

# HISTORIC PHILADELPHIA

FROM THE FOUNDING UNTIL THE EARLY  
NINETEENTH CENTURY

Papers Dealing with its People and Buildings  
with an Illustrative Map

Issued as Volume 43, Part 1, of the Transactions of the  
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY  
held at Philadelphia  
for Promoting Useful Knowledge  
Independence Square

1953

## LIBRARY HALL: HOME OF THE LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA 1790-1880

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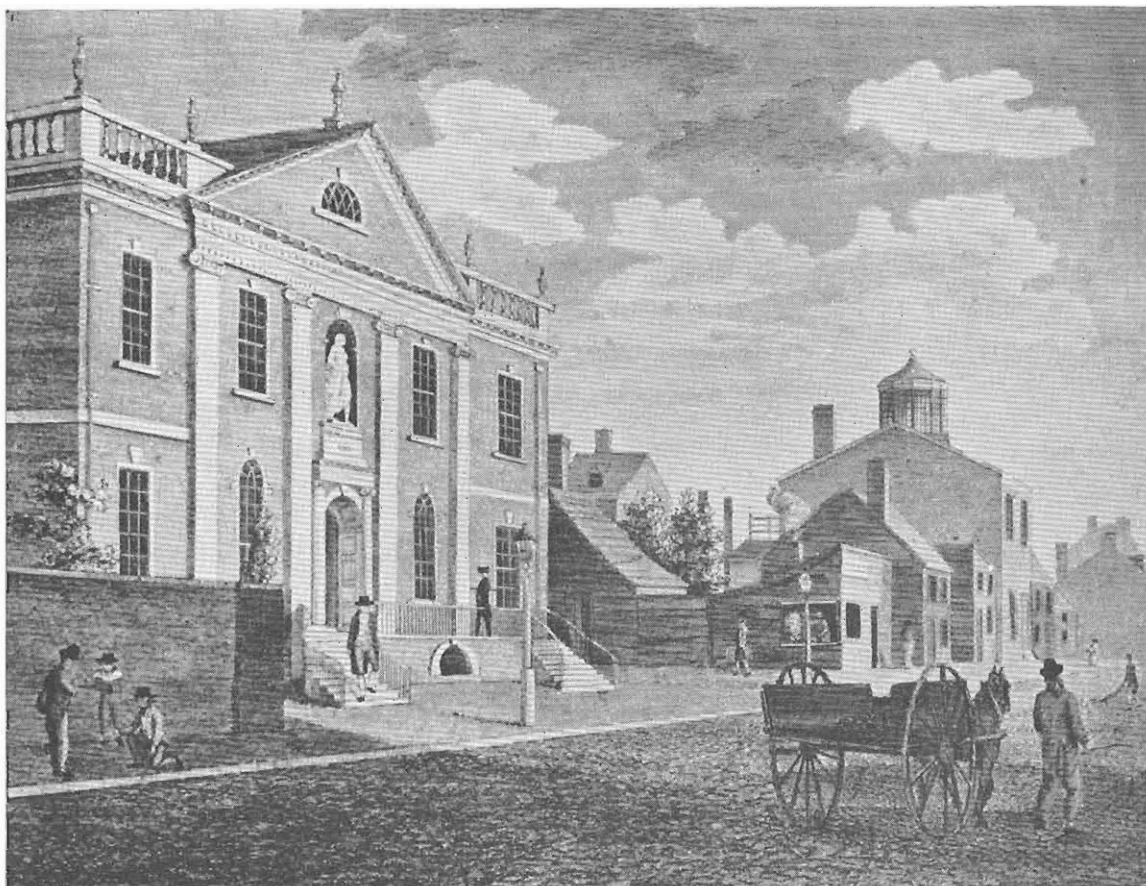


FIG. 1. Birch Engraving, 1800. Set well back from Fifth Street and facing the State House yard, Dr. Thornton's Library displayed architectural character new to Philadelphia.

THE story of the Library Company of Philadelphia has been often sketched and is generally well known.<sup>1</sup> Founded by Benjamin Franklin and his friends in 1731—and chartered in 1742—the Company was to

\* Acknowledgments: Special library assistance from Mr. Barney Chesnick, Ridgway Branch, Library Company of Philadelphia, suggestions from Dr. Robert C. Smith, and Mr. Edwin Wolf 2nd, and fire insurance surveys from James Somers Smith, Jr., and William C. Ross of the Philadelphia Contributionship. This article was first published in *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.* 95 (3): 266-285, 1951. Certain corrections and additions are now made.

<sup>1</sup> The first published sketch that has come to my attention is "A Short Account of the Library" published in *A Catalogue of the Books Belonging to the Library Company of Philadelphia*, Phila., 1789. More recent works are: James Hardie, A.M., *The Philadelphia Directory and Register*, 200, 201, Phila., 1793; J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 1173-1189, Phila., 1884; George Maurice Abbott, *A short history of the Library Company of Philadelphia*, Phila., Lib. Co. of Phila., 1913; and Austin K. Gray, *Benjamin Franklin's Library*, N. Y., Macmillan, 1936, n.a., The birth and devel-

build up a famous collection of books, one of the real cultural monuments of eighteenth-century America.<sup>2</sup> Less known is the history of the handsome building erected in 1789-90 which served to house the Library for nearly a century.

From the beginning, the institution had enjoyed a steady growth and enlarged its quarters a number of times to keep apace. The books were first kept at Pewter Platter Hall, in space rented from Robert Grace,

opment of Libraries in Philadelphia, in *The Free Library of Philadelphia, Report 1941-1944*, 37-49, Phila., Free Lib. Phila., 1950. Where these sources are used, footnotes do not always appear.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin called this institution the "mother of all the North American subscription libraries." Albert Henry Smyth, ed., *The writings of Benjamin Franklin* 10: 159, N. Y., Macmillan, 1907.

Philadelphia was not far behind the capital. London's first lending library that offered books beyond a very small circle was founded in 1684 (William Kent, *An Encyclopedia of London*, 354, London, 1951).

a shareholder,<sup>3</sup> and then in the home of William Parsons, librarian. The collections increased by purchase and gift and in 1738 John Penn, the Proprietor of the colony, sent an air-pump from London as a "useful and pleasant apparatus . . . to show the nature and power of air." By the time this contraption was housed in the large wooden cabinet made for it,<sup>4</sup> the directors were looking around for more spacious quarters. Successful application was made to the legislature, and in 1740 the Library moved to the west wing of the new State House.<sup>5</sup>

In the year 1769 the Union Library Company, which had had its own building at Third and Pear Streets<sup>6</sup> next to St. Paul's Church [E, V] was joined to the older company and a committee was appointed to petition for a building site on State House Square. The collection of books and "philosophical apparatus" was crowding the space then available. The proposal went to the legislature but the plan did not bear fruit.<sup>7</sup> An agreement was finally reached with the Carpenters' Company by which the Library Company leased the entire second floor of their new Hall [D, IV],<sup>8</sup> then nearing completion. They moved into that space in 1773<sup>9</sup> and remained there through the difficult period of the Revolutionary War. Fortunately no real damage was done to the collections, which were frequently used by British military personnel.

The Carpenters' Hall quarters were not considered

The secular nature of Franklin's institution is suggested by the comments of Dr. Robert Jenney of Christ Church: "we have a publick Library in the State-house; and some persons are incorporated by the proprietaries-Charter by the name of the Library Company, very few of which are Friends to our or any Religion" (London, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Archives, *Letters Received, Vol. B 19, Doc. 105*, October 30, 1751).

<sup>3</sup> Of the first home of the Library, Zachariah Poulson wrote in 1806: "Jones's Alley is now called Pewter-platter Alley, and the Building in which the Library was kept was afterwards occupied by David Hall as a Printing-office—it is back of the house in which Mr. Hornor had his Ironmongery Store." *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Directors of the Library Company of Philadelphia*, MS (MPDLC) 4: 209. Jones's Alley is now part of Church Street.

<sup>4</sup> The original cabinet and part of the apparatus may be seen at the Ridgway Branch Library today.

<sup>5</sup> The new space was on the second floor of the west wing or "Western Office." The entire original wing was removed and replaced about 1811. The present construction dates from the 1890's.

The Honorable Thomas Penn had given the Company a free building lot on Chestnut Street west of the town in 1738, but this was never used by them. Scharf and Westcott, 2: 1175.

<sup>6</sup> Founded 1746. Pear St. is now Chancellor Street. For the history of the other local libraries see E. V. Lamberton, *Colonial Libraries of Philadelphia, Penna. Mag.* 42 (3): 193-234, 1918.

<sup>7</sup> MPDLC 2: 63, 64 (January 10, 1772).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 74-76 (June 29, September 28, 1772). A committee for this purpose had been appointed as early as 1769. Scharf and Westcott, 1177.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 93.

really satisfactory because of combustible goods stored in the basement<sup>10</sup> and during the post-war inflation period, when the rent was raised sharply, the directors of the Library began to look about for a new location.<sup>11</sup> The American Philosophical Society was then planning to erect a building on State House Square and suggested that the Library Company join with them in putting up balancing structures on the Walnut Street side of the square, similar architecturally.<sup>12</sup> A committee appointed to study this matter reported favorably and a joint petition by the two societies was submitted to the legislature. As it turned out, both organizations wanted to be on the east side of the square, closer to the center of the town, which was still hugging the banks of the Delaware. When the Philosophical Society won out, the Library Company withdrew altogether.<sup>13</sup>

Other sites were subsequently considered, including the Masonic Lodge, which was offered for sale in 1785, but the Library Company would not pay the price asked.<sup>14</sup> At this point a delegation went to wait on Benjamin Franklin, recently returned from France.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 44 (March 9, 1779). See also *Ibid.* 2: 233, 236-239. The occupation of Carpenters' Hall by the Library is discussed in Charles E. Peterson, *Notes on Carpenter's Hall*, 5-7, St. Louis, 1948 (mimeographed).

<sup>11</sup> MPDLC 2: 182, 183.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 213, 214 (1784). According to Samuel Vaughan in a letter to Franklin dated Philadelphia, March 8, 1784, it was intended to develop the southeast and southwest corners of the State House Yard with balancing buildings "which are meant to be sufficiently ornamental not to interfere materially with the views of making a publick walk." MS. Amer. Philos. Soc., Franklin Papers.

<sup>13</sup> The text of the joint petition is found in the Library of the American Philosophical Society (Archives, December 13, 1784), and the record of the relations of that Society to the joint efforts to obtain two suitable building lots on State House Square appears in the Minutes of its meetings from March to December, 1784. Of more than passing interest today (in relation to the Independence National Historical Park) is the proposal for the reconstruction at some future time of Library Hall to house the Library of the American Philosophical Society (cf. *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.* 94 (3): 208-213, 1950). To effectuate this, Congress passed an act approved July 10, 1952 as follows:

"The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to permit the American Philosophical Society, a nonprofit corporation, without cost to the United States, to construct, operate, and maintain in the park a building to be located on approximately the original site of historic Library Hall to house the library of the American Philosophical Society and any additions to said library, such permission to be granted the society pursuant to a lease, contract, or authorization without charge, on such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Secretary and accepted by the society, and for such length of time as the society shall continue to use the said building for the housing, display, and use of a library and scientific and historical collections:

"Provided, That the plans for the construction of the building and any additions thereto shall be approved by the Secretary of the Interior." (Public Law 497, 82d Congress, Chapter 653, 2d Session, H. R. 6544.) At the annual meeting on April 26, 1952, the Society voted to reconstruct Library Hall.

<sup>14</sup> MPDLC 3: 4, 5. The Lodge (in Lodge Alley) went for £1500, which was £500 higher than the Committee was willing to bid.

