

MANORS
OF
CHESTER COUNTY

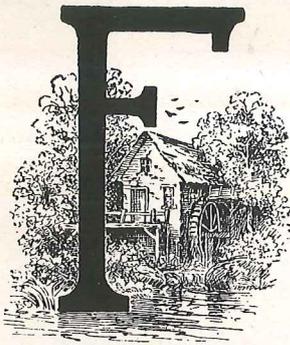


1944

By

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OR those of us who are tinged ever so slightly with romanticism, the word "MANOR" is very suggestive. It presents to our mind's eye, a stately country-house, with lines broken by clustering shrubbery, surrounded by velvety lawns of richest green, approached by long avenues of elm and chestnut trees: a place where bursts of laughter and song are heard from high born ladies and distinguished gentlemen.

Readers of Whartons' *Wits and Beaux of England* will recall the manorial grounds of Ham House, near Kingston on the Thames, where the Merry Monarch of "Merrie" England and his courtiers beguiled the tedium of many an idle hour.

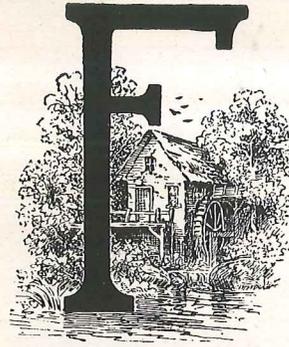
Lingard informs us, in his *History of England*, that William the Conqueror possessed 1432 Manors in various parts of his Kingdom. An historical punster called him "a well manored King". I doubt very much if the Anglo Saxon free holders whose houses he razed and whose fields he destroyed in order to enlarge his forests, would have agreed with this characterization of the Norman Conqueror. But that is another story.

What is a Manor? Some writers tell us the word is an English corruption of the French Manoir meaning a habitation — a mansion where one permanently abides, that it is derived from the Latin *manere*, to remain. The old English law defines it as a tract of land granted by the King to one as Lord with the right to exercise jurisdiction over it by a Court-baron.

A Manor, in the time of William the Conqueror and for some centuries thereafter, was as Andrews puts it, "not so much a stretch of territory, as a right of jurisdiction which a Lord possessed over people who cultivated the soil or engaged in industry. Frequently, these people lived in a single vill and in that case the Manor and the vill were territorially the same."

But, sometimes the Lord's authority covered men in other vills. "We cannot," says this historian, "draw a diagram of a Manor as we can of a town. The nearest that we can come to it is to say a Manor contained a manor-house, a church, one or more vills with open fields and perhaps the land of certain men elsewhere over whom the Lord of the Manor had jurisdiction, for all land was supposedly under a Lord."

"The Manor-house," says Green in his *History of the English People*, "became the centre of every English village. The Manor Court was held in its hall; it was here that the Lord or his steward received homage, recovered fines, . . . or enrolled the villagers in their tithing. Here, too, if the Lord possessed criminal jurisdiction, was held his justice court and without its doors stood his gallows. Around it lay the Lord's demesne or home farm and the cultivation of this



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rested wholly with the villains of the Manor. It was by them that the great barn was filled with sheaves, the sheep shorn, the grain malted and the wood hewn for the manor-hall fire. These services were the labor rent by which they held their lands."

In many instances the villains were obliged to remain for life. The amount of labor and payment were fixed by the custom of the Manor. The extent of Manorial jurisdiction varied greatly — all was determined by local custom. After the Wars of the Roses, in fact for a century before, the Manorial system had almost broken down, the tenant who had held his land according to the custom of the Manor now gradually became a copy-holder. In other words, these customs were evidenced by entries on the roll of the Court-baron.

Now, a Court-baron, according to Blackstone, is a Court incident to every Manor in the Kingdom to be holden by the Steward within the Manor. It is of two natures, the one a customary Court appertaining entirely to the copy holders in which their estates are transferred by surrender and admittance, and other matters are transacted relative to their tenures only. The other is a Court of Common Law known as the Court of the Barons, by which name the freeholders were sometimes anciently called, for that it is held before the freeholders who owe suit and service to the Manor, the Steward acting rather as the registrar than the judge. Its most important business is to determine all controversies relating to the right of land within the Manor. It may also hold plea of any personal actions of debt, trespass on the case or the like where the debt or damages do not amount to 40 shillings.

