The Philadelawareans:
A Study in the Relations Between
Philadelphia and Delaware in the
Late Eighteenth Century

"Having made an appointment three weeks ago to go to Philadelphia with Mr. Abraham Winekoop I fixt on this day to set off—before I was quit Ready I went Round the Town To bid my friends fare well."

So Thomas Rodney began, on September 14, 1769, his journal of a trip from Dover to Philadelphia. It was, of course, a considerable journey which he was undertaking. Philadelphia was three days to the north—a glamorous cosmopolis which would afford young Rodney an endless round of tea, grog, and coffee drinking with friends, of visiting the ships on the river, and of playing billiards in Spring Garden. But such pleasant dalliance soon exhausted the youth and he hastened back to the Lower Counties and to a tryst with his sweetheart.\(^2\)

The time of Rodney’s trip and the formality of his farewells indicate the relative isolation of central Delaware in his day. Compared with the 1940’s, when one might even commute from Dover to Philadelphia, the isolation was indeed great. Most especially was this true of Kent and Sussex counties. New Castle County, northernmost of the three that comprise Delaware, was fortunate in lying athwart the main land route of travel from Philadelphia and the North to Baltimore and the South. Through Kent and Sussex, however, almost no one found his way, unless he was interested in

1 From an address delivered before the Pennsylvania Historical Junto in Washington on November 24, 1944.
2 Thomas Rodney, Journal of a Trip from Dover to Philadelphia, September 14 to 22, 1769, Rodney MSS. (Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington.)

128
those two counties themselves. No cities of any size existed on the lower peninsula; and the flat plain that today lures motorists southward-bound to choose the peninsular road to the Cape Charles Ferry then provided few temptations to the traveller. On each side of this three-hundred-mile long jetty are natural waterways which the pre-macadamite eighteenth century preferred to its roads—in-terminable stretches of ruts and rocks alternating with inadequate bridges, fords, and ferries. The Chesapeake and the Delaware, with, when it had terminated, the Atlantic, too, coursed on each side of Delmarva both to its advantage and its detriment. To its advantage they brought shallops and barges up its creeks, its Appoquinimy, Mispillion, and Nanticoke. To its disadvantage they allowed coastal trade to by-pass its towns, barely flirting with New Castle, Port Penn, and Lewes on the way to New York, Charleston, or Cap François.

Yet in spite of the difficult distances of the eighteenth century, Delaware's three counties perched beside their river found themselves inexorably drawn into the cultural, social, and economic sphere of the river's metropolis, that colossus to the north of whose prospects a local booster had written as early as 1730:

Europe shall mourn her ancient fame declined
And Philadelphia be the Athens of Mankind.3

Back and forth between the Quaker-founded city and the Lower Counties travelled a human throng in the late eighteenth century—physicians like James Tilton, Nathaniel Luff, John Vaughan, and Edward Miller, printers like James Adams and Hezekiah Niles, writers like John Parke and William Cobbett, lawyers like James Bayard and Gunning Bedford, preachers like Morgan Edwards and Matthew Wilson, mechanics like Oliver Evans and John Fitch, gentrly like Benjamin Chew and John Dickinson, soldiers like Washington and Howe, distinguished foreign visitors like the Duc de la Rochefoucault Liancourt and Francisco de Miranda, and innumerable shallopmen and postriders whose names have long been forgotten. Nor did the men proceed alone; they carried a baggage with them, not merely of Spanish lace or plaster of paris or Madeira wines or fine furniture, but an assortment of ideas to be displayed in the

market places of the mind. Thus the American Athens cast the light of her learning into a segment of her rural Attica.

Up the Delaware to Philadelphia the produce of the farms and forests was carried—Indian corn and wheat from New Castle and Kent, shingles and boards from Sussex. Back again the vessels came to the farm landings and village wharves with "a pattern of cloth" and "Jersy Chees" and "Virginia Twist Tobacco" and other goods easily procured in a cosmopolitan mart.

