To the Editor of Pennsylvania Magazine:

Looking through Volume XVIII Pennsylvania Magazine for the year 1894–95, I encountered an advertisement requesting information concerning the descendants of Richard Holcomb, who married Sarah Holme, the daughter of Thomas Holme, who laid the plan for the City of Philadelphia.

This advertisement I have learned was inserted by the late Mr. Oliver Hough when he was collecting material for his article on Thomas Holme, Penn's Surveyor-General, which article continued through several numbers of the Pennsylvania Magazine.

The will of Thomas Holme contained the following item:

"Item.—I give and bequeath unto the children of Richard Holcomb by my daughter Sarah, the sum of thirty pounds to be paid of the thousand acres of land next beyond Hilltowne of this countie upon the said lands are sold."

It is evident that Mr. Hough did not succeed in obtaining the information he sought, as though he deals with descendants of other children of Thomas Holme, he states that it is not known if Sarah Holme or her children ever came to America. This statement has been repeatedly copied in various monographs relating to
WASHINGTON’S HEADQUARTERS AT HOLCOMB’S
The Descendants of Sarah Holme.

Thomas Holme, or of Holmesburg, or in genealogical works such as the Crispin family.

The will of Thomas Holme, now on file at the City Hall is in a ragged and mutilated condition. If any inventory or accounting was ever made of the estate by the sole executor, Silas Crispin, it is now missing. Consequently it is impossible to tell by this means in just what manner the executor made settlement with the children of Richard Holcomb of the one thousand acres in Hilltowne.

Hilltowne was later known as Abington. The "thousand acres of land next beyond Hilltowne" was a part of a tract of 2500 acres that Holme purchased from Samuel Clarridge (then residing in Ireland) the deed dated May 18 1686 (E5 p 528 Phila. Co.) this tract is shown on Thomas Holmes map of 1686 lying to the northward of the Squehanna Road, labeled "Samuel Clarridge" and lying between the land of "Silas Crispin" and "Perce & Comp." The total amount of land covered in the deed is 5000 acres and the sum paid for all this land by Holme was fifty-seven pounds, nine shillings.

The Holcomb children came to Hilltowne or Abington shortly before the year of 1700. There were two brothers, Jacob and John Holcombe. They were both born in Tierton, Devonshire, England and their father Richard Holcomb died while they were young. Both of their parents being Friends they were brought up in this sect, and throughout their lives in America both are identified as prominent and consistent members of the Abington, Falls, and Buckingham Friends Meetings.

After the death of Richard Holcomb, Sarah (Holme) Holcomb, married John Hurford. John Hurford had a son named John by a previous marriage. All of this family came to America and settled in Hilltowne, or Abington as it is now known. One of the early minutes of the Abington meeting notes the marriage of John
Hurford Junior. "28 lOmo 1702 A certificate granted John Hurford jun In order to his proceeding on in marriage with one of ye county of Chister" Of this second marriage of Sarah (Holme) Holcomb to John Hurford, Sr. two children were born, namely Grace who married Robert Thomas of North Wales, Gwynedd in 1722 and Samuel Hurford who married Hannah Ser- mon of Abington in 1731. Samuel had no descendants. By his will (No 118 Book O pg 158 Phila. Co.) dated, "23" 3mo called March 1765" he gives "sixty pounds to be divided between all the children of my half brother John Hurford" and the bulk of his estate in- cluding his silver watch, silver shoe buckles, silver knee buckles, silver stock buckle, and certain real property to the children of his sister Grace, namely, John Thomas, Samuel Thomas, and "to my nieces husband Lewis Roberts." He also left a legacy to his "kinsman Joseph Hallowell" who married Elizabeth daughter of his half brother Jacob Holcombe. Joseph Hallowell was a descendant of John Hallowell of Abington who 15th 6mo 1696 purchased of Silas Crispin, executor of the estate of Thomas Holme, 630 acres of the land in Hilltowne for 58 pounds 16 shillings. At this date John Hallowell was living in Darby Pa.