In 1660, a Statute known as 12 Charles II was passed in England, transforming military tenures into free and common socage, meaning thereby a certain honorable service generally fealty and rent. After that Statute, Manors were never possessed, nor were their Lords ever invested with the powers, privileges, rights, duties and burdens of the old feudal Manors.

"It is," says DeLancey, "owing to the ignorance of this fact that so much misconception has been generated in the popular mind by some writers, in relation to Manors, their tenants and their owners."

As to these owners, a curious error has obtained credence. We see them written of and spoken of as Nobles. No grant of a feudal Manor in England at any time from their first introduction ever carried with it a title. The dignity was a personal matter not a territorial adjunct. In France this was different, many seignories did carry with them the right to a title.

The term Lord of Manor is a technical one and means simply the owner, the possessor, nothing more. "Lord" as a prefix to a manor owner's name was never used in England.

Vexatious incidents of feudal tenures were not engrafted on our Manor land.

The Royal Charter (Section 10) gave unto William Penn, his heirs and assigns, free and absolute power to divide his province into towns, hundreds and counties, also to erect any parcels of land within

his province into Manors, and in every one of them to have and hold a Court-baron.

The same authority and power was given to such grantees of an inheritance as should obtain a license from Penn for that purpose and this notwithstanding the Statute of Quia Emptores.

This Statute, passed in 1290, 18 Edward I, forbade subinfeudation.

As copyhold tenures did not arise out of feudal grants, but the tenants held by the will of the Lord according to the custom of the Manor, Copyhold Manors could not be created by Charles II, for length of time is of their very essence. Accordingly, you find no reference to them in the Royal Charter to Penn.

If then in 1660, all the lands in England were already in tenure, and they were, and subinfeudation was forbidden, how could the King grant power to Penn and his grantees to erect free hold Manors in his Province with Court-barons?

Various Courts decided that it could be done because the Statute was not applicable to the ungranted crown lands in the Colonies.

In 1700, the Proprietary and Governor presented to the Council and Assembly a bill about a Court-baron, but his attempts to secure the passage of such a law failed.

In discussing this matter, Shepherd says, "He (Penn) had directed the Commissioners of property to erect Manors wherever possible, but the order was not obeyed. Had Manorial Courts been established in the Province of Pennsylvania, the experience of other Colonies proves they would have possessed little vitality. In Pennsylvania, the spirit of the people was against them.

"Hence, in the full and strict sense of the term, there were no Manors in Pennsylvania, whatever the Proprietary's tenths and other large surveys may have been dominated. Though the tenure expressed in the patent was nominally as of the Manor of (let us say Springton) yet really it only implied rent service.

"Often the lands granted within the County were held as of the principal Manor of that County whether the particular tract was actually within the surveyed limits of the Manor or not."

In their *History of Chester County*, Futey and Cope deservedly devote no little space to Springton Manor. Those of you who have read that part of their history will recall that they refer to the 9th Article of "Conditions and Concessions, by which the Proprietary reserved to himself 10,000 out of every 100,000 acres, to lie in one place."

As early perhaps as 1686 an attempt was made to locate such a reservation in Chester County embracing a considerable portion of what is now West Bradford Township. This effort, however, was abandoned and at the time of William Penn's second visit nothing had been done in the matter. By virtue of a warrant dated September 1, 1700, under the hand and seal of the Proprietary and Governor, Edward Pennington, Surveyor General, directed Henry Hollingsworth, Deputy Surveyor, to survey for the Proprietary, one-tenth part of all the lands that shall be laid out in the County of Chester.

The Manor of Springton or Springtown, as it was generally writ-

ten, included nearly all of the present township of Wallace and portions of the southeastern parts of Honeybrook and West Nantmeal. The south line of the Manor remains as the north line of East and West Brandywine.

Futhey regretted that Springton or Springtown was not adopted as the name of the Township that coincided so nearly with the extent of the old Manor, but he found a little satisfaction in the "lingering reminder" as he calls it, of the Church and Post Office of Brandywine Manor.

The earliest mention of the name of Springton, so far as he could discover, is under date of March 6, 1700 and appears as a memorandum of an order for a survey.

In 1709 a tract was surveyed at the great meadow on a branch of Pickering Creek and in the draught it is represented as adjoining the "Reputed Manor of Springton." This location was probably abandoned on account of its interfering with earlier surveys.

