worth, secretary-treasurer.

Mr. Tunnell was re-elected as president the following year and was succeeded the next year by Mrs. Worth.

The 25th annual meeting of the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc., will be held in the mansion on the Kitts Hummock Road at 5 p.m. on Monday, June 6.

Following the meeting there will be a reception and then a buffet dinner served on the lawn in front of the house. The garden and grounds of the house are expected to be at their height at this time.

Dr. Sam A. Banks, president of Dickinson College, and Gov. Pierre S. duPont, both members of the board of directors are expected to attend the meeting and dinner.

At the business meeting Lawrence Henry, director of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, will report on progress made at the mansion during the past year, its role in the Bicentennial and plans for the future. Because of the fiscal situation of the state the mansion may be open only on weekends from November through March and there is a possibility that admission fees may be instituted in the future. A definite decision should be known by the June meeting. If admission fees are started members of the Friends of the Dickinson Mansion would not be charged.

George C. Hering III, president, will preside and report on the activities of the society during the past year and will also discuss its future role.

The membership will then elect a new slate of directors who in turn will meet to elect officers for the coming year. In addition to Mr. Hering the officers are John A. H. Sweeney, vice-president; Susanne Fox, secretary and James Jackson, treasurer.

Then will follow cocktails and the buffet dinner on the lawn. Last year's turnout was the largest on record and was the first held outdoors, a change which delighted most of the members, according to remarks heard during the affair. Of course if the weather is forbidding the dinner will be held in the mansion.

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LETTERS FROM A FARMER IN PENNSYLVANIA

BY JOHN DICKINSON

PART II OF LETTER XII

What have these colonies to ask, while they continue free? Or what have they to dread, but insidious attempts to subvert their freedom? Their prosperity does not depend on ministerial favours doled out to particular provinces. They form one political body, of which each colony is a member. Their happiness is founded on their constitution; and is to be promoted by preserving that constitution in unabated vigour throughout every part. A spot, a speck of decay, however small the limb on which it appears, and however remote it may seem from the vitals, should be alarming. We have all the rights requisite for our prosperity. The legal authority of Great-Britain may indeed lay hard restrictions upon us; but, like the spear of Telephus, it will cure as well as wound. Her unkindness will instruct and compel us, after some time, to discover, in our industry and frugality, surprising remedies – if our rights continue inviolated. For as long as the products of our labours and the rewards of our care, can properly be called our own, so long will it be worth our while to be industrious and frugal. But if when we plow – sow – reap – gather – and thresh, we find, that we plow – sow – reap – gather – and thresh for others, whose pleasure is to be the sole limitation, how much they shall take, and how much they shall leave, why should we repeat the unprofitable toil? Horses and oxen are content with that portion of the fruits of their work, which their owners assign to them, in order to keep them strong enough to raise successive crops; but even these beasts will not submit to draw for their masters, until they are subdued with whips and goads. Let us take care of our rights, and we therein take care of our property. “Slavery is ever preceded by sleep.” Individuals may be dependent on ministers, if they please. States should scorn it – And, if you are not wanting to yourselves, you will have a proper regard paid you by those, to whom if you are not respectable, you will infallibly be contemptible. But if we have already forgot the reasons that urged us, with unexampled unanimity, to exert ourselves two years ago; if our zeal for the public good is worn out before the homespun cloaths which it caused us to have made – if our resolutions are so faint, as by our present conduct to condemn our own late successful example – if we are not affected by any reverence for the memory of our ancestors, who transmitted to us that freedom in which they had been blest – if we are not animated by any regard for posterity, to whom, by the most sacred obligations, we are bound to deliver down the invaluable inheritance – Then, indeed, any minister – or any tool of a minister – or any creature of a tool of a minister – or any lower ^(d) instrument of administration, if lower there may be, is a personage, whom it may be dangerous to offend.

I shall be extremely sorry if any man mistakes my meaning in any thing I have said. Officers employed by the crown, are, while according to the laws they conduct themselves, entitled to legal obedience and sincere respect. These it is a duty to render

them, and these no good or prudent person will withhold. But when these officers, thro' rashness or design, endeavour to enlarge their authority beyond its due limits, and expect improper concessions to be made to them, from regard for the employments they bear, their attempts should be considered as equal injuries to the crown and people, and should be courageously and constantly opposed. To suffer our ideas to be confounded by names, on such occasions, would certainly be an inexcusable weakness, and probably, an irremediable error.