John and Sarah Hurford continued to reside at Abington until 1720 when they removed to Buckingham and located on a farm adjoining Jacob Holcombe. Their certificate of removal from Abington meeting is dated "25th of ye 5 1720" they were growing aged and feeble as one might infer from this extract from the Buckingham minutes "6 mo 3 1725. Jacob Holcombe by request of his aged parents John and Sarah Hur- ford to have an evening meeting at their house by reason of their inability to get to the public meeting place every other first day meeting" And here they still lived in 1726 when the map referred to in Volume I page 256 Davis History of Bucks County was pre-
pared, which notes them as residing between the houses of Jacob Holcombe and Mercy Phillips.

About the year of 1700 Jacob Holcombe, one of the children of Richard Holcomb and Sarah (Holme) Holcomb removed to Buckingham township and was one of the early settlers of what is now Solebury Pa. The early records of the township as well as the records of Buckingham meeting testify to his public spirit. He was one of the first ministers of the meeting, the first book of minutes was transcribed in his handwriting and he was one of the committee to build the second meeting house in 1729. He was petitioner and later commissioner to lay out the road now known as the Old York Road and also the road from Solebury along the Delaware. He traveled to England; Connecticut; Rhode Island; Long Island N. Y.; and Maryland on Missions to Friends meetings at those places. A testimonial from Buckingham meeting concerning Jacob Holcombe may be found in the "Collection of Memorials concerning Divers deceased Ministers and others of the People called Quakers etc." published 1787. Jacob married Mary Woolridge of Falls meeting 1712 and had eight children. 1 Thomas who married Hannah Pownall 6mo 3 1741-2 Sarah, (named after his mother) married Thomas Lewis 7 mo. 6 1736; 3 Rebecca; 4 Mary, married Jacob Walton 3mo 11749; 5 Elizabeth, married Joseph Hallowell of Philadelphia 4 mo 13 1745; 6 Susanna, married John Van Duren of Gwynedd; 7 Hannah; and 8 Sophia.

Jacob Holcombe and his brother John located on tracts of land on either side of the Delaware along the course of what became the Old York Road and at the crossing which during Revolutionary time was known as Coryells Ferry, but now known as the city of Lambertville on the New Jersey side and New Hope on the Pennsylvania side. I append a photostat of a part of the two maps prepared in 1881-83 by Mr. Walter F.
Hayhurst and the late Mr. Ruben Pownall Ely, both of Lambertville N. J. These maps have an index or title brief cap size of some 200 pages and the originals are owned by the daughters of Mr. Ely now residing in Lambertville.

In addition to the tract of 500 acres, a part of the Heath tract shown on the map, Jacob Holcombe purchased from James Logan 25 March 1709 the two tracts shown in his name, one containing 320 acres, the other 500 acres. These he promptly sold to John Scarborough and at the same time purchased from John Scarborough another tract containing 510 acres, the money consideration in each of these deeds being mentioned as £300 silver money. Jacob Holcombe sold on December 3 1717 to Thomas Canby (who also came from Abington) 444 acres of this 510 acre tract. Jacob had still another tract of 500 acres which was patented to him April 12 1712. He died 30th 6mo 1748. In his will (Bucks Co No 597) he disposes among other items, a silver spoon to his grandson Jacob marked with his fathers initials “R. H.” This Jacob was a son of Thomas Holcombe and he married Esther Livesey, daughter of Jonathan and Katherine Livesey of Lower Dublin township 19th 6mo 1768.

