

CHRISTOPHER MARSHALL'S HOME IN WHICH HE LIVED AND WROTE HIS DIARY IN YEAR 1777 AND 1781 INCLUSIVE

By D. F. Magee, Esq.

On the date of the Sesqui-Centennial of the meeting of the Continental Congress in Lancaster, September 6th, 1927, there was placed upon the eastern end of the home of Mrs. Mary Mercur Eshelman, at No. 215 East Orange street, Lancaster, a bronze marker of artistic design, skillfully worded upon the squared plate of twelve by eighteen inches, this legend:

CHRISTOPHER MARSHALL.

1709—1797.

Distinguished Diarist of
Revolutionary Times
Lived in this House
Where he made almost
Daily entries in his Diary
From June 27, 1777,
To September 24, 1781.

Marked By
The Lancaster County
Historical Society
1927.

This was to commemorate for all time the fact that there lived in our City for a period of years Christopher Marshall, the Quaker Patriot of the Revolution who took most active interest of the affairs of his country in this great struggle, which interest was manifested and directed towards the financial support and maintenance of the soldiers in the field and particularly of the defense of Philadelphia, his home town, and the armies engaged in its defense.

Being a man of considerable wealth himself and associated with the wealthiest and leading financiers of the day under Morrison, he was at all times in close touch with this phase of the revolution, and in the daily writing of his Diary has put on record details of the trying times to the peoples of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in most interesting and enlightening records.

Our Society has in its Library a copy of this Diary and there is within its covers a graphic pen picture of the period which in its gripping details and its lifelike portrayal is unsurpassed by any other revolutionary lore.

His residence during the period 1777 to 1781 was in this City in the first quarter of the block of East Orange street, east of Lime, on the north side. It has long been known that it is either one of two homes fronting on East Orange street on north side, within three hundred feet of North Lime; said homes being the residence of Mrs. Mary Mercur Eshelman, No. 215 East Orange street, and the other best known as the Annie Hurford House, at No. 207 East Orange street, and now remodelled and rebuilt, in part by a large addition, as the home of James Shand.

These two properties now join each other and they are built on two adjoining lots as laid out originally by Hamiltons each, and all of which were fronting on East Orange street and running back uniformly to the Alley in the rear Grant, 245 feet. These lots afterwards were halved and quartered and referred to as the eastern moiety or western half, &c, &c, but in the original grant under Hamilton were recorded as Lots No. 501,

No. 500, No. 499, No. 493, No. 486, No. 482. In the beginning Christopher Marshall only owned the lower numbered ones, at the time of his death many years afterwards he had acquired and held practically all of the above numbered Building Lots.

The Annie Hurford House was built on the western half of Lot No. 500 and the Eshelman home was built upon the western half of Lot No. 499. The two full sized lots were therefore beside one another when Marshall bought his home in 1777, and the No. 500 Lot was then divided into two Lots through a middle line.

Both houses show indubitable signs of their great antiquity and one was no doubt built and standing when Marshall bought and moved to Lancaster; and these two acknowledged facts have long lead to some doubt and to more or less contradictory claims as to which was and is the real Marshall home.

The first thought of your author was to give the full chain of title to both properties from Hamilton to Marshall, which is all of full record in the Recorders Office at Lancaster, but on second thought I believe that the case can be fully, clearly and indubitably proven to the mind of the layman by a much shorter process by laying before the reader three dominating and uncontradicted facts as shown in the Marshall Diary and in the Court House records.

In the Diary of Christopher Marshall under date of April 16, 1777, we find this entry. "Near five came Paul Fooks, Dr. Phyle and Col John Cox who brought the Deeds for the House in Lancaster, and executed his to me for which I then paid him, he then promising to acknowledge the same with his wife, when she came to town (to Philada.), of which he desired those gentlemen to take notice and remember his promise.

From Record Book S, Page 69 we find record that on date of April 16, 1777, that John Cox conveyed to Christopher Marshall four Lots containing all told on East Orange street 257 feet 6 inches, bounded on West by Lot of Ann Shea, South by Orange street, East by Lot of Daniel Wistar, etc.

Under date of June 6th following the April 16th entry and on same page of Diary we find this: "June 6th paid John Whitehill 48£ for hauling five loads of goods to Lancaster; two from Philada and three from Trap. Under date of June 27th or just three weeks from the above we find this: "Arrived at our house in Lancaster near seven. I was really tired; the road so hilly and stony, and I being so poorly."