We have reason to believe, that several of his Majesty's present ministers are good men, and friends to our country; and it seems not unlikely, that by a particular concurrence of events, we have been treated a little more severely than they wished we should be. They might not think it prudent to stem a torrent. But what is the difference to us, whether arbitrary acts take their rise from ministers, or are permitted by them? Ought any point to be allowed to a good minister, that should be denied to a bad one? The mortality of ministers is a very frail mortality. A +++ may succeed a Shelburne – a +++ may succeed a Conway.

We find a new kind of minister lately spoken of at home – The minister of the “house of Commons.” The term seems to have particular propriety when referred to these colonies, with a different meaning annexed to it, from that in which it is taken there. By the word “minister” we may understand not only a servant of the crown, but a man of influence among the Commons, who regard themselves as having a share of the sovereignty over us. The minister of the house may, in a point respecting the colonies, be so strong, that the minister of the crown in the house, if he is a distinct person, may not chuse, even where his sentiments are favourable to us, to come to a pitched battle upon our account. For tho' I have the highest opinion of the deference of the house for the King's minister; yet he may be so good natured as not to put it to the test, except it be for the mere and immediate profit of his matter or himself.

But whatever kind of minister he is, that attempts to innovate a single iota in the privileges of these colonies, him I hope you will undauntedly oppose, and that you will never suffer yourselves to be either cheated or frightened into any unworthy obsequiousness. On such emergencies you may surely without presumption believe that ALMIGHTY GOD himself will look down upon your righteous contest with gracious approbation. You will be a “Band of brother's” cemented by the dearest ties – and strengthened with inconceivable supplies of force and constancy, by that sympathetic ardour which animates good men, confederated in a good cause. Your honour and welfare will be, as they now are, most intimately concerned; and besides – you are assigned by Divine Providence, in the appointed order of things, the protectors of unborn ages, whose fate depends upon your virtue. Whether they shall arise the

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diffuse the blessings of religion, science, and liberty, thro' remote wildernesses. It is, therefore, incontestibly our duty and our interest, to support the strength of Great Britain. When, confiding in that strength, she begins to forget from whence it arose, it will be an easy thing to shew the source. She may readily be reminded of the loud alarm spread among her merchants and tradesmen, by the universal association of these colonies, at the time of the Stamp-act, not to import any of her manufactures. – In the year 1718, the Russians and Swedes, entered into an agreement, not to suffer Great-Britain to export any naval stores from their dominions, but in Russian or Swedish ships, and at their own prices. Great-Britain was distressed. Pitch and tar rose to three pounds a barrel. At length she thought of getting these articles from the colonies; and the attempt succeeding, they fell down to fifteen shillings. In the year 1756, Great Britain was threatened with an invasion. An easterly wind blowing for six weeks, she could not man her fleet, and the whole nation was thrown into the utmost consternation. The wind changed. The American ships arrived. The fleet sailed in ten or fifteen days. There are some other reflections on this subject worthy of the most deliberate attention of the British parliament; but they are of such a nature, I do not chuse to mention them publicly. I thought I discharged my duty to my country, taking the liberty, in the year 1765, while the Stamp-Act was in suspense, of writing my sentiments to a man of the greatest influence at home, who afterwards distinguished himself by espousing our cause, in the debates concerning the repeal of that act.

(d) “Instrumeta regni.” Tacitus An. b. 12 s. 66.

If any person shall imagine that he discovers in these letters the least disaffection towards our most excellent Sovereign, and the parliament of Great-Britain; or the least dislike to the dependance of these colonies on that kingdom, I beg that such person will not form any judgment on particular expressions, but will consider the tenour of all the letters taken together. In that case, I flatter myself that every unprejudiced reader will be convinced, that the true interests of Great-Britain are as dear to me as they ought to be to every good subject.

If I am an Enthusiast in anything, it is in my zeal for the perpetual dependance of these colonies on their mother-country. – A dependance founded on mutual benefits, the continuance of which can be secured only by mutual affections. Therefore it is, that with extreme apprehension I view the smallest seeds of discontent, which are unwarily scattered abroad. Fifty or sixty years will make astonishing alterations in these colonies; and this consideration should render it the business of Great Britain more and more to cultivate our good dispositions towards her: but the misfortune is, that those great men, who are wrestling for power at home, think themselves very slightly interested in the prosperity of their country fifty or sixty years hence; but are deeply concerned in blowing up a popular clamour for supposed immediate advantages.