Franklin assured them of his interest and hoped that they could manage to erect a new building of their own. He intimated that he would donate some valuable books which he would not consider safe in Carpenters' Hall.<sup>15</sup> Another committee was appointed.<sup>16</sup>

On February 1, 1787, this committee reported in favor of erecting a suitable building on a lot "in some central safe Part of the Town" and the Board requested it to take an option on such a site.<sup>17</sup> Joint construction of a building with the Philosophical Society was also

Decision was formally made at a stated meeting of the Company on June 4, 1789, Bishop William White presiding. The directors were authorized to purchase a site and they were given "power to contract for materials and workmanship, and shall cause to be erected a suitable building, with cellars, the said building to be two stories high, and of a size sufficient to accommodate and serve the purposes of the library, having regard therein to a gradual increase of books, and other articles there to be deposited."<sup>18</sup> Financing was to be provided

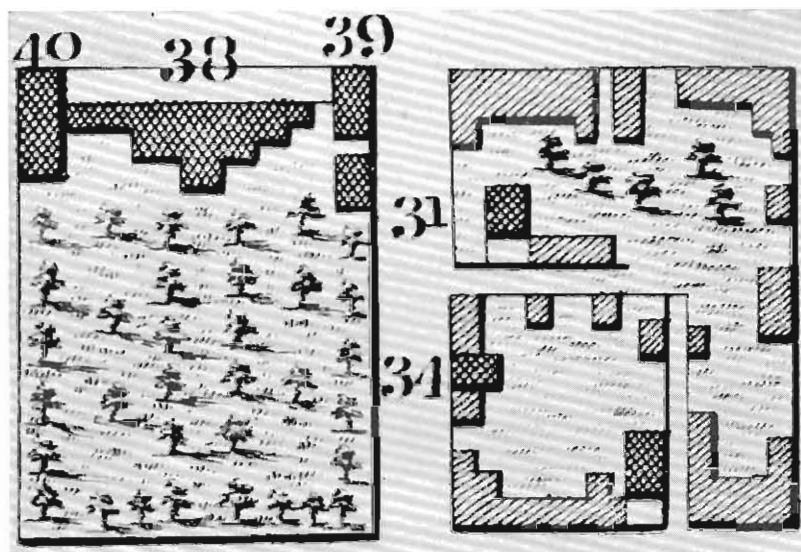


FIG. 2. Portion of Hills Map, 1796. Principal buildings identified are (31) Philadelphia Library, (34) Surgeon's Hall, (38) State House, (39) Old City Hall, and (40) Congress Hall. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

considered, but no agreement along those lines could be reached.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 3: 17, 18 (February 2, 1786).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 3: 52. Members: Josiah Hewes, Richard Wells, Thomas Norris and Dr. Thomas Parke. Richard Wells played an important part in the project and seems to have been interested in architecture. On October 6, 1791, he presented the Company with "part of the Cornice from the great hall at Wresel Castle in Yorkshire, built about the year 1390." *Ibid.* 3: 280.

The records of the American Philosophical Society show that Wells became a member of that body on January 19, 1768, and served as its secretary in 1774-1776. On December 17, 1773, he communicated a paper on a plan for a snow plough and on January 21, 1774, one on raising water without the use of pumps or other machines. In 1782 he was a member of the Silk Society.

Wells is listed in the Philadelphia directories as merchant, 1785; esquire, congressman, and director of the Philadelphia Contributionship, 1791; cashier of the Bank of North America, 1794. The diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer (*Extracts from the diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer, 1765-1798*, J. C. Parsons, ed., Phila., 1893), 151, 177, shows that Wells in 1789 was a proponent of John Fitch, the steamboat inventor, as was William Thornton, and in 1792 he was directly concerned with the construction of the President's House on Market Street.

<sup>17</sup> *MPDLC* 3: 53.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 3: 79 (October 4, 1787).

by the sale of one hundred new memberships and the sale of surplus real estate.

After considerable investigation, a fine site on Fifth Street facing Philosophical Hall and the State House yard, was purchased [C, IV].<sup>19</sup> This ground was part of the gardens of the old Norris House, then being subdivided.<sup>20</sup> It was an attractive location, shaded by trees and with a row of yellow willows along the street.<sup>21</sup>

This was a period of rapid development in the neigh-

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 3: 150-152.

<sup>20</sup> This was composed of the rear of two long lots facing on Chestnut Street, part being purchased from Mary Norris (August 10, 1789), and part from George Logan *et al.* (August 11, 1789). See *MPDLC* 3: 135, 157. A sheriff's sale of the corner lot, 55' 8" x 225', was advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* for July 22, 1789.

The south boundary of the lot was "an alley leading from Fifth-street to a 50 feet [*sic*] court." This was first called "Norris Court," then "Library Street," and now "Sansom Street." On October 21, 1952 an ordinance was approved authorizing the Philadelphia Department of Streets, Board of Surveyors, to change the name back to "Library Street."

<sup>21</sup> *Recollections of Samuel Breck*, H. E. Scudder, ed., 103, London, 1877.

<sup>22</sup> *Reminiscences of Deborah Norris Logan*, ca. 1827. Board MS, Hist. Soc. Penna.



borhood, the boom partly caused by the anticipated return of Congress to the city. One observer was reminded of London and commented, "Philadelphia does in reality increase very fast particularly toward the State House, great numbers of Houses tis said are to be built this summer."<sup>23</sup> Philosophical Hall and Congress Hall in the State House Yard across the street had just been completed and the Old City Hall on the nearest corner was under construction (fig. 2).<sup>24</sup>

#### DOCTOR THORNTON'S PRIZE DESIGN

David Evans, carpenter and a shareholder, had been active in the Union Library Company, recently assimilated, and he assisted the Committee by making some preliminary designs.<sup>25</sup> His work seems not to have pleased the directors, however, for afterwards a new committee was appointed to "prepare a suitable plan and elevation of the building, to make inquiry with regard to the best method of procuring Materials and engaging workmen."<sup>26</sup> The sale of additional shares of capital stock was pushed.<sup>27</sup>

At a meeting on June 15 the committee reported that they would soon have a design for the building and formally agreed on its size.<sup>28</sup> After some further delay, it

<sup>23</sup> Susanna to William Dillwyn, Philadelphia, March 24, 1792. Dillwyn Papers, MS, Library Company of Philadelphia. At the end of 1789, in anticipation of the moving of the Federal Government to Philadelphia, house rent had increased and the cost of building construction also. Robert Proud to William Proud, Philadelphia, January 10, 1790. Proud Papers, MS, Ridgway Library.

<sup>24</sup> Probably the best documented account of construction in the State House yard at this time is Robert P. Reeder, *The first homes of the Supreme Court of the United States*, *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.* 76 (4): 543-596, 1936.

<sup>25</sup> Evans had an important part in bringing the Union Library Company's building into being. He provided the lot for it next to his own house on Pear (now Chancellor) Street in 1761, and was perhaps its designer and builder. Lamberton, 198-199. No views of "The New Library in Third Street" are known to the writer. Evans was the donor of two volumes of English architectural design by Abraham Swan to the Library Company (1798 Catalog No. 276).

During the construction of Library Hall he was seriously injured in a fall from a three-story scaffold on Race Street. *Diary of Christopher Marshall*, MS, Hist. Soc. Penna., April 24, 1790. Evans was a member of the Carpenter's Company—elected in 1769 and expelled in 1815. *Charter, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations of the Carpenters' Company*, 60, Phila., 1916. David Evans, Jr., was the designer of the final, or central, unit of the old Philadelphia Hospital still standing on Pine Street. There was in Philadelphia at this time another David Evans, a cousin and cabinet maker. William Macpherson Hornor, Jr., *Blue Book, Philadelphia furniture*, Phila. 79, 1935.

<sup>26</sup> MPDLC 3: 157. The committee consisted of Richard Wells, Thomas Morris, John Kaighn and the Secretary, William Rawle.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 152.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 158. The size of the building was set at 70' front and 48' depth. Just what happened is not too clear; there was evidently a controversy over the design. At this juncture (July 8) it is interesting to note that the Directors traded a share in the Company for a morocco-bound folio edition of Inigo Jones' designs. *Ibid.* 3: 169.

was decided to advertise for plans and the following notice was run in the *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser*:

Philadelphia, July 9, 1789.

THE Directors of the Library Company of Philadelphia, being solicitous to render the Building proposed to be erected, as elegant as the unavoidable frugality of the Plan will admit, request ingenious Artists, and Friends to the Institution, to favour them with Designs and Elevations for the purpose.

The Building is to be 70 feet in length, 48 in depth, and two stories high. The present funds will not admit of any kind of Turret or Cupola.

The Directors will meet on the 20th instant, for the purpose of deciding on the Plan and Elevation. They acknowledge their Obligations for several ingenious Designs already sent in.

A Share in the Library will be granted to the Person whose Plan and Elevation is adopted.

In the meantime the building committee made a contract to procure scantling at £3 per thousand and were authorized to bargain for brick and stonework.<sup>29</sup>

Several drawings were received as the result of the notice and "Carpenters and Masons of judgment" were consulted. Dr. William Thornton's elevation was selected and premiated with a share of the Company's stock. Thomas Carstairs, a Philadelphia builder,<sup>30</sup> received a second prize of £5 for the several elevations he had submitted.<sup>31</sup>

Dr. Thornton was a young physician who had recently come from the West Indies via New York City and Wilmington, Delaware. The doctor had had no architectural training and the design for the Library was the first he had ever made. He was afterwards to win the competition for the design of the United States Capitol in Washington and to design some other well-known buildings such as the Octagon House and Tudor

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 158, 168.

<sup>30</sup> "Thomas Carstairs, Architect and House carpenter, lately arrived in this city from London." *Pennsylvania Packet*, Feb. 5, 1784. According to John W. Jordan, ed., *Colonial and Revolutionary families of Pennsylvania* 2: 870, N. Y. and Chicago, Lewis Pub. Co., 1911, Carstairs was born in Scotland in 1759 and died in 1830. He was elected to the Carpenters' Company in 1804.

<sup>31</sup> MPDLC 3: 171, 172, 183 (October 1, 1789). The board in accepting the Thornton design ordered "an alteration in the Steps and Stone basement and some deviations in the ornament and disposition of the doors and windows."

The original drawings seem to have been lost long ago. The late Austin K. Gray (p. 34) stated that "No less a man than Thomas Jefferson submitted plans for the building" but no substantiation has been found for the statement.

A letter relating to the competition turned up in uncatalogued papers of the Library Company in 1952. Signed "IS [?]" one of the friends to the Institution" and dated at Philadelphia, July 20, 1789, it enclosed a design with a circular front now, unhappily, lost.

Place, Washington, Woodlawn, Fairfax County, and Pavilion VII at the University of Virginia.<sup>32</sup>

In a letter written a few years later, Dr. Thornton explained the beginning of his architectural career:

It will perhaps be deemed presumptuous that I began to study Architecture, and to work for Prizes at the same time; long before I was appointed to my present office A Plan for a Public Library in Philadelphia was proposed,

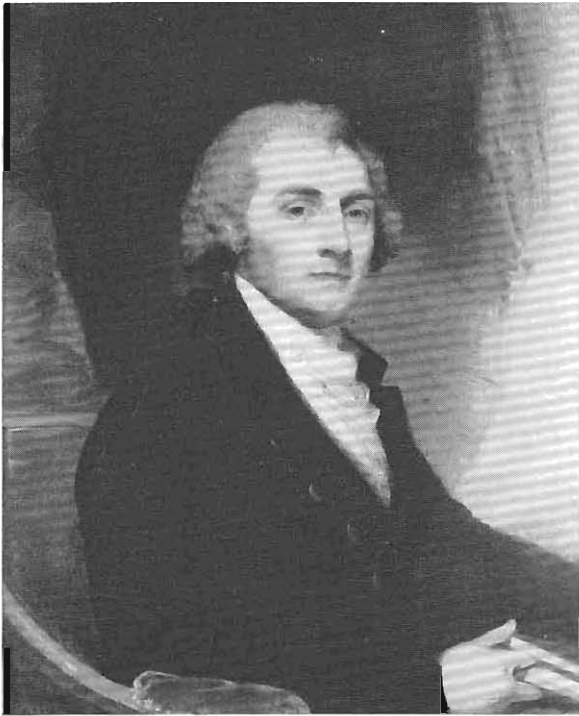


FIG. 3. William Thornton by Gilbert Stuart. Thorton, 1761-1828, was educated at Edinburgh as a physician but never practiced extensively. He is best known for his second architectural design, prize-winner for the United States Capitol at Washington. Courtesy of National Gallery of Art.

and the Prize for the best Plan &c was a Share in the Company. I studied Architecture, set to work, and drew one in the *ancient* Ionic order. . . . This Order I admire much. —The Prize was adjudged to me. . . .<sup>33</sup>

Compared with present day commissions the prize seems paltry, the value of these shares being only ten pounds each.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> For biographical notes see Appendix I.