In the early part of 1714, Isaac Taylor, Surveyor, was admonished to give Secretary Logan the best account that he could render of the Manor of Springton and in the latter part of the same year he was advised that Logan had received his letter, but having taken physic was unable to answer it, but sent the admonition, "Be sure to remember Springtown."

Springton was a seat worthy of the Lord of the Fee. . . . Like the plain of Jordan, chosen by Lot, Springton was well watered everywhere. The Black Brandywine flowed through its southeastern corner, the Western Brandywine through its southwestern corner, while the Eastern Brandywine and the two Branches of Indian Run plentifully supplied its interior. On its southern border a barren mountain looked down upon the union of Indian Run and the Eastern Brandywine. Up this mountain and along these streams frequented by Indians, John Taylor went surveying and marking until at last, on March 18, 1729-30, he entered in his notes, "Finished Springton Manor."

But Taylor was mistaken. Springton was not finished. Lines were to be adjusted and the whole tract was to be divided into parcels of two hundred acres each.

Logan called it "the unfortunate Manor of Springtown, which has been no less than three several times in as many different places laid out and is the only spot left in the County of Chester to answer the holding expressed in every patent for land granted in Chester County." This statement is not strictly correct, but it furnished an illustration of what I have previously stated, that the Manor was regarded as the seat of the Chief Lord of the Fee and the other lands were held as dependencies thereof.

In 1739, Taylor was ordered to divide Springton Manor into "tracts of 200 acres or thereabouts" and incidently to bestir himself.

In 1740 Taylor wrote Richard Peters that he would not be hurried to "so vast a task" and laying down his instruments tartly wished him a better surveyor.

For me, as for many others, the scenery of what was once Springton Manor has a singular fascination, whether seen from the hill of the Bartol country-seat, not far from the junction of the two branches of Indian Run, or looked at through the open door of the Brandywine Manor Church.

Possibly my feeling is in part the result of an incident that occurred some forty years ago, when in walking along a public road that skirted Springton Dam, I stopped to notice a little white heron on an island near the center. It stayed just long enough to let me catch it with my camera, and then, away it flew, up Indian Run. So soft and white did the little heron look and so swift was its flight, that I could almost pardon old Pythagoras for his theory of transmigration, and could almost believe that this light-winged bird that skimmed the surface of the dam so gracefully, was but the embodiment of some fair Indian Maiden's spirit revisiting the scenes of happy childhood in a former life by the quiet waters of Indian Run.

The surroundings here always induce a feeling of sadness. This retreat originally was not made for me. God made it for the Indians and I stand here upon his ashes beside the stream he loved.