For my part, I regard Great-Britain as a bulwark happily fixed between these colonies and the powerful nations of Europe. That kingdom is our advanced post or fortification, which remaining safe, we under its protection enjoying peace, may

DICKINSON SERVED IN STATE MILITIA IN 1777

Two hundred years ago John Dickinson was living in the house on St. Jones Creek where he had taken his family in mid December of 1776 after resigning from the Pennsylvania Assembly.

Although opposed to independence he had left the Congress in early July to take command of the First Philadelphia Battalion then stationed at Perth Amboy, N.J. He was appointed acting brigadier general in command of the four Pennsylvania battalions by Gen. Hugh Mercer and was praised by Mercer for his services. But later when the Pennsylvania Assembly named Robert Roberdeau as brigadier general and Dickinson was elected to the Assembly he resigned his commission as colonel and returned to Philadelphia. Because of disputes the Assembly was unable to organize and Dickinson, disgusted, resigned and moved with his family to Dover, becoming a private citizen.

When President John McKinly of the Delaware State called on Kent County to supply 400 militia to defend the state against the invading army of Gen. William Howe Dickinson shouldered his musket as a private soldier in Capt. Stephen Lewis's company which reported to Gen. Caesar Rodney at Noxen town near Middletown.

President McKinly wrote to Rodney suggesting that such a distinguished citizen as Dickinson should have a higher rank than private and be given some important duty. Rodney did not promote him but assigned him to direct the collection of food and other supplies for the Delaware militia.

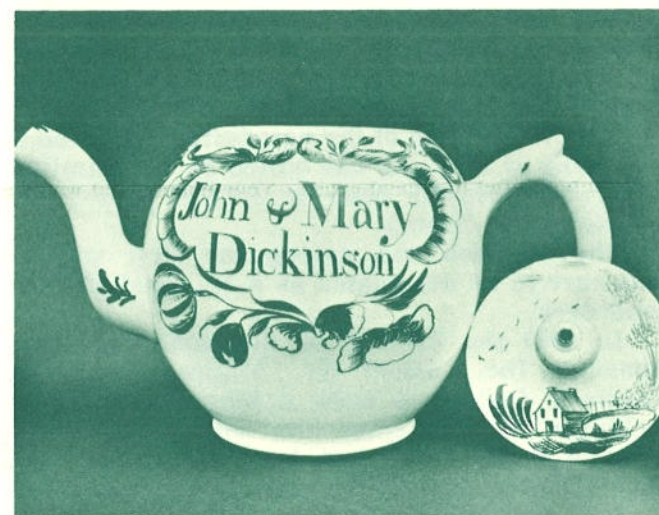
This was in late August, 1777. The Delaware militia remained in Delaware when the Continental Army moved to Chadds Ford so Dickinson did not see any combat action in the Battle of Brandywine.

After the British captured Wilmington, Dickinson told Rodney that a large amount of military supplies were stored in a building on the south shore of the Christina at the ferry near where the present Third Street bridge now is.

Dickinson said that with the help of about 50 men he could raid this building at night and bring off the supplies. He explained that the ferry was no longer running and that the British had not extended their outposts past the north bank of the Christina.

Rodney turned down the offer as too dangerous and also expressed the belief that the British must certainly have already seized the supplies even though apparently they had not established outposts on the south side of the river.

Dickinson remained with the militia until October when the Kent citizen soldiers were returned to that county. He joined his family and continued to live in the house on St. Jones Neck until the following year when after the British evacuated Philadelphia he went to that city. He would return to the Kent County home in 1781 to repair the damage done after Tories had raided and looted the house during an expedition in longboats from a British ship in the Delaware. It was at this time that he was elected to the Delaware Assembly and later that year elected President of the Delaware State.



Among the most interesting items bearing directly on John Dickinson in the collection at the mansion is the Queen Anne style creamware teapot shown above with the inscription side at the left and the reverse side at the right.

It is believed to have been a wedding present for John and Mary (Norris) Dickinson and is in remarkably good condition considering its advanced age.

It was presented to the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion in 1962 by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph L. Graham of New York City.

FARMER

(Continued from Page 2)

noble and indisputable heirs of the richest patrimonies, or the dastardly and hereditary drudges of imperious task-masters, you must determine.

