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JOHN FANNING WATSON, HISTORIAN 1779-1860.

University of Delaware (Winterthur Program),

M.A., 1971

History, modern

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JOHN FANNING WATSON, HISTORIAN

1779 — 1860

by

Deborah Louise Dependahl

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of  
Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of Master of Arts in Early American Culture

May, 1971

Approved: George F. Frick  
Professor in charge of thesis  
on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: George F. Frick  
Coordinator of the Winterthur Program

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

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The bulk of Watson's manuscripts are preserved in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and in the Joseph Downs Manuscript Collection, the Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum. Mr. Peter Parker, HSP, and Mrs. Betty Hill, Winterthur, and their staffs obtained materials and answered questions with rare good humor. For permission to use other Watson materials I thank the American Philosophical Society, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the New York Historical Society, the Manuscript Division of the New York Public Library, the Quaker Collection of Haverford College, the Germantown Historical Society, and the Chester County (Pennsylvania) Historical Society.

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## ABSTRACT

John Fanning Watson (1779-1860), a Germantown, Pennsylvania, banker with an avocation for antiquarian investigations, became an historian in both his aims and methods. Best-known as author of Annals of Philadelphia (1830), Watson gathered anecdotes through oral interviews, questionnaire responses from "aged persons," archival research, and archaeological evidence as a foundation for a local mythology to be erected by authors of the caliber of Cooper or Irving. Reverence of "olden times" prompted Watson's preservation efforts. He sought to save the "Letitia Court" House, employed artists to take views of significant Philadelphia buildings, and gathered relic wood fragments associated with historic happenings. A school of local historians and antiquaries inspired by Watson followed his model in research, publication, and collecting. Despite his occasional errors of fact and judgment, Watson's works remain a primary source for study of colonial Philadelphia and New York City history.

## INTRODUCTION

Watson's Annals is a familiar reference to the student of Philadelphia history. The second and subsequent editions represent the sum of customary transmitted knowledge about the growth of colonial Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> Yet the banker with an avocation for antiquarian pastimes who compiled the Annals, John Fanning Watson, is little known. Writers dismiss him as either an "indefatigable and irascible chronicler of early Philadelphia"<sup>2</sup> or a "good but not entirely trustworthy old chronicler."<sup>3</sup> Such judgment is unfair. Contemporaries knew Watson best for his valuable additions to local history "with which he was perfectly familiar."<sup>4</sup> He preserved the most striking adventures of the founders and settlers of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, as they had no historian of their own. Watson's work clearly falls within John Higham's definition of history as "any story about human experience that tries to exclude fable and error in the interest of truth . . . ."<sup>5</sup>

As an amateur historian or antiquary, Watson collected "the dust of perished matter," and with his recreative power stamped the past with a kind of immortality. He pioneered usage of such scholarly techniques as oral history and public opinion questionnaires in preparing histories of Philadelphia, Germantown and New York. His concern for the historic artifact and building presaged that of the twentieth-century historic preservation movement. Dr. Frank H. Sommer called Watson the "first historian of American decorative arts" on the basis of his attempt to undertake a systematic study of American interior design and furnishings.<sup>6</sup> Materials gathered from the aged populations of Philadelphia and New York resulted in chapters on "Furniture and Equipage" in both the Philadelphia and New York Annals. When the Historical Society of Pennsylvania was founded, Watson

outlined a program for the promotion of local history studies which anticipated many later proposals. "One of the early American social historians," Watson rightfully has been called a spiritual ancestor of Dixon Ryan Fox.<sup>7</sup>

Publication of the Annals of Philadelphia in 1830 was not an isolated incident in American historiography. The Annals were but one product of a general intellectual celebration of the progress of democratic government in the United States. The forward-looking national intellect of the second and third decades of the nineteenth century discovered the temporal order and distinctions within it of past and present. Compilation of documents and records and foundation of historical societies to preserve them increased rapidly on the East Coast.<sup>8</sup> Pierre Eugene DuSimitiere set the precedent for the Annals with his five volumes of scraps and fragments of American history collected during the Revolutionary War period. Watson found DuSimitiere "a dull Proser: -- one of those eccentric minds who gave his whole soul to schemes for which he had not adequate judgment or taste!"<sup>9</sup> In 1811 Dr. James Mease issued The Picture of Philadelphia, a modified commercial handbook incorporating an account of the city's origin, increase, and improvements. His chief object was "the multiplication of facts." Joseph Delaplaine, a boyhood companion of Watson, acted as retail sales agent for the publication. Watson subscribed for twelve copies.<sup>10</sup> In the later editions of the Annals Watson claimed that he originated the Picture scheme.<sup>11</sup> A continuation written by Thomas Porter covering the years 1811 to 1831 accompanied an emended reissue of the first volume in 1831. Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania, a serial publication, began in 1828. Watson contributed to the eighteenth and nineteenth numbers of the initial volume, and to the sixth volume. The popular Library of American Biography edited by Jared Sparks, whom Watson had introduced to his friend John Thomson, found a ready market.<sup>12</sup> By 1834, scholar-politician George Bancroft had issued the first volume of his multi-volume History of the United States. More closely aligned to the interests of Watson were the pursuits of his contemporary John Warner Barber (1798-1882). Both men were artists as well as historians, recording

remnants of the national past in picture and word. Barber largely confined his curiosity to history, topography, and buildings in the production of an illustrated series of Historical Collections covering the antiquities and local history of various states. Watson focused on personalities and amusing anecdotes, as they related to the grand theme of progress.

Watson revealed the extent of his belief in the advancement of an enlightened citizenry in a toast. "Philadelphia," he wrote,

A fruitful theme of admiration for the historian & the Philosopher! The history of its Rise & Progress is curious & instructive — no other City has arisen to equal greatness in so short a time, by the industry & resources of its population! — May its peculiar history, soon become a more popular study! 13

To this end, Watson dedicated forty years of his "spare" time.

1. See George B. Tatum, Penn's Great Town (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), p. 27; J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia 1609-1884 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884) I, 166; Struthers Burt, Philadelphia: Holy Experiment (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Doran & Company, Inc., 1945), pp. 339-343, 377.
2. Burt, Philadelphia, p. 339.
3. William S. Dye, Jr., "Pennsylvania versus the Theatre," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LV, 4 (1931), 344.
4. Public Ledger (Philadelphia), 25 December 1860, p. 1.
5. John Higham, History (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), ix.
6. Frank H. Sommer, "John F. Watson: First Historian of American Decorative Arts," Antiques, 83 (March 1963), 300.
7. Thomas S. Gates, "The Possibilities of Philadelphia As A Center For Historical Research," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXII, 2 (April 1938), 122.
8. R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 159-160.
9. John Fanning Watson, Annals of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Leary, Stuart Company, 1927), (Hereafter cited as Annals (1927), I, 562-563. Watson to J. J. Smith, 30 January 1827, 7 February 1827, Library Company of Philadelphia Manuscript Collection on deposit at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter cited as LCM) Yi 2 7299, F 75-76.
10. James Mease, M.D., The Picture of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: B. & T. Kite, 1811), p. 375.
11. John Fanning Watson, Annals of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1857) (Hereafter cited as Annals (1857), II, 4.
12. John Thomson to Watson, 2 November 1827, in Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter cited as HSP), Am 30163, p. 249.
13. Undated MS. fragment, Society Collection, HSP.

CHAPTER I  
"A RESPONSIBLE MAN IN THE WORLD"

Little in the heritage or upbringing of John Fanning Watson indicated that he would become an historian. The second son of William and Lucy Fanning Watson, John was born in Batsto, Burlington County, New Jersey, on 13 June 1779. His father, a sea captain and ship owner, served as a volunteer on the privateer "General Mifflin" with his brother-in-law Lieutenant John Fanning during the Revolution. The two survived a Virginia beach shipwreck in which seventeen crewmates perished. Loyalist refugees captured Watson on the New Jersey shore on 10 November 1781. First confined to the New York Provost, he was transferred to the Stromboli hospital ship in New York Harbor. Upon his release in the summer of 1782, Watson moved the family to Timber Creek, Gloucester County, New Jersey, where he made salt.

Impoverished by post-war depreciation of his Continental currency, William Watson moved the family to the Northern Liberties of Philadelphia, and re-established himself as a sea captain by 1785. Active in the coastal trade, Watson sailed between Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., and Charleston, South Carolina in 1800. The following year he undertook an expedition to Nova Scotia. With his youngest son Wesley, he sailed to New Orleans in 1803. There the boy contracted yellow fever. On their return voyage, they encountered a storm off Cape Hatteras 21 January 1804, and were lost upon the shoals.<sup>1</sup>

Lucy Fanning Watson, a Methodist mystic and poet,<sup>2</sup> aided her son's antiquarian endeavors indirectly by transmitting to him her faculty for lucid

remembrance of names, persons, and places encountered in her youth on the Mystic River in Connecticut and in Walpole, New Hampshire. Like his mother, John Fanning Watson had present pictorial images of men and objects as he saw or heard them in his youth in Philadelphia and New York.

Though often sickly in constitution, Mrs. Lucy Watson was spiritually robust. In later life, her piety, correct deportment, fine understanding, and beauty brought her praise from her son and his friends.<sup>3</sup> In an introduction to an autobiographical statement dictated by his mother, Watson wrote that she exhibited nice judgment and sound discretion in her relations.<sup>4</sup> Following her husband's death, Mrs. Watson again received suitors. In this regard, John advised

I set my face against any minister — not that I oppose your alliance to a religious man, but that the general disrespect attached to Methodist clergymen will reduce my importance —<sup>5</sup>

The extent and nature of Watson's education is unknown. Specimens of his handwriting including two poems written at the age of ten survive. The maxim "Humility is a Virtue", although written six times on wide-lined paper, failed to impress the young scholar.<sup>6</sup> To escape the yellow fever, Watson spent a portion of 1793 in New Castle, Delaware.<sup>7</sup> He obtained business training in the Philadelphia countinghouse of James Vanuxem.<sup>8</sup> In 1798, he offended his employers by joining the Macpherson Blues, a militia company called up to aid in suppression of the Northampton Insurrection. Watson was dismissed.<sup>9</sup>

From Philadelphia, Watson moved to Mount Holly, New Jersey. There his company proved acceptable in the grandest society. He made a trifling adventure in fans, which returned him double their cost. This success prompted a self-congratulatory letter to his mother. He expressed certainty in his ability to become a respectable businessman, based on his belief that industry and economy combined with ability ensured wealth in the United States.<sup>10</sup> An acquaintance

begun in Mount Holly with James Eakin, a career civil servant, continued in Watson's Washington years, and proved useful throughout his life.<sup>11</sup>

Watson accepted a clerkship in the War Department and moved to Washington City in 1800. He felt himself driven into involuntary exile by adverse fortune to gain a "small pittance which can but barely support a young man genteelly." He found his boarding house, that of William O'Neal, father of the infamous Peggy Eaton,<sup>12</sup> large and elegant with excellent fare but the society there "viscious, democratic and dissipated . . . they perhaps hate me as I despise them . . . ." <sup>13</sup> He began to look for some small genteel Methodist family with whom to board. Generally Watson found the city not as wild and terrible in appearance as he had anticipated. While a Washington resident, Watson assisted in the removal of records from the War Department offices in a fire on 8 November 1800.<sup>14</sup> He settled his father's accounts and made suggestions for his brother Wesley's studies.<sup>15</sup> As in Mount Holly, Watson moved in the best society. By October 1800, he had been introduced to all the first families of the new city and was attending weekly private balls.<sup>16</sup>

Early in 1801, Watson wrote his mother that he felt within himself an unconquerable disposition for study and universal knowledge of philosophy and the works of nature. He judged himself vastly superior to his former classmates "in understanding, talents, and in the estimation of society."<sup>17</sup> His appointment by the Secretary of War and the Comptroller of the Treasury in 1803 to enquire into the propriety and justice of several charges made by contractors and others at military posts from New York to Massachusetts reveals the accuracy of his self-evaluation.<sup>18</sup>

Although financially independent, Watson was nonetheless deeply involved with his family. The threat of fever in Philadelphia in 1802 caused him to disclose plans for a family mercantile venture. After moving the family to



Washington, William Watson would be provided with a vessel to touch at Norfolk for freight and passengers on the Washington-Savannah run. The plan would be inaugurated in the spring of 1803. In the interval Watson and his partner planned to establish their correspondence and obtain consignments of all types of back-country produce.<sup>19</sup>

Although the plan failed, Watson resigned from the War Department in 1804 to take charge of a similar scheme for General James O'Hara of Pittsburgh, former Quartermaster-General of Anthony Wayne's Indian army. O'Hara's business centered in New Orleans. In preparation for the move, Watson studied French.<sup>20</sup>

Watson left Philadelphia on 10 March 1804 in the Lancaster mail stage in the company of Miss Polly Carson, a niece of General O'Hara. O'Hara joined them in Lancaster. The party reached Pittsburgh on the 19 March 1804. There Watson stayed at the General's spacious frame house surrounded with poplars, on the bank of the Monongahela.<sup>21</sup>

From Pittsburgh Watson was to descend the Ohio in O'Hara's schooner "Conquest". He decided instead to take passage on a flatboat and overtook the schooner below the falls of the Ohio. He left Pittsburgh 9 April 1804 with a cargo of flour and whiskey. Watson landed at New Orleans on 26 May 1804 and immediately learned of the deaths of his father and brother at sea.

While in New Orleans Watson served as commissary of provisions for all army posts in Lower Louisiana.<sup>22</sup> He requested consideration as agent for the Mexican boundary commission's subsistence in 1805 and noted to a Washington correspondent that he felt assured of obtaining the Spanish supply contract.<sup>23</sup>

Black vomit and yellow fever plagued Americans in New Orleans. Watson avoided both dangers,<sup>24</sup> although his mother felt he was neither happy nor

safe in New Orleans. "My Dear Son! Come Home!" she wrote. "If you are spared through this Season, don't venture it another."<sup>25</sup> Watson refused to return to Philadelphia immediately. He requested that Mrs. Watson "only send us some Christian ministers and all will be well." His nine-month profit exceeded two thousand dollars. In one year, he anticipated a gross of twenty thousand dollars if he received all projected contracts.<sup>26</sup>

When Watson left New Orleans on 19 November 1805, he had "\$2500 clear money" and had lent his friend Delaplaine one thousand dollars repayable on demand. George W. Morgan, treasurer of the Louisiana Territory, took over his business affairs. To his mother he wrote:

I am happier than ever I have been before in life. I have now before me, various sure means of honourable living. I have attained just that standing, which while bereft of, picqued & worried my ambition —<sup>27</sup>

From New Orleans Watson sailed to Havana. There he engaged passage on "an elegant fast sailing new Sch/oone/r" for Charleston.<sup>28</sup> On 20 December 1805 Watson left Charleston in the mail stage bound for Washington City. He arrived in Georgetown on 8 January 1806, and remained until 17 February, involved in legal squabbling. In a disagreement with the Honorable John Smith, Senator from Ohio, who was subsequently implicated in the Aaron Burr conspiracy, and Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, Watson published an expose of alleged misconduct in office. The threat of violence loomed. To intimidate Watson, Smith brought an action claiming \$12,000 damages against Watson, and required him to post bond for that sum.<sup>29</sup>

While detained in Georgetown, Watson looked for a wife, preferably "an amiable woman with some property." The "beautiful, accomplished & discreet" sister-in-law of W. B. Grove, late member of Congress from North Carolina interested him. The attraction was mutual. Grove even proposed that Watson join

him in business at Fayetteville, North Carolina.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, Watson returned to Philadelphia on the 21 February 1806, and left with his mother for a two-month visit with New England relatives on 8 March 1806.

On his return to Philadelphia Watson opened a mercantile house at 22 Branch Street. The 1810 Philadelphia Directory listed him as a bookseller and stationer at 98 South Second Street. He moved to the southwest corner of Third and Chestnut the following year. By 1814, he ran two shops, one at 51 Chestnut, and a second at 47 Spruce.<sup>31</sup>

Watson purchased the Select Review and Spirit of Foreign Magazines in July, 1811. The monthly digest of English magazines continued under his supervision for a year. Late in 1812 Moses Thomas bought the eclectic and installed Washington Irving as editor.<sup>32</sup>

Following the magazine venture, Watson published an American edition of Dr. Adam Clarke's A discourse on the nature, design & institution, of the Holy Eucharist, commonly called the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He also acted as an agent for the Edinburgh Review and Quarterly Review.<sup>33</sup>

Watson's stock included the classics, but not "the idle & corrupt ephemera of the present day." New works available on 2 January 1812 included The Botanist by Benjamin Waterhouse (Shaw and Shoemaker #24380), Hannah More's Practical Piety (Shaw and Shoemaker #23429), Practical Astronomy by Alexander Ewing, revised and corrected by John Gummere (Shaw and Shoemaker #25374), and John Cole's hymnal Episcopalian Harmony (Shaw and Shoemaker #22558). To increase sales, Watson sought recognition as the official bookstore for Gray and Wylie's Philadelphia Academy.<sup>34</sup>

Even after accepting the position of Cashier with the Bank of Germantown

in 1814, Watson continued his book business as a sideline. In 1816, he attempted to sell a plate for navigation charts to the Navy Board through his friend James Eakin. Six years later, he sought salesmen to peddle a chart of the Atlantic Ocean at three dollars a copy.<sup>35</sup>

While a bookseller, Watson embraced religion, to his mother's pleasure, and married Phebe Barron Crowell, of Elizabeth, New Jersey. "Her father is pretty wealthy," Mrs. Lucy Watson wrote her sister.<sup>36</sup> They had seven children of whom five survived, daughters Lavinia, Selena, and Myra, and sons Barron Crowell, and John Howell. The family lived in a comfortable, unostentatious, and prudent manner.<sup>37</sup> Lavinia married Harrison Whitman of Maine, and Selena, Charles Willing of Philadelphia. Barron, after studying at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, became a physician practicing in Maine and Massachusetts. John Howell eventually served as executor of his father's estate.

A new phase in Watson's business activities began with the passage of the Pennsylvania Banking Act of 1814. Among the forty-one banks chartered for a ten-year period was the Bank of Germantown. The Board of Directors elected Watson Cashier, with an annual salary of \$1,000, on 16 July 1814. Offices and Watson's home were located at 5275 Germantown Road. The bank opened 1 August 1814. Although the bank suspended specie payment within the month, it survived the initial crisis.<sup>38</sup> Watson received a notary public commission, and continued signing the bank's notes with President Samuel Harvey.<sup>39</sup> An act of the legislature renewed the charter without difficulty in 1824. In 1835, the re-charter request met a reluctant legislature. Perhaps the adoption of a resolution to send a memorial to Congress urging the renewal of the Bank of the United States charter on 3 February 1832 by the Directors prompted the hesitation. Watson spent five weeks in Harrisburg lobbying for charter renewal. He described his bank as small but genuine, with its funds among the people. Half of its stockholders were female.<sup>40</sup> By 19 March 1835, the Bank bill had passed the House and was in Senate committee.

An amendment added to the bill which stipulated that no officer of a bank should act as a notary angered Watson. He regarded the addition as an insult directed toward him.<sup>41</sup> On 7 April 1835, Governor George Wolf signed an act extending corporate existence of the bank for a fifteen-year period.