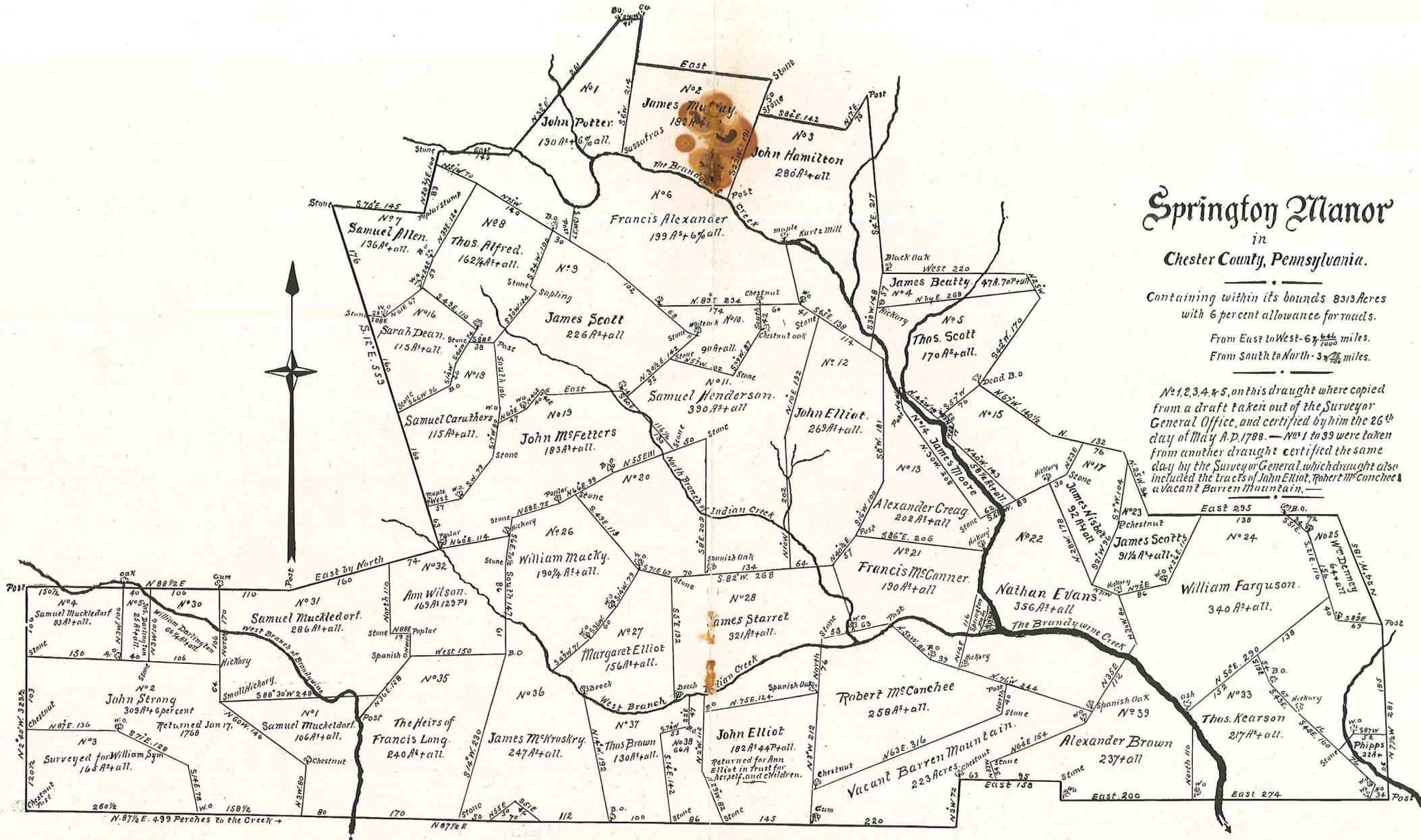
When West Nantmeal was divided in 1852 and a new Township was formed including nearly the same territory as the old Manor of Springton, there was some question as to what name it should bear. At the request of a large majority of its occupants, the Legislature called it Wallace.

The settlers of Springton were, for the most part, of Scotch-Irish stock, descendants of Macelduff, Alexander, Henderson, Starrett and Mackey. How unreasonable to ask their offspring to subordinate Wallace to Springton. Patriotism has no nobler name than Wallace. Very properly they declined to yield to English or Welsh suggestions. England had no special claim on this portion of Chester County and Wales had already contributed enough of unpronounceable names.

Not more than a mile from Springton Dam was Indiantown. When the Hendersons first settled here in 1737, they found that the Indians had partially abandoned their nomadic habits and were raising a little corn and tobacco, even planting a few fruit trees.

From Indiantown in Springton Manor let us travel southward to Indian Rock on the Western Brandywine near the Eastern boundary of Newlin Township. Was the land now included within its limits ever a Manor or part of a Manor, and if so, what was its name? This is an interesting question. Proceeding backwards, I find that on June 10, 1724, Charles Read, Job Goodman, Evan Owen, George Fitzwater and Joseph Pigeon, as Trustees for the Free Society of Traders, conveyed a tract of 7100 acres to Nathaniel Newlin.

This deed recites a seizin of land by the Society without specifying the acreage, on March 24, 1681. On March 22 and 23, of that year, William Penn, by lease and release, conveyed 20,000 acres to Nicholas Moore, James Claypoole, Philip Ford, William Sharloo, Edward Pierce, John Simcock, Thomas Brasey, Thomas Barker and Edward Brooks, Trustees for the Free Society of Traders.



Springton Manor

in
Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Containing within its bounds 8313 Acres
with 6 percent allowance for roads.
From East to West - $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles.
From South to North - $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

No. 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5, on this draught were copied
from a draft taken out of the Surveyor
General Office, and certified by him the 26th
day of May A.D. 1788. — Nos. 1 to 39 were taken
from another draught, certified the same
day by the Surveyor General, which draught also
included the tracts of John Elliot, Robert McConhee
& vacant Barren Mountain.