To discharge this double duty to yourselves and to your posterity; you have nothing to do, but to call forth into use the good sense of spirit, of which you are possessed. You have nothing to do, but to conduct your affairs peaceably – prudently – firmly – jointly. By these means you will support the character of freemen, without losing that of faithful subjects - a good character in any government – one of the best under a British government. You will prove that Americans have that true magnanimity of soul, that can resent injuries without falling into rage; and that tho' your devotion to Great-Britain is the most affectionate, yet you can make proper distinctions, and know what you owe to yourselves as well as to her – you will, at the same time that you advance your interests, advance your reputation – you will convince the world of the justice of your demands, and the purity of your intentions – while all mankind must with unceasing applauses confess, that you indeed deserve liberty, who so well understand it, so passionately love it, so temperately enjoy it, and so wisely, bravely, and virtuously, assert, maintain, and defend it.

“Certe ego libertatem qua mihi a parente meo tradita est, experiar, verum id frustra, an ob rem faciam, in vestra manu fitum est, quirites.”

“For my part, I am resolved strenuously to contend for the liberty delivered down to me from my ancestors; but whether I shall do this effectually or not, depends on you, my countrymen.”

How little soever one is able to write, yet, when the liberties of one's country are threatened, it is still more difficult to be silent.

A FARMER.

Is there not the greatest reason to hope, if the universal sense of the colonies is immediately express, by resolves of the assemblies, in support of their rights; by instructions to their agents on the subject; and by petitions to the crown and parliament for redress; that those measures will have the same success now that they had in the time of the Stamp-act.

(This is the last of the 12 Farmer Letters that Dickinson wrote in 1768.)

DINNER-LECTURE DRAWS THRONG

The annual dinner-lecture of the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion drew a large throng last November 11 when it was held in the Du Barry Room of the Hotel Du Pont.

Dr. William J. Murtaugh, Keeper of the National Register in the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service was the speaker of the evening.

He explained the significance of the National Register, how it was developed and how it has already saved a number of historic sites in different parts of the nation from destruction.

All buildings designated as National Historic Landmarks, as is the John Dickinson house, are also on the National Register but the Landmark designation indicates the building is of major national importance.

Preceding the dinner there was a reception for Dr. and Mrs. Murtaugh. George C. Hering III presided at the dinner.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG NEAR HOUSE TO BEGIN

A grant of \$10,000 from last year's session of the General Assembly has been obtained by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs for archaeological work around the John Dickinson Mansion, according to Lawrence Henry, director of the division.

The archaeological studies will be made to try to find the foundations of the various outbuildings which once existed on the plantation near the mansion such as the spring house, slaves quarters, carriage houses, and similar structures.

The last archaeological work to be done at the site was back in 1952 when diggers for the Archaeological Society of Delaware located the grave of Samuel Dickinson some distance from the house.

When the study has been completed Mr. Henry plans to ask the legislature for a grant of \$50,000 to reconstruct one or more of those buildings nearest to the house and when that work is completed for a similar grant to reconstruct the others.

While the present financial situation of the state is precarious he hopes that by the time the studies are completed the Assembly will be able to make the additional grants.

25th ANNIVERSARY

(Continued from Page 1)

The presidents who have served since that time are: Dr. John A. Munroe, Anthony Higgins, Mrs. Cummins E. Speakman, Joseph Monigle, Harold W. T. Purnell, Theodore Marvin (for five consecutive terms), Mrs. Eugene K. Quigg, Dr. Maynard Mires and W. Emerson Wilson.

The work of restoring the house was completed and it was officially opened to the public on May 2, 1956. During the early years the Friends received a number of gifts for the furnishing of the house with Mr. Henry Francis du Pont serving as chairman of the committee in charge. In 1954 the Wilmington Garden Club announced the underwriting of a garden plan for the house which was carried out under the direction of Alden Hopkins who had done much of the landscaping for Colonial Williamsburg.

The first edition of the newsletter appeared in the spring of 1956 and was edited by a committee comprising Joseph P. Monigle, John A. H. Sweeney and Robert N. Lunny.

The mansion was among the first sites in Delaware to be designated as a National Historic Landmark.

In 1969 the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Inc., asked Dr. Milton Flower of Dickinson College to write a biography of John Dickinson and presented him with a substantial grant of funds which was later increased. Dr. Flower has completed the manuscript of his book but has not yet obtained a publisher.

The Friends have held their annual meetings in the mansion at different times during the spring and their annual dinner-lecture meetings in New Castle or Wilmington early in November on a date near that of the birth of John Dickinson.

Work on the gardens and grounds has continued throughout the quarter century under the direction of the feminine members who have shown a loving and enthusiastic interest so that now the garden is a real showplace.