<sup>33</sup> Thornton to ———, Washington, October 10, 1797. William Thornton Papers, MS, Library of Congress.

<sup>34</sup> In 1792 plans for a Dancing Assembly Room were publicly requested as a prize of one subscription or £20 cash were offered. *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, April 10, 1792.

The same year competitions for designs for the United States Capitol and the President's House at Washington were announced. In each case a first prize of \$500 (or a medal of that value) was offered. For the Capitol there was also a second prize of \$250. The Washington competition required more study; drawings specified were "ground plats, elevations of each

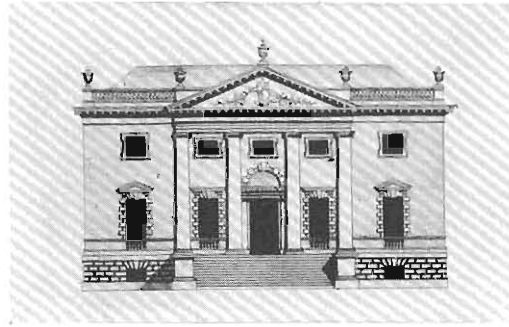


FIG. 4. English Precedent. When Dr. Thornton began his studies the Library Company owned two sets of Abraham Swan's *Collection of Designs in Architecture* (London, 1757). The above design (Vol. 2, Plate 9) seems to account for the design of the new library. Courtesy of Library Company of Philadelphia.

Just what sources Dr. Thornton consulted for his design he did not say, but we can identify some of the architectural books in Philadelphia at that time. The Library Company had collected in that field from the beginning, two items having been requested with the very first books ordered in 1732 from London. These were a volume of Palladio and "Evelyns' Parallel of the ancient and modern Architecture."<sup>35</sup> During the year of the competition, the Library published a catalog listing twenty-one works under the heading of "Civil Architecture."<sup>36</sup> (See Appendix II.) These books, together with those owned by the Carpenters' Company and kept in the same building,<sup>37</sup> provided unusual reference opportunities for the period.

A review of these works points towards a design in Abraham Swan's *A Collection of Designs in Architecture* (London, 1757) as the principal influence. Swan seems to have been popular in Philadelphia, for there were two sets of the works in the Library at this time and it had been reprinted in the city in 1775 as the

front and sections through the building in such directions as may be necessary to explain the internal structure and an estimate of the cubic feet of brick work composing the whole mass of the walls." *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, April 12, 1792.

<sup>35</sup> List of books in Historical Society of Pennsylvania, *Society Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Library Company of Philadelphia*. The Evelyn volume was marked "out of print or dear" and was probably not received.

<sup>36</sup> In an undated leaflet for the Library Company, Dr. Kimball wrote, "These books formed, indeed, the finest architectural library in America at that time, being rivalled only by the group in the library of William Byrd of Virginia, the largest private library in the Colonies, dispersed in 1779. With his great interest in architecture, Jefferson who had bought extensively at the Byrd sale, had but half the numbers of the Philadelphia group before he sailed for France in 1784."

For the full book list, enlightening as to the state of architectural resources in Philadelphia, see Appendix II. For information on Swan, see Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *American architectural books*, iii, 103, Minneapolis, Univ. of Minn. Press, 1946.

<sup>37</sup> For notes on other Philadelphia architectural books see Hornor, 78, 79.

second architectural book published in America. Plate 9 in the second 1757 volume entitled "A Design for a House of Six Rooms upon a floor" (fig. 4) bears a strikingly close resemblance. It can be described as a two-story Palladian design having a center entrance with a pedimented bay of four pilasters, the whole on a low basement and covered with a hipped roof surrounded by a balustrade with urns (fig. 11). The principal difference between Swan's design and Thornton's is the shape and decoration of the windows. The Library windows, especially the round-topped openings with the "Gothic" sash, were in the current Philadelphia style and may well have been designed by one of the several master carpenters on the job. Thornton's original drawings seem to have been lost long ago and we have no written description of them.

We do not know whether Thornton supervised construction work at the site, as professional architects now do. In the eighteenth century the master mechanic played an important part in the final appearance of a building. Architects' drawings often provided only the general outlines. Details of such as entrance frontispiece and cornice—as well as interior effects—were usually left to mechanics—often anonymous, but responsible for some of the handsomest decorative features to be seen in early American work.

#### CONSTRUCTION

The exact site for the new structure—twenty feet back from the street—was determined on August 5<sup>38</sup> and the cornerstone erected on August 31. The stone<sup>39</sup> has been preserved and the inscription, except for that part relating to himself, was composed by the venerable Dr. Franklin (fig. 5).

Construction proceeded very quickly and to meet expenses a draft for £200 was drawn in favor of Richard Wells on September 5 for "Stone, Brick, Scantling, Digging the Cellar, Mason's wages."<sup>40</sup> The walls were ready for the roof by the end of October, when an entertainment for the workmen was planned.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> MPDLC 3: 173.

<sup>39</sup> The stone may now be seen at the Ridgway Library.

<sup>40</sup> MPDLC 3: 182.

<sup>41</sup> *Pennsylvania Packet*, October 13, 1789. "Custom has made a law," wrote a library shareholder, of the festivities to celebrate the raising of the roof frame.

When the roof of the Free Quaker Meeting House (Fifth and Arch Streets) was raised in 1784 the workmen were entertained with a rum punch. Herbert C. Wise and H. Ferdinand Beidleman, *Colonial architecture for those about to build*, 256, Phila., Lippincott, 1913.

Jacob Hiltzheimer reported a similar occasion the evening of July 7, 1792, when "the Carpenters, bricklayers and stone-cutters were treated to a round of beef, ham and punch, to celebrate the putting down of the first floor" of the new house for President Washington. *Extracts from the diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer* (Parsons, ed.), 179, Phila., 1793.

The carpenters were also given a lunch when the second floor was completed (Sept. 7); a "cut of beef and some punch" at

Little detail has survived in the matter of the construction; the account books of the Building Committee have apparently been lost. Surviving records do show that payment to workmen was made at least partially

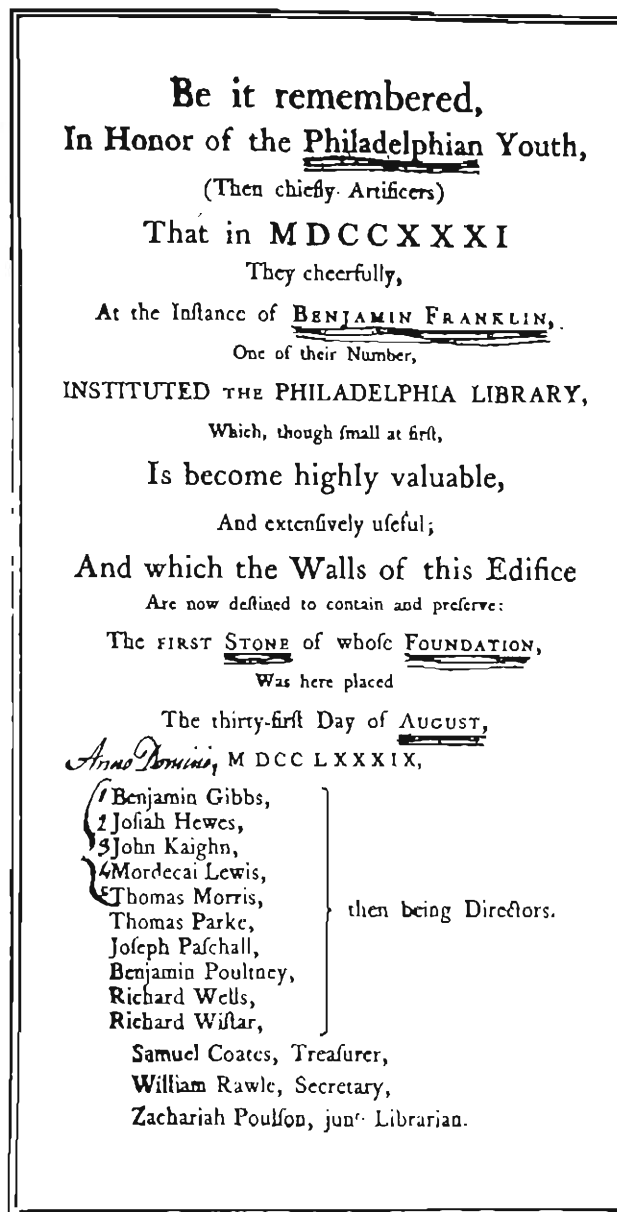


FIG. 5. Library cornerstone inscription on a rare broadside, possibly used at the laying ceremony, 1789. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

by the granting of Library Company shares. The project was a genuine community enterprise, to judge by the number of workmen mentioned as receiving such shares.

completion of the third floor (Nov. 2); beef and punch again at the beginning of the fourth floor (Nov. 29), and a raising supper for 180 persons when the first rafters had been erected (Dec. 1).

<i>Carpenters</i>	<i>No. of Shares</i>
William Garrigues	(3)
Joseph Ogilby	(2)
Samuel Pancoast	(3)
Joseph Rakestraw	(2)
Matthias Sadler	(2)
Joseph Govett	(2)
David Evans	(1)
William Williams	(2)
Joseph Hewlings	(1)
John Robins	(1)
Thomas Mitchell	(1)
Allen Ridgeway	(1)
William Lucas	(1)
Edward Brooks	(1)
<i>Plasterer</i>	
Samuel Shoemaker	(2)
<i>Painter</i>	
Jacob Hergesheimer	(1)
<i>Bricklayers</i>	
Jacob Ridgeway	(1)
Nicholas Hicks	(1)
Charles Souder	(1)
William Nash	(1)
Joshua Reper Smith	(1)
Benjamin Taylor	(1)
George Justice	(1)
Jacob Souder	(1)
<i>Stone Cutter</i>	
William Stiles	(3)
<i>Iron Mongers</i>	
Edward Brooks, Jr.	(1)
Jacob Parke	(1)
Richard Hopkins	(1)
Joseph Bringhamst. Jr.	(1) <sup>42</sup>

Other carpenters who applied for shares on account of work done by them are identified in the Philadelphia directories: John Cornish, William Krider (or Kreider), John Lort, William Roberts, Nathan A. Smith, Thomas Smith, Joseph Rakestraw, Jr., and Joseph Willis. David and Nathan Sellers, wire-workers, also participated, presumably in placing guards over bookcases.<sup>43</sup> No information has been located about the suppliers of building materials such as brick, marble, lumber, plaster, glass, and paint. All that has turned up is that John Haworth, the tanner, furnished hair for the plaster.

The new building was seemingly completed and the books moved from Carpenters' Hall about the beginning of October.<sup>44</sup> The first meeting of the directors was

<sup>42</sup> Various entries in *MPDLC* 3. Also loose memoranda in Coates & Reynell Papers, Hist. Soc. Penna., Collection No. 140, "Library Company," loose papers.

<sup>43</sup> Coates & Reynell Papers, December 9, 1790, January 6, April 7, 1791.

<sup>44</sup> Notice by Librarian Poulson issued September 23, 1790. *The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser*, October 22, 1790.

The expenses of the move are listed in an account submitted by Poulson:

held there on the seventh and Zachariah Poulson was appointed Librarian.<sup>45</sup>

A good idea of the complete exterior may be had from the view engraved by William Birch in 1800 (fig. 1). The interior layout is not so clear. According to Moreau de Saint-Méry the first floor was divided into two parts: one for the six hundred subscribers with ten thousand volumes and one for the general public with about five thousand volumes.<sup>46</sup> A fire insurance description adds much to our knowledge of this period. The policy was taken out with the Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses against Loss by Fire, and the "survey" by Gunning Bedford has been preserved in their archives. The structure was 40' x 70' in size. The "Large Room" on the first floor was fitted up with book shelves to the ceiling on the east, or rear, side and in part on either end. The highest shelves were reached from a light "gallery" which ran along in front and was approached by two flights of stairs. The librarian occupied a circular enclosure. The whole was decorated with Doric pilasters and entablature. Walls were whitewashed, as was the common practice of the time<sup>47</sup> (fig. 15).