The remaining son of Richard Holcomb and Sarah (Holme) Holcomb, named John Holcombe continued to reside at Abington Pa until 1705. On November 16 1705 he purchased of Richard Wilson of Bucks Co Pa, a tract of 350 acres of land on the New Jersey side of the Delaware about opposite to the tract owned by his brother Jacob. He is designated in this deed as “John Holcombe of Abington, county of Philadelphia and Province aforesaid, yeoman” Near the southwestern border of this purchase was later to be the crossing of the York Road from Philadelphia to New York. This purchase was the first of a series of purchases amounting to nearly 1500 acres and shown on the Lambertville
The Descendants of Sarah Holme.

map. He married Elizabeth Woolrich of Abington Meeting "28th ye second mo 1707." John Holcombe was prominent in the affairs of Old Amwell and early Hunterdon County N. J. He was twice a justice of Burlington County before Hunterdon County was set off from it in 1713, having been appointed justice February 14 1710 and March 17 1713. He was one of the first justices of Hunterdon County being a member of the first court which met at Maidenhead N. J. June 14 1714. He served as Freeholder, Overseer of the Poor; Collector; Surveyor of Roads; etc. All his life he lived a consistent member of the Buckingham Friends Meeting and left a legacy to this meeting upon his death. A few years before his death he built a large stone house on the hillside with a commanding view of the river. This house is still standing and was twice used by Washington as his Headquarters while his army was at Coryells Ferry. John Holcombe had six children. 1 John who died in early life unmarried; 2 Samuel born 1711 and who married Eleanor Barber (most of the Holcombes of New Jersey and Pennsylvania are descendants of this Samuel); 3 Grace who married Phillip Calvin; 4 Mary, married Samuel Furman; 5 Julia Ann, married Daniel Howell; 6 Richard named after his grandfather. He was born March 10 1726, was twice married and died 1783.

John Holcombe died August 1743 and lies buried in the ancient plot of the Friends Burying Ground, Lahaska (Buckingham). He has a large number of descendants, now scattered through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa and many other states. The late Ruben Pownall Ely of Lambertville compiled in 1886 a 500 page manuscript of over 1600 descendants of John Holcombe of the first six generations, not half bearing the name of Holcombe, but through the female line, the names of many old and respected families of New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
One more matter before closing and that is in reference to the statement made above that the Holcombe house has the distinction of having been twice used by General Washington as his headquarters. I am aware that where he stopped is expressed doubtfully in many quarters. This has seemed to me to be due to the fact that both the Pennsylvania and New Jersey sides of the river were for a time called Coryells Ferry. Today being Washington's birthday, it does not seem amiss to say a few words about this historic crossing.

John Wells, whose tract is shown on the New Hope map next to Jacob Holcombe's, both as parts of a tract patented to R. Heath in 1710, appears to have been operating a ferry here before 1715. There was occasion for a ferry here as "Heaths mill at the ferry" was built in 1707, and the Old York Road was opened from Philadelphia to the Delaware in 1711. This ferry became known as "Wells ferry" and in 1719 the Pennsylvania Assembly passed an act granting to John Wells the privilege of operating a ferry for seven years. This license was renewed in 1726 by the Lieutenant Governor for a further term of seven years. In the year 1733 the proprietaries, John, Thomas, and Richard Penn extended the license for another seven years.

As stated above the York Road was opened to the Delaware in 1711. Gradually the trail had been blazed through the wilderness. In August 1693 the road had been laid out from Philadelphia as far as Cheltenham. By 1697 it was further extended to Mooreland by surveys made by Nicholas Scull. Then on the 27th of January 1710 the inhabitants of Buckingham and Solebury petitioned the council of Pennsylvania for a convenient Road to begin at the Delaware opposite John Reading's landing, from thence the most direct and convenient course to Buckingham meeting house; and thence through the lands of Thomas Watson, by the house of
Stephen Jenkins and Richard Wells, and so forward the most direct and convenient course to Philadelphia. A jury composed of Thomas Watson, John Scarborough, Jacob Holcombe, Nathaniel Bye, Matthew Hughes, Joseph Fell, Samuel Cart, Stephen Jenkins, Thomas Hallowell, Griffith Miles, Job Goodson, and Isaac Norris were to lay out the road and return their report in six months. And this was the extention of the York Road through Pennsylvania, the first crossing at the Delaware being at Reading’s Ferry, later called Howell’s ferry, and still later Mitchell’s ferry. But the traffic early began to split and turn off at Well’s ferry four miles below, so that what is known as the York Road in New Jersey begins at Lambertville courses through what is now Mount Airy, Ringoes and Readville to New Brunswick that common meeting point of the various old roads from Burlington and the Falls of the Delaware (now Trenton) for ferrying the Raritan River. This was one of the early wagon roads of the State of New Jersey (not the earliest) and followed an old Indian path. In a deed for land at Ringoes, N. J. dated August 25 1726, this road is described as “the Kings Highway that is called York Road” And so it is called even today.