N. 87 1/2 E. 4.99 Perches to the Creek

The language used by him was the following: "I William Penn . . . do erect the said twenty thousand acres into a Manor and do constitute, make and confirm the same to be henceforth a Manor by the name of the Manor of Franke."

In granting its Charter, Penn was most liberal. He empowered the Corporation to have and to hold Courts baron, Courts leet, and view of Franke pledge. In addition to these rights, the inhabitants of the Manor and all buildings therein were to be free from "all taxes and other burdens of scot, lot, watch and ward." The Charter also provided that the inhabitants should not be impleaded without the said Manor, for any plea arising within the said Manor.

This Free Society of Traders was a joint stock Company which had been planned and discussed in London and great results were expected of it. In July 1682, James Claypoole, treasurer of the Society, wrote to a friend, "We are to send out one hundred servants to build houses, to plant and improve land for cattle, and to set up a glass house for bottles, drinking glass and window glass, to supply the islands and continent of America." These dreams were never realized. Unfortunately, for grantor and grantee, the Free Society of Traders proved a failure and, so far as appears, nothing was done to improve or organize the Manor, and in March 1722, the land of the Company was vested by Legislative Act in certain Trustees to be sold for payment of debts.

This Act is a long one and recites that great numbers of persons had subscribed large sums of money only to meet with sundry disappointment, that for twenty years past the Agents of the Company had declined acting in behalf of the subscribers, that the land already surveyed and located had been possessed and wasted by idle and ill-disposed persons and that much of the remaining land was of little value.

The probabilities are that the 7100 acres conveyed to Nathaniel Newlin were a part of the 20,000 acres granted by Penn in March 1681. The Manor was not laid out in a contiguous tract although originally such seems to have been the intention. Surveys were made in various localities, several of them in Bucks County, for the Society, but I have been unable to find any further mention of the Manor of Franke. It has disappeared alike from our geography and history and belongs to the list of things long since forgotten.

If our minds are in a state of dubiety respecting the Manor of Franke, let us leave the Brandywine and hasten toward the Schuylkill. In journeying northward, when you come to the Old Organ Church, you are close to what was formerly the southern line of Vincent Manor. Stop for a few minutes in the church-yard, I pray you, and refresh your eyes with the scenery to the north. Afterwards, when you reach the State Institution at Pennhurst, you will halt without any admonition and look out on the Schuylkill River, which in a sweeping curve, gracefully bounds the eastern portion of the land that was once a part of our northernmost Manor.

Vincent Manor was one of the largest in Chester County. On its face it contained 30,000 acres; in reality, about 20,000.

The early history of this Manor is vague and unsatisfactory. Its beginning is not easy of ascertainment. It is like seeking to find the source of a stream. You follow its meanderings through bushes and briars to find it disappearing in a swamp.

This Manor, a large part of which lay between French Creek and Schuylkill River, derived its name from Sir Matthias Vincent, who was one of the four persons whose names appear on Holme's Map of the Improved Parts of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Furley being another and Doctor Daniel Cox a third. Furley was "very intimate with William Penn and travelled much with him in Germany. He was a gentleman of considerable estate, fine acquirements and of such influence among the Germans as to induce numbers of them to settle in Pennsylvania."

While the earliest inhabitants were supplanted by the Germans, Furley's name was never affixed to this territory, but we find Cox's name applied to it, although he had only held his acreage, purchased from Penn in 1686, for a period of five years, when he conveyed it to The West New Jersey Society. It was known as "Cox's 20,000 acres" and "Cox's Manor." However, French Creek, which passes through it, was called Vincent River, thus dividing the honors between two of the original owners.

In the second quarter of the 18th Century, an attempt was made to locate in Vincent, a Manor called Callowhill.

Sometime in 1736, Benjamin Eastburn, Surveyor, made a draught of Richard Hills Tract of 304 Acres and labeled it "Part of Callowhill Manor," in "Land called Cox's."

In 1759, among the Taylor papers, are various surveys by Thomas Lightfoot, Jr. At the bottom of one of these dividing the tenement of Joseph Hancock, is a statement that the above described tract of land is situate in the Manor of Callowhill. There is a 51-acre tract to John Martin in 1757, another to David Morris and Morris Evans, a third to Theophilus Thomas, a fourth to Frederick Bingaman. Does someone cry "Hold! enough." I agree to do so, on condition that doubters admit that the name of Callowhill Manor was applied to land in Vincent Township. Somehow this name did not fit, would not wear, or got lost between the two rivers.