Ascent to the second floor was made by a stairway to the right of the front door. Upstairs there were three rooms: one for Directors' meetings, one apparently for the scientific apparatus and one of unknown use, possibly the Librarian's office.<sup>48</sup>

"October 7, 1790.

The Library Company of Philadelphia,

To Zachariah Poulson, junr. Dr.

To Cash paid Joseph Greswold for hauling some trunks from Wister and Aston's Store	£0..1..6
To ditto paid Ditto for hauling the Property of the Company from the Carpenters' Hall	4.10..0
To ditto paid Richard Thomas for 2-3/4 days labor, at 5/pr day	0.13..9
To ditto paid Nathaniel Basset for 3 days labor	0.15..0
To ditto paid Caesar Jones for 2 days labor	0.10..0
To ditto paid William for 1-1/4 days labor	0..6..3
To ditto paid a black Man, whose name I could not learn—he having neglected to return agreeably promise,	0..1.10-1/2
To ditto paid for white-washing the old Apartments in the Carpenters' Hall	1.10..0
To ditto paid for washing the windows and floors of the said Apartments	0.10..0
To ditto paid for washing some of the windows and a part of the Floor of the Directors' Room in the new Building	0..3..6
	£9..1.10-1/2"

<sup>45</sup> *MPDLC* 3: 224, 235.

<sup>46</sup> Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Voyage aux Etats-Unis, 1793-1798*, 379, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1913.

<sup>47</sup> *MPDLC* 4: 249 (June 2, 1808). The interiors of Carpenters' Hall were still whitewashed in this period.

<sup>48</sup> Surveys 2414 and 2415 dated November 3, 1790. Some of the other inside specifications were: Floors, "Narrow Boards Naild. Through"; inside shutters all around; base and surbase all around. Outside: "Modillion & dintel Cornice," balustrade on roof with 17 urns.





FIG. 6. Franklin Statue by Lazzarini. The statue of Carrara marble, originally raised to the niche over the front door of the Library in 1792, is now preserved at the Ridgway Branch. Courtesy of Library Company of Philadelphia.

About this time the wealthy Senator William Bingham offered to donate a white marble statue of Franklin to be placed in a niche on the front of the building. Dr. Franklin was consulted as to costume and he favored "a Gown for his dress and a Roman Head." A portrait bust was secured from the Managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital and forwarded to the sculptor in Italy along with a sketch of the figure.<sup>49</sup> The statue, carved from Carrara marble by François Lazzarini and said to have cost more than five hundred guineas,<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> MPDLC 3: 180, 181, 182, 188. *Columbian Magazine or Monthly Miscellany*, January 25, 1790.

<sup>50</sup> *The Universal Asylum and Columbian Magazine*, April, 1792, 284. See also Margaret L. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Bingham, *Pennsylvania Magazine* 61: 299, 300, July 1937.

Richard North received £ 26s 8d for cutting and painting the following inscription on the base:

This Statue of  
Dr. Benjamin Franklin  
Was presented by  
William Bingham, Esq.  
MDCXCII

A letter to the newspaper suggested a shorter inscription. *Dunlap's Daily American Advertiser*, April 21, 1792.

was finally placed in its niche in April, 1792 (fig. 6). The Directors were very pleased and it was recorded in the minutes that they

... flatter themselves that, from the accuracy of its resemblance and the excellence of its execution, it will be considered not only as the first Ornament of their building; but as the most finished specimen of Sculpture America can exhibit; and, whilst it will have a tendency to perpetuate, in the minds of his fellow-citizens, a recollection of the public and private Virtues of its Original, cannot fail to remind them of the liberality and taste of its Donor.

The erection of the statue inspired a long poem in French in the daily paper.<sup>51</sup> The memorial was all the more appropriate for the fact that the subject had died in the meantime.

The Building Committee found that the cost of construction altogether had been 4490 pounds.<sup>52</sup>

The Franklin statue was hardly in its niche when an addition to Library Hall was projected. The success



FIG. 7. Library Hall, 1790. While the building was still under construction, the Library was shown in this portion of a copperplate "View of Several Public Buildings in Philadelphia." Philosophical Hall lies to the left and the old Loganian Library to the extreme right. *Columbian Magazine*.

of the project had attracted another important collection: the trustees of the Loganian Library had decided to bring their books under the same roof. James Logan (1674-1751), friend of William Penn and the most influential man in the province, had some years before built up a notable library of scholarly works which he left for the use of the public installed in a small brick building facing the State House yard on the west side (fig. 7). The whole had been decided to the City, making it the first free library in America.<sup>53</sup> The building

<sup>51</sup> *General Advertiser*, April 17, 1792. Signed "D. L. Morel, Habitant de St. Domingue." On May 12, Gideon Hill Wells was paid £ 12s. 6d. for "portering of the Statue." *An Account of Expenses*.

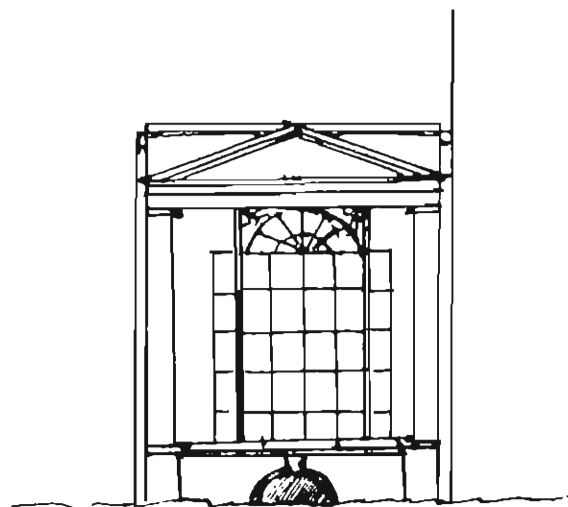
<sup>52</sup> MPDLC 3: 308 (May 5, 1792).

<sup>53</sup> "Birth and Development of Libraries in Philadelphia," 42. Architectural drawings for this building by Logan are preserved at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The idea for a library at Newport, Rhode Island, is said to have come to Abraham Redwood after a visit to Philadelphia.

was opened to the public in 1760<sup>54</sup> but was closed entirely during the Revolutionary War, owing to the death or absence of all the trustees.

Dr. Franklin, before his death, had urged joining the collections of the Loganian Library and the Library Company and this was made possible by an act of legislature.<sup>55</sup> The stipulation was that the books were to be so housed as to maintain their separate identity.<sup>56</sup> To make possible the construction of additional space the Loganian heirs sold their old library building for £700<sup>57</sup> and loaned the Library Company a like amount for an addition, agreeing to pay rent for the space. An additional strip of land to the east was purchased<sup>58</sup> and plans for the extension were approved July 16, 1792.<sup>59</sup> The Loganian annex, as it was called, was completed and opened May 1, 1794.<sup>60</sup> The new addition was long and narrow, lighted by a "Palladian" or "Venetian" window at either end and from the top by a skylight in its copper-covered roof.<sup>61</sup> In 1794 a lightning rod was added, a touch Dr. Franklin would have approved.<sup>62</sup>

Library Hall seems to have made an excellent impression. Even before completion it was shown on the cop-



*North & South Sides alike*

FIG. 8. Study for Loganian Library, 1792. Pen drawing by an unknown hand. Courtesy Library Company of Philadelphia.

<sup>54</sup> *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 1660, October 16, 1760.

<sup>55</sup> James M. Hardie, A.M., *The Philadelphia Directory and Register*, 202, Phila., 1793. Also urged by Samuel Vaughan in a letter to Franklin, March 8, 1784. MS, Amer. Philos. Soc., Franklin Papers.

<sup>56</sup> Abbot, 14-16.

<sup>57</sup> Loganian Library Account Book, MS, 2 (September 5, 1792).

<sup>58</sup> A five foot strip of land was acquired from Samuel M. Fox for \$500. *MPDLC* 3: 313, 315.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 3: 316, 317.

Discovered in 1932 among the uncatalogued papers of the Library Company are two roof plans and two elevations dated 1792 but unsigned. The elevation for the north and south ends is reproduced here (fig. 8). The chief problem seems to have been the skylights, for which oval and oblong forms were considered as alternates: "The sashes must be of metal and if neatly & strongly made the weather will have no access."

<sup>60</sup> Loganian Library Minutes: 30.

<sup>61</sup> *MPDLC* 3: 323. The skylight "let into the interior of the Loganian a flood of light, and through the two-storied arched opening in the wall of the main building it found a clear and excellent situation for the desks of the Librarian, with light into the main building, and gave him, with the system of adjoining stairways leading to the galleries, full communication with every part of the building." *Public Ledger*, April 20, 1887, Supplement.

From a fragmentary account of 1795 it seems that the shingle roof was painted (with fish oil paint?). Bills from Samuel Wetherill & Son and John Elliott for 1797 mention the following pigments: yellow ochre, spruce yellow and Spanish brown.

<sup>62</sup> Library Company of Philadelphia, uncatalogued papers:

"August 7, 1794

To Skerrett & Bonsall Dr.

to 41 lb. of litching rod a 1/6d pr lb.	3..1..6
to 8 staples 6d apiece	0..4..0
for putting the rod up	0..7..6
to 1 brass tube gilded for the top of the rod	0..8..0

£4..1..0"

A "platina point" was added in 1815. *MPDLC* 4: 356.

per plate "View of Several Public Buildings in Philadelphia" published in *The Columbian Magazine* (fig. 7) which called it "an elegant and stately edifice."<sup>63</sup> Clement Biddle's Philadelphia directory for 1791 refers to it as "an elegant building . . . in a modern stile." Moreau de Saint-Méry, who did not admire Philadelphia architecture, admitted that the Library "adds to the decoration of the square on which it is built."<sup>64</sup> It may well have been an influence on other Philadelphia buildings such as Trumbull's First Presbyterian Church (Market Street) [E, III]<sup>65</sup> and Samuel Blodget's First Bank of the United States (Third Street) [D, IV] both under construction in 1796,<sup>66</sup> as well as the central, or final unit of the Pennsylvania Hospital a few years later.<sup>67</sup> It impressed other visitors to Philadelphia from the new American states.<sup>68</sup> Early in the nine-

<sup>63</sup> January, 1790, p. 25.

<sup>64</sup> Moreau de Saint-Méry, 379.

<sup>65</sup> Theodore Sizer, Mr. Trumbull's Church, *Jour. Soc. of Architectural Historians* 9 (3): 20-22, Oct. 1950.

<sup>66</sup> Stephen's Philadelphia Directory for 1796.

<sup>67</sup> The Philadelphia Library and the Pennsylvania Hospital have a family resemblance to the house design in Plate 116, William Pain, *The practical house carpenter*, Phila., 1797.

<sup>68</sup> To judge by the painter-architect John Trumbull, who urged the building committee of the new Connecticut State Capitol "to make use of the Philadelphia marble such as us'd in the front of the new library (if the price be not too extravagant) in the more elegant parts of the building." Trumbull to Walcott, Hartford, Conn., September 30, 1792. Charles A. Place, *Bulfinch architect and citizen*, 52, Boston and New York, Houghton, 1925.

