Col. Josiah Granville Leach, a well-known member of the senior Bar of Philadelphia, passed away quietly at his residence, No. 2218 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, May 27, 1922, where he had resided for half a century. He was born at Cape May Court House, New Jersey, July 27, 1842, and was admitted to the Philadelphia Bar March 17, 1866. D. Newlin Fell, lately Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, who was loved and respected by the whole Bar of Pennsylvania, was admitted to practice on the same day, St. Patrick's Day.

I have been asked to write a few words in the way of a memorial of Colonel Leach, and while it had to be done in the midst of the pressure of many judicial duties, including jury trials, such as it is, with all its imperfections, I submit to the friendly and indulgent criticism of my professional brethren; regarding it as a duty just as one would reverently place a flower upon a friend's grave.

Nearly forty years ago Colonel Leach and I formed a close personal relationship which strengthened with the fleeting years, and, due largely to the many similar views of colonial history which we shared in common, I am proud to say that that relationship was maintained to my profound satisfaction in the most cordial manner up until his death. Knowing the man, his aspirations, his worth, integrity and purity of character, and his efficient lifework within the lines selected by himself, I am aware that much of his success was achieved under unusual difficulties, disappointments and obstacles which he surmounted. He excited my genuine sympathy and admiration, especially so during the last five years of his life, when his physical strength
was failing and he was no longer able to do the same work, day in and day out, as formerly, exemplifying the adage that the Old Guard dies but does not surrender. You did not accord him honor as a tribute when you realized what he had to contend with physically as he compelled it. It will be remembered that at the time of his admission to the Bar the Civil War had just closed, and that both himself and Mr. Justice Fell had served in the United States Army; Colonel Leach as Sergeant, 25th New Jersey Infantry. At the Philadelphia Bar he was not known as a trial lawyer. The forum did not appeal to him. He devoted himself to Orphans’ Court work, conveyancing, drawing wills and managing estates, which is now done almost exclusively by title and trust companies. In those days, before the advent of title and trust companies, all deeds and wills were drawn and briefs of title prepared and opinions thereon given by lawyers as to its marketability. Today one simply gets a title policy. I recall my surprise in my early days at the Bar, nearly forty years ago, when no less an authority than Mr. Richard C. McMurtrie declined to accept a policy of title insurance in a matter in which I was counsel, and told me to give him a brief of title and searches showing a clear title to the property, so that he himself could decide whether his client was obtaining a title, and he added: “And you want me to accept a deed and pass a title upon the mere say so of a corporation title company which may be correct or not!” This is only interesting now as a matter of history, showing the antagonistic attitude of the older members of the Bar toward title companies in their incipiency. Now title insurance is the accepted method of the transfer of real estate and many other legal matters also which the old lawyers of Philadelphia like Joseph B. Townsend, Eli K. Price, George W. Biddle, William Henry Rawle, John Cadwalader, John Samuel and many other law-
yers of high standing regarded as a commercial invasion of the practice of the law and not to be encouraged. Most of their fears have not materialized, although some have, and while some title companies have failed, as they predicted, all that the owners of real estate had to guarantee their title was a policy of a bankrupt title company, as once happened before me in court. Colonel Leach was not enthusiastic about title companies, as he was of the old school, but he lived to see them eminently successful and doing properly the work formerly done by lawyers, and to the satisfaction of those who employed them. He never undertook any criminal work. It was distasteful to him, and I imagine if he had gone into the criminal court he would have felt so strangely that he would almost have asked to be introduced. I recollect his having so stated to me when I was one of the Assistant District Attorneys of this county over twenty years ago. Among the things not generally known of him were his many ready kindnesses to his clients, both rich and poor; like the general practitioner in medicine, he was the family lawyer. The courtesies may have differed in kind, but the result was ever the same. It can be said of few attorneys in active practice, as can be said of Colonel Leach, except perhaps Mr. Cadwalader, unless we remember the Binneys, the Tilghmans, the Rawles, the Sergeants, Ingersolls and Gerhards in their time, that they have rendered legal services to five generations of one family, settling the estates of generation after generation, and investing the proceeds of the estates of those who followed, remaining meanwhile the friend, advisor and counselor of all. It seems, in relating this incident, like taking a page from an old English family history rather than the recital of a fact about the practice of a Philadelphia lawyer of our day; but it illustrates the changes that have taken place, and it shows the man, simple and direct of manner, positive in his
viewpoint, faithful to his ideals, partisan perhaps at times, and uncompromising in his attitude towards matters which seemed to him of principle and fundamental.