During the period 1826-1835, the bank's directors pursued a conservative course. They did not invest in, or extend loans to, railroad or canal companies, and voted it inexpedient to accept the state offer of a loan of a portion of the Treasury surplus. After the bank suspended specie payment on 10 and 11 May 1837, Watson sought a more secure position, and considered that of agent for the Stephen Girard estate.<sup>42</sup> As the financial crisis deepened, Watson faced civil suits over debts. With only one creditor remaining, he mentioned that property intended for the benefit of his family was secure in trust.<sup>43</sup> In 1841, the Bank weathered a depression by issuing relief notes. Watson resigned his position in April, 1848, feeling that affairs had been managed for sinister purposes against him after Samuel Harvey's death. He sought a new position, as secretary-treasurer with either the West Chester Railroad, or the reorganized Philadelphia, Germantown and Norristown Railroad.<sup>44</sup> Watson took the PGN position, and served until his retirement in 1859. (See figure 1.)

Watson often lamented the confinements of his official duties, and looked forward with lively expectation to roaming over hills and dales inhaling the air of other regions, whenever possible. Frequently he made summer excursions without his family to such resorts as Cape May or Long Branch, New Jersey, or to areas of interest like the Mauch Chunk coal fields, or to Reading, Pennsylvania, via the Schuylkill Canal. His wife accompanied him to Niagara Falls, and to the Manahawkin Mansion of Health, in New Jersey.<sup>45</sup>

Politically Watson regarded himself as a Whig. He expressed anti-Masonic sentiment in 1830, declaring that "Masons are a treacherous, selfish

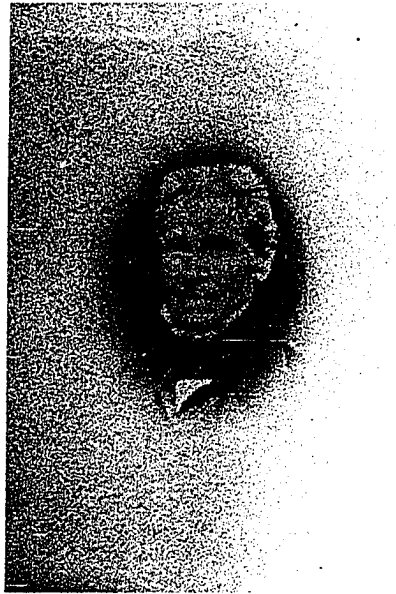


Figure 1. John Fanning Watson circa 1860. Author's collection.

band."<sup>46</sup> Indian removal as proposed by Andrew Jackson irritated Watson. He viewed the crisis as the result of "Cabinet sophistry", but placed great reliance on the outcome of the Georgia missionaries' appeal to the "firm integrity" of the Supreme Court. As a final resort, Watson suggested that the Indians move to Canada.<sup>47</sup> A "Scheme for Slave Emancipation" published in the Pennsylvania Inquirer of 30 August 1855 over the signature of "A Northern Man" presented Watson's solution to the moral dilemma of slavery. His benevolent project involved a gratuity to slaveowners equivalent to the freed slave's value, and the transportation of freedmen to Africa, Santo Domingo, or Canada, to establish a black republic.<sup>48</sup>

In the aftermath of the Kensington Anti-Catholic Riots of 6-8 May 1844, Watson gained favor with the "Romanists" for testifying in their behalf.<sup>49</sup> In other religious matters, Watson followed his mother's Methodism in matters of theology, but joined the Episcopal Church. He opposed those who indulged in "extravagant emotions and bodily exercises." In a volume entitled Methodist Error (1819), Watson published his belief that to "study to be quiet" is the best role for Methodists. In this endorsement of quietism, Watson followed the sentiments of Hannah More, whom he much admired. Watson also authored The Pulpit Made Free (1822), an anti-clerical polemic which stressed the priesthood of all believers. Bible Thoughts, an unpublished folio compiled by Watson primarily in 1826, contains additional illustrations for The Pulpit Made Free argument, and a book of "Gospel Doctrine" intended for school, missionary society, and home use.<sup>50</sup>

Watson contracted a kidney inflammation in his eighty-second year, and died at home on 23 December 1860. His funeral and interment took place on 26 December 1860, at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Germantown. Thus quietly, John Fanning Watson became part of his beloved "olden time".

1. "Experiences and Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Lucy Watson," Downs Memorial Library, Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum (hereafter cited as DML) 58x29.14, p. 19; "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15, Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 8 October 1800, 18 October 1800, 7 February 1801. William Watson owned the schooners "Success" and "Brilliant," and the sloops "Lucy," "Unity," and "Union." See Lucy Fanning Watson's "Family History to the year 1803," in Germantown Historical Society MS. IV, p.66.
2. Lucy Watson, "her hand wrote in the year of our Lord 1786 Novem~~ber~~28," a wallpaper-covered volume which includes "The believers Triumph," "A Hymn of Praise," and "Babylon," DML 58x29.13.
3. Watson, "Diary of John F. Watson's Journey to New Orleans," DML 58x29.1, [pp. 23-24]
4. Watson, "Experience and Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Lucy Watson," DML 58x29.14, Preface.
5. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 19 February 1805, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.
6. Loose sheets in "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.
7. Watson, "1822 Trip to Cape May," DML 58x29.2, pp. 3-4.
8. Watson to P. S. DuPonceau, 23 December 1835, Society Collection, HSP.
9. Watson to John Spencer, May 1842, Gratz Collection Case 6, Box 13, HSP.
10. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 22 October 1798, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.
11. Watson, "Journal Traveling Notes 1833 Trip to Manahawkin," DML 58x29.7, pp. 3-4.
12. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 21 July 1800, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15; Watson to James Eakin, 27 December 1832, Charles Roberts Collection, Haverford College Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection: "I can't bring to remembrance Mrs Eaton the famous, & yet I must have seen her in the rough quarry-state, when I boarded a short time, with her Father."
13. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 21 July 1800, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.



14. Deposition of William O'Neale, The National Intelligencer And Washington Advertiser, 25 March 1801, p. 4.

15. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 21 July 1800, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

16. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 18 October 1800, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

17. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 7 February 1801, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

18. Department of War, Accountant's Office, "To any officer of the United States . . . ." 14 May 1803, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

19. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 7 August 1802, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

20. Four books of French exercises in J. F. Watson's hand, Am3014, HSP.

21. Watson, "Diary of John F. Watson's Journey to New Orleans. . .," DML 58x29.1, pp. 1-4.

22. Watson to John Spencer, May 1842, Gratz Collection Case 6, Box 13, HSP.

23. Watson to the Honorable Jno. Smith, 18 March 1805, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

24. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 14 September 1804, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

25. Mrs. Lucy Watson to Watson, 7 October 1804, Xerox of uncatalogued original, John F. Watson Collection, Henry E. Huntington Library in DML.

26. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 19 February 1805, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

27. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 20 October 1805, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

28. Watson, "Journal of a Voyage from Orleans to Havannah & Charleston . . . .", 13 December 1805, DML 58x29.2.

29. Ibid., Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 13 February 1806; [John Fanning Watson,] To the public [Washington, D. C., 1806].

30. Watson to Mrs. Lucy Watson, 13 February 1806, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

31. James Robinson, The Philadelphia Directory for 1807 (Philadelphia: 1807); Kite's Philadelphia Directory for 1814 (Philadelphia: B. & T. Kite, 1814).

32. Aurora General Advertiser (Philadelphia), 2 February 1812; Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), I, p. 279n.

33. Thomas Jefferson to Watson, 7 May 1814, Dreer Collection, Jefferson Letters — A, HSP.

34. Watson to Messrs. Gray and Wylie, 2 September 1812, Society Collection, HSP; Aurora General Advertiser, (Philadelphia) 2 January 1812.

35. Watson to James Eakin, 25 November 1816, New York Public Library, Manuscript Division, Miscellaneous; Watson to William Whitesides, 16 May (1822), Gratz Collection, Case 6, Box 37, HSP; Watson to Rev. T. G. Harrison, 25 November 1816, Germantown Historical Society MS. IV, p. 77.

36. "Experience and Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Lucy Watson," undated loose sheet, DML 58x29.14; Thomas Crowell's estate was valued at \$14,229.47 on his death in December, 1841. Philadelphia, Will Book 15 (1841), p. 270.

37. Deborah Norris Logan Diaries (hereafter cited as DNL Diaries) XII, 4 November 1828, p. 94, HSP.

38. Bank of Germantown 1814-1914 (Philadelphia: 1914), pp. 3-20; Charles Wistar to Watson, 16 July 1814, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

39. John Fanning Watson's Commission as a Notary Public, 6 December 1815, "Family Letters," DML 58x29.15.

40. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 10 December 1834, Society Collection, HSP; Bank of Germantown 1814-1914, pp. 28-29.

41. Watson to Charles V. Hagner, 19 March 1835, Society Collection, HSP.

42. On 18 May 1836, the Bank of Germantown announced a 4%

dividend to stockholders for the previous six months. See Germantown Telegraph, 18 May 1836; Watson to John Jay Smith, 13 October (1838), LCM Yi 2 7299, F 220.

43. Watson to John Jay Smith, 27 September (1840), LCM Yi 2 7299, F 248.

44. Watson to Doctor William Darlington, 8 May 1848, American Philosophical Society (hereafter cited as APS), microfilm of original belonging to the New-York Historical Society.

45. See various travel journals in DML 58x29 group.

46. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 5 June 1830, Society Collection, HSP.

47. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 1 December 1830, Society Collection, HSP.

48. Watson to James Buchanan, 13 November 1856, Buchanan Papers, HSP.

49. Watson to Edward Armstrong, no date, Am 3011, HSP.

50. [John Fanning Watson,] Methodist Error (Trenton: D. & E. Fenton, 1819), p. 120; Watson, "Trip to Cape May, 1822," DML 58x29.2, p. 9; [John F. Watson,] The Pulpit Made Free . . . (New York: R. Norris Henry, 1822); Watson, MS. "Bible Thoughts," HSP.

## CHAPTER II

### BOSWELL FOR PHILADELPHIA

Watson began his historical compilations by keeping travel journals as "remembrancers" of his personal exploits. His rule for journalizing, to note whatever most surprized or interested him at the time, became the selecting principle for incidents ultimately incorporated in the Annals.<sup>1</sup> Activities of the Historical Committee of the American Philosophical Society, the Penn Society, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania prompted the transfer of Watson's energies to historical inquiries.

The need for an historical society in Philadelphia had been recognized long before 17 March 1815, when the American Philosophical Society created the Committee of History, Moral Science, and General Literature. Its purpose was to collect original documents and "such other papers as may be calculated to throw light on the history of the United States, but more particularly of this State, to be preserved among the archives of this society for the public benefit."<sup>2</sup> Members included William Rawle, Joseph Parker Norris, and prison reformer Roberts Vaux. Dr. George Logan of Stenton, his wife Deborah Norris Logan, Thomas Jefferson, and Indian missionary-historian Reverend John Heckewelder assisted the committee. Although it acquired records and published a 414-page volume of Transactions, the Committee was not an integral part of its parent organization.

Paralleling the development of the Historical Committee was the Society for the Commemoration of the Landing of William Penn. Philadelphians including Roberts Vaux, Peter S. DuPonceau, Robert Wharton, Joseph Parker Norris, Thomas

Biddle, Zachariah Poulson, Thomas I. Wharton, and Watson agreed to dine together on 4 November 1824 at the Rising Sun Inn (the so-called "Letitia Penn" House) to celebrate the 142d anniversary of the landing of the "great founder" William Penn. Afterwards, Watson and Vaux agreed that the association should confine its activities to commemorative dinners, as an auxiliary to an historical society, which would conduct research and preserve antiquities.<sup>3</sup> The Penn Society appointed Watson secretary pro tempore. A constitution passed on 2 February 1825 set life membership fees at ten dollars, and established as the date of Penn's landing 24 October 1682 (old style).<sup>4</sup> In recognition of his service, the Society elected Watson Curator for the 1826 term. Watson hoped he could meet requirements of the position by "holding a Surveillance" of Society treasures from Germantown.<sup>5</sup>

Philadelphia residents, stimulated by the success of the Penn Society dinners, sent anecdotes and documents illustrative of the "olden time" to Watson. To exclude fable and error from this material, Watson pioneered oral history techniques, utilized archival research and newspapers, and gathered archeological information supporting documentary evidence.

Watson's excursions into oral history began with a letter to the editor of Poulson's American Daily Advertiser published on 6 March 1821. Watson suggested old inhabitants relate facts respecting manners and customs of early times as they recalled them in Philadelphia. By 1823 he had devised a series of questions to ask "aged" persons about passing change. On 8 April of that year, Watson wrote Richard Peters, federal district judge for Pennsylvania from 1792 to 1828, requesting information about customs and dress, and old houses unusual in architecture, or interesting in consequence of their ancient inmates. Watson felt that his questions would quicken Peter's memory and lead him more intimately into his views. The first asked "was there a Spring in Judge Shippen's Garden where you used to sit & read Law —" Several referred to the ancient state of Dock Creek and its environs.

Watson sought confirmation of prior knowledge in question nine:

Have you any tradition also that at corner 4 & High St was originally a Great Duck & Geese Pond<sup>x</sup> (x the same was once back of Christ Church) & spatterdashes by the overflowing or spreading of Dock Creek. I have direct evidence of this & would like your knowledge too.<sup>6</sup>

Question fourteen requested information as to the location of "Guest's first house in Philad<sup>a</sup> called 'the Blue Anchor Inn or Budd's Row near Porvely Docks'" which Watson wished to sketch. Watson admonished Peters to "try to tell all the traditions you have ever heard —" He also desired information about the woods near Philadelphia when Peters was a boy, especially references to sightings of bears, and to summer recreations.<sup>7</sup>

Roberts Vaux enquired at the almshouse for ancient people but found none who could illuminate Watson's queries.<sup>8</sup> John Jay Smith, Junior, agreed to circulate a sheet of questions pertaining to the Revolutionary War "to any competent old persons in the city." Watson felt there must be several still alive who could tell strange or interesting facts. He sent Smith a copy of a questionnaire "before used for such Enquiries" to which Deborah Logan, Joseph Parker Norris, Colonel Allen McLane and others had responded. Individuals interviewed ranged from Quaker patriot Timothy Matlack to Abduhl Rahaman, a prince of Timbuctoo and former Natchez field slave. A "Respectable Quaker" living near Plymouth Meeting told Watson of the British Army and Lafayette near Barren Hill.<sup>9</sup> Norris furnished "full 30 pages" of anecdotes.<sup>10</sup> A description of Watson's method appears in his sister Deborah's diary:

We drank tea and had a great deal of amusing chat. he constantly recurring to the 'olden time,' asks me questions which bring back the memory of departed and altered things, and elicits much that he likes to be acquainted with, — in this way he does to others and obtains such a mass (but in its present state it is an heterogeneous one) of information.<sup>11</sup>

Watson preserved lists of his "Queries of Aged Persons" in his manuscript journal

"Summer Excursions 1825-1826," in the manuscript "Reminiscences and Old-Time Researches in New York . . .," and in the manuscript Annals of Philadelphia, 1829.<sup>12</sup> (See appendix.)

Exercising critical judgment as to the reliability of his sources became important to Watson. He found that

in making the many enquiries that I have, respecting the antiquities of Philad<sup>a</sup> —, in which I had so many & various dispositions to consult, it would be a natural consequence, that I should sometimes encounter cases of perverseness, ludicrousness, or singularity —<sup>13</sup>

Richard Conyngham of Lancaster presented Watson with an anecdote about the naming of Pegg's Run which Watson termed "Sheer fable!" Watson further elaborated:

This Paper may Serve to preserve a curious instance of the Fables which being often told are therefore most surely believed among us — The truth is, as I have shown in my book, that the Run was called after Danl Pegg the early owner of the adjoining land — It proves however that my researches have gone back beyond the times of popular tales, & that I have told things often without comment on the discovery, which none then knew but myself —.<sup>14</sup>

When Watson interviewed Old Butler, aged 104, about the French and Indian War, he obtained stories "all extremely picturesque & vivid; but at the same time, I was fully convinced of some striking discrepencies." Watson interviewed him again after an interval of six months, and was told "the same errors!"<sup>15</sup>

To Judge Peters, Watson wrote

the changes of Philad<sup>a</sup> within my recollection are now written out in 20 pages . . . — I have no doubt of making a book worthy to be read when you & I are gone . . . I will enhance its value by not allowing it to be published in my time & only to be consulted in MS.<sup>16</sup>

At that time, he planned to give the completed manuscript to either the Library Company of Philadelphia or to the Historical Committee of the Philosophical Society.

Initially Watson aimed to secure

all such facts as do not belong to the dignity & gravity of history, & are not to be found in Proud & others; but which shall nevertheless furnish materials for raising works of imagination etc therefrom such as Cooper's "Pioneers" etc — 17

He retained this orientation throughout his career.