However, Fiske Kimball and Wells Bennett wrote: "Its pedimented frontispiece of pilasters rising through two stories was in the accepted academic style of the time, but involved nothing new to American builders. The Pinckney house in Charleston, forty years older, offers a close parallel and seems likewise to

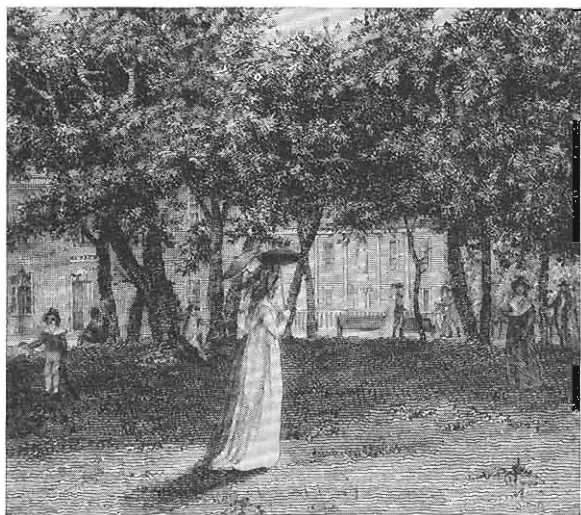


FIG. 9. The State House Yard, 1799. The Birch engraving shows the iron palisadoes which replaced part of the high brick wall and allowed a view from the Library into the State House Yard. This had recently been landscaped with plantings, walks and settees and was a popular promenade. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

teenth century the Library was well enough thought of to appear on one of a series of scenic plates called "Beauties of America."<sup>69</sup>

In 1794 the grounds north of the Library were enclosed<sup>70</sup> and among the finishing touches was their planting with shrubs for which John Lithen received

have had the 'ancient' Ionic capitals of Palladio rather than the angular ones of Scamozzi." William Thornton and the design of the United States Capitol, *Art Studies* 1: 78, Princeton [Princeton Univ. Press], 1923.

A critical description of the building in the mid-Victorian period, just before it was pulled down, is interesting:

"The building at the corner of Library Street is a quaint and substantial example of the old style architecture, when substance and solidity were objects of the first importance; and whilst in style there was some little change from the uniformity of plain brick walls, the ornament was such as was easy to be obtained in native marble, with the addition of well-made mouldings in wood, in panel, balustrade, with classic urns. There was breadth and solid ease about the old Philadelphia Library Building, and a peculiarity which distinguished it from any other structure of a public character in the city. The great steps on Fifth Street were of a width and depth of more than ample liberality. They were, in fact, almost a building by themselves, and gave to the lower part of the edifice a solidity which was well assisted by the broad, noble doorway and the heavily faced niche, with ornaments above it. Taken from any point of view this building, although not gorgeous, was striking and respectable, and creditable to the taste which planned it." *Public Ledger*, April 20, 1887, Supplement, 1.

<sup>69</sup> The Historical Society of Pennsylvania has one of these—a cup plate, 8¼" in diameter, with a rather poorly drawn reverse view in blue transfer and the maker's name J. & W. Ridgway. See Sam Laidacker, *The standard catalogue of Anglo-American China*, Scranton, Pa., 1938.

<sup>70</sup> £166 9s. 5½d. being "the amount of the Carpenters & Masons bills including materials for inclosing the Lot on the North side of the Library." Library Company Papers, Hist. Soc. Penna., MS Collection 454, November 6, 1794.

\$4.26 for materials and labor.<sup>71</sup> A successful campaign was also conducted to open a view into the State House yard across the street by taking down a section of the brick wall, which had enclosed it for years, and substituting a clairvoyée or open panel of "Iron Palisadoes."<sup>72</sup> The Yard had recently been landscaped under the direction of Samuel Vaughan with trees, shrubs, and serpentine walks and furnished with Windsor settees.<sup>73</sup> It made a pleasant and popular promenade which contributed to the attractiveness of the Library's setting (fig. 9).

#### THE LIBRARY IN USE

The Library was heated by wood-burning stoves. The account books carry items for the wharfage, hauling, sawing, and splitting of hickory wood bought at 33 shillings per cord and piled in the cellar. The stoves and their pipes were stored in the garret and brought down later in the autumn to be set up, blacked, used for the winter and returned aloft in the spring. There are also items for sweeping the chimneys, shovelling snow, and washing windows. Brass candlesticks were used and "mould candles" bought by the pound. A fine lantern for four candles was purchased for the front entry (fig. 17).<sup>74</sup> At Christmas time there was regularly a cash present to the watchmen who lighted the lamps.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> MPDLC 4: 60 (November 3, 1796). Other evidence of interest in landscaping at this time is shown in book orders for "Langley on Gardening" in 1794 and "Repton's essay on Landscape Gardening" and "Haye's practical treatise on planting, etc." in 1796. The earlier minutes of the Company show that *Switzer's Gardening* and *Perkison's Flower Garden* were ordered from London as early as 1732 and 1733 and that Peter Collinson had presented the volumes of Philip Miller's *Gardener's Dictionary* in 1732–1739.

<sup>72</sup> MPDLC 3: 341, 342.

<sup>73</sup> John Fanning Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia* 1: 397, Phila., 1881. Manassah Cutler, *Life Journal* 262–263. Sarah P. Stetson, *The Philadelphia sojourn of Samuel Vaughan*, *Penna. Mag. Hist. and Biog.* 73: 465, 466, 1949.

<sup>74</sup> Payment to Poultney & Wilson of £2 5s., the Green Store on Market Street, was ordered for the lantern on February 3, 1791. Hist. Soc. Penna., Gratz MS, Case 14, Box 7. The lantern has been preserved and rehung in the Ridgway Branch.

<sup>75</sup> Various entries, *An Account of Expenses and Loganian Library Minutes*, Bound MS, Library Company of Philadelphia. The stoves are referred to as "soapstone stoves" in a repair item of the year 1800. The Loganian Library was heated by an open stove loaned by Joseph Paschall and for which the Trustees provided a sheet iron hood and andirons.

This was a period of intense interest in heating improvements. Some of the experimentation is reflected in the following items in uncatalogued papers of the Library Company:

Jan. 11, 1794	To Elbow & fitting an old Stove pipe	£0.5.0
	To Setting up a Stove	2.6
Aug. 7, 1794	To putting a handle to the chimney hood	0.1.6
Aug. 14, 1797	To Building fire places in the Library Room	11.5.0
Aug. 15, 1797	To 2 chimney Mantles	4.12.9



FIG. 10. Undated Photograph, ca. 1855? Several photographs of the Library before demolition show details of carpentry and stone cutting in the best Philadelphia tradition. Courtesy of Free Library of Philadelphia.

Random entries in the records gives a number of further details. Shelving was continually added through the years, both against the walls and in the form of free-standing "stalls"—what we would today call "stacks."<sup>76</sup> The shelving was painted<sup>77</sup> and some of it protected by wire latticework.<sup>78</sup> Other features of the rooms were Venetian blinds at the windows<sup>79</sup> and maps on rollers.<sup>80</sup> The Director's Room was furnished with a dozen Windsor chairs<sup>81</sup> and its fireplace had an iron back and jambs.<sup>82</sup> The Loganian annex had two large painted tables and some benches.<sup>83</sup> Six leather fire

Nov. 16, 1797	To 3 pairs of andirons	4.2.6
	To 3 bars to lay across the andirons to keep the wood from rolling at/9d pr lb	0.17.3
	To 2 sheet iron fenders 40lb. at 2/6 pr lb	5.0.0
Nov. 27, 1797	199 lbs Sheet lead for hearth	6.12.8
March 17, 1798	2 Stoves of Soap Stone 35 feet 5 Inches each at 7.6 per foot (70 ft 10 I)	\$70.75
	2 chimney Pieces at 8.3d per foot 22 feet	24.20

<sup>76</sup> MPDLC 3: 350, 352 (1794); 4: 55; 4: 165, 180, 184 (1796, 1803, 1804, 1805).

<sup>77</sup> Hist. Soc. Penna., MS Collection 454, Library Company Papers (April 3, 1794).

<sup>78</sup> MPDLC 4: 272. "N & D Sellers for wire work, \$42.93" (January 4, 1810).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* 4: 111, supplied by John Rea (January 2, 1800).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* 4: 114, supplied by Charles DeKrafft (February 6, 1800).

<sup>81</sup> £ 11.5s. to Joseph Herozey (?) (December 6, 1792) cost £ 5.4s. 8d.

<sup>82</sup> MPDLC, Cost £5.4s. 8d., 4: 115 (April 3, 1800).

<sup>83</sup> Various entries, Minutes and Account Book of the Loganian Library. William Roberts was paid £ 7.17s. 8d. on July 15, 1792, for making and painting the tables, which had locks and keys, and for altering two benches.

buckets bearing the Library's name were purchased by the Librarian to hang ready for emergencies.<sup>84</sup>

The new building was kept closed for three months while its eight thousand books were reinstalled. Opening came on the first day of the year 1791.<sup>85</sup> This was in time to make a hospitable gesture and "respectful mark of Attention" to President Washington and members of Congress who had just come back to Philadel-



FIG. 11. Original Urn from Roof. One of the seventeen carved wooden urns that ornamented the balustrade on the Library roof has been preserved at the Ridgway Branch. Height, 50½", max. dia. 16½", pedestal modern. Courtesy of National Park Service.

phia for a ten-year sojourn. The Directors of the Library resolved

... that the President and Members of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives of the United States, shall have the free use of the Books in the Library, in as full and ample manner, as if they were Members of the Company.<sup>86</sup>

The First Continental Congress (1774) and the Constitutional Convention (1787) had previously enjoyed the

<sup>84</sup> MPDLC 4: 64, 65 (1797).

<sup>85</sup> Notice by Librarian Poulson issued September 23, 1790. *The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser*, October 22, 1790. MPDLC 3: 224, 235.

<sup>86</sup> MPDLC 3: 238, 239 (January 18, 1791).

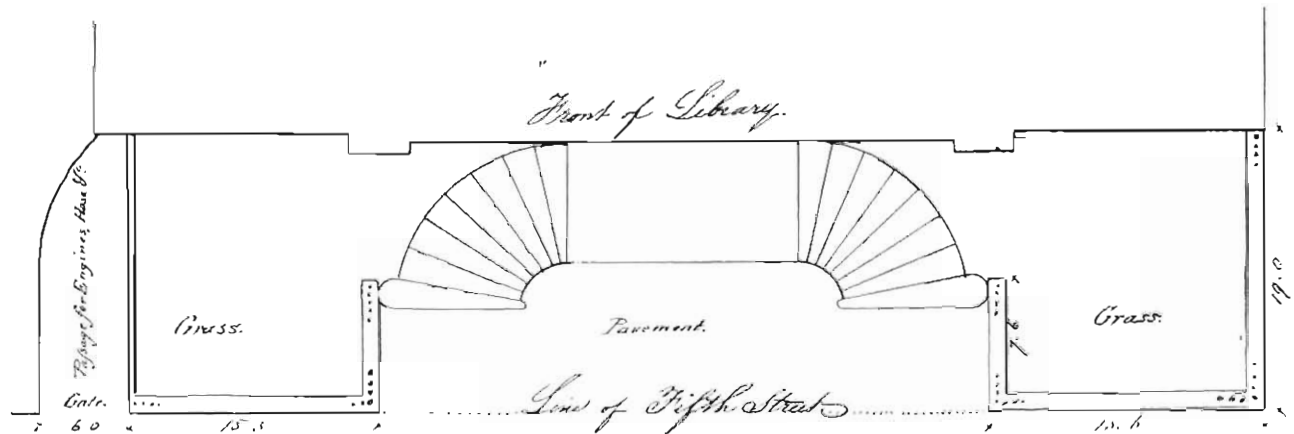


FIG. 12. Architectural plan of the Library Front and Entrance Steps drawn by stonecutter Adam Traquair in 1820. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

same privilege when the Library Company was at Carpenters' Hall. In a sense the Philadelphia Library was thus the parent of the Library of Congress, established 1800.<sup>87</sup> Tobias Lear, Secretary of the President, punctiliously acknowledged this kindness, assuring the Directors that their letter had "made a proper impression."<sup>88</sup>

The building was open to readers every day from one o'clock to sunset except Sunday.<sup>89</sup> The short hours were the subject of frequent complaints. One by a lady visitor from New Hampshire signed LITERARY LEISURE appeared in the local *Port Folio*. Disappointed one morning by a locked door she went home and wrote to the editor charging . . .

<sup>87</sup> *Library of Congress . . . Catalog of the Exhibit Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Its Establishment*, 1-3, Washington, Library of Congress, 1950.

<sup>88</sup> *MPDLC* 3: 247 (January 20, 1791).