In the meantime there had settled upon the Jersey side of the river one Samuel Coate the land he settled is described in the deed to John Holcombe as then (1705) belonging to Robert Eaton, “formerly Hugh Howells” Coate seems to have bought the land from Robert Eaton and here he established a ferry which became known as “Coates ferry” No clear brief of the title of this land seems to exist. It was originally a 400 acre tract surveyed to Benjamin Field in 1700. It is alluded to as a Henry Clarks, and as Hugh Howells. On Oct 15 1728 John Coate sold to John Purcell 200 acres of this tract, and on August 4 1732 John Coate then of Bethlehem N. J. sold of John Holcombe 30 acres
of this tract. This deed refers to a post in William Coates and a post in Henry Coates land. John Purcell on Feb. 8, 1732 sold his tract to Emanuel Coryell and one of the courses is described as "a post standing by the Kings Road that leads to the Ferry over the aforesaid River Delaware to John Wells." This deed is the first recorded evidence of the coming of Emanuel Coryell to Amwell in West New Jersey. The next year, January 7, 1733, King George II granted to his "loving subject" Emanuel Coryell "the sole privilege of keeping a ferry at the place called Coates ferry opposite Wells ferry the Pennsylvania side and three miles up and three miles down the said river Delaware and to his heirs and assigns forever." On the Jersey side a small settlement grew up. Here on a site now the southwest corner of Ferry and Union Sts. Lambertville, Emanuel Coryell built a stone tavern, which after standing about 100 years was torn down shortly before the Civil War. John Coryell the eldest son of Emanuel Coryell in 1760 shortly after the death of his father, bought the Wells ferry property on the Pennsylvania side from the widow of Benjamin Canby, and his tavern like the tavern on the Jersey side was known as Coryells tavern. Thus Elizabeth Drinker in her diary Aug (or Sept.) 1771 speaks of going to Coryells tavern on the York Road where Mr. Drinker was to meet "the commissioners for improving and clearing the navigation of the River." Down to 1770 the ferry was generally known as "Wells ferry". Whether prior to 1760 Emanuel Coryell and John Wells were rival ferrymen or whether they jointly operated under a common interest there is no data at hand to determine.

New Hope took its name from a flour mill which came into possession of the Parrys. Since the days of the Heath mill there had been a mill here and in 1790 the Parry mills caught fire and burned down. At about this same time, 1790, they bought the mills on the Jersey
The Descendants of Sarah Holme.

side near "Wells falls" known as the Prime Hope mills and when they rebuilt their mills on the Pennsylvania side, they named them New Hope. About these mills a small settlement grew which by 1810 was known as New Hope. As for the name Lambertville on the Jersey side, it chanced that in 1814 the Hon. John Lambert, United States Senator from New Jersey, secured for his nephew and namesake the appointment of first postmaster here and had the post office designated as Lambertville. This was a disappointment to some of the Coryell family who wanted the place named Georgetown and failing were pleased for a while to call it "Lambertvillany."