And now for Valley Forge. Southwardly we go, over ten miles of picturesque country, until we come to the bridge at Valley Creek, about three hundred yards from Washington's Headquarters. This Creek divided John Penn's Manor of Bilton, in Chester County, from Letitia Penn's Manor of Mt. Joy, in Philadelphia County (afterwards Montgomery). It contained 2,850 acres of land now lying in the Township of Charlestown and Schuylkill. The Manor was bounded on the North by the Schuylkill River, on the East by that River and Valley Creek, on the South by the Welsh tract, and on the West by the Pickering or Mine Hole tract. From East to West it extended about $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles, with $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles of river frontage on the North.

In 1681 there was a grant of 5,000 acres from William Penn to William and Margaret Lowther and, on the same date, a like grant to John and Ann Lowther.

In 1733, two Proprietary Warrants, under date of September 30, were issued; one for laying out 4,920 acres to John Simpson in right of the original purchaser of William and Margaret Lowther and to include within the same one-half of the tract of land known as the Manor of Bilton. The other, containing a similar provision for Joseph Turner, in right of the original purchase of John Lowther and Ann Shalot. By 1737, the whole interest was vested in William.

Who were the Lowthers to whom the original grants were made? William and Margaret Lowther are familiar names to all who are acquainted with the family history of William Penn. They will recall Pepys' sketch of Penn's gay and romping sister, eight years younger than her famous brother, the girl whom her friends called "Peg".

*"A hoydenish maiden was Margaret Penn.
Both jolly and impish, especially when,
Sam Pepys made his call; with mischievous glee,
Peg used him as sport for her gay company."*

"Comes our company to dinner," writes Pepys on January 4, 1667; "Lord Brouwker and his lady, Sir W. and Lady Penn, Peg and her servant Mr. Lowther and we made merry; Mr. Lowther is a pretty gentleman, and is too good for Peg."

Peg married Anthony Lowther, of Maske, when she was fifteen years of age and two children were born to them, Margaret and William, nephew and niece of the Proprietary.

Naturally, one identifies them with two of the grantees and continues to read the "delicately indelicate" pages of Pepys about the Penns.

In the Recorder's Office at Philadelphia, where the record of the grant to the Lowthers may be found, it is stated that Margaret and William are "children of Anthony Lowther" who was the husband of Peg. About the relationship of the other Lowthers nothing is mentioned. They were probably cousins.

Looking at a draught of the Manor of Bilton, unless you are wholly unimaginative, as many assert an historian should be, another figure will present itself on the adjoining Mine Hole Tract. Stretched out on the banks of the stream you will see Charles Pickering, lawyer and adventurer, dreaming his dream of silver. If, however, you are interested only in conveyancing, you will fold up your draught, close Pepys' Diary, return to West Chester and take down Docket G in the Recorder's Office and read on page 503, a long recital which I have endeavored to epitomize.

Before leaving this section of the County, let me answer a question that is often asked: "Was the Welsh Tract a Manor?"

Briefly, these are the facts: the Welsh settlers did intend to establish a Cymric Barony in Pennsylvania, and thought they had a definite agreement to that effect with William Penn, but, unfortunately, it was not reduced to writing.

In their petition to the Commissioners of Property, the inhabitants of the Welsh Tract describe themselves as descendants of the Ancient Britons who, in the land of their nativity, under the Crown of England, have always enjoyed that liberty and privilege as to have their own bounds and limits by themselves within which all causes, quarrels, crimes and titles are tryed and wholly determined by officers, magistrates and judges of their own language, who are their equals.

They followed this preface with a statement that the Proprietor had promised them 40,000 acres of land, regularly laid out as a Manor, and that they should not be obliged to answer in any Provincial Court, but have Courts and Manors of their own; and, further, that he had issued a warrant on March 13, 1684, for a survey of the Tract.

To a question that was asked them on 3rd Mo. 6, 1691, whether they would pay the quit rent for the entire Tract from the date of the Warrant, they answered "No," but expressed their willingness to pay it henceforward; whereupon their plea to be regarded as a Manor or Barony was denied and the unsettled part of the Tract was granted to other purchasers.