<sup>89</sup> Clement Biddle, *The Philadelphia Directory*, xi, Phila., 1791. *Independent Gazetteer*, January 1, 1791.

that no one was permitted to read in a public library till food, and wine, and the fumes of tobacco had, at a late hour in the afternoon, ingeniously pioneered the way to the clear understanding and laborious perusal of any, the most difficult books.<sup>90</sup>

This brought further comment from Samuel Saunter which lends atmosphere to our picture of this institution:

. . . Men may trifle with books, in the afternoon, but they must be *studied* in the morning. Indeed, no one, I believe, in the Philadelphia library, ever *dreams* of any higher effort of his mind, than to gaze with half-shut eyes at Hogarth's prints, or the maps on the wall, to read a magazine or a review, to discuss the intelligence of the last gazette, or quietly sink on the shoulders of the arm chair, and enjoy a long *vision* of the Muses. An English gentleman, a stran-

<sup>90</sup> *The Port Folio* 2 (27): 209 (Phila., July 10, 1802).



FIG. 13. A Circulating Library, 1804. This copperplate shows English ladies with reading problems in a comparable institution. The borrower at the desk is taking out some amorous novels of a type not popular with the Philadelphia Library directors.

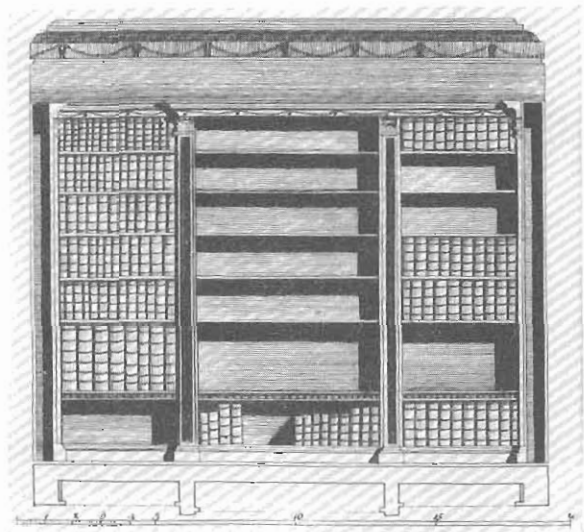


FIG. 14. Library Shelving. The Philadelphia 1797 edition of William Pain's *Practical House Carpenter* included this copperplate (No. 119) of a shelving design. The Library's volumes, like those shown here, were classified, first by size. Courtesy of David Stockwell.





FIG. 15. Interior of Main Building, 1859. Wash Drawing by Colin C. Cooper, Jr., shows the Librarian's desk to the right and behind it an arched opening into the Loganian Library. The building was getting crowded with books in its later years. Courtesy of Free Library of Philadelphia.

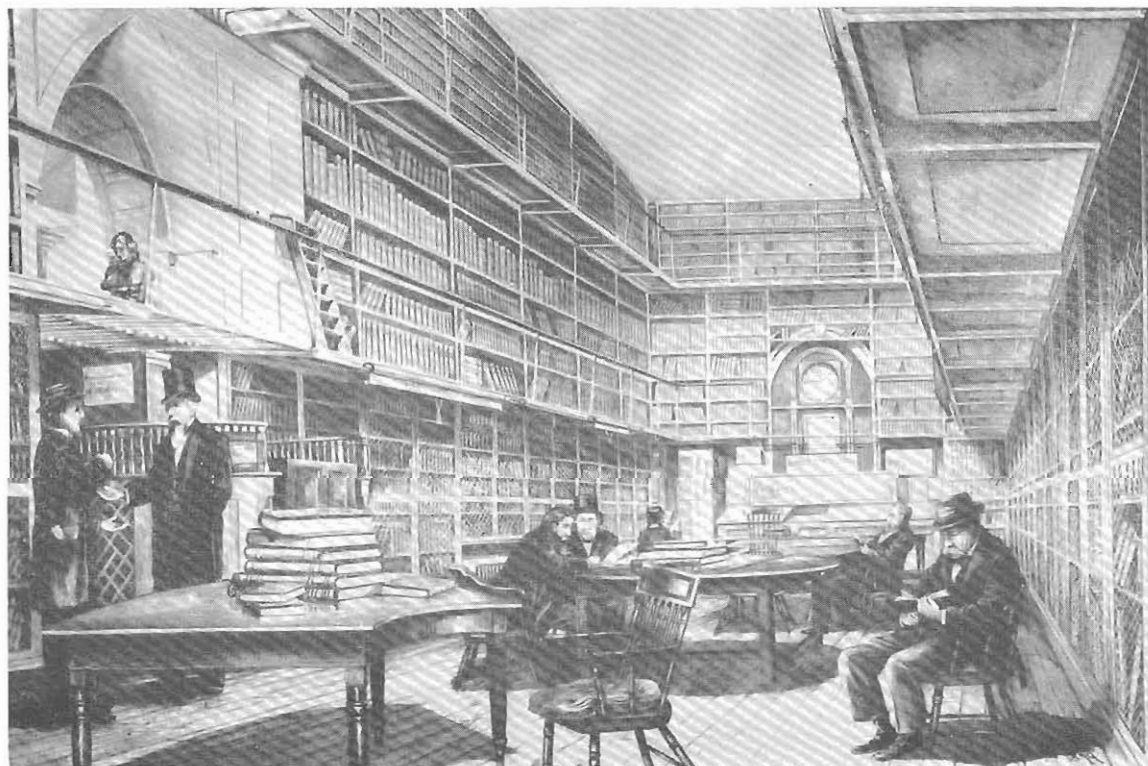


FIG. 16. Loganian Library, interior view looking east, 1879. Another drawing by Cooper. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.



FIG. 17. Hall Lantern. Originally purchased from Poultney & Wilson for £2. 5s. and paid for in 1791, this candle lantern has survived and has been rehung in the Ridgway Branch.

ger, ironically complimented me that our library establishment was so far monastic, as not to want a *dormitory*; that under the fervour of a July sun, it was the coolest room in the city for a *nap*, and that, on a late visit, he saw some half dozen hard students, whose studies might be very profound for aught he knew, except that they were occasionally interrupted by a profound *snore*, convulsive twitching, the grinding of the teeth, and other symptoms of the most studious slumber.<sup>91</sup>

The philosophical apparatus and the natural curiosities were regularly shown by the Librarian on Saturday mornings. The latter consisted of such items as petrifications and reptiles and insects bottled in "spirits of wine." By special permission of the directors the scientific instruments could be used by parties considered qualified.<sup>92</sup>

An impressive feature of the artistic furnishings was an elaborate allegory sent from London. Samuel Jennings, a young Philadelphian painting in England, had heard that an elegant building was being put up and wished to contribute a picture that would be "applicable to do so noble and useful an Institution." "Liberty displaying the Arts and Sciences" or "The Genius of America encouraging the Emancipation of the Blacks," as it has been variously called, painted to size in 1792 and sent across the Atlantic, is still preserved and displayed by the Library Company.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *Op. cit.* In spite of this impression of well-heeled idleness, the Rev. Duché wrote a few years earlier "for one person of distinction and fortune, there were twenty tradesmen that frequented this library." *Caspipina's Letters*, 1, 14, London, 1777.

<sup>92</sup> Hardie, 1793, 201.

<sup>93</sup> *MPDLC* 3: 195-197, 206-207. This painting has been ex-

A clock made by Henry Voight for £27 was another item displayed,<sup>94</sup> as well as busts of Franklin<sup>95</sup> and Washington, and a plaster cast of Diana by Houdon presented by a Mr. Dupont.<sup>96</sup>

The eastern end of the cellar was first rented to Israel Whelen, a High Street merchant, and occupied by him December 15, 1791.<sup>97</sup> This was an old Philadelphia custom. The undersides of Carpenters' Hall, Philosophical Hall, private houses, and even churches were regularly let out for storage.<sup>98</sup> The fire insurance policy allowed the use of the Library basement for commercial goods, including naval stores, but excluding gunpowder.<sup>99</sup> No lights were permitted because of fire hazard.

Outdoors, the grounds gradually filled up. In 1805 a "necessary" was added.<sup>100</sup> The Pennsylvania Fire Company in 1816 was granted permission to erect its engine house on Fifth Street front of the lot just north of the Hall.<sup>101</sup> Street curb stones were placed on Fifth Street in front of the Library in 1811 and a brick paving along Library Street on the south side.<sup>102</sup> About 1822 the ceiling of the Loganian annex was raised eight feet and the shelving increased.<sup>103</sup>

The early years of the nineteenth century passed quietly and the collections grew. There was only one untoward incident. On January 6 or 7, 1831, during a meeting of the Directors (in an upper room "enjoying their monthly collation of oysters and fish-house punch") the Loganian annex caught fire. The conflagration, which originated in a chimney breast (where a new coal grate had been installed for purposes of fire-safety), was put out with a loss of some books and two por-

terly studied and written up by Robert C. Smith, A Philadelphia allegory, *Art. Bull.* 31 (4): 323-326, December, 1949.

<sup>94</sup> *MPDLC* 2: 340 (1793).

<sup>95</sup> *MPDLC* 4: 186 (January 17, 1805).

<sup>96</sup> *MPDLC* 4: 116 (April 3, 1800).

<sup>97</sup> Whelen paid a rental of £30 per annum for the cellar but was not allowed to use it for naval stores or oils, or to use a light in it. *Ibid.* 3: 236. The rent was upped to £40 in 1792. *Ibid.* 3: 325. The front cellar was rented for \$120 per year to Harmes & Holtzbecker in 1803 by the "Cellar Committee." *Ibid.* 4: 155. Lorent & Lang followed in 1810. *Ibid.* 4: 274.

<sup>98</sup> Another basement occupant of the Library (1793) was Joseph Anthony & Son, Chestnut Street merchants. Captain Anthony was later threatened with eviction on account of "the frequent introductions of fire, candles and inflammable articles." *Ibid.* 4: 9. The rear cellar under the Loganian Library was rented to Jacob Shoemaker for \$50 in 1803 (*ibid.* 4: 160), to Elliston and John Perot in 1806 (*ibid.* 4: 219) and C. Danenburg in 1811 (*ibid.* 4: 287).

<sup>99</sup> Philadelphia Contributionship, Survey Nos. 2414 and 2415. \$35.25 was paid William Roberts "for building a necessary and finding materials." *MPDLC* 4: 195 (August 8, 1805).

<sup>101</sup> *MPDLC* 4: 363 (March 7, 1816). Permission had been granted as early as 1808. *Ibid.* 4: 237. The Resolution Hose Company's application of 1815 was turned down. *Ibid.* 4: 360.

<sup>102</sup> *MPDLC* 4: 295, 296, 298.

<sup>103</sup> Philadelphia Contributionship, *op. cit.* (December 2, 1811). Mentioned here is the yellow pine floor, gallery for reaching books on west side, 4 stacks or "stands" 12½' long, 8' high, protected with wire panels and a dentil cornice at the ceiling.