In the year 1811 the ferry rights all rested in the New Hope Delaware Bridge Co. organized this year and chartered by Pennsylvania and New Jersey in 1812. And now after another 100 years, January 1920 the bridge is taken over by the two states, the toll house closed and a free passage between the two towns of the two states established.

It is a fact that at the time of the Revolution both sides of the river were known as Coryell's Ferry.

In July 1777 filled with apprehension as to the destination of Howe's fleet, Washington marched across New Jersey. His center, with which his headquarters were attached headed for the crossing at Coryell's Ferry, his right was to cross the river at Howell's Ferry four miles above, while his left marched to Trenton to cross at one of the two ferries at that point. Upon reaching the river, Washington decided to wait more definite news of Howe's movements, and selected the stone house built by John Holcombe for his headquarters. In the manuscript division of the Library of Congress at Washington there are copies of some ten letters of Washington's correspondence written at Headquarters Coryell's Ferry bearing date July 29, 30, and 31 1777. From Colonel Pickering's Journal the
year 1777 we find the following notes of the march; "26 to Morristown, 27th to Reading eighteen miles from Coryell's ferry over the Delaware 28th Marched to the ferry and quartered at a hearty old Quaker's named Oakham." The "hearty old Quaker named Oakham" was Richard Holcombe son of John Holcombe the first settler on the Jersey side of the ferry.

June 1778 when the army left Valley Forge for that memorable march across New Jersey, in pursuit of the enemy retreating from Philadelphia and on the eve of the battle of Monmouth, once again Washington established headquarters in this house. The line of march led from Valley Forge to Crooked Billet now Hatboro, and thence along the York Road to Coryell's Ferry. Washington arrived on the Jersey side about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of June 21 1778 and went directly to the house of Richard Holcombe upon the hillside to the north of the ferry. It was raining and progress of the troops was much delayed so that Washington remained at the house for two days. Copies of seven letters are on file at the Library of Congress prepared at headquarters here on this occasion, namely June 22 & 23 1778. I also found among Washington's Headquarters accounts kept by Capt Caleb Gibbs, a receipt signed by Richard Holcombe for subsistence and entertainment of Washington and his staff on the occasion of this visit.

June 21st 1778

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<tr>
<th>His Excell'cy Gen. Washington To Rich'd &amp; 22, 1778 Holcombe Dr.</th>
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<tr>
<td>To 38 dinners @ 3/9 ................... £7 &quot; 2 &quot; 6—</td>
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<td>To bread butter &amp; other necessaries 1 &quot; 17 &quot; 6—</td>
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<td>To Trouble &amp;c. made in the house.. 1 &quot; 17 &quot; 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Near Coryells Ferry £10 &quot; 17 &quot; 6</td>
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Rec'd y° above account in full

Richard Holcombe
Washington kept an exact account of his headquarters and secret service expenses. Though Congress had fixed the pay of the Commander-in-Chief at five hundred dollars a month, Washington in his address to Congress when accepting this commission said, "As to pay, I beg leave to assure the Congress that, as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit of it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those, I doubt not, they will discharge, and that is all I desire." John Adams, who was present, writing to a friend said of the incident: "He declared, when he accepted the mighty trust, that he would lay before us an exact account of his expenses, and not accept a shilling of pay." Washington's account book noting his advances for headquarters expenses about Germantown, the Brandywine and Valley Forge is entered sometimes in dollars and sometimes in pounds which latter currency he calls "lawful money."

As better reflecting the times than anything I could write I am attaching two photostats of original letters of Washington addressed by Washington to the President of Congress and among the papers of the Continental Congress now on file with the manuscript division of the Library of Congress, and both written from Headquarters at Coryell's Ferry.

I am sorry for this long delay in answering Mr. Hough's inquiry, which may really be of very little interest to anyone else. It was not until I was ordered here in command of the Naval Hospital at League Island during the Great War that I had occasion to learn of the wealth of material in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Very respectfully,

Richmond C. Holcomb.
Comdr. (M. C.) U. S. Navy.