He was the Honorary President of the Pennsylvania Society Sons of the Revolution, of which I have the honor to be a Vice-President with Rt. Rev. James H. Darlington, D.D., Hon. Charlemagne Tower, General Asher Miner, U. S. A., and Edward S. Sayres.

Colonel Leach was Chairman of the Membership Committee from the organization of the Society in April, 1888, until April 4, 1921, as well as a member of the Board of Managers, and he passed upon over 4000 applications, original and supplemental, which bear his signature, and during this whole period of thirty-four years he never missed a meeting until April 4th of last year, a rather remarkable record and much to his credit and honor.

His charity was of such a generous character that one might venture to say it was disproportioned to his income, and, in addition, in many legal matters, if his clients were poor, he charged them little, if anything. If he loomed large in the hearts of many grateful clients, it may be said of him, as Senator Dolliver once said of Lincoln, speaking materially, "A man who habitually gives his advice away for nothing, has not the foresight to ask for a retainer, nor the energy to collect a fee after he has earned it, no matter what other gifts and graces he may have, is not fitted by nature or cut out for a lawyer." An altruist has little regard for money, but such conduct redounds greatly to his honor in life and when he is no more.

I should say two of the facts I have admired in him were his conservative ideas as to the making of money, and his devotion to his friends in life, and their memory after they have passed into the beyond.

Colonel Leach's great care and accuracy in historical
J. Granville Leach.

matters tempt me to relate a personal incident which illustrates it. He seemed to have always a record, will or deed for his historical statements, as lawyers say it, he was always ready to prove them beyond a reasonable doubt. Some ten years ago I was asked by a mutual friend, Dr. T. Hewson Bradford, to address the Society of Colonial Wars of Pennsylvania upon the subject of "Colonial Judges and Lawyers," and I said I would do it. After three months had gone by, during which time I had, with the aid of Dr. J. F. Sachse and Colonel Leach, been gathering material for it, Dr. Bradford called upon me and said: "I find our annual meeting is our twentieth anniversary. Would it make any difference to you if you should change your address from "Colonial Judges and Lawyers" to the "Colonial Wars in America?" I replied, "Not at all, Doctor; I do not know anything much about either subject, and I can talk equally well about one as the other."

After my Colonial Wars address was prepared, I sent a copy of it to Colonel Leach, and he, with his great caution, suggested that I add a few words that it was not to be considered a history in detail of Colonial Wars of America, but rather a brief résumé of the same. The Society of Colonial Wars did me the honor of printing this address, and a copy of it can be found in the library of the Law Association.

Pennsylvania owes a debt of gratitude to Colonel Leach for preserving many notable incidents of her history, and to a small group consisting of Dr. Charles I. Stille, Dr. Frederick D. Stone, Charles R. Hildeburn, Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker, Dr. Gregory B. Keen, Brinton Coxe, John Samuel, Charles Henry Jones, Joseph Ingersoll Doran, Edward S. Sayres, John F. Lewis, Dr. John Woolf Jordan, S. Davis Page and Hampton L. Carson, their literary labors, evidenced by books and printed papers in the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, are of great interest.
and of the highest value to the critical student and investigator of American history who may have occasion to consult them, because their strongest point is their accuracy. Like President Roosevelt, Colonel Leach held the thought that the most uncomfortable truth, in the long run, is a safer companion than the pleasantest falsehood.

One is almost tempted to say that the men whom I have thus hastily named from memory, with Colonel Leach, were in fact The Historical Society of Pennsylvania itself. They were the master workmen who built the foundations upon which it rests so securely to-day, and it will forever remain as their monument.

Governor Pennypacker records in his Autobiography his meeting with Colonel Leach in 1865, when he was reading law in the office of Byron Woodward. The Governor adds: "Leach introduced me into the Law Academy, and at his suggestion, while yet a student in 1865, was elected its assistant secretary. I, therefore, owe to Leach my first professional recognition."

Colonel Leach had great regard for my predecessor, Judge Sharswood, President Judge of the District Court, noted for his learning, dignity and impartiality, whose portrait hangs in my court room, who taught him law at the University of Pennsylvania, and he always mentioned him with love and profound respect. Sharswood had one of those kindly dispositions which made everybody fond of him, and Pennypacker, who also was one of his scholars, tells us: "With young men he was ever gentle, and late in life he afforded the pathetic spectacle of a father watching through the night for the incoming of an only son whose wildness and waywardness he ever condoned. He had no presence, no voice and a troubled utterance; he suffered much from a physical cause, and, in the trial of cases, paced slowly up and down behind the bench. Later he became Chief Justice of the Commonwealth, and after a career of
great distinction, died universally esteemed and leaving his edition of Blackstone for the instruction of the profession.” The lectures he delivered in a building on the west side of Ninth Street, north of Chestnut Street, and it was here Colonel Leach graduated as a Bachelor of Law, and he was given the diploma in 1866.