But sometimes the wheat was ground at home, and proximity and reputation brought Conestoga wagons rolling down the hills from Lancaster and Chester counties with more grist for the Lea mills at Brandywine or the Latimer mills at Newport on the Christiana. From these merchant mills ships loaded the cargo easily, by grace of Oliver Evans' devices, and carried it directly overseas or, more often, to Philadelphia, where it was transshipped to larger schooners. In Thomas Mendenhall's Wilmington yard near the Foul Anchor Inn, thirty wagons sometimes stood at once, waiting overnight to be loaded on Philadelphia-bound sloops. John and William Warner advertised in 1798 that their "fast sailing packet boat with every accommodation for passengers" would run to Philadelphia as soon as the plague had subsided and added that the trade of those who had flour to ship was solicited.

The Bush line in the 1790's supplied de luxe passenger and freight service between Wilmington and Philadelphia on their new packet, the Nancy, at a rate of fifty cents a head. Meals were served on the ship, breakfast and supper costing twenty-five cents each and dinner twice that sum. The trip took from six to nine hours, departures, which depended upon the tide, being signalled by the ringing of a large bell on the Wilmington storehouse of the firm. In this storehouse the Bushes kept the flour, salt, plaster of paris, and fish that they offered for sale. So profitable was the packet business that


6 Wilmington, *Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser*, January 4, 1798. The Warners and James Hemphill were running competing packets to Philadelphia in the fall of 1799. Wilmington, *Mirror of the Times*, November 20, 1799.
Captain Milner of the _Nancy_ bought, with some partners, another sloop with which he began to compete with the _Nancy_ for the Philadelphia trade in 1794.\(^7\)

New Castle, too, had her share of the river commerce. Joseph Tatlow in 1775 started running a packet there from Philadelphia, while a complementary line was begun on the Chesapeake between Frenchtown and Baltimore, the New Castle and Frenchtown wharves being connected by a stage line which was established in the same year. Thus a short easy transit was provided from Philadelphia to Baltimore down the Delaware by packet to New Castle, across the head of the peninsula by stage, then by packet again to Baltimore.\(^8\) So popular was the line that New Castle once again came to rival Wilmington as a port. Though most of Delaware’s foreign commerce moved through Wilmington, yet there stopped at New Castle “as great and perhaps a greater number of vessels . . . during the summer and fall seasons . . ., generally those in the Irish trade and those bound to Philadelphia, where parts of their cargoes belong to Baltimore.”\(^9\) In 1794 the Insurance Company of North America purchased two hundred and fifty tickets in a “Lottery for building Piers at New Castle,”\(^10\) which indicates that this conservative Philadelphia enterprise felt deeply concerned about a Delaware port.\(^11\)

Even small towns like Newport and Christiana were terminals for stage-boat lines established by John McCallmont and the Hollingsworths. Indeed during the Revolution the protected Christiana route along which they lay became an alternate to the New Castle-Frenchtown road in providing communication between Philadelphia

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\(^7\) Samuel Bush began a regular service to Philadelphia in 1774 with the thirty-ton sloop _Ann_. Before this there had been no regular communication between Wilmington and Philadelphia, and merchants plagued by the long day’s journey by land or water had gone to Philadelphia only in the spring or fall. Scharf, _History of Delaware_, II, 757.

\(^8\) _Ibid._, 866; Duc de la Rochefoucault Liancourt, _Travels through the United States of North America . . . in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797_ (London, 1800), III, 538-539.

\(^9\) James Booth to George Read, New Castle, April 24, 1789, William T. Read, _Life and Correspondence of George Read_. . . (Philadelphia, 1870), 477.

\(^10\) Marquis James, _Biography of a Business, 1792-1942_ (Indianapolis, 1942), 53.