While Watson prepared his Philadelphia volume, he also recorded incidents in Germantown history. He included his own sketches of Germantown buildings. The weekly Germantown Telegraph published excerpts from the manuscript under the heading "From a Page of the Olden Time" in 1836.<sup>18</sup>

In the spring of 1824, Watson sent several pages of the Philadelphia history to Peter S. DuPonceau for his perusal. "This much<sup>x</sup> (<sup>x</sup>and half as much more)," Watson wrote, "is actually executed for the benefit of the Philosophical Society —" The original manuscript of three hundred pages destined for the Library Company Watson intended to rewrite in a form better adapted to publication. When completed, Watson proposed to give the revision to the Philosophical Society Historical Committee. Watson declared his manuscript a book of anecdote as well as of history, and in that respect

quite unique, being the copy of no other work known to me — I felt myself the Boswell of Philadel, & with his love of anecdote, related all<sup>b</sup> which amused or surprised or affected myself —

Roberts Vaux expressed an interest in seeing this first manuscript volume. Watson rejected his request. He had restricted its loan "to those only who could



hope by age, or knowledge of unpublished antiquities to encrease my stock."<sup>20</sup>

In April 1824, Watson requested that an article entitled "Recollections of Ancient Philadelphia" be printed in Poulson's American Daily Advertiser, with the expectation of awakening the public "to the utility of bringing out their traditions & ancient family records." The article brought Watson the following recognition:

You have already reaped a rich Reward for the  
Antiquary and Modern Philosopher by presenting a New  
World for their Speculations.<sup>21</sup>

It had little practical impact, although Carey and Lea's Philadelphia in 1824 (Shaw and Shoemaker #17612) contained a similar request in a headnote to "Illustrations of the Antiquities of Philadelphia, by J. F. Watson" extracted from the manuscript picture of the primitive settlement.<sup>22</sup>

Vaux praised Watson's "most original & interesting book" lavishly after glancing at it briefly. "It ought to be published; every citizen of Phil<sup>a</sup> & its neighborhood should possess a copy," he wrote. "The influence which a just view of our early times would have upon those who are now upon the stage of actions, as well as in relation to such as are to come, would be of the happiest character."<sup>23</sup> After receiving such praise, Watson felt that its author deserved to be indulged and lent Vaux the volume. Vaux reiterated his judgment that the work be printed and published. "This could easily be accomplished," he felt, "by subscription. — The antiquarian & the moralist would unite in promoting an object of so much usefulness."<sup>24</sup>

Vaux regretted Watson's decision to furnish the Philosophical Society with the results of his labors. As Vaux belonged to both the parent society and to the Historical Committee, he spoke with some authority when he declared that "no advantage will result from the possession of the work by that institution. — It has

collected much material for History, which will sleep the sleep of death."<sup>25</sup> At the same time, Vaux told Watson that his proposal for an historical society was gaining friends, and promised to succeed. He asked Watson to direct his work toward the infant society. "It would form a starting point, & would no doubt insure the foundation of such an association."<sup>26</sup>

Watson assured Vaux that he was under no obligation to present any "History of Philad<sup>a</sup> antiquities to the Philosophical Society." His intention, as he had informed DuPonceau, had been to give the Philosophical Society a supplement of duplicate or additional matter which could not be incorporated into the body of the paper. Watson acknowledged that his despair at the plodding of the Historical Committee had induced him with reluctance to begin his collections. To Vaux, Watson revealed his new proposal of preparing his manuscript for the press and publishing it as a means of preserving its contents for posterity. He foresaw no obstacle to giving the manuscript to an historical society, although he gave no deadline for completion of a revision. He concluded "I may now say, I shall be very glad indeed to see an Historical Society instituted — It is what I much desire —"<sup>27</sup>

Following the success of the first Penn Society dinner, Roberts Vaux and six others gathered on 2 December 1824 to found the Historical Society of Pennsylvania "for the elucidation of the natural, civil, and literary history of this state." Watson refused any active or conspicuous role in the Society, fearing that his bank directors might object. He suggested an honorary membership as an acceptable alternative.<sup>28</sup>

Watson subsequently suggested, in a letter to the Society's President, William Rawle, a scheme for gathering local history through committees. Society members, appointed as special agents, would "rescue from oblivion, the facts of personal prowess, achievements, or sufferings, by officers & Soldiers of the

Revolutionary War — " Watson also proposed that Rawle address similar historical societies throughout the nation, and set them severally on like researches. In addition, such local agents could gather incidents connected with pioneer settlement nationwide. Watson hoped this procedure would rejuvenate perishing legends and provide a collection of tales equalling those "best perpetuated in Song & Story among the Highland Clans. — "29

Rawle approved Watson's suggestion. He appointed ten special committees, the third of which was instructed to collect "biographical notices of persons distinguished among us in ancient & modern times." To this group, Watson's proposals were referred.<sup>30</sup>

Watson promulgated his local history scheme directly by writing to Edward Everett of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Everett hoped the proposal would stimulate the local antiquarian group to new efforts and researches.<sup>31</sup> Watson's manuscripts were to be the model for writing up all finds, in the interest of uniformity.

Following his own advice, Watson began corresponding with Samuel Preston of Stockport, Pennsylvania, author of articles on the "Old Times" published in the Doylestown Patriot. He agreed to forward information and documents in hopes that they might be "useful in rescuing from oblivion many interesting facts that now only linger in the recollections of a few old men — "32

On 30 November 1826, the Doylestown Patriot ran an article entitled "Antiquities of Pennsylvania" which mentioned favorably Watson's letter in the Chester-Upland Union (4 November 1826) about his visit to Chester. The Patriot published the following tribute:

MR WATSON, of Germantown, has been indefatigable in collecting and preserving whatever related to the

early history of our state. Original letters, manuscripts of various kinds, pamphlets, (sic) &c. — and his collection of varieties of this kind is not excelled by that of any person in the United States. These valuable materials are not kept locked up in his private library, a plan too often adopted by the possessors of treasures of a similar kind, but are open to the inspection of every friendly inquirer. To this collection Mr. Watson is constantly endeavouring to make additions: so that it may some day become a rich legacy to the history of our state.<sup>33</sup>

Results of partial exploration of topics outlined by Watson in his letter to Rawle (26 September 1825) were compiled in a manuscript volume entitled "Historical Collections." Watson felt the poverty and imperfection of his own contributions would encourage those of others. The obvious defects of style he dismissed as irrelevant. "Leave it to Posterity to adorn them with the ornaments of rhetoric & composition — They may be sufficiently thankful if we can only succeed to furnish them, in this way, with the rough materials!"<sup>34</sup> In addition to presenting the "Collections" volume, Watson disclosed his intention to present to the Society at a future date the manuscript copy of his Annals, "a work, in which much that is rare, curious, & amusing, of the olden time, will be rescued from the oblivion to which it was receding,"<sup>35</sup> in fulfillment of his pledge made to Vaux in 1824. By St. Patrick's Day, 1827, Watson announced to both J. J. Smith, Jr. and Deborah Norris Logan his hope of re-writing the Annals manuscript for the press during the coming summer. Deborah expressed doubt as to Watson's ability to reduce his "confusion of dates and incidents" to order. The difficulty arose from his mode of indiscriminately writing down all he collected in his research and conversations. According to Deborah, "he should have kept a Book to copy them in and referred them to different heads."<sup>36</sup>

During that summer, Watson and his wife made a pilgrimage to Niagara Falls. The journal Watson kept indicates the persistent theme of his writings,

"the condition & character of the Founders, those Pioneers, from whom we their descendents derive so many inestimable comforts — , " and his constant model, Doctor Samuel Johnson, from whom Watson took the admonition to "note the impression which the first sight of anything new & wonderful made for the mind — "37

After completing the revision, Watson sent the manuscript to Smith, who found too many quotations in the text. Watson countered:

Are not quotations 'little apples of gold in pictures of Silver!!' They indeed look like pedantry or vanity, as I am aware, when brought into the public gaze: but I had only private purposes — something to amuse myself & children after me — 38

Watson gave the following description of the developing manuscript on 14 June 1828:

I preserve autographs of the Pilgrim Fathers — Several Drawings of things and houses as they were & even patterns pasted on my leaves of Dresses actually worn — also drawings of strange dresses — one by Maj Andre's own hand — a card of Genl Howe to [o] — Paper Money & — My book is a perfect Museum of things surprising me — equal to 500 pages of this sized Mss. When I meet with facts not precisely suited for myself I give them to the Historical Society bound up in book — 39

In addition to materials gathered orally and from questionnaires, Watson used newspaper articles. By 1823, he had consulted Philadelphia papers from 1727 forward. From the Pennsylvania Gazette and others he extracted notices about the postal system, agricultural produce prices, and what he called "Varieties from the Gazettes, &c. "40

Archival research proved useful. John Jay Smith provided Watson with extracts from the Minutes of the Philadelphia Common Council from 1704 to 1775.

Watson took data from William Penn's letters to his Chief Steward James Harrison concerning the Pennsbury Estate. Watson's information on land distribution in Germantown could be verified by the surveys and plats in the possession of Benjamin Lehman, son of the Germantown surveyor. Facts on the state of the Indian nations in 1759 Watson drew from a paper by Captain George Croghan, general negotiator with the Indians at a treaty held at Pittsburgh that summer. Watson utilized maps as well as documents. In 1823, he desired the loan of DuSimitiere's map. A copy of the Thomas Holme "Portraiture of Philadelphia" from the plate owned by the Logan family aroused Watson's interest. He found discrepancies in the exhibition of the watercourses of the several creeks.<sup>41</sup> Mr. Trumball, archivist at Harrisburg, copied curious facts from the oldest records for Watson. Watson found that he knew more about the records than did the archives staff. This he ascertained by observing their eagerness to hear him relate and explain curious facts. "They can't therefore be depended upon at all for any help to you," he wrote P. S. DuPonceau, "in any examination — They will give you books & Treaties only —"<sup>42</sup> The Philadelphia Recorder of Wills allowed Watson to make enquiries about the descent of property, particularly respecting the Letitia Penn House, without charge.<sup>43</sup> Joseph B. Newbury (Norbury), chief clerk in the Recorder's office, acknowledged an interest in Watson's historical anecdotes, and offered to send him extracts occasionally from the Germantown records, and "any facts worth recording from other sources" coming to his attention. Watson called Newbury a new disciple whom he had inspired.<sup>44</sup>

To supplement and confirm facts obtained from other sources, Watson sought archaeological materials. He recorded facts about "made Earth" or fill, and natural earth in Philadelphia, in an attempt to ascertain colonial levelling patterns within the city.<sup>45</sup> "Sub-terrene and Alluvial Remains . . ." connected with Pegg's marsh meadows included fragments Watson tentatively identified as part of an ancient mill, and a sword found at a depth of eighteen feet, resting upon sand. Demolition of the western wing of the State House (Independence Hall) disclosed a keg of flints, a dozen bomb shells filled with powder, and the entire outfit of an

army sergeant.<sup>46</sup> The Dock Creek area posed the greatest archaeological difficulties for Watson. Judge Peters was asked why wharf logs were found six feet underground in Chestnut Street on the east side of Whalebone Alley, parallel with Wister's pavement. Watson suggested it might be an abutment to an early bridge over Dock Creek.<sup>47</sup> Watson asked Roberts Vaux to enquire of masons and diggers of cellars in the new lots in Arch Street when and where they encountered fill in digging foundations. Watson had secured information about trees twenty to thirty feet under the extant ground-level in that area, and of spatterdocks, a type of common yellow waterlily, at Sixth and Arch Streets.<sup>48</sup>

Illustrations were an important aspect of Watson's over-all scheme. He made rough sketches of Philadelphia buildings and scenes to accompany his manuscript notes, but by 1824 he sought an artist to produce finished versions of the various outlines. On 6 November of that year, Watson wrote Roberts Vaux requesting neat colored drawings of the smallest size for his Annals of Doyle's house, and of the Letitia Penn House, if they could be done by an amateur to cost Vaux nothing. Watson also asked that the person sketch from memory the Great Friends meeting house on Second and High Streets.<sup>49</sup> On 26 September 1825, Watson informed Vaux that

I have made an engagement with a competent hand, to take me about 2 doz views of ancient Edifices etc in Phila- Several are from description- They will be very interesting — Among the most interesting to you — are the Bank Meeting — The old 2<sup>d</sup> St Meeting at High Str — with the Court House — Friends Alms House — Laetitia Court —<sup>50</sup>

When John Bacon reminded Watson on 22 October 1825 of the upcoming Penn Anniversary Dinner, he requested that Watson bring along some of the pictures, if any were finished.<sup>51</sup>

By 13 April 1826 some of the views were completed. Deborah Norris Logan noted that Watson had visited that afternoon, and had brought with him

a person whom he patronizes who can sketch, and several of the views done by this gentleman, some from view's of existing objects, and some from my friends description of the olden time. — They all drank coffee with me, and the conversation elicited was very entertaining to me, who can get back into by-past-days with great facility, and look upon all time lost, when I am with antiquaries, that is spent in modern discussions. They staid with me 'till night, and I hope the artist saw some views that will hereafter give employment to his pencil.<sup>52</sup>

In December, 1826, Watson had as many as "30 perspective good Drawings of ancient houses & places in Philadelphia — as they were in the beginning, or 70 & 80 years ago!"<sup>53</sup>

The unnamed artist whom Watson commissioned to do watercolors was W. L. Breton, an Englishman who arrived in Philadelphia no later than 1824. The earliest extant documented watercolor by Breton is "State House — at Philad<sup>a</sup> 1825" (7.5"x6.5", HSP). Breton recorded the Carpenter Mansion on Chestnut Street above Sixth prior to its demolition in April 1826 in "Side and back view (NE) of the late residence of the Honb<sup>le</sup> Judge Tilghman, dec<sup>d</sup> taken in 1826" (7"x5", HSP).<sup>54</sup>

Although other scholars trace Watson's first encounter with Breton to a chance meeting along the Wissahickon in the spring of 1828,<sup>55</sup> Breton is mentioned by name in a letter written by Watson to Smith on 26 May 1827. At that time, Watson sent Smith a watercolor of Charles Thomson's residence at Harriton by Breton as a gift, and enclosed additional Breton watercolors for Smith to sell to personal friends at fifty cents each. This request Watson explained as intended to oblige Smith's friends

as well as the poor artist — I could procure many more . . . when we consider the time & travel to execute any given subject, they are really dog cheap! — The picture called 'Baptist Meeting house Lower Merion' — is a Thomson picture. It is the church where C. T. always worship<sup>d</sup> . . .



All his 25<sup>cts</sup> pictures refered to in the letter, I have made my own — 56

In an undated cover letter transmitting the journal of his 1827 excursion to Niagara Falls to Smith, Watson thanked him on behalf of Breton for securing subscriptions to the watercolor series but noted that Breton was "too evanescent to be at any time sure you are affording him any permanent benefit — I shall inform him what you have done — I wish he was at Niagara & along my tour drawing there!"<sup>57</sup>

In the only monograph published on Breton and his work, Martin P. Snyder concludes that the strong antiquarian streak in Breton's work, especially his ability to convey a "primitive" atmosphere, proved the catalyst in the author-illustrator relationship.<sup>58</sup> In preparing the illustrations for the 1830 edition of the Annals, Breton apparently had access to Watson's sketches and descriptive materials. A comparison of the finished lithographs with Watson's sketches shows that the sketches were always used in obtaining the lines of the buildings. Breton chose the background. The Letitia House ultimately appeared in the country surroundings of its original setting, and the London Coffee House became the scene of a slave auction. Only Breton's rendering of the Pegg's Run scene dissatisfied Watson. Breton chose for his model a Watson sketch emphasizing the pasturage and irrigation aspects of the creek. Watson had also included in his manuscript an attractive skating scene. In noting sketches available for reference in the Library Company Annals, Watson listed "Pegg's run, and scenery in skating there," and appended the following comment:

the picture, as a skating scene, is more to the ideas in my mind, than the one given in this work. There were difficulties in forming the pictures of 'things before,' which the present artist could not overcome.<sup>59</sup>

In September, 1829, Watson discussed with Smith publication and sales of

the forthcoming Annals to subscribers following Vaux's original scheme. He felt an endorsement by members of the Historical Society would aid sales. He also decided to add an appendix concerning New York written from manuscript notes he gathered in 1828, to boost potential sales. Watson declared to Smith, "I wish I was done! My MS book for the Historical Society just bound up is 600 pages. One for your Library is 350 pages — "60

In a prefatory note to the manuscript given to the Historical Society, Watson explained that though the volumes were complete in themselves, they did not comprise the whole from which the published version was formed. The reference manuscript given to the Library Company was also used in the final publication. Articles in the "Annals of Philadelphia . . . . 1829" manuscript appeared in the succession in which they were written, exhibiting not only the facts, but also "the proper History of their attainment."61

By 9 December 1829, the Annals were in press.<sup>62</sup> Though the printer aimed at a proof a day, the printing advanced slowly. Watson found the book growing despite his trimming and pruning, until it promised to be 800 pages octavo, with twenty-six plates, executed by Breton, and printed by the Philadelphia firm of Kennedy and Lucas. Watson feared dividing the burgeoning manuscript into two volumes would frighten off readers.<sup>63</sup>

In January, 1830, Watson suggested to General Thomas Cadwalader that he might wish to inspect the collection of Philadelphia drawings done for Watson, which was to be seen at Breton's studio, in the eastern range of the Arcade. To quicken Cadwalader's interest, Watson told him that "one of the pictures — 'Loxley's House' etc is to illustrate facts concerning 'Bathsheba's bath & Bower' once a celebrated Spring & Bower — once on the premises of your Father in So 2<sup>d</sup> St. by Spruce St." Watson also asked Breton to allow Cadwalader access to any lithographs done

from them.<sup>64</sup> The letter infers that some of the Annals plates were on stone early in 1830. An ensuing dispute over the price charged by Breton for half-page lithographs caused Watson to consult his publishers, Carey and Hart, after the prints were pulled but prior to making payment:

Mr W L Breton charges me the same price for each 2 lithographs done on one 8 vo page, as he does for one large one filling the same page, saying he found it more difficult to do little ones than big ones, & had rather have done large ones at less than little ones — I thought I had understood that he would do each 8<sup>vo</sup> for a given price whether it had one or many subjects — What I wish in the premises is that you might enquire . . . of Mr Childs or Kearney, what is their practice & if Mr. Breton's idea is not unconventional or unusual I shall acquiese in his version . . .<sup>65</sup>

Before the required edition was printed, at least one and probably two of the stones broke, and the pictures redrawn. Changes in details appeared, including the addition on some plates of attribution to Breton, and the Kennedy and Lucas firm. The view of the "Stone Prison at Philadelphia, 1728" was redrawn in reverse so that its entrance incorrectly appeared on Third Street instead of on Market. On 28 June 1830 Watson reported to the publishers that "the stone that was broken is nearly finished — no delay will therefore follow from it."<sup>66</sup>

As printing proceeded, Joshua Francis Fisher of the Historical Society approached Watson concerning publication of his manuscript notices of the late Honorable Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress. Although Watson included six pages of biographical data in the Annals, he gave Fisher permission to publish the other, saying that the two manuscripts could not be regarded as the same, except in the occasional similarity of facts. Watson also informed Fisher that he planned to include much the same material, though in a more limited form, contained in manuscript notices of Germantown in the possession of the Society, under the head "Country Towns."<sup>67</sup>

On 5 June 1830, Watson told Vaux that the Annals was to be through the press, and in the shops within the month. He desired to print with the preface an endorsement by a Committee of the Historical Society.<sup>68</sup> On 7 June 1830, the Society met and resolved

— That the Society being informed that John F. Watson, Esq. one of its members was about to publish a work entitled 'Annals of Philadelphia;' which having been examined and found to be authentic, curious, and highly interesting in many respects, it is highly recommended to the patronage of those who feel an attachment to our city, and take an interest in its primitive character.

Ordered, that a copy of this resolution be furnished to John F. Watson, Esq.

Roberts Vaux Vice President  
Joshua Francis Fisher, <sup>69</sup>  
Secretary p.t.

Although strictly an individual enterprise, publication of the Annals had been encouraged by action of the Society. Watson was the first author to employ and the first to carry on a title page the phrase "Member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania." By gift to the Council of the Historical Society on 20 June 1830, Watson placed amongst its archives three folio volumes of manuscripts, in accordance with his earlier promises.

Watson presented gift copies of the Annals to friends who shared his affection for "olden time enquiries." He also used these individuals as salesmen by including with the gift copy additional copies to be sold to friends or guests at three dollars apiece.<sup>70</sup>

Congratulations flowed in from all quarters. The New-York Historical Society made him an honorary member for his postscript about that city. Zachariah Poulson, editor of the American Daily Advertiser, took six copies to give to friends. John Vaughan and others hailed the author's appearance in Philadelphia, invited

him to dinner, and caressed him with compliments. Watson even received sixteen unsolicited votes for Germantown Town Clerk immediately following publication.<sup>71</sup>

Publication did not alter Watson's goals, as stated to Judge Peters in 1823, and to P. S. DuPonceau in 1824. As in the 1827 Historical Collections, he intended to furnish rough materials from which "better or more ambitious writers could elaborate more formal history and from which as a repository, our future poets, painters, and imaginative authors, could deduce their themes — for their own and their country's glory."<sup>72</sup> The title page defines the volume's scope as:

Being A Collection Of  
Memoirs, Anecdotes, & Incidents  
Of The  
City And Its Inhabitants  
From The Days Of The Pilgrim Founders,  
Intended To Preserve The Recollections Of Olden Time, And  
To Exhibit Society In Its Changes Of Manners And  
Customs, And The City In Its Local Changes  
And Improvements.