Did the Proprietary break his promise to the Welsh gentlemen who originally interviewed him in respect to this tract? Admittedly "they and those concerned with them were nearly all of the highest social caste of the landed gentry of Wales — the equals and peers of Penn." Their statements, therefore, must be given due consideration. Browning, in his work on *Welsh Settlements in Pennsylvania*, contends that he treated them unfairly and adduces many reasons in support of his contention. Other writers think the matter may be resolved into a misunderstanding. The question is still debatable, but the Welsh Friends in their day could do nothing when the Baronial issue was decided against them, for Penn's word was final.

On February 14, 1672, William Penn married Guelma Springett. Several children were born to this union, among them William and Letitia — William in 1678, Letitia in 1680. When the Proprietary sailed from Cowes in 1699, for America, he took Letitia (or "Tische" as he called her) with him. Some of his biographers tell us it had been his intention to remain in Pennsylvania and bring up his family there. However this may be, Letitia — a lively and self-willed girl — soon became engaged to a young man named William Masters, of Philadelphia, but for some reason the match was not to her father's liking and nothing definite was settled. In 1701, he left Pennsylvania for England. Just before his departure an address was presented to Letitia who was eager to return, testifying that she was "courteously carried and sweetly-tempered in her conversation among us and a diligent comer to meetings."

In this quaint document it was further stated that she was not, to the writer's knowledge, engaged to be married.

When her promise to William Masters became known, the persons who had signed the certificate were very indignant and wished to recall the paper.

The Penns reached England about the middle of December 1701,

and, in September of the following year, Letitia married William Aubrey. About this marriage, her brother William remarked: "There was a mighty noise made over William Masters in Philadelphia, but it did not last long." As for Aubrey, William thought him "a good sort of man," but William's father found him a grasping creditor.

In 1701, Henry Hollingsworth made a survey of 30,000 acres including all of the present township of New Garden and the greater part of Kennett Township, together with several thousand acres in New Castle County. This survey was divided and the eastern part, containing 15,000 acres, was confirmed to Letitia by a patent dated October 23, 1701, by the name of the Manor of Stenning, otherwise known as Letitia's Manor. The portion of it that lay south of the Circular Line was watered by Red Clay and Mill Creeks and included, among other places, Yorklyn, Ashland and Hockessin.

The remainder of the 30,000 tract, consisting of 14,500 acres, was patented to William Penn, Jr., on May 24, 1706. This portion also received the name of Stenning. These two Stenning Manors were separated by the division line between what is now Kennett and New Garden Townships.

At an early date, the western line of New Garden extended southwardly to the Circular Line between Pennsylvania and Delaware. Later on, a part was taken from New Garden and added to the Township of London Britain. Before this was done, New Garden embraced that portion of William's Manor of Stenning which lay north of the Circular Line, containing 8913 acres.

In 1715, William sold what remained of his Manor (excepting 500 acres) to John Evans; in consequence of which, the tract is sometimes called Col. Evans Manor.

In October 1924, many members of the Chester County Historical Society, with some representatives of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, visited the southern part of this Manor and congregated at a spot not far from the union of the Eastern and Middle Branches of White Clay Creek. Here, along the roadside, in front of a little Welsh Church, they placed a bronze tablet on a huge boulder brought from that creek to mark the site of Minguannan Indian town of the Chief Machalopa and his people of the Unami Group of the Leni Lenapes or Delawares.

There are few places in Chester County where the Past becomes as realistic as it does here. Amid these surroundings, the years recede like an ebbing tide and you find yourself contemporary with the early settlers. Immediately in front of you, in the quiet churchyard, is the grave of John Evans, and towering above you are some mighty oaks that dominate the scene today as they did more than two hundred years ago, when they looked down upon the surveyors who laid out the lands of Stenning Manor for the son of the Proprietary.

Moving northwestwardly toward Kelton and passing over the London Company's Tract, you approach the southwestern corner of Letitia Aubrey's Manor, better known to people generally as Fagg's Manor. This Manor, in its larger signification, was created by Wil-

liam Penn in 1682, when the Proprietary made a grant of 30,000 acres to Sir John Fagg as Trustee for Penn's wife and children. Sir John was a cousin of William Penn's first wife. No surveys were made for Letitia and William west of the London Company's Tract until 1700 at least. It was to the land laid out for Letitia to which the name of Fagg's Manor was distinctively applied. The surveys in this part of the County were far beyond the regular settlements, and, as might be expected, numerous encroachments were made by irresponsible squatters who destroyed much timber to raise a little grain.