Muddy thinking and inaccurate writing, especially exploiting that as history which never happened, annoyed him. Sir Boyle Roche’s Humor did not amuse him as it did the writer. I once used one of Roche’s Jokes to emphasize a point I was trying to make. During the troublous times in which Roche lived, life and property were deemed insecure. He wrote to a friend: “You may judge of our state when I tell you that I write this with a pistol in each hand and a sword in the other.” Colonel Leach used his blue pencil (and it was unused by me), and I gladly accepted his judgment.

The American branch of the Leach family was founded in Massachusetts, in 1629, by Lawrence Leach. In 1676 the Colonial Government appointed William Manning, another of Mr. Leach’s ancestors, to obtain funds for the erection of the first hall of Harvard College.

Colonel Leach received his preliminary education under private tutors and in private schools in Philadelphia. For several years prior to 1863 he was engaged in newspaper work, but in that year he entered the Union Army as sergeant in the 25th New Jersey Volunteers.

He devoted much time to organizing soldiers’ aid societies to provide clothing and hospital stores for the sick and wounded. For gallant conduct at the Battle of Fredericksburg he was promoted to sergeant-major, and then to second lieutenant. In 1887 he was commissioned Commissary General of the National Guard of Pennsylvania with the rank of colonel. At the time
of the Johnstown flood he was summoned to that city, where he organized the department for feeding and clothing the sufferers. The strongest factors in his life were, I think, his love for work and his love for his fellow-men. His industry was unceasing; his desire to help others unbounded.

In 1866 he was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law Department and entered upon active practice in Philadelphia, in which he continued until his death.

When only nineteen he became interested in politics and delivered campaign speeches in support of Lincoln, Hamlin and others.

He was a member of the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1876, but declined renomination. Subsequently the Greenback Labor Party nominated him for the same position, but he declined.

In 1880, in the Garfield Campaign, he took an active interest for the Republican candidate. At that period it was customary in order to stir up enthusiasm for the respective candidates of the Republican and Democratic Parties to have campaign marching clubs. Philadelphia had the Young Republicans, marshalled by such young men as Edwin S. Stuart, afterwards Mayor of Philadelphia, and in 1907, Governor of Pennsylvania; Robert von Moschzisker, now Chief Justice of Pennsylvania; Dimmer Beeber, later Judge of the Superior Court; Gen. Wendell P. Bowman and Gen. J. Lewis Good, Joseph M. Gazzam, an Allegheny County Senator; C. C. A. Baldi, now an Inspector of the Eastern Penitentiary; Charles F. Warwick, City Solicitor and afterwards Mayor of Philadelphia; Abraham M. BeItler, Director of Public Safety, and after that Judge of Court of Common Pleas No. 1, now practicing law and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania; James Alcorn, subsequently City Solicitor and more lately on the Public
Service Commission; A. Lincoln Acker, lately High Sheriff; Mahlon D. Young, Alfred S. Eisenhower, Hampton L. Carson, later Attorney General of Pennsylvania; Robert N. Willson, F. Amadee Brégy, Charles B. McMichael, Robert Ralston, subsequently to go upon the bench of the Common Pleas Courts, and a host of others subsequently prominent at the Philadelphia Bar and in commercial life, not forgetting Thomas L. Hicks, then Chairman of the Finance Committee of City Councils. The Republican Invincibles under James L. Miles, President of Select Council, and afterward High Sheriff of the County of Philadelphia, and the old Harmony Legion under John O'Donnell, later Recorder of Deeds of Philadelphia County, were the other prominent Republican marching clubs, but these two latter organizations differed from the Young Republicans in their personnel, in that most of their membership consisted of men active politically in their respective wards. The Democratic Party had the Moyamensing Legion under William McMullin, locally known as "The Squire," and the Young Men's Democratic Association under John Cadwalader, later Collector of the Port of Philadelphia. It was then thought these marching organizations kept the young men in line, educated them in the principles they advocated, and they were regarded as important parts of their party organization, and most helpful in obtaining results. Col. Leach raised one of the companies of the Young Republicans, known as "Company H," was elected its captain and served as such most efficiently during the whole campaign. He was ably assisted by two well-known lawyers, Theodore M. Etting, as first lieutenant, Edward S. Sayres, second lieutenant, and James Mau- ran Rhodes, of the old banking firm of C. & H. Borie, as third lieutenant. This company ranked unusually high even for the Young Republicans, especially socially, as it was composed mostly of members of the Philadelphia
and Rittenhouse Clubs, and its members and their relatives and friends were more or less independent politically, not previously taking part in local politics in any manner. The company was always greeted with great applause, and the citizens of the Seventh and Eighth Wards residing on Spruce street presented them with a set of colors in front of Joseph Hazlehurst’s house on Spruce Street below Eleventh street.