To achieve this end, Watson balanced a narrative history chapter like the "Epitome of Primitive Colonial and Philadelphia History" (pp. 7-35) against one of "Facts and Occurrences of the Primitive Settlement (pp. 59-94) in which extracts from the Minutes of the Assembly of Pennsylvania and Minutes of the City Council from 1704 to 1776 are reprinted. Watson regarded the footnote as an addition to or explanation of the text rather than as a voucher for the validity of the statement. He included citations directly in the text. Although the Annals lacks a bibliography, Watson included a "Catalog of Ancient Publications, Illustrative of our early History . . ." available from either the Library Company or the American Philosophical Society Library (pp. 48-50).

Watson's intention to serve as a compiler of primary materials for more rigorous studies would have been understood by Henry David Thoreau. He saw men

like Watson collecting the raw materials of biography and history, "memoirs to serve for a history, which itself is but materials to serve for a mythology." Thoreau envisioned an entry in the future classical dictionary, recording what the demigod Franklin did. "Son of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. He aided Americans to gain their independence, instructed mankind in economy, and drew down lightning from the clouds."<sup>73</sup>

Not all Philadelphians applauded the Annals, or its author's intentions. Walsh's National Gazette encouraged Watson to continue his labors on 30 July 1830. The following day the editor announced

Mr. Watson has so long been living in spirit with those who lived on earth some fifty or a hundred years ago, that he has imbibed a strong affection for ancient modes and customs, and seems to think the former state of society preferable to the present.<sup>74</sup>

Watson's delvings into the origins of Philadelphia settlement offended the sensibilities of some local grandees. Watson wrote his friend Smith

Several 'base mechanicals' stand at the head of several present opulent & haughty families! — Much they hate those old books, & such modern ones as 'Annals'! — Even Mr Walsh deems it in bad taste to mark localities & names of ancient Tanyards —<sup>75</sup>

The ready sale of the Annals surprised many of the fashionable Philadelphia booksellers. Six hundred copies of the first edition of one thousand were sold initially. Uriah Hunt took the remainder of the printing.<sup>76</sup>

1. Watson, "Diary of John F. Watson's Journey to New Orleans," DML 58x29.1, frontispiece.
2. "Art. XI. — Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society . . . Vol. 1. Philadelphia, 1819, p. 414." The Analectic Magazine, XIII, (March 1819), 243.
3. "Proceedings of a Meeting," undated clipping from Poulson's American Daily Advertiser, Am 301, II, 449, HSP; Watson to Roberts Vaux, 6 November 1824, Vaux Papers, HSP; Roberts Vaux to Watson, 30 November 1824, Am 30163, p. 61, HSP.
4. Thomas Cadwalader Miscellaneous, Box 21 T, Cadwalader Collection, HSP.
5. Jno Purdon to Watson, 8 November 1825, Am 30163, p. 109, HSP; Roberts Vaux to Watson, 12 November 1825, Am 30163, p. 115; Watson to Roberts Vaux, 10 October 1825, Vaux Papers, HSP.
6. Watson to Judge Richard Peters, 8 April 1823, Peters MS XII, Miscellaneous 1821-1845, p. 24, HSP.
7. Ibid.
8. Roberts Vaux to Watson, 19 February 1825, Am 30163, pp. 78-79, HSP.
9. Watson to John J. Smith, Jr., 8 December 1826, LCM Yi 27299, F 63; "The British Army & Lafayette, near Barren Hill," Am 2705, unpaginated, HSP.
10. Watson to Peter S. DuPonceau, 23 March 1824, Gratz MSS., Case 6 Box 20, HSP.
11. DNL Diaries XI, 18 March 1827, p. 32, HSP.
12. Watson, "Summer Excursions 1825-1826," DML 58x29.4; "Old-Time Researches . . . in New York, 1828," New-York Historical Society; "The Annals of Philadelphia . . . 1829," II, 381-384, HSP.
13. Watson, "The Difficulties of Antiquarian Investigations, disclosed by an Anecdote," October 1824, Am 30163, pp. 52-53, HSP. Also see Annals (1857), II, 14.
14. Richard Conyngham to Watson, 30 January 1825, Am 30163, pp. 73-74, HSP.

15. Watson to P. S. DuPonceau, 22 December 1835, 23 December 1835, Society Collection, HSP.
16. Watson to Judge Richard Peters, 8 April 1823, Peters MS XII, Miscellaneous 1821-1845, p. 24, HSP.
17. Ibid.
18. See the Germantown Telegraph 20 July 1836, "The Monastery on the Wissahiccon: From A Page of the Olden Time;" 17 August 1836, "Germantown — a place for Congress!" From A Page of the Olden Time;" 19 October 1836, "The Revolutionary War, From A Page of the Olden Time." All are signed "W." MS is included in Am 3013, pp. 1-38, HSP.
19. Watson to P. S. DuPonceau, 23 March 1824, Gratz MSS Case 6, Box 20, HSP.
20. Roberts Vaux to Watson, 25 March 1824, Am 30163, p. 23, HSP; Watson to Roberts Vaux, 25 March 1824, Vaux Papers, HSP.
21. Sam Craig to Watson, 11 July 1824, Am 30163, p. 35, HSP.
22. H. C. Carey and I. Lea to Watson, 1 July 1824, Am 30163, p. 33; clipping, Am 301, 1, 39, HSP; "We are desired to add, that those who are acquainted with any interesting facts or valuable unpublished documents relative to the subject, will gratify the author of 'The Illustrations' by communicating them to him." See Philadelphia in 1824 (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1824) p. 12.
23. Roberts Vaux to Watson, 22 July 1824, Am 30163, p. 38, HSP.
24. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 12 August 1824, Society Collection, HSP; Roberts Vaux to Watson, 23 August 1824, Am 30163, p. 40.
25. Roberts Vaux to Watson, 28 September 1824, Am 30163, p. 46.
26. Ibid.
27. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 30 September 1824, Vaux Papers, HSP.
28. Watson to [Roberts Vaux, ] 9 May 1825, Vaux Papers, HSP.
29. Watson to William Rawle, 26 September 1825, Society Collection, HSP.
30. William Rawle to Watson, 28 September 1825, Am 30163, p. 103.



31. Edward Everett to Watson, 15 November 1825, Am 30163, p. 111.
32. Watson to Samuel Preston, 19 September 1826, Society Collection, HSP.
33. Doylestown Patriot, 30 November 1826, Am 3013, p. 191, HSP.
34. Watson, 1 January 1827, forward to "Historical Collections," Am 3013, p. iii, HSP.
35. Ibid, p. i.
36. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 16 March 1827, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 81; DNL Diaries XI, 18 March 1827, p. 32.
37. Watson, "Trip to Niagara," DML 58x29.5 front fly, p. 6.
38. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 14 August 1827, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 113.
39. Watson to Samuel Preston, 14 June 1828, Society Collection, HSP.
40. Annals (1830), pp. 224, 626-627, 648.
41. Watson, "Annals . . . 1829," Am 301, II, 475, HSP; "Annals . . . 1829," Am 301, I, 164-171; "Historical Incidents of Germantown," Dreer 184, p. 5, HSP; "Historical Collections," Am 3013, pp. 57-60, HSP; John Morris to Watson, 25 November 1823, Am 30163, p. 7, HSP; "Annals . . . 1829," Am 301, 372, HSP.
42. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 26 September 1825, Society Collection, HSP; Watson to P. S. DuPonceau, 21 December 1835, Society Collection, HSP.
43. Watson to John J. Smith, Jr., 10 February (1827), LCM Yi 2 7299, F 77.
44. Jos. B. Norbury to Watson, 3 May 1827, Am 30163, p. 226, HSP; Watson to John J. Smith, Jr., 11 May 1827, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 90.
45. Watson, "Tuckerton Beach," DML 58x29.3, appendix; Annals (1830) pp. 211-214.
46. Annals (1830), pp. 383-385; Watson, Historic Tales of Olden Time . . . Philadelphia and Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: E. Littell and Thomas Holden, 1833), p. 181.
47. Watson to Judge Richard Peters, 8 April 1823, Peters MS XII,

Miscellaneous 1821-1845, p. 24, HSP.

48. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 25 March 1824, Vaux Papers, HSP; Watson recorded additional "Curiosities and discoveries, - generally of a sub-terrene character" from both Philadelphia and New York in the Annals (1830), pp. 653-658.

49. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 6 November 1824, Vaux Papers, HSP.

50. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 26 September 1825, Society Collection, HSP.

51. John Bacon to Watson, 22 October 1825, Am 30163, p. 107, HSP.

52. DNL Diaries IX, 13 April 1826, p. 128.

53. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 8 December 1826, LCM Yi 27299, F 63.

54. Other copies which Martin P. Snyder decided were executed later are "SE view of the Residence of the late Chief Justice Tilghman - taken in 1826 - which, during the Revolutionary War, was the Residence of the Minister of France," (7.25x5.1875), Athenaeum of Philadelphia; and an untitled copy signed "WLB" (10.1875x7.125), Library Company of Philadelphia.

55. Joseph Jackson, Iconography of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: 1934), p. 15. Martin P. Snyder, "William L. Breton, Nineteenth Century Philadelphia Artist," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXXXV, (April 1961), 183.

56. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 26 May 1827, LCM Yi 27299, F 93.

57. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., LCM Yi 27299, F 110.

58. Snyder, "Breton", 181.

59. Annals of Philadelphia (1830), p. 735.

60. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., September 1829, LCM Yi 27299, F 144.

61. Watson, "Annals . . . 1829," Am 301, 1, 3.

62. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 9 December 1829, Society Collection, HSP.

63. Watson to J. J. Smith Jr., [January 1830], LCM Yi 27299, F 150.

64. Watson to General Thomas Cadwalader, 16 January 1830, Cadwalader

Collection, Thomas Cadwalader Correspondence, Box 10, HSP.

65. Watson to Messrs. Carey & Hart, 13 July [1830], Gratz Collection, Case 6, Box 37, American Literary Duplicates, HSP.

66. See Snyder, op. cit., p. 194, note 54; The Library Company of Philadelphia has three copies of the Annals (1830) with varying plates; Watson to Carey & Hart, 28 June 1830, HSP.

67. Watson to Joshua Francis Fisher, 6 January 1830, Joshua Francis Fisher Collection, HSP.

68. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 5 June 1830, Society Collection, HSP.

69. Hampton L. Carson, A History of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: HSP, 1940), I, p. 143.

70. Watson to G. N. Barker, Esq., July 1830, LCM Yi 2 7370, F 30.

71. DNL Diaries XIII, 29 July 1830, pp. 62, 64; Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., [July 1830], LCM Yi 2 7299, F 119.

72. Annals (1830), p. iv.

73. Henry David Thoreau, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1893), pp. 75-76.

74. Clipping labelled in Watson's hand "The Gazeite 31 July 1830," in Dreer 186, p. 3, HSP.

75. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 28 February [1831], LCM Yi 2 7299, F 185.

76. DNL Diaries XIII, 23 October 1830, pp. 110-111.

CHAPTER III  
"THE HIDDEN AND CURIOUS PAST"

Following the success of the Annals of Philadelphia with its postscript on the history of New York City, Watson issued a smaller volume entitled Historic Tales of Olden Time New York (1832), for the home and school market. He hoped to make incidents of the past "popular by first delighting his audience with the comic and strange of history," and afterwards winning them to graver researches. As in the preparation of the Annals, Watson utilized archival research and oral history, recording from "living chronicles" materials to serve as sources for "future works of poetry, painting, and romance. It is the raw material to be elaborated into fancy tales and fancy characters by the Irvings, Coopers, and Pauldings of our country."<sup>1</sup>

Watson perceived a difference in the spirits of the two cities he chose to immortalize. As early as 1823, he predicted that New York would be the greatest commercial and financial center in the nation. The air of show and attraction in all activities indicated to Watson a spirit of rivalry and enterprise not visible in Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup>

Watson began corresponding with Doctor David Hosack of the New-York Historical Society in August, 1823. The Historical Society wished to examine Watson's manuscript volumes. Hosack sent Watson a plan of New York City, and requested documents in return. Watson obliged by sending two printed accounts of Captain Kidd, an account of the first American ship out of New York for Canton, the Empress of China, and copies of Isaac Norris's letters respecting the yellow fever of 1793.<sup>4</sup>

While visiting Mrs. Watson's sister, Mrs. James Bogert, Junior, in New York City during the summer of 1827, Watson continued his research and sketched an old bakery "being built of brick and white plastered, which seems to be one of the oldest style of houses now extant in New York . . . It is very public; is but one story high & about 15 feet wide on Front, — a board Roof."<sup>5</sup>

Watson derived the bulk of the material for his Tales from Joseph White Moulton's View of the City of New-Orange (now New York) as it was in the year 1673 (1825) and from his private research.<sup>6</sup> The "Olden Time Researches & Reminiscences of New York City done by J. F. Watson in 1828," one hundred and fifty three manuscript pages, covers such topics as "Primitive New York," "Memorials of Dutch Dynasty," "Dress, Furniture & Equipage," and "Ancient Edifices." As in the Philadelphia manuscripts, Watson sketched old buildings still standing, including No. 76 Pearl Street, which he described as being built of yellow Holland brick with a tile roof. He also prepared memory drawings of the Stadt Huys and Herberg, built in 1642 and dismantled in 1700, and the Stuyvesant Huys and Customs House.<sup>7</sup>

On 10 June 1832, Deborah Norris Logan noted Watson's preoccupation with the New York book.<sup>8</sup> Watson announced publication to J. J. Smith, Jr., on 9 November 1832, and mentioned that a companion volume for Philadelphia and Pennsylvania was in press under E. Littell's supervision. He requested Smith

When you read it, don't abuse it — Should it generate  
any kindly feelings from your pen in the Saturday  
Bulletin, send me a paper, as I have no means here to  
see that Paper —<sup>9</sup>

The Saturday Evening Post (Philadelphia) commended the book to the public as in "every way worthy of public patronage."<sup>10</sup>

In December 1835, Watson visited New York to view the ruins left by the great fire. Again he noted a difference between the characters of sedate and com-

posed Philadelphia, and bold and dashing New York. New York, he concluded, "would serve well for our joyous youth, & Philada for our sober middle age — The one is the City of the heart, the other of the head."<sup>11</sup>

Impressed with the utility of preserving the spectacle of New York City in ruins, Watson suggested one or two lithographic views of the scene be taken. He "directly prompted Mr. Breton to go on and endeavor to execute them — He agreed; but soon after declined because of the proposed Diorama of the Same by Wright."<sup>12</sup>

Watson acknowledged that he had completed his research among New York antiquities in a two-week visit to the city in 1828. However, "having my method by the end, still as I pulled, it came, — till now I have ready for press a New York book of 500 pages 8<sup>vo</sup>."<sup>13</sup> This became Annals and Occurrences of New York City and State in the Olden Time: Being a Collection of Memoirs, Anecdotes, and Incidents Concerning the City, Country, and Inhabitants From The Days of the Founders, published by Henry F. Anners of Philadelphia in 1846. Watson's mode of composition and layout was one of scissors and paste, "to avoid the labour of writing out the pages of the Annals." The printer was given a list of manuscript articles in Watson's Ms. "Supplementary Annals," which were to be severally incorporated when required into the body of the new volume. As a general rule in bringing into the text the "additional<sub>s</sub>," Watson instructed the printer to use his discretion in changing wording to make "the added article to fit & dovetail into the leading tenor of the whole text — " An insert for the chapter "Ancient Edifices" exemplifies the technique:

see page of Historic Tales Ol Time p. 196 203	see page of Ms Sup <sup>te</sup> Annals p. 279 —	insert at this place, Gen'l Wash- ington's first public dinner — / 12 lines MS. "Reflections & Notices"
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— to be continued with 14 pages  
MS — of my notices about Town<sup>14</sup>

In the Annals of New York Watson gave a picture of the hardships of early pioneers, talked of Indians, and hoped "to snatch from oblivion all the facts familiar to our forefathers."<sup>15</sup> The published volume included an appendix of Watson's journal "The Great Conflagration of New York, December, 1835," with supplemental notes estimating the cost of destruction wrought by the fire. Two books were included in the single volume. The first covered New York State in general. The second focused on New York City, after the model of the 1828 manuscript.<sup>16</sup> Proof sheets for the second book, with Watson's corrections, are in the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Materials from the Philadelphia Annals were used. The chapter on longevity opens with mention of the Philadelphia silversmith John S. Hutton, accompanied with a cut (pp. 289-290), which appears in the Annals (1830, pp. 510-511). In "Reflections and Notices," Watson included observations on the current scene. He found "the sombre granite heavy walls and little unadorned windows" of Astor's great "Mammoth Hotel" prison-like. Houses around Washington Square he thought copied after the Philadelphia manner in red brick, with marble sills, steps, and window tops.

Although Watson wished the public in general to read his instructive volume, he still held one hundred copies in 1853. "The New Yorkers have not been very favourable, so they say, to the idea of a Philad<sup>an</sup> making a New York book," Watson informed Philadelphia bookseller A. Hart.<sup>17</sup>

In 1855, Watson offered to sell the copyright, woodcuts, and stereotype plates for the New York Annals to George L. Duyckinck and Charles Scribner in hopes of achieving greater circulation. Watson described his work to Duyckinck in the following terms:

It occurs to me to say, of my New York Annals, that

no other work in existence, has so much of what was derived, from facts of memory — "to amuse and instruct," concerning the past, as my book — I told my facts like Michelet Vol 2 p.364. Official records (since published,) are not of such materials, as my observations. So said Genl Morris of the Mirror — who highly commended the work — So too, also, Dr. Francis. These two gentl<sup>n</sup> have said that it has no compeer — I mention these facts for your government.

Despite such recommendations, Scribner and Duyckinck did not purchase the Annals. Shortly before his death, Watson visited New York City to gather materials for a "Final Appendix of the Year 1860" and planned to issue a new edition. His final remarks are a jeremiad protesting change and "progress." He opposes extravagance in dress, the opera, the envelope, and great cities "first realizing the characteristics of great deserts."<sup>18</sup>

While Watson prepared his Historic Tales of New York for the press, he continued his Philadelphia investigations. In May, 1831, Watson expressed a desire to be canceled from Historical Society membership "solely on the grounds of never attending & to avoid . . . any future contribution of money."<sup>19</sup> The Historical Society of Pennsylvania elected Watson a corresponding member on 18 August 1841.<sup>20</sup>

After the publication of Historic Tales of Philadelphia (1833), which were derived in substance from the Annals, and cast in the form of instructive historical tales, Watson compiled a manuscript supplement. This, as previously noted, became the basis for the Annals of New York and for subsequent editions of the Philadelphia study.