On April 3, 1730, John Taylor notes in his memorandum book, "I went and warned the Irish off Fagg's Manor." What effect this warning had may be inferred from a letter written by Letitia on January 23, 1734 to John Penn in which she states that James Logan has informed her that the 5,000 acres of land taken up in Sir John Fagg's Manor is settled upon "intirely" and that there is not enough left for one plantation. She thinks it very strange that there is no law to hinder such things. "If this be the case," says she, "if I cannot have my land there, my request is that I may have it somewhere else."

About three years after this letter was written, a re-survey was made and returned, showing a rectangular strip of land running north and south over four miles in length and a little less than two miles in breadth.

Letitia's Manor began at a white oak, a corner of William Penn, Jr.'s Manor, now the southwestern corner of West Fallowfield Township and extended southerly to the southern line of the present Township of Penn. It was named in honor of Sir John Fagg and contained about 5,000 acres. The name of the Manor has been handed down and kept alive by the Presbyterian Church situated in its northwestern corner.

Letitia had no children and willed the property to her nephew, William Penn — son of her brother William — and to his daughter, Christina.

William died in 1746 and the daughter appointed William Peters and Richard Hockley her attorneys who sold several tracts.

In one of his talks with his father, William, Jr. informed him that as his prospective heir, it was only right that he should visit his inheritance. The birth of a child, however, delayed his departure and the Proprietary wrote to James Logan, "My son resolves to be with you the first opportunity. His wife was this day delivered of a fine boy, so that now we are, major, minor and minimus."

William "minor" came to America, but left his wife and child behind him. Like the Prodigal Son, of Scripture, he spent his time in riotous living. In addition, he openly renounced the name of Quaker and disassociated himself forever from a Society to which he had become a public disgrace. He tried the army, he tried the navy, he stood for a seat in Parliament but lost the election and the expenses fell on his father as well as debts to the amount of 10,000 pounds.

Of his Manor, little need be said. It comprised 5,000 acres, adjoining Fagg's Manor on the west, and was laid out under a Warrant

dated the 15th of 7th Mo., 1701. It took in the eastern portion of Upper Oxford Township as it is today, and a small portion of Lower Oxford. It was re-surveyed on the 5th, 12th and 13th days of June 1741 by John Churchman and a Patent was granted December 12, 1747. It had been conveyed by William Penn (a son of William Penn, Jr., deceased) whom his grandfather called "Minimus."

Those of you who are familiar with the Manors of Chester County will find little that is new in my brief paper, but I hope that others who have hitherto given no attention to these large reservations with their "courtesy titles" may become sufficiently interested to visit at least some of the manorial localities. If, perchance, you are unable to find Peter Bezallion's Cave in Vincent, or Fire Brand Hill in Stening, or the Indian Burial Ground in Springton, I am sure you will be impressed by the picturesque beauty of the various tracts so carefully selected by the agents of Penn for the benefit of himself and his family. Labor not to find in the history of these Manors any Court-barons, for none can be found. The power to create them was given to Penn and his licensed grantees, but this power was never exercised by him or them in Chester County. The early settlers were not favorable to these courts, and as we had no copy holders in Chester County, we were spared the ludicrous and indecent exhibitions that the "Spectator" says took place in the Court-barons of several English Manors to the great delight of the tenants whose prurient curiosity brought them together in great numbers to witness them.



"SPRINGHOUSE HILL"
3511 HUMPTON ROAD
DOWNTOWN, PA 19335-2121

February 29, 2000

Old Calm Historical Society
P. O. Box 428
Thorndale, Penn. 19372

Dear Arnie King, President

Enclosed please find rare copy
of "Manors of Chester County"
1944 by Wilmer W. Mac Elree
signed to the Members of the
Chester County Historical Society.
on February 21, 1939

Please place in our Calm H.S.
Museum on Route 340 in
Calm Township. King Highway

Sincerely,

Mary C. Hickman

(Mrs David Elwyn Hickman, Jr.)
Charter Member, O.C.H.S.