It will be noted that most of the members of the Young Republicans possessed names now known and honored throughout the State of Pennsylvania, but it was not until later they rendered public service and achieved distinction. Forty-two years ago when they marched with the Young Republicans they were little more than boys with life and its possibilities before them, with all its aspirations, illusions and dreams, and they had not yet succeeded in getting on the first rung of the ladder of success, which many of them afterward climbed to the top. At this time they were merely in a receptive condition, working and waiting for success.

In the spirit of accuracy it might not be amiss to mention that the writer was President of the Young Republicans when he was nominated by the Republican citizens of this County for the Bench in 1902, to succeed Judge Pennypacker, who had resigned to accept the nomination for Governor.

In 1889 he was appointed appraiser at the Port of Philadelphia, this being President Harrison’s first appointment in the city. His management of the office won him commendatory notice from the Treasury Department.

On Oct. 5, 1866, in Philadelphia, Colonel Leach was married to Miss Elizabeth R. Whilldin, a daughter of the late Captain Wilmon Whilldin, a wealthy steamboat owner of this city. Mrs. Leach died last January. Their children are J. Granville Leach, Jr., Dr. Wilmon Whilldin Leach, Meredith Biddle Leach and Annie Adele Leach.
Colonel Leach was a member of Old St. Peter’s Church (Episcopal) of Philadelphia. He was widely known for his historical and genealogical investigations. He was the first to suggest June 14th be recognized as Flag Day.

He was one of the leaders in the formation of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania and since 1913 its president. He was histriographer of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for over twenty years; a founder and historian of the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution; a deputy governor general of the Society of Mayflower Descendants; a councilor of the Colonial Society of Pennsylvania; a member of the Society of Colonial Wars; founder and councilor of the Old Planters’ Society of Massachusetts, and a member of numerous historic organizations.

His belief in the importance and efficacy of the patriotic hereditary societies was fixed and immovable upon the principle that like produces like, and the descendant of a race-horse once started would run true to form. He thought no better agency existed wherein and whereby minds could be turned to the study of history and the development of mankind. Under this influence he had seen men and women gain in self-respect and in appreciation of the things of the spirit. Indeed, I may almost say this whole subject was a half-religion with him, increasing with years as his strength to “carry on” diminished.

He was the editor of "The Journal of the Rev. Silas Constant," "Annals of the Sinnott, Rogers, Coffin, Corlies, Reeves, Bodie and Allied Families," "Some Account of the Tree Family," and "Some Account of John Redington, of Topsfield, Massachusetts, and Some of His Descendants, with notes on the Wales Family." His last work is entitled "Some Account of Captain John Frazier and His Descendants, with notes on the West and Checkley Families." These are printed solely for private circulation.

If Colonel Leach had failings, as all human beings have, I do not recall them. I can think only of acts which merit praise, and high praise—Semper Fidelis—Like David Garrick, I have learned to think more of a friend's virtues than of his failings.

Since I have been upon the bench, such judges as Michael Arnold, M. Russell Thayer, Craig Biddle, Thomas K. Finletter, Henry J. McCarthy, W. Wilkins Carr, Edward W. Magill, John L. Kinsey, William W. Wiltbank, D. Webster Dougherty and Henry M. Wessel have been removed by death, and hardly a week passes now but that some well-known member of the Bar, often a friend and associate of many years, will leave us, his work on earth completed, to join the great majority beyond the river. The other day it was R. Stuart Smith, Esq., who, though a young man, had already earned an enviable place for himself at the Bar. Then Judges Brégy and Willson, full of years and honors. Now it is Colonel Leach whose loss we mourn, after a worthy career. Another of these sad events cannot fail to remind us of the senior Bar that our circle is narrowing, that the time of our own departure may not be very far removed. My deepest hope is that our personal example and professional conduct may shine with no uncertain light, and our memories, like that of our friend and brother, Colonel Leach, may be cherished and hallowed when we are no more.