Perhaps a dozen drawings of curious buildings along the Delaware River executed by Breton about 1835 were intended for the supplement. An undated memorandum headed "List of Old houses — to be drawn by W. L. Breton to have pent houses — porches — hanging down shutters &c, & glazed bricks," in Watson's hand, is probably of the same period. Many of the listings pique the curiosity, like



"No 23 & 25 Wat[er] St—two houses very narrow. a 2<sup>d</sup> & 3<sup>d</sup> story brick:" or "No 47 & 49 So 2<sup>d</sup> St—two little houses—strange looking & out of line of St;" or "No 10 & 12 Strawberry Alley—an old queer frame 2<sup>d</sup> story. (Eaves)."<sup>21</sup> Though none of Breton's 1835 drawings and watercolors have been linked to these descriptions, they depict the same type of structures.

Watson and other members of the Penn and Historical Societies had long revered remains of the great Treaty Elm, blown down in 1810, as marking the site on which Penn held his conference with the Indians to secure the lands which now comprise the city of Philadelphia. In 1835 Watson discovered that no instrument in writing conveying the lands had been signed under the tree. The treaty, which he discovered in the Harrisburg land office, was negotiated by surveyor Thomas Holme in 1685.<sup>22</sup> Watson conveyed his findings, and his puzzlement to P. S. DuPonceau.<sup>23</sup> His study appeared in Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (1836), a decade after Roberts Vaux's "A Memoir on the Locality of the great treaty between William Penn, and the Indian natives in 1682" had appeared in the same publication. A leaflet by Dr. James Mease, author of The Picture of Philadelphia, "On William Penn's Treaty with the Indians," summarized the discussion of the treaty notion, and lauded Watson's publication to correct the faulty Annals account. As Mease noted,

hitherto, anyone who had the boldness to even hint the possibility of a doubt of every position respecting it, as given by him in his "annals," or by the Historical Society, was denounced as guilty of something like historical treason, and was charged with the crime of 'unsettling venerable traditions,' &c &c, as if historical truth were not more valuable than any tradition  
 . . .<sup>24</sup>

Watson completed a revision of the Annals in 1842. He predicted it would cover two octavo volumes of six hundred pages each.<sup>25</sup> For it Watson asked Breton to sketch Carpenters Hall, although the artist was about seventy, and

semi-retired. To supplement Breton's work, Watson requested antiquary John McAllister to ask James W. Queen, principal draftsman and lithographer for P. S. Duval,

to sketch a final draft of the Centre House from Hills map — I dont want a finished one; but only the idea, so as to have it just near to my view of the Old Waterworks on Sckl & Spruce Strs — perhaps a vignette to the other . . . Your Christ Church view will answer, when I have need of it, for the artist's use — not now required.<sup>26</sup>

Thomas Howland Mumford, a wood engraver, prepared the plates after the Breton drawings, and pen-and-ink sketches by his brother Edward W. Mumford, now in the Sachse Collection of the Library Company of Philadelphia. Barrington and Maswell printed the cuts. C. W. Murray completed the stereotyping of the first volume of 650 pages on 25 September 1843, and the second of 500 pages on 16 February 1844.<sup>27</sup> John Pennington and Uriah Hunt published the edition. The following puff for the new set appeared on the cover of Littell's Law Library for August 1844:

WATSON'S ANNALS OF PHILADELPHIA  
New, improved and enlarged edition.

The original edition of this truly interesting work was published in 1830, in one octavo volume, and was sold for \$3. It has long been a scarce book, and second hand copies have been purchased at auction for eight dollars. The able and indefatigable author, John F. Watson, Esq., of Germantown, who has been styled the "Homer of his class" — has been induced to put forth a new and greatly improved edition, in two handsome octavo volumes, embellished with many curious engravings, illustrative of primitive manners and scenes, for the low price of \$4 per set.<sup>28</sup>

To the original manuscript, Watson added a chapter covering "Progress and State of Society," particularly changes since 1800. He mentions the tariff

debates of 1833, the increased elegance of public edifices, the silk and mulberry speculation of 1838-1839, and the Panic of 1840. An appendix of excerpts from the travel journals and other manuscripts concludes the second volume.

George Lippard, Germantown novelist and editor of the Quaker City Weekly, reviewed the second edition in a two-part article in the Daily Chronicle. He found the style not Johnsonian, but the designed object accomplished. He judged that goal to be the erection of a massive monument of the past for the admiration of future times, "a temple where old-time memories should be enshrined . . . ." Lippard regarded Watson's work as one of a cluster of brilliant exceptions to the then degraded state of American literature.<sup>29</sup> The capital review brought Watson what he termed "praise enough for any private man!"

Although Watson intended the Annals to be his final literary product

I meant to be done; when I had finished the Annals, —  
I have done! . . . I have jealous lookers-on, who'd  
not like to hear on my being further engaged in such  
inquiries, — so I am resolved, individually to be done,  
and the field is therefore fully open to others . . .<sup>30</sup>

John Jay Smith persuaded him to assist in preparing a volume of facsimile American autographs. Their American Historical and Literary Curiosities included miscellaneous items taken from Philadelphia collections, with a short text, for the amusement and instruction of their own and future generations. From the American Philosophical Society, Watson sought contributions from the papers of Count de Vergennes and Benjamin Franklin concerning the Revolution, Benjamin West on the painter John Trumbull, Noah Webster's 1786 scheme for Americanizing spelling, and from John Law the Mississippi Bubble promoter. To justify his request, Watson explained his purpose as bringing into view "the hidden and curious past." The Society granted access to the Franklin papers. Watson planned to "dip into each paper with a swallow's wing — working quickly & hardly to pick up here and there some grains of wheat — " The popular success of the publication warranted issuance

of six editions.<sup>31</sup>

In 1850, the two-volume edition of the *Annals of Philadelphia* was re-issued by A. Hart, J. W. Moore, J. Pennington, Uriah Hunt, and H. F. Anners. Illustrator W. L. Breton was still working at eighty-two, as a letter of Watson's in the spring of 1855 indicates:

Mr. Britten told me he had engaged himself a residence in Rising Sun Village — so perhaps in or near Nice Town — He was seeking one in Gernt. - . . . I suppose he has all the houses and places, you ask about, already drawn— especially that of the Monastery. — We should be glad to see him at my house in Gernt. — He has a good one of the rocks near Rittenhouse P[aper] mill . . .<sup>32</sup>

Breton's death on 14 August 1855 ended his productions for Watson. Watson possessed about two dozen watercolors which he "had done up in colour, by Breton, intended to be paid for, by Mr Penn in Engl<sup>d</sup> — Some years ago — he & Genl Cadwalader, who was to pay for them, about 50 Drs, had left them on my hands." These Watson offered to either antiquary Ferdinand J. Dreer or John McAllister. Watson offered McAllister a copy of the Wharton House (Walnut Grove) or any other one or two views as an acknowledgment of his many attentions and favors. "I have other copies of them all (enough for my own keeping) done in Sepia, prior to their execution on Wood, as exhibited in the *Annals*."<sup>33</sup>

The final *Annals* edition issued during Watson's lifetime appeared three years before his death with the addition of a "Final Appendix of the Year 1856. Notes and Reflections on Social Changes and Progress in General." Elijah Thomas purchased woodcuts, stereotype plates, and copyright for \$6,000 on credit, and copyrighted the work in 1857. At Watson's demise, the unpaid balance of \$4,000 appeared as a doubtful asset in the estate.<sup>34</sup>

In 1879, the final volume of a new three-volume edition of the Annals appeared. It contained a memoir of Watson and other supplementary materials prepared by Willis P. Hazard, son of Samuel Hazard, editor of the Register of Pennsylvania.

Perhaps the best summary of Watson's involvement in historical inquiries is his own reflection on the Philadelphia Annals:

The public in general has very little conception of the really pleasing character of olden time enquiries — facts attained, as they suppose, by laborious delving and exploration & enquiry — They wholly overlook the real poetry of the subject, — the stimulus & the gratification, which a mind duly constituted for the pursuit into, acquires by opening to itself the contemplation & the secrets of a buried age.<sup>35</sup>

1. John Fanning Watson, Historic Tales of Olden Time New York (New York: Collins & Hannay, 1832), pp. 90-91.
2. Watson, "Tuckerton Beach," DML 58x29.3, pp. 20-21.
3. Dr. David Hosack to Watson, 13 August 1823, Am 30163, pp. 1-2, 15, HSP.
4. Dr. David Hosack to Watson, 16 November, 1823, Am 30163, pp. 5-6, HSP.
5. Watson, "Trip to Niagara," DML 58x29.5, pp. 18-19.
6. Watson, Historic Tales New York, p. v.
7. Watson, "Olden Time Researches . . . of New York City . . . ," pp. 131-132, 136, New-York Historical Society.
8. DNL Diaries XIV, 10 June 1832, p. 54, HSP.
9. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 9 November 1832, LCM Y: 27299, F 193.
10. Clipping dated 22 December 1832, in Dreer 186, p. 269, HSP.
11. Watson, "Supplemental Notes [to] the Great Conflagration of New York, Decem 1835," DML 58x29.8, p. 29.
12. Ibid., p. 4.
13. Watson to \_\_\_\_\_, 4 February 1842, Helena Hubbell Collection, 2-33, HSP.
14. Watson, "To the Printer!", Dreer 186, p. 246, HSP.
15. Watson to M. M. Jones, 28 May 1845, Society Collection, HSP.
16. Copyright for Annals of New York, 14 November 1846, Misc. Watson, New-York Historical Society.
17. Watson to A. Hart, 9 June 1853, Misc. MSS "W," New-York Historical Society.
18. Watson to George L. Duyckinck, care Charles Scribner, 12 February 1855, Duyckinck Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library;

The Historical Magazine, IV, (September 1860) 228.

19. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 28 May 183-, in LCM Yi 2 7299, F 185.
20. Jno Pennington to Watson, 19 August 1841, Dreer 186, p. 295, HSP; Membership certificate, Dreer 186, p. 294, HSP.
21. "List of Old Houses — to be drawn — by W. L. Breton . . . ,"  
Society Collection, HSP.
22. Watson, 2 December 1835, "The Indian Treaty for the lands now  
the site of Philadelphia," Society Collection, HSP.
23. Watson to P. S. DuPonceau, 29 December 1835, Society Collection,  
HSP.
24. Am 301, II, p. 371, HSP.
25. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 27 September [1840], LCM Yi 2 7299,  
F 248.
26. John McAllister to Watson, 9 August 1842, Am 3011, p. 20, HSP;  
Watson to John McAllister, 12 August 1842, LCM Yi 2 7377, F 42. "Hills Map"  
is "This plan of the city of Philadelphia . . . published and sold by John Hills,  
surveyor & draughtsman, 1797," Phillips #175. Queen (1824-1886), a native  
Philadelphian, drew and lithographed a number of illustrations for the U. S. Military  
Magazine (1840-1842). See Nicholas B. Wainwright, Philadelphia in the Romantic  
Age of Lithography, p. 38, 81; Carl M. Cochran, "James Queen, Philadelphia  
Lithographer," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXXXII, (1958)  
pp. 139-175.
27. Dreer 186, p. 353, HSP.
28. Dreer 186, p. 365, HSP.
29. Clipping in Dreer 186, p. 349, HSP.
30. Watson to Horatio Jones, Jr., 6 March 1845, Society Collection,  
HSP.
31. Watson to George Ord, 30 November 1846, APS Archives; Watson  
to (APS), 14 December 1846, APS Archives; Watson to George Ord, 6 January 1847,  
APS Archives; Watson to George Ord, 9 January 1847, APS Archives.

32. Watson to Horatio G. Jones, Jr., 20 April [1855], HSP.
33. Watson to John McAllister, 24 November 1855, LCM Yi 2 7380, F 9; Watson to John McAllister, 20/21 May 1856, LCM Yi 2 7380, F 9.
34. City of Philadelphia, Register of Wills, 1861, no. 4, Will Book #45, p. 29.
35. Watson, "My Annals — & my reflections thereon," Dreer 186, p. 22, HSP.



## CHAPTER IV A FRIEND AND A DISCIPLE

Though John Fanning Watson found kindred spirits among the memberships of the Penn Society and the fledgling Historical Society of Pennsylvania, his fifteen-year association with Deborah Norris Logan of Stenton,<sup>1</sup> the noted female historian, and his life-long friendship with John Jay Smith, Junior, proved historically more fruitful. Deborah provided documents relating to James Logan and William Penn, personal memoirs, and artifacts to assist Watson. In return, she felt it her prerogative to edit Watson's writings on subjects of personal interest. Smith, whom Watson called a disciple, frequently acted as a research aide. Together they edited the American Historical and Literary Curiosities.

Deborah Logan apparently met Watson in the spring of 1823. In a diary entry dated 25 May she commented that Watson provided entertainment at tea that afternoon by telling of his explorations of old houses. He stayed about six hours, "indulging in Antiquarian lore." After that initial visit, Watson, whom Deborah called "the Antiquary," frequently took tea at Stenton.<sup>2</sup>

On 22 February 1824, Deborah "frittered away the day in looking over Watson's Book and writing a little in it."<sup>3</sup> One evening Watson showed Deborah a "Book of the Letters of Distinguished Men," with facsimile autographs, and accompanying portraits.<sup>4</sup> Another afternoon, Watson brought "a brother Professor from New York" to meet Deborah, and to inquire into what could be obtained at Stenton relative to the State of New York and its earliest history. Deborah found nothing suitable, except James Logan's letters concerning Dutch claims prior to the

Duke of York's patent, which the New Yorker copied. Deborah lent Watson three volumes of Peter Kalm's travels, and a book of Philadelphia City Ordinances on that visit.<sup>5</sup> A portfolio containing views of old Philadelphia houses entertained Deborah when Watson came to tea on 19 June 1826 with his daughters. Some of the sketches she regarded as "pretty and true;" others, taken from description were "too fanciful and extended."<sup>6</sup>

In August, 1825, Deborah acknowledged that Watson was a "very pleasant friend and neighbour, no new acquaintance that I have made for many years being more agreeable."<sup>7</sup> The qualities of sagacity and perseverance which Deborah recognized in Watson's "original mind"<sup>8</sup> were essential to the success of his historical studies. Yet they became the source of conflict between the two. Despite the possession of acute historical sensibilities, neither Deborah nor Watson acquiesced in the twentieth-century view that all information regarding an individual or action should be presented to form a "well-rounded" picture of the past. In editing the Logan papers, Deborah tried to quash the publication of anecdotes and domestic chit-chat which she felt would blur or darken the founders' images. Occasionally her judgment ran counter to that of Watson. One such incident questioned the propriety of publishing a letter from Charles Thomson to W. H. Drayton of South Carolina about General John Dickinson.

Difficulties commenced with Watson's visit to Harriton, residence of Charles Thomson, in December, 1824, to take a general appraisal of the books and papers of Deborah's cousin, secretary to the Continental Congress. From memoranda, Watson gave her an account of what he viewed and espoused sentiments with which she was pleased, "respecting the sacredness of letters written in the confidence of friendship . . . ."<sup>9</sup> Two years later, Watson sent Deborah a short biographical sketch of Thomson's life, which she found inadequate, and a second paper entitled "The Revolution." The latter upset her greatly. She wrote,

I entreat him in a note which I shall send him presently not to put it out of his hands untill I shall have the pleasure of seeing him . . . . To say truth I was far from satisfied with either the Biography or the Paper annexed . . . . 10

Deborah based her objections on Watson's treatment of a letter found among Charles Thomson's papers addressed to Drayton concerning the roles of Thomson and John Dickinson in arousing anti-British sentiment in Pennsylvania, prior to the First Continental Congress. She wished him to suppress the document, and refrain from presenting his Revolutionary War study to the Historical Society.<sup>11</sup>

Watson realized the futility of argument with a determined lady. As he wrote

I shall make the difficulty respecting Genl Dickinson & Genl Reed &c a short affair by expunging the whole of it from the intended gift to the Historical Society. I will by no means, at any time, write a word that 'may give a pang or cause a maiden's blush,' — I deem it therefore good luck, at least, that it has so early met an objection from a quarter so likely to have been afflicted by what I deemed to have been the sense of the record — 12

Deborah's cousins, the late General Dickinson's daughters, shown the offending letter by John Jay Smith, Jr., were provoked by Watson's interpretations sufficiently to feel it injured their father's reputation.<sup>13</sup> They, however, knew little of their father's public character

except that it was unimpeachable . . . and they appreciate your motives but think you read the matter & construed it wrong at all events they want the matter set right before it is deposited with the Historical Society . . . 14

The controversy was outwardly resolved on 15 January 1827, when Deborah received a note from Watson

in which he inclosed the objectionable document as surrendered to me to do as I pleased with, without keeping any copy of it for himself: - I felt exceedingly obliged by this procedure, and not a little pleased that my respect for him and opinion of his good Principles have received such a confirmation.<sup>15</sup>

In her acknowledgment, Deborah called Watson's action "a practical illustration of the Christian Principles of doing as we would be done by. —"<sup>16</sup>

The matter lingered unpleasantly through the following year. A copy of Charles Thomson's letter to William Henry Drayton obtained by Watson from his nephew John Thomson circulated amongst relatives. General Dickinson's daughters retained the original and sent Thomson the copy, without seeking prior consent. Their audacity irritated Thomson. On December 15, 1827, Deborah reluctantly returned the original to Watson with the suggestion that if Thomson would deposit the letter with her, it would be preserved for posterity.<sup>17</sup>

Watson exhibited characteristic slyness by preserving a copy of "The Revolution" in manuscript. Throughout the account, the name of General Dickerson has a single pen line drawn through it. Appended to the manuscript is an explanation for the article's preservation:

The foregoing is a kind of a Copy of a similar Paper I wrote originally with a purpose of incorporating in my "Annals of Philada" — The present Paper I drew up to accompany a Mss Biographical notice of Ch<sup>s</sup> Thomson which I wrote & sent to his nephew Jno Thomson — I have however withheld this paper & destroyed the other . . . As I scorn to disturb the repose of any family I wish to keep back this Paper from the public eye. — At the same time I wish to retain the facts for my own information & because I regard them as creditable to the memory of Genl Dickinson.

W.18

A synopsis of the disputed Thomson letter written "chiefly to display the character of his friend John Dickinson" appeared in the first volume of Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (1853).<sup>19</sup>

Once family honor became the criterion for judgment of historical fact, Watson had difficulty pleasing the Logan family. As he prepared the chaos of his collections for the press, Deborah asked to see the chapters in which she was interested in time to correct any errors "before the Press has set seal to them."<sup>30</sup> Items making honorable mention of her husband's ancestors and corresponding to her own "traditional recollections" received approval.<sup>21</sup> Deborah also assumed the role of intermediary between the author and her Dickinson cousins. She feared they would hold her accountable for errors which violated their interests. Watson accepted this censorship, and brought newly-drafted portions of the Annals manuscript for Deborah's scrutiny when he came to visit. She suggested he observe greater accuracy, avoid flights of fancy, and deflate his style.<sup>22</sup>

When the Annals finally appeared, Deborah dreaded to read it "from a fear of my too-oft-recurring name . . . . Besides tho' it may seem ungrateful to complain — he has given much of the information derived from me not exactly as it ought to be — mistakes occurring continually."<sup>23</sup> Her son Algernon and Cousin Sally found innumerable errors in the volume.<sup>24</sup> All condemned "the Abominable Style" in which Watson wrote.