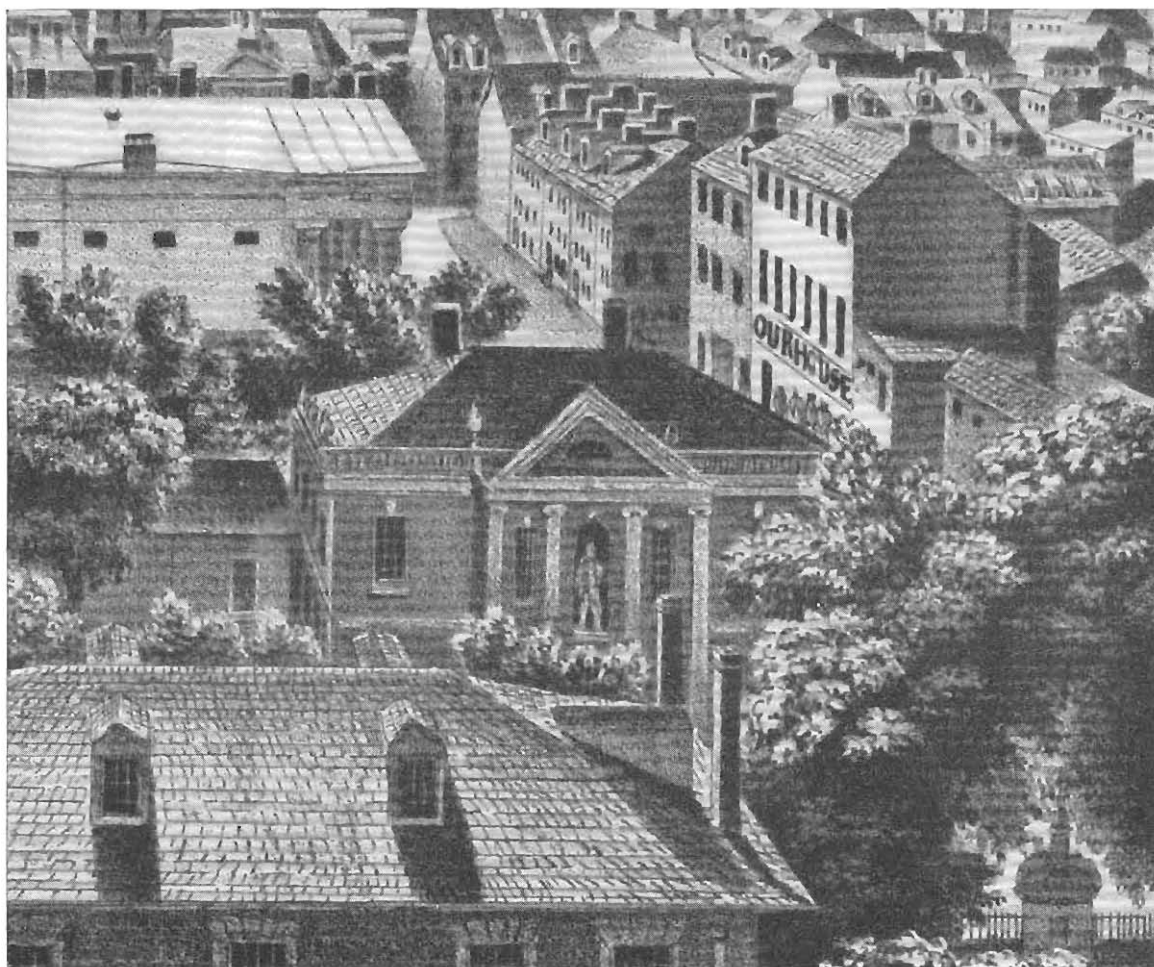


FIG. 18. Portion of Wild Lithograph, 1838. A panorama taken from the restored steeple of Independence Hall, shows the front of the Library and two neighboring buildings which still stand: (left foreground) Philosophical Hall and (left background) the Old Custom House, originally the Second Bank of the United States. Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

traits.<sup>104</sup> About 1835 a large one-story brick wing of one room was added to the north; this was almost completely filled with stacks.<sup>105</sup> The building at this period is well shown in a lithographic view from the State House steeple drawn by J. C. Wild (fig. 18).

In time the Library outgrew the possibilities of further expansion on the Fifth Street site and in the year 1856 a subscription list was opened for a new fireproof building.<sup>106</sup> A site at Center Square was later consid-

<sup>104</sup> Gray, 38. Scharf and Westcott, 1184. \$2943.55 in insurance was collected, however. Loganian Library Minutes. Philadelphia Contributionship, *op. cit.* (October 6, 1835). The addition was 26' x 41'-6" and 15' high. It had a shed roof covered with tin and was pierced with a long skylight, the sash of which was manipulated by a cord from the floor below.

<sup>105</sup> Philadelphia Contributionship, Insurance Survey 2414 dated October 6, 1835.

<sup>106</sup> Library Company of Philadelphia. *Annual Report*, May, 1879, 3, Philadelphia, 1879.

There are drawings for a new building on the Fifth Street site at the Ridgway Library. One of them is a floor plan by John Notman dated July, 1840.

ered, but it was not until 1880, after a substantial gift had been received, that a site was purchased at Locust and Juniper Streets.

The Library finally moved into *two* buildings, the Ridgway Branch, a new and large granite Doric structure occupied in 1878 under the terms of the Rush bequest<sup>107</sup> and another structure at Locust and Juniper Streets.<sup>108</sup> The latter building was supposed to be something of a reproduction of the old Fifth Street Library, but the resemblance was not striking. The original stone entrance steps were brought up from the old building<sup>109</sup> and the Franklin statue was again set up in a niche over the entrance.

<sup>107</sup> Broad and Christian Streets, finished 1877, cost \$850,000, architect, Addison Hutton. The literal classic porticoes are surprising for this period. See John Harbeson, Philadelphia's Victorian architecture, *Penna. Mag.* 67: 258, 259, July, 1943.

<sup>108</sup> Built 1879-80, architect, Frank Furness. Gray, 67. Scharf and Westcott, 1187.

<sup>109</sup> Gray, 67. These stone steps seem to have disappeared during the demolition of the building in 1940.

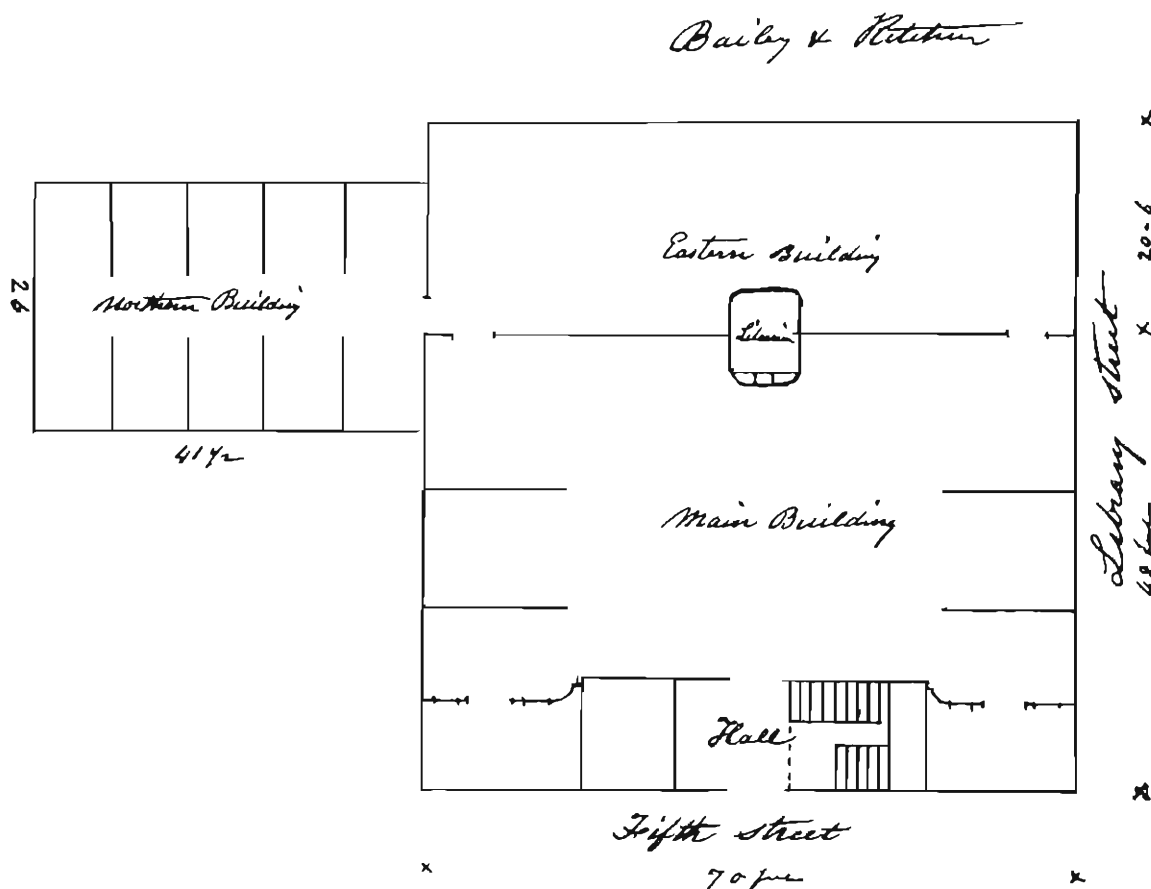


FIG. 19. Floor Plan, 1880. At the time the Library moved out of its old Hall, this fire insurance survey was made to show the floor plan, including the Loganian annex ("Eastern Building") and the North Wing. It is the only known floor plan. Courtesy of Philadelphia Contributionship.

In its last years Dr. Thornton's building was described by Willis P. Hazard:

The present building has a quiet, venerable appearance, and its interior though plain, is impressive. Besides the books, the rooms contain portraits of Lord Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton, William Penn, John Penn, James Logan, Benjamin Franklin, Rev. Samuel Preston, a benefactor (the portrait by West), William Mackenzie, a donor of books, Joseph Fisher, a donor of money, Thomas Parke, Zachariah Poulson, and others. There are various relics, such as William Penn's writing-desk; a colossal bust of Minerva which formerly stood behind the Speaker's chair in the first Congress under the Constitution; a mask of Washington's face from the original and used for Houdon's statue; a reading-desk of John Dickinson, author of *The Farmer's Letters*; James Logan's library-table, and other curiosities.

The collection then totaled over one hundred thousand books—still following the original arrangement of position according to size<sup>110</sup> (fig. 14).

The next year the old Library Building was "eviscerated" and on August 8, 1884, it was sold to Anthony J. Drexel.<sup>111</sup> Not long afterwards the whole structure

was removed for the construction of the Drexel Building which still remains. The *Public Ledger* for April 20, 1887, reported that: "... the workmen are ranging all around it and eager for the hour when the Central News Company under whip and spur will withdraw from the old Library building and another of the ancient landmarks which the Revolutionary Fathers planned will have fallen before the progress of time."<sup>112</sup>

## APPENDIX I

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON DR. WILLIAM THORNTON

Thornton was born in an English Quaker colony on the island of Jost van Dyke, in what are now the British Virgin Islands, about 1760. He was educated in medicine at the University of Edinburgh and lived for a time

<sup>110</sup> John F. Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia* 3: 339. Phila. (Hazard edition), 1879.

<sup>111</sup> *Philadelphia Deed Book* JOD 221/123.

<sup>112</sup> Other accounts of the Library in its last years are R. A. Smith, *Philadelphia as it is in 1852*, 193-197, Phila., 1852; Edward Strahan, *A century after*, 65, 66 (illus.), Phila., 1875; Rebecca Harding Davis, *Old landmarks in Philadelphia*, *Scribner's Monthly*, 155-156 (illus.), N. Y., 1876; and Louise Stockton, *The old Philadelphia Library*, *Our Continent*, 452-459 (illus.), Phila., October 18, 1882.



in both London and Paris. In 1786 he arrived at New York. Early the next year he was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society and in 1788 he took the national oath of allegiance in New Castle County, Delaware. An invitation to dinner with Dr. Benjamin Franklin on February 17, 1789, shows Thornton was then living "at M<sup>rs</sup>. Houses 5<sup>th</sup>. Street Corner of Market Street," a fashionable Philadelphia boarding house.