July 11th and 13th following the above is following interesting little items throwing light upon the then conditions in Lancaster, p. 119.

"Sundry Philadelphians who moved here last winter have returned back with their families this week; not pleased.

We have had some difficulties to encounter here as the people here have taken offense against the Philadelphians, who, some of them have not behaved prudently.

Again the following: "Had not my wife bought a load of hay and we sent some bushels of oats stowed in among our bacon, our horse would have suffered; but we have a Lot adjoining to us, though small it serves to turn him in, just to stretch his legs." (This was no doubt Lot No. 493 which he owned.

He writes this below all the above: I just give this note of some of the difficulties by way of momento to remind of some of our trials.

Now with the above facts in mind and the date fixed to a day when Christopher Marshall bought, settled for, and took Deed to a House, and moved in with his family, which was on April 16, 1777, we have but to show that it was just about three years afterwards that he bought the Annie Hurford Property to the west of him, now the James Shand, by the following:

On October 4th, 1769, as of record in Book N. page 140, Martha Vernon sold to Ann Shea, Lot 500.

The Hurford Lot

On March 27th, 1780, Record Book Q. Q., page 568, Henry Witmer & Jno. Burkholder sell that certain tenenet and westernmost moiety or half part of said Lot on Orange street (Annie Hurford part) fronting 32 ft. two and quarter inches for ninety pounds to Robert Thornbough. In this Deed it is bounded on the West by Lot of Thomas Barton; which fixes it again as the Annie Hurford Lot; and the fact that it sold for ninety pounds is pretty fair proof it had no substantial house on it, though it may had a small log one.

Next on April 10, 1780, or immediately after Thornbough bought it, we find from Book Q, Q, page 571 Robert Thornbough conveyed the same property to Christopher Marshall for the same sum, ninety pounds.

In Marshall's Diary under date March 31, 1780, find the following respecting the purchase of this property "Gave one hundred dollars to Sus. Thornberry to pay Caleb Johnson for writing Deed of house on paper, and Ten Dollars to pay Charles Hall for his trouble in going three miles to have the Deed acknowledged.

In summing up would say that a more detailed description of the half lots with their respective width, length, abutting owners, prices paid for each, makes it very apparent that the Annie Hurford House was not built on the ground when Marshall bought and moved to Lancaster into a "House and lived there with his family in April, 1777; and moreover that he did not take Deed and title to the Hurford Lot until 1780 after he had lived in Lancaster three years or more.

As a short postscript to this short paper for the information of our younger and less informed members of the Society it may be stated that this particular portion of East Orange street, near Lime, has wrapped up in its history much that makes it one of the most interesting quarter blocks in our entire residential part of Lancaster.

The Barton Gardens on the corner and the home of the Episcopalian Minister who was forced out of his pastorate and the loss of his home, because of his loyalty to the English sovereignty; the Home of Shippen, where Peggy Shippen presumably visited her grandfather, the splendid row of old English Elms that still stand as monuments along the north side of the block from Lime to Duke, they having been planted, it is believed, at the time of the founding of Old St. James in pre-revolutionary times. Such trees are rare in Lancaster today. And in more modern times the homes of many of our most noted men, Judges Livingston, Brubaker, Justice J. Hay Brown, Col. Brenneman awhile back. that splendid citizen Richard M. Reilly then just down Lime, the erstwhile home of W. U. Hensel and close beside it of the famous Frazier family; with the beautiful Young Women's Christian Association and the Shippen School just beyond there lives, and has lived much, very much, that is well worth while remembering in the life story of our city and its citizens.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CHRISTOPHER MARSHALL TABLET

The bronze tablet, 18 by 12 inches, was informally unveiled on the east side of 215 East Orange Street, by Mayor Frank Musser and the President of the Society on "Capital Day"—September 27, 1927. It reads

CHRISTOPHER MARSHALL
1709—1797

Distinguished Diarist of the Revolutionary Times
lived in this House where he made almost daily
entries in his Diary from June 27, 1777, to
September 24, 1781.

Marked by The Lancaster County Historical Society, 1927

The cost of the tablet was \$69, of which \$35 was contributed by Rodney Eshelman, son of the owner of the property, Mrs. B. Frank Eshelman.

D. F. MAGEE,
WILLIAM F. WORNER,
HERBERT H. BECK.

Author: Magee, Daniel F.

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