Watson continued to visit Deborah and exchange "antiquarian lore," although her displeasure with the factual shortcomings of the Annals remained. After reading a manuscript of gleanings Watson made while in Harrisburg lobbying for recharter of the Germantown Bank in 1835, Deborah complained that the objects of his searches were often petty, and his hand illegible.<sup>25</sup> Yet Watson took extracts on the appearance of an apparition in England for her the following year.<sup>26</sup>

By 1838, however, all disagreeableness engendered by the Annals had vanished. Deborah recorded that after guests departed on 15 September, and she washed the dishes and cleaned the closets,

I came to write, but lighted on neighbour Watson's 'Annals' and found so much Entertainment in it, and so much of my own information that it has beguiled the morning from me and I have not made up a clean cap for the afternoon — 27

Deborah's death on 2 February 1839 terminated a profitable, though often restraining, friendship. On an announcement of her funeral, Watson wrote "Truly she was a woman to be lov'd & wept!"<sup>28</sup>

Watson enjoyed being an antiquary if "only for the love it generates among the brotherhood — all so wholly purged of all selfishness - & all so cordial and in unity of object & taste!"<sup>29</sup> Watson freely shared his queries and materials with other historians. A series of questions about the moral character of George Washington was sent to George Washington Parke Custis as a guideline for a biography. Custis responded saying that they would be answered in reminiscences he occasionally published in the press. He even notified Watson when the Recollections of Washington appeared. Watson referred Jared Sparks to his manuscript folio in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania collections for facts gleaned from the Charles Thomson papers, as well as for remarks and anecdotes respecting Washington.<sup>30</sup>

Watson's chief disciple was an enterprising Philadelphia entrepreneur descended from the Logan family, John Jay Smith, Junior, born in Burlington, New Jersey, in 1798. He came to Philadelphia as a druggist's apprentice. Smith may have met Watson in the course of peddling his home-manufactured durable ink to Philadelphia booksellers. With Watson's assistance, he was elected Librarian of the Loganian Library, and of the Library Company of Philadelphia, posts he retained from 1829 to 1851. For varying periods Smith edited the Pennsylvania Gazette, the

Saturday Bulletin, the Daily Express, Waldie's Select Circulating Library, and Downing's Horticulturist.<sup>31</sup>

Smith frequently acted as research assistant for Watson's projects, and his messenger within the city. He ferreted out bundles of family papers that related to Watson's interests, though he admitted Watson had gotten "so provokingly beyond us that I hardly know what will be useful to you —"<sup>32</sup> Among the privileges which the two shared, Smith counted "the friendship of the admirable Stenton lady — it is no small one certainly to enjoy the refined society of such rare beings — we shall hardly appreciate it till she is removed —"<sup>33</sup> Deborah enjoyed their amiable company. After one extended visit, when by the fireside the three had discussed "Characters and times by-past, and raked up from oblivion old anecdotes and things," Deborah sought the proper color of antiquarianism. She decided "Gray with the Rust of Years" the most suitable.<sup>34</sup>

Watson and Smith shared a delight in collecting artifacts with historical associations. Having stumbled over a "queer thing" at his sister's, a certificate of Governor Lloyd to England, Smith wrote Watson

If I envied people ever — that passion would arise sometimes at your possessions — such things as you hoard are not everyday affairs — have this advantage over a Bank note even, that they will pass, when the Bank (not Germantown of course) is forgotten — but you have so fairly earned your stock that I would fain increase rather than subtract from it.<sup>35</sup>

In Burlington, New Jersey, Smith discovered some relics from Pennsbury Manor. Particularly exciting to Smith was a bookcase owned by William Penn, now in the collection of the Library Company of Philadelphia. "It would be something to view one's self in the same mirror as he did," he wrote. He secured the feet of the of the bookcase, and promised Watson a pair to be used as mantle ornaments.<sup>36</sup> Watson congratulated Smith on his prowess. "You are a true Disciple to have ferreted out such rarities! My mantle shall fall upon you!" He agreed to use the

bookcase feet and to purchase the then-detached door mirrors as Smith suggested.<sup>37</sup>

Smith's editorial activities provided Watson with free advertising space and a clipping service.<sup>38</sup> Occasionally Watson suggested Smith publish one or more of his controversial theological articles, or his study of Oliver Cromwell.<sup>39</sup> Promotion of Smith's Laurel Hill Cemetery paralleled Watson's efforts to commemorate the achievements of Thomas Godfrey. Watson encouraged transfer of the remains of Charles Thomson to Smith's grounds.<sup>40</sup>

Watson's admiration for Oliver Cromwell, Dr. Samuel Johnson, and Johnson's biographer James Boswell posed difficulties for Smith. Prior to making a trip together to Trenton and Burlington in 1827, Smith admitted to Watson "I am reading Boswells Johnson to try to like him as much as you do! —"<sup>41</sup> Smith eventually exorcised his mental block against Cromwell, as well as that against Boswell and Johnson. Watson rejoiced when Smith agreed that Boswell's Biography was unsurpassed in the annals of English literature, save in its partial imitation in the Memoirs of Hannah More.<sup>42</sup>

The wives of both master and disciple regarded antiquarian pastimes wryly. When Smith sent Watson "a most flattering" gift Watson acknowledged it pleased his wife much more than his antiquities.<sup>43</sup> Smith's wife once questioned Watson's sanity. Watson replied

Tell your wife I am not mad — for there's 'method in his madness-' Boswell's wife was always jealous of Johnson, as misleading her husband from home-duties! See Johnsons letters about her & to her — propitiating her!<sup>44</sup>

Watson summarized his relation to Smith when he noted that Smith's letters included in his "Supplemental Annals" and "Correspondence" scrapbooks were both amusing and flattering. "Thus," he wrote, 'your bark shall attendant sail' down



the stream of time with mine! Whew! how we apples swim!"<sup>45</sup> In contrast, Smith dismissed Watson with a single phrase in his autobiographical chronicle of personal achievements.<sup>46</sup>

1. References to the Deborah Norris Logan Diaries, HSP, were located with the help of an appendix to Barbara Jones, "Deborah Logan," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1964.
2. DNL Diaries VI, 25 May 1823, pp. 57-58, HSP; Lavinia F. Whitman in Benjamin Dorr, Memoir of John Fanning Watson (Philadelphia: 1861), p. 24.
3. DNL Diaries VI, 22 February 1824, p. 160.
4. DNL Diaries VII, 24 January 1825, pp. 205-206.
5. DNL Diaries VIII, 17 August 1825, pp. 98-99.
6. DNL Diaries IX, 19 June 1826, p. 173.
7. DNL Diaries VIII, 17 August 1825, pp. 98-99.
8. DNL Diaries XI, 31 January 1828, p. 242.
9. DNL Diaries VII, 16 December 1824, p. 172.
10. DNL Diaries X, 31 December 1826, p. 143.
11. DNL Diaries X, 6 January 1827, p. 147.
12. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 9 January 1827, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 73.
13. DNL Diaries X, 11 January 1827, p. 153.
14. J. J. Smith, Jr., to Watson, 9 January 1827, Am 30163, p. 189, HSP.
15. DNL Diaries X, 16 January 1827, p. 160.
16. Deborah Logan to Watson, 17 January 1827, Am 30163, p. 194.
17. Watson to Deborah Logan, 6 November 1827, Maria Dickinson Logan Papers, HSP; Deborah Logan to John Thomson, 23 November 1827, Society Collection, HSP; DNL Diaries XI, 22 March 1827, p. 35, 1 May 1827, p. 54; John Thomson to Watson, 5 December 1827, Am 30163, pp. 251-252, HSP; DNL Diaries XI, 12 December 1827, pp. 199-200; Deborah Logan to Watson, 12 December 1827, 15 December 1827, Am 30163, 252-255; Watson to John Thomson, 22 December 1827, Gratz Collection, Case 6, Box 20, HSP.

18. Watson, "The Revolution," Am 30163, p. 168, HSP.
19. "XIX. Notices of the Papers seen in Charles Thomson's possession in the years 1824 and 1825, by John F. Watson, Esq., with Extracts therefrom," Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (1853), pp. 121-131.
20. DNL Diaries XII, 23 December 1828, p. 154.
21. DNL Diaries XII, 22 August 1828, p. 47.
22. DNL Diaries XII, 7 March 1829, pp. 171-172; 22 July 1829, p. 239.
23. DNL Diaries XIII, 15 July 1830, pp. 54-55.
24. DNL Diaries XIII, 21 July 1830, pp. 56-57; 26 July 1830; pp. 58-59; 28 July 1830, p. 60.
25. DNL Diaries XV, 23 May 1835, pp. 191-192.
26. "For Mrs. D. Logan — An Extract From the Methodist Magazine 1819 . . . Extracted by JFW. — 1836," Logan Papers, Correspondence of Deborah Logan, VII, p. 92, HSP.
27. DNL Diaries XVI, 15 September 1838, p. 361.
28. Dreer 186, p. 354, HSP.
29. Watson to Horatio Jones, Jr., 26 August 1845, Society Collection, HSP.
30. "General Washington's Character," Am 3013, "Historical Collections," p. 63, HSP; G. W. Custis to Watson, 23 May 1826, Am 30163, p. 144, HSP; Watson to John Thomson, 20 November 1827, Gratz MS. Case 6, Box 20.
31. John Jay Smith, Recollections (Philadelphia, 1892), pp. 64, 222; Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 13 May, 20 May 1829, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 141, F 142.
32. John J. Smith, Jr. to Watson, 23 December 1826, Am 30163, p. 187, HSP.
33. John J. Smith, Jr. to Watson, 21 February 1827, Am 30163, p. 204.
34. DNL Diaries XI, 13 May 1827, pp. 61-62.

35. J. J. Smith, Jr. to Watson, 2 May 1827, Am 30163, p. 223, HSP.
36. J. J. Smith, Jr. to Watson, 8 May 1827, Am 30163, p. 229, HSP.
37. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 11 May 1827, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 90.
38. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 26 July (1830), LCM Yi 2 7299, F 170.
39. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., no date, LCM Yi 2 7299, F118; Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 23 June \_\_\_\_, Miscellaneous, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.
40. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 5 October 1838, 28 November 1828, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 217-219, F 224.
41. J. J. Smith, Jr. to Watson, 17 May 1827, Am 30163, p. 231, HSP.
42. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 23 June \_\_\_\_, Miscellaneous, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.
43. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 3 March 1827, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 80.
44. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 26 May 1827, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 93. On 4 February 1842, Watson wrote "I have a house full of queer relics — & yet am not myself queer!" Helena Hubbell Collection, 2-33, HSP.
45. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 20 December \_\_\_\_, Miscellaneous, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.
46. Smith, Recollections, p. 283.

CHAPTER V  
"RELICS & REMEMBRANCERS"

Interest in the preservation of Philadelphia's physical past predates the formation of the Historical Committee of the American Philosophical Society. In 1813, a memorial to the Pennsylvania Legislature proposed retention of Independence Hall. The citizens announced that "the spot which the Bill proposes to cover with private buildings, is hallowed to your memorialists, by many strong and impressive recollections."<sup>1</sup> The city of Philadelphia purchased the endangered complex in 1816, to ensure its transmission to posterity. Lafayette's levee in the State House led to the rebuilding of the tower by Strickland in 1826, and to interior renovation.

Underlying the desire for preservation of such relics was the pleasures of perception aroused by their association with historical events. Philosopher Archibald Alison enunciated the doctrine in his Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1790). According to Alison, objects which have been devoted to patriotism or to honor affect viewers with all the emotion of the qualities of which they have become significant. Beauty of natural scenery is exalted by the records of events it has witnessed. The scenes most deeply affecting the admiration of the people are those which became sacred by the memory of ancient virtue or ancient glory.<sup>2</sup> Watson quoted Alison in the Annals (1857) (II, p. 15). For the new American nation, the virtues and glories celebrated were those of the founding fathers, and the Revolutionary leaders.

Watson focused on preserving the "Letitia Penn" House.

My desire is to get the ownership of the 'Laetitia House,'  
for the sake of its perpetual preservation, as a memorable

City Relic, worthy to be held in perpetual remembrance, as the actual contrast — at all times, between the beginning & the progress of our city.<sup>3</sup>

In 1824, he began collecting documentation supporting his belief that the Rising Sun Inn in Letitia Court was the house of Penn's daughter. He tried to locate the exact house through descriptions given in Penn's letters. Deborah Logan assisted by looking for a letter giving an account of Letitia Penn Aubrey's estate "Engulphed somewhere in the massy papers" in the Stenton Library. She was half-inclined to

believe that the old house in the Court with the carved wooden Pediment over the Door\* [\*Watson's note: now the old Rising Sun on the Western side] may have been the one in which our Great and good Founder once resided; but a reference to the title Deeds (I should suppose) would satisfy and the investigation is in excellent hands.<sup>4</sup>

In 1827, Watson proposed joining others in the purchase of the Rising Sun Inn. He suggested an adaptive use for the interior, turning the rooms upstairs and down into single halls, while maintaining the original exterior. The renovated building would house the Penn Society office and exhibitions of paintings and antiquities relating to early Philadelphia. He felt the Historical Society might be willing to travel down "the steps of time" to take up quarters in the basement. The proposal gained little support. Watson continued his research, with the help of John J. Smith, Jr. He questioned the origin of the brick used in its construction, and whether the beams were hewn or sawn. Following Deborah Logan's advice, Watson urged Smith to spend a rainy day in the Recorder of Deeds office running over the earliest books there to see "any strange or amusing facts in Wills."<sup>5</sup> Watson also corresponded with Roberts Vaux, about salvaging the Letitia House. He wished Vaux to call on the owner to induce him to keep the premises as they were until some actions could be taken. Watson previously extracted the owner's promise not to remove the pediment, the chief peculiarity of the house. He wrote Vaux:

I told him it would be to his lasting credit to become a member of the Perin Society & to offer them the preference of the house at the lowest terms as an act of public beneficence — . . . I even volunteered to put on the roof myself . . . 50 shingles would save it.<sup>6</sup>

Subsequently Watson asked Vaux to call on Isaac T. Longstreth in Church Alley for the oldest record of the Letitia House, and take notes of relevant dates and names. To Smith, Watson announced that if he allowed the owners to vend the Letitia House to pull it down, "I'll haunt your name through life — When it can be bought I'll buy it -"<sup>8</sup>

Watson outlined a comprehensive development plan for the Letitia House in an 1834 letter to Smith based on its purchase by either the City or by Watson and Smith jointly. If the pair bought it, Watson hoped the city would voluntarily exempt the house from taxation. The Inn would continue operation as a public house, on the temperance plan, rented to a respectable widow or to a small family of good character. Furnishings for the "historic house" would include Penn's looking glass, desk, and high chest. Watson planned to hang watercolor views of Philadelphia by Breton from his own collection about various rooms. In conclusion Watson wrote

I shall be deeply mortified if the apathy of Philadel<sup>a</sup> should allow the house to be pulled down . . . such a house with its pictures — & various old furniture — sanded floors — pewter plates & porringers etc, would be a perfect museum, where many of our citizens could be brought to deposit of their old relics. The thing is certainly feasible.<sup>9</sup>

Smith rejected the scheme. Watson appealed to Mr. Penn Gaskill for monetary relief. With Gaskill's refusal to act, Watson dropped his proposals.

In 1835, Joshua Francis Fisher, Secretary of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, attempted to revive the project. Watson again suggested keeping the Inn a temperance house to serve farmers from the Jersey market. As to

furnishings, Watson felt:

The house should be in all respects old-fashioned — the floors should be sanded, & the chief of the dinner & supper ware should be old pewter. The whole manner should revive the picture of olden time — We could get contributions enough of all old high-backed chairs — settles & Settees — pictures & looking glasses — . . . We might get up quite a museum of old fashioned dresses — house ornaments &c — The beau ideal of the whole, as I can see it, is quite fascinating.<sup>10</sup>

By 1856, the razing of "our two most notable houses," the Letitia House and the Slate-Roof House, seemed imminent. Watson proposed a system of historic site markers, marble or cast-iron plaques bearing sculptural representations of the former edifices, to be attached to replacement structures.<sup>11</sup> Demolition of the Slate-Roof House occurred in 1867. Only Breton's watercolors, and a few bricks and timbers remained.

The purchase of the Hasbrouck House, Newburgh, New York, Washington's headquarters from 1 April 1772 to mid-August 1783, and its opening as a museum on 4 July 1850 has long been considered a milestone in American historic preservation. According to Charles B. Hosmer, Junior, historian of the movement, Jonathan Hasbrouck, the last private owner, considered selling the house to a corporation formed for the purpose of purchasing and maintaining the property. The corporation had dissolved by 1848. Hasbrouck failed to make a mortgage payment, the house came up for sale, and the State of New York, after some discussion, purchased the building. Trustees of the (then) Village of Newburgh were authorized to take possession and to preserve the House, but in so doing, to keep it as it was during Washington's occupancy. A local committee put the house in order, and General Winfield Scott presided at the dedicatory exercises.<sup>12</sup>

Watson expressed an interest in the house as early as 13 August 1834, in a letter to the postmaster of West Point. He wished to obtain a sketch of the



"memorable house." He fancied that many of the West Point cadets would be competent to prepare a pencil sketch preserving the form of the building, which Watson intended to use in a future edition of the Annals. Watson's interest in the building was two-fold: Washington lived there; of a single story in the Dutch style, it was a relic of Dutch times. George Pope Morris of the New York City Mirror sent Watson an engraved view of the house after a painting by Robert W. Weir, which appeared in his paper on 27 December 1834. Watson published it in the 1846 New York Annals.<sup>13</sup>

With the advent of photographic means of recording "ancient edifices," Watson moved from collecting sketches to photographs. To his son-in-law Charles Willing he suggested procuring a Daguerrotype view of the Willing House before its destruction. Watson felt it would be barbarous neglect to preserve no vestige of it.<sup>14</sup> For his friends Ferdinand J. Dreer or Mr. Lloyd, Watson desired photographs of "the little old house, N.E. cor. Grays Alley & 2 St;" its connection on Second Street with the adjacent frame house, and a view down the Alley, showing "very superior houses of ornamental areas."<sup>15</sup>

Pilgrimages to the "hallowed haunts" of "splendour past" was another aspect of Watson's homage to previous eras. A visit to Pennsbury, "once the Farm & the Mansion House of Wm Penn the Founder" undertaken in the company of Reuben Haines of Wyck, Germantown, on 8 July 1826, typifies these excursions. The gentlemen "intended to explore & investigate the remains of that once distinguished place now gone down & in ruins —" Watson sketched remaining buildings and noted curious anecdotes about the area in his journal.<sup>16</sup> The following year, Watson visited Chester. J. J. Smith, Jr. accompanied Watson on his visit "to see and examine the venerable Remains of that once distinguished Town in the earliest Annals of Penn<sup>sa</sup> —" Again he recorded buildings of interest, including the home of Deborah Logan's mother.<sup>17</sup> On an excursion to Graeme Park, Montgomery County, in 1855, Watson acted as an historian for the group of sundry members of the

Historical Society. His reflections on the past are interspersed with anecdotes of the Graeme family history and a description of the house:

There it still stands as an empty disused structure — . . .  
The mansion is 60 feet front of two stories high built of  
the Red Schale stone of the Country, has a door & 5  
windows below. Six windows on 2d story & 4 dormer  
windows . . . Windows on its double pitched roof — 18

Watson collected moveable memorabilia as well as sketches of "olden time." Like a medieval canon, he sought to increase the fame of Penn's city with sacred bones. His fervor had few counterparts. A memoir of Watson in the hand of biographer Evert A. Duyckinck comments that he left a rare collection of relics, autographs, and other items at the time of his death. Duyckinck noted that Watson preserved with pious veneration mementoes of his parents, and "that they might always be thus perpetuated, each contains attached to some hidden part, a written history."<sup>19</sup> (See figure 2). Watson's bedchamber as described by his daughter reveals an early collector "living with antiques."