That Thornton spent much time working on the invention of the steamboat with John Fitch and others is revealed in a letter he wrote to Robert Fulton from Washington on December 16, 1807:

I was engaged in a Steam Boat several years ago projected by the late John Fitch, who only conceived the Idea of applying Steam to the propelling of Boats, but had never seen a Steam Engine—I believe I was the only person in the Company, who had seen a Steam Engine, but those I saw when very young & they only worked one way. We tried various modes and made an Engine work both ways giving motion first to wheels, then to . . . cranks and Paddles on the sides, but we found all these inconvenient especially when running across the wind and after many modes found the best was by placing Paddles at the Stern—for they were then entirely out of the way, & were always working in the wake of the Boat therefore not subject to any sudden injury from dashing waves or obstructions of any kind.—The Boat which was 60 feet keel went only from 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 miles per hour till I put in a Boiler of abt. 6 feet long by abt. 4 wide of which I was the Inventor, and the same boat with some small alterations then went 8 miles an hour through dead water, time & distance accurately measured frequently & in the presence of hundreds now at Philada.—and it went 80 miles in a Day.—I had then a Schooner built of 25 Tons burthen for the Mississippi & strick above 90 strokes a minute with the Paddles abt. 7-1/2 fet. at a stroke & with the force of at least 40 men—The Govr. & Council in a Body walked to the Boat & presented us with a superb Flag, as a mark of appreciation. I had then calculated to go ten miles an hour. I prepared all the Material works previous to my setting out for the West Indies to see my Mother but I discovered a disposition in the Company to endeavor to simplify the works—I begged & urged them to adhere minutely to the plan laid down, & by which the other was built, & I departed in confidence that no material deviation would take place.—The King of Spain sent us a Patent or exclusive privilege for the Mississippi, and I promised every success to the plan. I ordered flat bottomed boats to deposit coals every 30 or 40 miles in descendg from Pittsburgh to New Orleans & had laid a Plan which by several Ste[am] Boats would have brought in a very great Profit.—but when I returned from the West Indies instead of findg. the Boats built I found the only two we had executed were sold with the apparatus of every kind; for by innovation, & attemptg to improve the work the Company could not make the Engine strike a stroke, and I declined pursuing an object of the greatest consequence & I give the above to act for our not continuing with such Partners. (William Thornton Papers, MS, Library of Congress.)

After winning the Library competition and marrying, Thornton returned to the West Indies. By the end of 1792, however, he was back in Philadelphia. His widow later wrote:

On his return he fixed in Philadelphia, where his mother-in-law had engaged & furnished a house [on Chestnut Street] ready for his reception & where he intended & indeed commenced the practice of physic, but it was so disagreeable to him, & he thought the fees so small (having been accustomed to the W. India fees which are very high) that he relinquished the practice & the house, & in consequence of his unfortunate passion for raising horses, took a small place a mile from Phila. where he remained 'till he received from President Washington the honorable appointment of Commissioner of the new City of Washn. or Federal City.

The Doctor moved to Washington late in 1794 and became a well known figure there. He died in 1828.

Not much detail is known of Thornton's life in Philadelphia. The records of the American Philosophical Society show that on November 21, 1789, he was appointed to the Committee on Publications and on January 4, 1793, elected a Councillor for three years. Thornton was present at meetings until 1796, served on various special assignments, and received a prize medal for his essay "Cadmus" on speech and the education of the deaf. He retained his interest in the Society and in 1807 sent it a copy of his essay on yellow fever.

Quakeress Susanna Dillwyn of Burlington and Philadelphia, in letters to her father in England, made two interesting mentions of Thornton in this period. These letters, preserved in the Dillwyn Papers at the Ridgway Library, Philadelphia, relay information from Sally Dickinson, daughter of the Revolutionary patriot:

[September 20, 1789] There is a Doctor Thornton who we became acquainted with at Wilmington, that professes a great attachment to S. N. Dickinson but whether he will be successful in his pursuit is very doubtful—he had his education in England, is acquainted with most parts of Europe and possesses tis said an uncommon share of knowledge for his age—he told me he was intimate with Doctor Lettson and is I suppose not more of a friend [Quaker] than he, that I suppose would be a principal objection with J.D. who is much more of a friend than formerly. . . .

[January 28, 1790] . . . I had a letter from Sally N. Dickinson which left their family well. Doctor Thornton, a person who long aim'd at a connection there, a few months ago was married to one Anne Burdeau [Brodeau] a young woman in Phila. and in a few days after [October 13, 1790] they embarked for the Island of Tortola. I have heard him say he was well acquainted with Dr. Lettson, I. and S. Hoare and several others I knew in England—he is a man of a very eccentric turn, and at one time made himself much talk'd of in this country. . . .

The most extensive life of Thornton yet published is Allen C. Clark, "Doctor and Mr. William Thornton" in *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 18: 144-208, Washington, 1915. See also Fiske Kimball in *Dictionary of American Biography*. Charles F. Jenkins, *Tortola*, 58-63, London, 1923. The principal available sources are the William Thornton and J. Henley Smith manuscript collections in the Library of Congress. Among this material is a valuable biographical sketch by Mrs. Thornton.



## APPENDIX II

SOME ARCHITECTURAL BOOKS IN  
PHILADELPHIA, 1789

The following list of volumes collected by the Library Company of Philadelphia was available to Dr. William Thornton when he took up his study of architecture and won the competition for the design of the new library. The books are listed as works of "Civil Architecture" on pages 253, 254 in the volume entitled: *A Catalogue of the Books belonging to the Library Company of Philadelphia; to which is prefixed, A Short Account of the Institution, with the Charter, Laws and Regulations* (Phila., 1789).

All of these volumes are still in the possession of the Company and all are in good condition except the Adam work (No. 304) of which only a fragment remains.

## FOLIO.

- 1 RULES for drawing the several parts of architecture. By James Gibbs. Third edition. London, 1753.
- 4 Vitruvius Britannicus; or the British architect: containing the plans, elevations and sections of the regular buildings [both public and private] in Great Britain; with plates. By Colin Campbell. 2 volumes in one.<sup>1</sup>
- 7 Ancient masonry; both in theory and practice; demonstrating the useful rules of arithmetic, geometry and architecture; with plates. By B. Langley. 2 vols. London, 1736.
- 9 [Some] Designs for buildings, both public and private; with plates. By James Leoni. London, 1726.<sup>2</sup>
- 28 A complete body of architecture; [adorned] with plans and elevations from original designs; interspersed with some designs of Inigo Jones, [never before published]. By Isaac Ware. London, 1756.
- 30 A collection of designs in architecture; with designs of stone and timber bridges; and screens and pavilions.
- 276 By Abraham Swan. 2 vols. London, 1757 and 1767. N<sup>o</sup>. 276 the gift of David Evans.<sup>3</sup>
- 41 [The four books of] Andrea Palladio's architecture; with observations that are most necessary in building houses, streets, bridges, piazzas, and temples. By Isaac Ware. London, 1738.<sup>4</sup>
- 68 A treatise of the five orders of columns in architecture. By Claude Perrault. To which is added, a discourse concerning pilasters. Translated from the French, by John James. London, 1708.
- 136 The villas of the ancients; with plates. By Robert Castell. London, 1728.
- 293 The British architect; or builder's treasury of staircases; with plates. By Abraham Swan. London.
- 296 James Gibbs's book of architecture; containing designs of buildings and ornaments. Second edition. London, 1739.
- 304 Works in architecture; with plates. By Robert and James Adam. London, 1773.

## QUARTO.

- 106 [Palladio Londinensis; or,] The London art of building; with the builder's dictionary. By William Salmon. Fourth edition. London, 1752.

<sup>1</sup> A copy of this work was first ordered in 1739.

<sup>2</sup> This volume has the bookplate of William Denny.

<sup>3</sup> There are two identical sets of this work, both dated 1757. Evans copy given January 13, 1764.

<sup>4</sup> A copy of Palladio was first ordered in 1732.

- 150 The British carpenter; or a treatise on carpentry; containing the most concise [and authentick] rules of that art. By Francis Price. Second edition. London, 1735.<sup>5</sup>

## OCTAVO.

- 94 The builder's dictionary; or gentleman's and architect's companion; with plates. 2 vols. [n.a.; "Faithfully digested from the most Approved Writers on these subjects."] London, 1734.
- 399 Fires improved; or a new method of building chimneys. Translated from the French of Monsieur Gauger, by J. T. Desaguliers. Second Edition, with an appendix, containing several farther improvements. London, 1736. Gift of Mr. Grace.
- 468-1 [Monsieur leComte] D'Espie's manner of securing all sorts of buildings from fire; with plates. London.<sup>6</sup>
- 620 Useful architecture, in designs for erecting parsonage-houses, farm-houses and inns. By William Halfpenny. London, 1752.
- 839 City, country-purchasers and builder's dictionary; or the complete builder's guide. By Richard Neves [Neve]. Third edition. London, 1736.<sup>7</sup>
- \*1467-3 Oikidia; or nutshells; being ichnographic distributions for small villas; chiefly upon oeconomical principles; with plates. [By Joseph MacPacker, A Bricklayer's Labourer] London, 1785.

## DUODECIMO

- 706 A [practical] treatise on chimnies; containing [full] directions for preventing or removing smoke in houses; with plates. [n.a.; revised from account in Encyclopedia Britannica.]

## APPENDIX III

## FIRE INSURANCE SURVEYS

When the Library building was first completed it was "surveyed" for fire insurance by Gunning Bedford. His report, or survey, preserved for Policy Nos. 2414 and 2415 at the Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses from Loss by Fire, reads as follows:

Survey<sup>d</sup>. 3<sup>d</sup>. Novem<sup>r</sup>. 1790.

The Library Hall, situate on the east side of fifth street between Chestnut and walnut Streets—

70 feet by 40 feet, Two Storys high, 14 Inch walls, floors Narrow Boards Nail<sup>d</sup>. Through, 2 Rooms in first & 3 D<sup>o</sup>. in Second Story, Large Room in first Story is fitted up with Shelves for Books on the Back Side and part of each end, 2 arches, 4 whole and 4 half dorick pilasters and Intaliture [Entablature] over them, dintel Cornice Round, Bass and surbass Round, archatrives to all the doors and windows, and inside Shutters, 3 windows and 2 doors arch<sup>d</sup>. and gothick sashes in arch<sup>d</sup>. part Square sashes 15 by 11, some brick and some plaster<sup>d</sup>. pertions. Bass & Surbass and Stoker [?] Cornice Round in Second Story. Two Storys of open Newel Stairs one of which is Ramp<sup>d</sup>. Bracketed scerting and half Rail and open pilasters up the wall, the other Ramp<sup>d</sup>. Bracketed & scerting up the wall, modillion & dintel Cornice to Eaves all Round, Hip<sup>d</sup>. Roof, pediment

<sup>5</sup> A copy was ordered in 1739. Present copy bound with Francis Price, *A Supplement to the British Carpenter: Containing Palladio's Orders of Architecture with the Ornament of Doors and Windows, etc.*, London, 1735.

<sup>6</sup> Published ca. 1755. Copy acquired from Union Library Company.

<sup>7</sup> A copy was first ordered in 1734.

in front. Balustrade Round Roof with pedestals for and 17 urns which are up, the whole painted inside and out, and New a galery on east side in first Story to gett at the Books—a Circular Inclosure for Librarian, and Two flights of Stairs Neatly finish<sup>d</sup>, to the galery.

Gun<sup>s</sup>. Bedford

£500. on the North Moiety	} Divided by an imaginary Line running East and West thro' the middle of the House.
£500. on the South Moiety	
£1000. at 42/6	
£500. addl. at 50/	
With Liberty of Naval Stores. (Gunpowder excepted)	

In 1811 another survey was made which describes the Loganian annex in some detail:

I have Surveyed an addition to the Philad<sup>a</sup>. Library on the east of the principal Building and adjoining 21 feet wide 70 feet long, one high Story, in one room the floor of yellow pine, Shelved on the west side to the ceiling, and a Gallery about midway of the highth with a plain rail in front, the

east side of the room Shelved about half way up, a large Venetian window in each end, the middle of which are arched, the roof covered with copper, modillion eave, & copper gutter and pipe — a large Skylight in the roof of 12 1/2 feet Square rising to a point — Also a range of Shelving on the west side of the principal room, to the ceiling with two flights of winding steps leading on to a Gallery, with a plain rail in front, the recesses at the North & Southwest corner of the room filled with Shelves, & the cornice with dentil continued round.— also 4 stands for Books on the floor about 12 1/2 feet long & 8<sup>ft</sup> in highth, each with a division & shelves on both sides—the whole of the shelving with wired doors in front & painted

12 Mo. 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1811	John C. Evans
\$800 at 2 1/2 p.Cent	\$20.—
\$4800 at 1 p.Cent	48.00
addl. 1333.33 at 2 1/2	33.33
	<hr/>
	\$101.33 rec'd.—
former Deps. £21.5—	56.67
	<hr/>
	158.—

Later surveys for these policies are dated 1822, 1835, 1852 and 1880.