Near by his bedside stood his old secretary, at which he wrote, containing his most valuable papers and writings, and by it, that venerable chair of PENN, made more remarkable by having seated Prince William and Lafayette. In the corner was an old clock-case,<sup>20</sup> belonging to the same family, with a tray holding seven canes of relic wood; — the walls were hung round with pictures of ancient houses, scenes, &c, all framed from some portion of the woods represented; and from two of the windows were suspended cannon balls, — placed there but a few days previously; — one was from the Battle of Germantown, presented by Benjamin Chew, Sen., Esq. The other reads, — 'This Ball is a curiosity. — It is older than Philadelphia: — was found imbedded in the root of a large tree-stump, in a house of Budd's long row. J. F. Watson, 1836.'<sup>21</sup>

Watson felt his collecting homeless miscellany required an explanation. The exhibition of a mummy in Philadelphia in 1824 gave him  
an apt occasion to justify the preservation of some Relics,

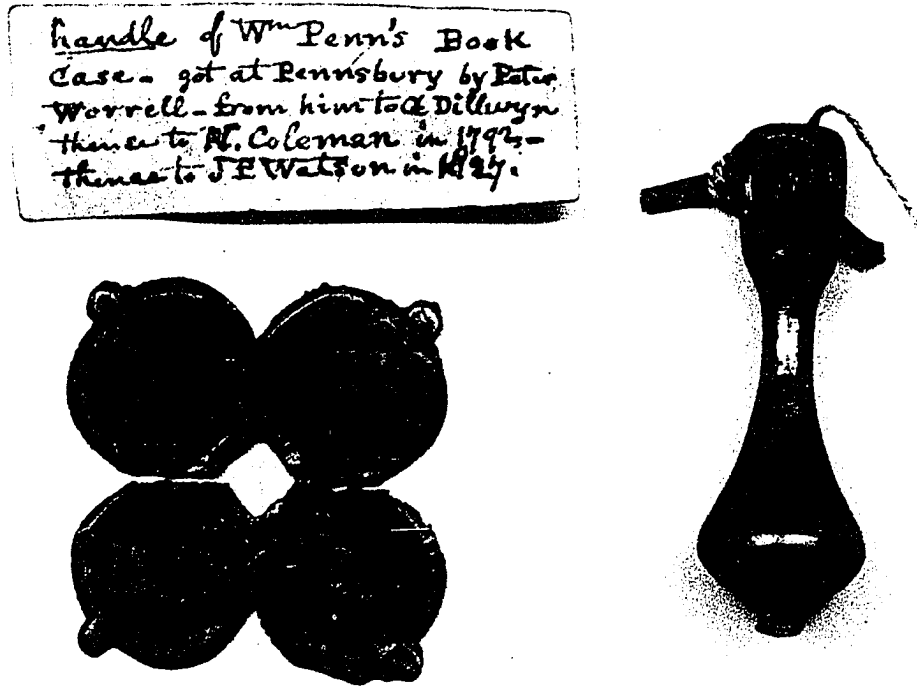


Figure 2. Handle of William Penn's Bookcase, with label in J. F. Watson's hand. Courtesy, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 58.102.20.

. . . which but for such countenance, might be deemed puerile — An unfeeling & unreflecting man, might exclaim, what is the occasion for visiting an old, shrivelled, & leathern coated, mummy! — . . . Such a mind, does not perceive, that the secret of the Interest we feel in the subject is the fund of moral reflections, & associations of ideas, to which the contemplation of the body leads us: And the less we really can know of its history, the deeper & more intense, is the interest we feel.<sup>22</sup>

In the various editions of the Annals, Watson lists "Relics and Remembrancers" in his own and others' collections. Mr. Chew gave Watson "three of the last remaining" balls and bullets gathered in the Cliveden garret following the Battle of Germantown.<sup>23</sup> In 1825, Watson obtained from John Thomson the "first" Argand lamp in the United States, sent from Paris to Charles Thomson by Thomas Jefferson in 1785. After receiving the lamp, Watson requested either a description of the lamp as he had seen it in two or three of Jefferson's letters, or the gift of one of the letters. Thomson sent a letter.<sup>24</sup>

When a Philadelphia military company went to Trenton to celebrate the Fourth of July, 1835, Watson and his son Barron accompanied the group. Watson lent them his

Hessian tassel taken from the flag captured at the memorable Battle of Trenton, — to append to their own flag; & also a golden locket containing Washington's hair & a picture on the reverse of the passage of the Delaware — This last was suspended round the neck of the <sup>25</sup>Captain at the time of dining & drinking their toasts.

Tracing the whereabouts of a stove plate cast by Christopher Sower in Lancaster, which Watson had stored at the Bank of Germantown, occupied much of Watson's time following the death of his wife in 1859. He made "diligent inquiry" at the Bank for the jamb stove but failed to locate it. For his correspondent,

however, he sketched the plate as he remembered it, with two Dunkards shaking hands cast in, and the following inscription:

Men of Arms at peace.  
Men of Peace in union of hands.<sup>26</sup>

Watson prized "an old cane chair" begged from Deborah Norris Logan in 1824 above all. At his request, Deborah found the chair in the Stenton garret, in "a sad mutilated state," missing an arm and a seat. Although she willingly gave Watson the chair, she wondered how to effect the transfer of possession.

If I send it up to his House his wife will be indignant at receiving such a 'Piece of Old Trumpery,' for she refused to give house room to an antiquated tea table which he had bought at vendue. Well, I believe to do the thing handsomely I must get Billy Reger to do repair before I send it.<sup>27</sup>

Watson's son John Howell gave the chair, now in the collection of Independence National Historic Park, to the City of Philadelphia in 1874 with the tradition that it had been brought from England in 1699 by William Penn, and later owned by James Logan. Watson unveiled the chair at the Penn Society dinner of 1824. In a list of toasts compiled for use at the antiquarian gathering he included one celebrating

The Sitting Chair of Penn & Logan — A rude relic of our rugged sires, but fruitful of soothing recollections! This regard which we pay to the reliques of men great & illustrious serves as an encouragement to expect the same renown, if sought by the same virtues.<sup>28</sup>

The success of the chair pleased Deborah Logan. She noted

my old chair, with a new arm and Bottom, furbished and varnished and dignified with a silver Plate, was placed for the President to sit in, and two other ones were introduced made of the wood of the old Kensington Elm, & many old relics were sent for and used by the Company; who intend an annual Commemoration.<sup>29</sup>

Watson's interest in relic furniture extended to designing articles to be manufactured from historically significant woods. In 1824, he obtained a piece of mahogany from a beam in the house "built" by Christopher Columbus in Santo Domingo. Portions of this appeared as inlay in the snuff boxes which Watson commissioned for members of the Penn Society. Each was to be constructed from primitive woods, with four kinds inlaid on the top lid.<sup>31</sup> Lafayette, John Thomson, P. S. DuPonceau, and Roberts Vaux were among the original recipients of the boxes. Woods used in Roberts Vaux's included black walnut, elm from the Treaty Tree, sweet gum, Columbus mahogany, and oak from "the top log of the butment wharf of the first bridge laid over Dock Creek."<sup>32</sup> Watson felt the boxes presented to a sympathetic and contemplative mind "remains calculated to impress the imagination with many grateful recollections of our primitive history."<sup>33</sup> P. S. DuPonceau congratulated Watson's gesture as a patriotic and honorable act aiding in collecting and preserving "relics of former times" for posterity.<sup>34</sup>

In 1830, Watson expressed an inclination to prepare and bestow a 'neat & ornamental small chest of Relic wood to contain the earliest papers of the Penn Society, ' the size of a ream of cap paper. The beam of Guest's Blue Anchor tavern, where Penn landed formed the primary wood. For contrast and ornament, Watson decided to add inlays of the Treaty tree and the walnut which had grown before Independence Hall. Inside the lid, Watson desired to have a watercolor of Penn's landing, fronted with glass for protection, after the manner of the Annals. A similar treasure chest, with a watercolor of the Treaty tree signed by Watson under glass inside the lid, is now in the Winterthur Collection, filled with small relics bearing labels in Watson's hand.<sup>35</sup> (Figures 3 and 4.)

Perhaps the most interesting of Watson's relic collages surviving is the "Liberty and Equality" chair now in the collection of Independence National Historic Park. On a trip to Harrisburg in 1835, Watson saw the "Rising Sun" chair in which he thought John Hancock sat to declare national independence. Watson

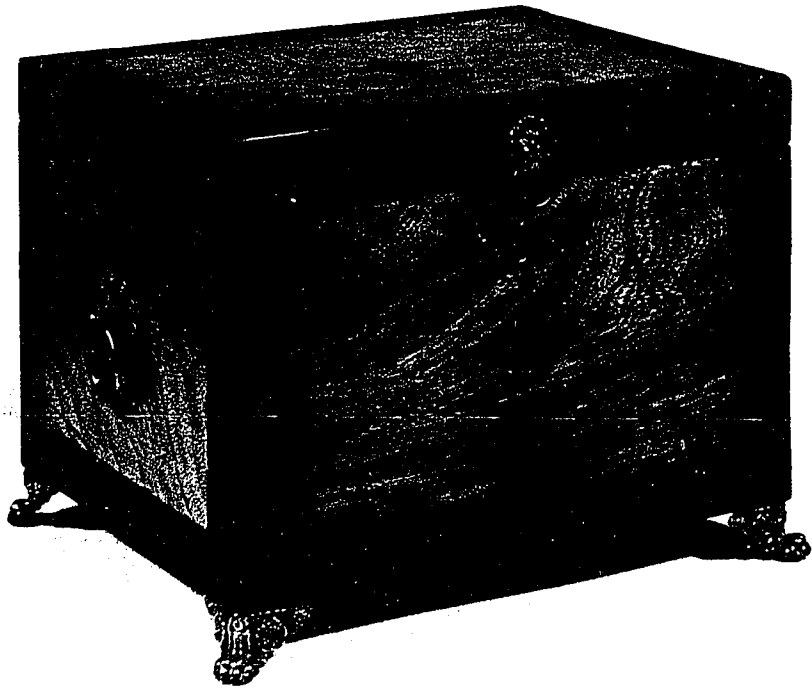


Figure 3. Casket of "relic woods" belonging to John Fanning Watson. Courtesy, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 58.102.1 (A).

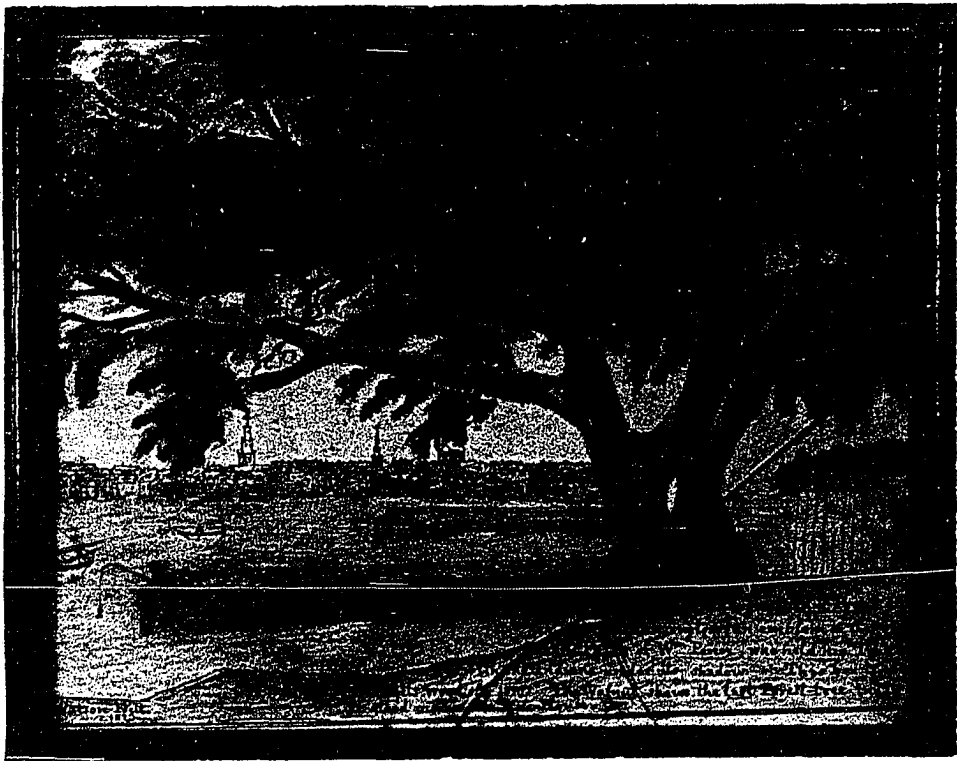


Figure 4. Watercolor, "The great Elm Tree of Kennington . . . ." in lid of casket shown in Figure 3. Signed lower left "J. F. Watson Fecit./1823." Courtesy, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 58.102.1 (B).



described it as "a high back mahogany one with a stuffed leather seat," and included a pen-and-ink sketch in his journal.<sup>36</sup> William Snyder of Kensington constructed a "singularly historical chair" after Watson's design, from relics. The Commissioners of Kensington acquired the chair in 1838. Incorporated were mahogany from the Columbus house, oak from a house in Letitia Court, cane seating from the Penn armchair in Watson's possession, hair from the head of Justice John Marshall secured by undertaker William H. Moore, a fragment of the frigate Constitution, and a portion of the great ship Pennsylvania launched in 1837. Walnut from the last of a group of trees standing in front of Independence Hall formed the carcass of the chair. With the incorporation of Kensington into the City of Philadelphia, an act of the Select and Common Councils transferred the chair to city ownership, and placed it in Independence Hall.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to collecting relic wood fragments, Watson attempted to preserve Philadelphia trees associated with historic events. Roberts Vaux and J. J. Smith, Jr. assisted his endeavors. Although the Penn Treaty Tree fell in 1810, Watson offered to pay for painting a tin marker to read "The Treaty Tree —/ Emblem/ Of unbroken Faith —/ Cherish this Scion/ from the Parent Stock!" to be placed at the site, in hopes that it might incite more respect for an offshoot of the original elm in the neighborhood. Smith secured the shoot from a second scion on the Pennsylvania Hospital grounds. Feeling that no monument could surpass the perpetuity of the tree itself on the same ground, Watson aided in boxing the tree, which then died.<sup>39</sup> In 1826, Watson asked Vaux to interfere for the preservation of the "Last Tree of the Forrest Race now extant, within the bounds of the city." He felt the tree would pay for its ground room by its celebrity as a city curiosity. At the same time Watson expressed an interest in the fate of six sweet gum trees on the north side of Vine Street in front of High Hill, and hoped they would long be preserved to show "the strange progress of our City from the Sylvan state —"<sup>40</sup>

A final facet of Watson's activity was his promotion of "respect for the

memory of all good men who had been useful in their generation." In 1826, he erected a small marble slab above the joint grave of General Agnew and Colonel Byrd, victims of the Battle of Germantown, in the Lower Burying Ground, 4901 Germantown Avenue, Germantown. To promote Laurel Hill, J. J. Smith, Jr. persuaded John Thomson, nephew of Charles Thomson, to exhume his uncle's remains from the family plot near Harriton, and transfer them to the new rural cemetery in 1838. Watson called the move an honor to Laurel Hill and a duty to Thomson. The grave marker, a granite obelisk sixteen feet tall, was to bear an inscription of Watson's composition. The granite rejected the chisel. A single marble slab, now indecipherable, carried Watson's verses instead. After Deborah Logan saw a copy of the tribute, she expressed delight "that it seemed to me . . . to be as unexceptionable as it did."<sup>41</sup> In 1838, Watson removed the body of Thomas Godfrey, "inventor" of the mariner's quadrant, to Laurel Hill. The cemetery managers erected a tomb over the remains. Subsequently the directors of the Mercantile Library of Philadelphia appointed a committee to collect funds to erect an appropriate monument over Godfrey's tomb. They asked Watson to serve, in recognition of the interest which he had previously manifested in having due honor paid Godfrey's memory. Watson assisted the committee, and a memorial was raised.<sup>42</sup>

In 1842, Watson requested Smith's permission to exhume the remains of General Nash of North Carolina and three other American officers from the Mennonite Burying Ground at Kulpsville, Montgomery County, and to reinter them under one monument in Laurel Hill. He expected a cavalry escort to effect the transfer. Smith refused space. Undaunted, Watson raised ninety-two one dollar pledges from the citizens of Germantown and Norristown for an appropriate marker. Made by a Mr. Derr of Norristown, it was erected in 1844.<sup>43</sup>

Watson sought proper remembrance of John Fitch, whose successful steamboats began regular service on the Delaware in 1787. Through his exertions

Fitch's remains were brought from Bardstown, Kentucky, and deposited on the bluff at Louisville in 1842. Over them Watson wished to erect a monument of twelve to sixteen feet in height surmounted by a vessel, boiling with vapor, and with billets of wood below it for a fire. The shaft would carry a bas relief of the Fitch steamboat, with other emblems of steam on the sides. Tablets on the base carried inscriptions in praise of Fitch's achievements.<sup>44</sup>

Watson conceived the past in visual terms. Applied association theory increased the scope of his vision. For example, a visit to Valley Forge in 1828 revived "all the necessary association of ideas" Watson had regarding the severities endured by the suffering American Army on the site.<sup>45</sup> Artifacts, relics, and wood fragments acted as a springboard for Watson. They allowed him to dive into vanished eras, and surface with a refreshed mental image of the world of the "founders." For these reasons, he promoted historic preservation.

1. Minutes of the Select Council of the City of Philadelphia, 11 March 1813, typescript, INHP, Philadelphia.
2. Archibald Alison, Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830), p. 405.
3. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 22 February 1834, in extra-illustrated copy, Smith, Recollections III, Manuscript Room, HSP.
4. "Memoranda, respecting Letitia Court & Black Horse Alley deduced chiefly from J. Chews Brief annexed," Am 301, I, 140, 144-145; Watson to Gavin Hamilton, 29 April 1824, in Am 301, I, 142; Watson to Thomas Bradford, 12 May 1824, Bradford Collection, Correspondence 1821-1839; Deborah Norris Logan to Watson, 2 February 1825, Am 30163, p. 75; DNL Diaries VII, 1 February 1825, p. 210, HSP.
5. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 7 February 1827, in LCM Yi 2 7299, F 76; Watson to Smith, 3 January 1830, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 148.
6. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 6 February 1830, Vaux Papers, HSP.
7. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 30 October \_\_\_\_, Society Collection, HSP.
8. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., no date, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 121.
9. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 22 February 1834, in extra-illustrated copy, Smith, Recollections III, Manuscript Room, HSP.
10. Watson to Joshua Francis Fisher, December 1835, Joshua Francis Fisher Collection, HSP.
11. Watson to Townsend Ward, 16 December 1856; Watson to Ward, 18 December 1856, Society Collection, HSP.
12. Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., Presence of the Past (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), pp. 35-36; Dorothy C. Barck, "Washington's Newburgh Headquarters," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XIV (May 1955), 30-32.
13. Watson to Postmaster at West Point, 13 August 1834, Gulian C. Verplanck Papers, Box 8, MSS Collection, New-York Historical Society; Watson to George P. Morris, 3 September 1834, Gulian C. Verplanck Papers, Box 8, MSS Collection, New-York Historical Society; engraving after Weir, "Hasbrouck House, Washington's Quarters," Annals of New York (1846), facing p. 48.

14. Watson to Charles Willing, 15 April 1856, mounted with photograph labeled "Residence of Charles Willing/1749", in Wallace Papers IV, p. 145, HSP.
15. Watson to John A. McAllister, 23 April 1856, Dreer Collection, American Press Writers IX, HSP.
16. Watson, "Trip to Pennsbury & to Count Survilliers - 1826," DML 58x29.4.
17. Watson, "Visit to Chester in 1827," Am 2705, p. 1, HSP.
18. Watson, "Graeme Park," Am 3015, pp. 3-4, HSP.
19. Duyckinck Collection, Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.
20. M. D. Logan to Watson, 14 May 1839, Am 3011, HSP: "M D Logan presents with her respects to J. F. Watson the old clock-case he saw when last at Stenton, as a relic of by-gone time."
21. in Dorr, Memoir, pp. 31-32.
22. Watson, "Annals . . . 1829", Am 301, 1, 31; Annals (1857) II, 494.
23. Watson, "Historical Incidents in Germantown," Dreer 184, p. 82, HSP.
24. John Thomson to Watson, 7 March 1825, Am 30163, p. 80; Watson to John Thomson, 12 March 1825, Gratz Mss, Case 6, Box 20; John Thomson to Watson, 25 March 1825, Am 30163, p. 82.
25. Watson, "Trenton/New York Fire," DML 58x29.8.
26. Watson to Abram H. Casell, 26 November 1858, 7 February 1859, Dr. Arthur C. Bining Collection, Autograph Section W-Z, HSP; Annals (1857), II, 34.
27. DNL Diaries VII, 18 September 1824, pp. 109-110.
28. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 1 November 1824, Vaux Papers, HSP.
29. DNL Diaries VII, 18 November 1824, p. 145.
30. David Sims to Watson, 30 March 1824, Am 30163, p. 17, HSP.
31. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 1 December 1824, Vaux Papers, HSP.

32. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 20 July 1825, Vaux Papers, HSP.
33. Watson to John Thomson, 20 July 1825, Gratz Collection, Case 6, Box 20, HSP.
34. P. S. DuPonceau to Watson, 23 July 1825, Am 30163, p. 90, HSP. Similar sentiments are expressed by Roberts Vaux, 26 July 1825, Am 30163, p. 94, HSP.
35. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 1 December 1830, Society Collection, HSP.
36. Watson, "Travelling Notes — Trip to Harrisburgh," DML 58x29.7, pp.7-8; Frank H. Sommer, "John F. Watson: First Historian of American Decorative Arts," Antiques 83 (March 1963), p. 301.
37. "By A Resolution of Board of Commissioners of the District of Kensington of the Northern Liberties, passed 1836 . . .," Am 3011, p. 52, HSP; D. W. Belisle, History of Independence Hall (Philadelphia: James Challen & Son, 1859), illustration facing p. 360, pp. 361-364; Journal of Common Council (Philadelphia), 6 July 1854, pp. 110-111, 115-116; Journal of Select Council (Philadelphia), 6 July 1854, p. 101; "An Interior View of Independence Hall, Philadelphia," Wainwright #158, printed in colors by L. N. Rosenthal, 1856, shows the "Liberty and Equality" chair in the lower right hand corner.
38. [John F. Watson, 1827?], LCM Yi 2 7299, F95.
39. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 3 March 1827, Society Collection, HSP; Annals (1857), I, 138.
40. Watson to Roberts Vaux, 3 July 1826, Vaux Papers, HSP.
41. DNL Diaries XVI, 28 August 1838, p. 349; Dorr, Memoir, p. 38.
42. clipping "From Silliman's Journal for January 1839," Dreer 186, p. 357, HSP; Isaac Barton to Watson, 18 May 1840, Dreer 186, p. 313, HSP.
43. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 10 November 1842, LCM Yi 2 7299, F 37; Dreer 186, p. 317, HSP; clipping from the Raleigh, North Carolina, Star, 30 October 1844, "Monument erected over grave of Gen. Nash," in Dreer 186, p. 363, HSP.
44. Watson, "The monument & inscriptions of John Fitch — the steam-boat inventor — at Louisville, Kenty," Dreer 186, p. 306, HSP.

45. Watson, "Trip to Valley Forge," Am 2705, p. 1, HSP; "Trip to Valley Forge & Camp Hills, July 1828," Am 3712, p. 10, HSP.

## CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

In preparing the Annals, the Tales, and various miscellaneous historical writings, Watson had three major aims. Primary was the hope of compiling anecdotes for a local mythology, to be written by authors of the caliber of Cooper or Irving. Inspiring a school of local historians and antiquaries to continue research and collecting was the second goal. Preservation of the physical past from destruction was his third desire. The measure of Watson's success can be taken by evaluating the degree to which his ambitions were realized.

Watson considered The Tale of Meredith or the Mystery of the Meschianza by James McHenry (1831), and A Tale of Blackbeard, the Pirate (2 volumes, 1835), as the literary fruits resulting from the publication of the Annals (1830).<sup>1</sup> To these can be added several books by George Lippard, including Washington and his generals; or, Legends of the Revolution (1847), The Rose of Wisahikon; or the Fourth of July, 1776 (1847), and Blanche of Brandywine; or September the eighth to eleventh, 1777 (1876). S. Weir Mitchell's Hugh Wynne (1898) and its sequel The Red City (1907) also descend from the Annals.

McHenry prefaced his tale with a note about the source of his material, a manuscript relating a series of adventures connected with the occupation of Philadelphia by the British Army.

It contained a mass of information concerning the olden time in and about Philadelphia, which would have been a treasure to my worthy friend Mr. Watson, when compiling that most instructive and curious of all American



books, (not excepting even Knickerbocker's renowned history,) the Annals of Philadelphia. What I supposed would be a treasure to Mr. Watson, I naturally looked upon as valuable to myself.<sup>2</sup>

The author of Blackbeard dedicated his work to Watson, and claimed that his intention was to execute an historical sketch, not a fanciful romance, from the primitive records of Philadelphia.<sup>3</sup>

Lippard, perhaps better known for his muck-raking novels, dedicated The Battle-Day of Germantown (Philadelphia, 1843) to Watson. The story ran as a serial in the Citizen-Soldier beginning on 18 October 1843. Lippard acknowledged Watson's assistance in providing various traditions and incidents from the second edition of the Annals for his account. The engravings accompanying his chronicle were taken from the plates illustrating the forthcoming Annals edition.<sup>4</sup>

Two poetic effusions by Mrs. Lydia Sigourney, the "Sweet Singer of Hartford," owe their origin to her perusal of Watson's Historical Tales of Olden Time New York. "First Gift to the Indians at Albany," included in Poems (1834), was based on Watson's anecdote about Henry Hudson and drunken Indians at Albany on 19 September 1609. Poulson's American Daily Advertiser carried "Sunrise at New York in 1673."<sup>5</sup>

An obituary in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin on 23 December 1860 acknowledged Watson as "the father of the school of local historians who have done so much in the last half century to rescue from oblivion the early history of Philadelphia." This group of antiquaries and historians included Watson's disciple John Jay Smith, Junior, Philadelphia optician John McAllister, capitalist Ferdinand J. Dreer, and autograph collector Simon Gratz. Watson and McAllister shared an ability to "evoke spirits . . . from the vasty deep of olden time!" Both McAllister and his son contributed facts of "olden times" to Watson's store. Through McAllister,

Watson occasionally corresponded with Benson J. Lossing, author of the Field Book of the Revolution.<sup>6</sup>

Dreer coveted Watson's manuscripts. In January, 1860, he requested a copy of Watson's poem "My Mother in Heaven." While copying his mother's recollections of her youth in Walpole, New Hampshire, for Dreer, Watson decided to sell him the entire volume of seven articles for twenty-five dollars. Watson assured Dreer "they are all historical and are nowhere else to be found —" Included in addition to the Walpole recollections was his account of a visit to Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1827 "wholly original, and has not been published & has several pictures." Watson explained that

the foregoing being the conceptions of my own mind & my feelings in the things told, may be considered as something of myself, outside their intrinsic worth as historical facts — You alone seem to have the power to allure them from my possession.<sup>7</sup>

After the first sale, Watson gave Dreer a lady's pincushion made of American-grown silk, half a dozen wood-cuts from the Annals, and an unidentified item of William Bingham's furniture.<sup>8</sup> Watson subsequently offered Dreer his manuscript "Germantonians and Sketches of Our Village," portions of which were published in the Germantown Telegraph in 1836. Watson also sold Dreer his "Supplement to the Annals of Philadelphia and New York" compiled in 1846. Both Dreer and McAllister ultimately gave their collections to the public, through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Library Company of Philadelphia.<sup>10</sup>

Simon Gratz wished to purchase autograph letters from Watson's hoard. Watson refused to sell his three bound volumes of letters respecting the Annals, which he preserved as vouchers for statements in the Annals. For \$200, later reduced to \$150, Watson was willing to dispose of a volume containing more than a hundred letters from distinguished persons. "Such as they are, they came to me unsought &

unbought," Watson wrote Gratz.<sup>11</sup> However, on 8 November 1860, Watson requested that Gratz return the volume, because he "felt a wish to keep the book together, for the remembrance of my old & early friend Delaplaine."<sup>12</sup>

Why did Watson part with his collections? His daughter Lavinia suggested in a letter to Benson J. Lossing that the sales were prompted by the lack of affection and admiration for Watson's writings and collection of relics among family members. Until Watson's death, only Lavinia shared his interests. Afterwards, her brother John sat for hours examining his father's manuscripts, and concluded "there never was such a man."<sup>13</sup>

Local historians sought Watson's advice. In 1860, Howard M. Jenkins, then a youth of eighteen, asked Watson's opinion and advice on executing a new history of Pennsylvania. Watson wrote, "What the Public should know, is very different from what they will read & pay for."<sup>14</sup> Jenkins later edited a three-volume edition of Pennsylvania Colonial and Federal (1903). The Rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, the Reverend Benjamin Dorr, acknowledged the Annals as prompting his study A Historical Account of Christ Church, Philadelphia . . . . (1841). A negative response to Watson's account of the "Fort St. Davids" fishing company caused Charles V. Hagner to correct the erroneous story in his Early History of the Falls of the Schuylkill . . . (1869), pages 21-30.<sup>15</sup>

With his measures for historic preservation, Watson recorded less success. While a marker in Penn Treaty Park still shows where the Shackamaxon Elm flourished, nothing remained of the Slate Roof House by 10 August 1867 "except the old Hearth Brick . . ." <sup>16</sup> The so-called "Letitia-Court" House sits, shutters closed, alone in West Fairmount Park between Girard Avenue and the Schuylkill Expressway, the temperance inn of Watson's vision gone.

Watson's merit as an historian and antiquary was recognized by his contemporaries. Giles F. Yates, editor of the Schenectady Democrat and author of of that paper's "Antiquary" column, wrote concerning antiquaries in the United States in 1835. "Of such congenial spirits we know but one in the United States, Friend John F. Watson, of Pennsylvania, we greet thee!"<sup>17</sup> When the Historical Society of Pennsylvania celebrated the 169th anniversary of the landing of Penn at Chester, Watson shared honored-guest status with such notables as Henry Rowe Schoolcraft of Washington, D. C., and Benjamin Ferris of Wilmington.<sup>18</sup> "For unearthing old legends & old bones," Dickinson College made Watson an honorary member of their Philosophical Society.<sup>19</sup> The Massachusetts Historical Society meeting of June, 1861, heard a memorial which cited the Annals as evidence of Watson's great historical and antiquarian research and taste.<sup>20</sup> Benson J. Lossing prepared a brief biography to be presented before the New-York Historical Society. The entry for Watson in Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History . . . Based Upon the Plan of Benson John Lossing LLD. (1902) cites him as "an industrious delver in antiquarian lore . . ." <sup>21</sup> Most extensive of the memorials and memoirs was that given by the Reverend Dorr before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and published by the family. Dorr felt Watson would be regarded as the founder of the Historical Society by succeeding generations.<sup>22</sup>

Watson's interest and enthusiasm continue to benefit modern scholars.<sup>23</sup> Despite his errors of fact and, occasionally, of judgment, Watson's works remain a primary source for study of the colonial period in both Philadelphia and New York. For this reason, Watson is deserving of the title "historian."

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5. Undated clippings, in Dreer 186, p. 247, HSP.
6. Watson to John McAllister, 12 June 1847, Gratz MS Collection, Case 6, Box 20, HSP; Watson to McAllister, 12 May 1859, LCM Yi 2 7380, F 67.
7. Watson to Ferdinand J. Dreer, 16 February 1860, Dreer Collection, American Prose Writers Vol. 9, HSP.
8. Watson to Ferdinand J. Dreer, 5 March 1860, Dreer Collection, American Prose Writers Vol. 9, HSP.
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10. Watson to Abram Cassel, 20 April 1860, Dr. Arthur C. Bining Collection, HSP.
11. Watson to Simon Gratz, 20 October 1860, 22 October 1860, Gratz Collection, American Literary Duplicates, Box 37, Case 6, HSP.
12. Watson to Simon Gratz, 8 November 1860, Gratz Collection, American Literary Duplicates, Box 37, Case 6.
13. Lavinia Fanning Whitman to Benson John Lossing, 14 February (1861), Benson J. Lossing Papers D-105, HSP.
14. Watson to Howard M. Jenkins, 18 September 1860, Society Collection, HSP; printed in PMHB, LXXI (1947), 160-161.
15. Benjamin Dorr to Watson, 2 April 1838, in Am 3011, p. 2, HSP.
16. John Crump to R. Eddy, Librarian, HSP, 10 August 1867, Society Misc. Collection Box 7B, HSP.

17. undated clipping, Dreer 186, p. 252, HSP.
18. Armstrong, "An Address Delivered at Chester," appendix. (Philadelphia: J. Pennington, 1852).
19. Watson to J. J. Smith, Jr., 17 December 1838, in LCM Yi 2 7299 F 225.
20. "The Late J. F. Watson," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, V (June, 1861), 207-212.
21. Benson J. Lossing, The Historical Magazine, V (March, 1861), 80; Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History . . . Based Upon the Plan of Benson John Lossing, LL.D. (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1902), X, 246.
22. Benjamin Dorr, Memoir of John Fanning Watson (Philadelphia, 1861), p. 12.
23. William John Murtagh, "The Philadelphia Row House," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XVI, 4 (December, 1957), 8-13.

## APPENDIX

Watson relied extensively on the questionnaire to obtain information. The following is taken from the appendix to "Olden Time Researches & Reminiscences of New York City . . . 1828," New-York Historical Society.

### Appendix

Being the Substance of such questions as are deemed best adapted to awaken the thoughts, & to elicit the proper answers, of the aged — vizt:—

#### Reminiscences —

- 1 Dresses of Men & Women, — of boys & girls, — in summer & in winter — what of wigs, hoops — homespun wear — Jeans — Boots rare — what of leather breeches & Aprons — Shapes of hats — if cocked — of womens bonnets & caps—
- 2 Furniture — no carpets — Sanded floors — if families lived back — When Side boards, Sophas &c first. — of Pewter vessels — then Liverpool ware — Deltware — any wooden trenchers —
- 3 Carriages — how many & by whom first had — Did ladies ride horseback — When Hacks began.
- 4 Diet & Drink — manner of living — eating time — of oysters, fish, meat — of punch drinking — of Gin — Jamaica rum &c — no brandy —
- 5 Servants — their state, who were they — prices of wages men & women — of Slaves, — it arrived in Ships — of their sports & field dances.
- 6 Physicians & midwives — when men first got the latter — who of them first rode & why — Had they any peculiar dress against rain before umbrellas known — what of them —
- 7 Lawyers — who remarkable ones — their fees then —
- 8 Clergy — any remarkable ones — like Whitetield — had big wigs? —
- 9 Churches — how cold when no Stoves — foot stoves — Did women ever sit with heads uncovered there —

- 10 Dentists when first noticed & Encouraged — facts
- 11 Music & Dancing when first cultivated — facts —
- 12 What of Fortune Tellers, Conjurors, & superstitions
- 13 When Stores of separate branches of business first prevailed — When striking signs & windows first introduced — by whom — facts —
- 14 What ideas of a long voyage to go up the Hudson or through the Sound to Boston &c
- 15 What of the latest dutch schools — when stopt —
- 16 What dutch customs or festival days remembered — what facts — how weddings — how moving day —
- 17 What Gardens, farms, country Seats &c nearest to the city — What Sea Shore places — facts —
- 18 Where out of town — What trees — blackberries — sheep grounds — rope walks — wind mills — How any given places look'd formerly — give facts —
- 19 When first good vegetable Gardens — & by whom?
- 20 When did city first take its rapid rise & the cause — Was it commerce in French Revolution or When foreigners most came — When for NW Engl<sup>d</sup> —
- 21 What thought they of Philad<sup>a</sup> formerly in relative importance.
- 22 When & what great changes in the fish & oyster market — of prices altered — cause — When Ice first used generally — facts.
- 23 When & where great alterations in filling up or cutting down Streets — any strange facts — when lamp lighting — watchmen &c
- 24 British Governors remembered — Their State & style & residences — facts —
- 25 Who & when bro<sup>t</sup> in first Ladies Academies — how education aforetime — prices charged —
- 26 What ladies first put off hoops & high heads & wore white dresses in french style — when done so — what facts. —
- 27 New York hospitality once famous — how now — When did dutch manners give way —
- 28 Give every possible reminiscence of the War — what of British officers & Men — where quartered — What they did — Of American Prisoners & Sick — What of Jersey Prison Ships & the Wallabout graves — Every fact respecting Arnold — where he lived — State of Society, while under martial law — How we acted & did — How they did — give facts to form a picture as it was —



- 29 What traditions of Kidd or Blackbeard piracies — of money digging &c —
- 30 Describe state & manners of high life, their amusements & expenses — also that of the tradesmen & wives — their habits — dress & humility — What of dress & cost of servants — great change —

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