\(^11\) Nor was this strange, for ships bound to sea from Philadelphia really took their departure from New Castle. “When they are laden, they drop down thither with their pilot, and take in their poultry and vegetables, where the captains who remain at Philadelphia to settle their accounts at the custom-house join them by land, and from whence they sail with the first wind.” Rochefoucault, _Travels_, III, 539.
and Baltimore free of danger from the British fleet. Since that fleet raided commerce on the Delaware Bay, its activities hampered the normal intercourse between downstate Delaware and Philadelphia, diverting some of the trade to New York and thus encouraging "trading with the enemy" and the general cause of Toryism in southern Delaware. This threat to the Philadelphian connection became so bothersome that Delaware's legislature empowered the executive "to fit out barges to cruise on the bay and river of Delaware for the protection of the trade thereof."

Delaware's roads like Delaware's river led to Philadelphia. From the southern end of the peninsula one road ran north through Horn Town (Virginia), Snow Hill (Maryland), and Dagsbury, Milford, Dover, and Wilmington to Marcus Hook, Chester, and Philadelphia. Northwestward from Wilmington the roads to interior Pennsylvania shortened the path for Lancaster and Chester County products en route to Philadelphia via Christiana River wharves. West from Wilmington the highway from Philadelphia continued to Newport, Christiana, and the Head of Elk Creek, in Maryland, where the traveller might choose between continuing on land to Havre de Grace and Baltimore or embarking for a sail down the Chesapeake. Southward from Wilmington to New Castle lay a much travelled section of the road running on down state past the Red Lion Tavern to Dover. Christiana Bridge, which is today pronounced "Chris- teen" by the natives, was connected at the Red Lion with both the southern highway and with New Castle. From the Red Lion another popular route led southwestward to Warwick, Maryland, and on to the Chesapeake's shore. From this Eastern Shore road and from the main road down Delaware, various other roads reached back into the interior, to Georgetown, new seat of Sussex County, and to the

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12 Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 894, 941; Morse, Abridgment, 94.
13 Toryism in Delaware is discussed by Harold B. Hancock in The Delaware Loyalists, Papers of the Historical Society of Delaware, New Series, III (Wilmington, 1940).
14 Minutes of the Council of the Delaware State from 1776 to 1792 (Dover, 1886), 562-563; Delaware Archives (Wilmington, 1911-1919), II, 920-930; Governor's Register, State of Delaware, . . . 1674 to 1851 (Wilmington, 1926), 35; Laws of the State of Delaware (New Castle, 1797), II, chap. XCII B, 771; John A. Munroe, "Relations between the Delaware Legislature and the Continental Congress, 1776-1789" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1941), 168-171.
coast, at Lewes, old county seat and port. Thus the whole provided a network of communications which the peninsula’s shape tightened at the top and directed toward Philadelphia.

To be sure, these roads offered no attraction in themselves. Travelers bore many difficulties with varying amounts of patience. Thomas Rodney relates how he and his wife-to-be, Betsey Fisher, travelled north from Dover “Very Safe Till We Came To Patersons Mill, who’s Dam had been broke by the Storm—When We Came there, Betsey got Down and Walk’d behind the Chair, and I got out and Lead the Horse—about Midway the Dam we had to go of [sic] on one side, and as it was Very Steep going down the Chair was Like to Over Set. I Immediately Stopt the Horse to Run and Right it—but before I got to it the frollick began. it Tiptd over Quite Topsy Turvy and Scared the horse So that he took of [sic] and the first jump, the Spring Struck against a Large Logg that Lay in the way which broke the Carriage all to Shatters Leaving Nothing Whole but the Wheels and Box.”

Coming down the same road nineteen years later Rodney again had trouble crossing a stream. Near the present-day town of Smyrna he dismounted to lead his horse over “the bridge that crosses the Mill run at Duck Town, it being very Much rotten and broken, . . . but there being an ugly hole just at the foot of it, the Horse got scared and jumpt round it, and by that means jumpt on my right foot.”

The erratic Mr. Rodney’s chair and his foot were not the only casualties of early Delaware travel. The Due de la Rochefoucault Liancourt found this state “distinguished by the bad condition of...”

15 The following maps were consulted in the map collection of the Wilmington Institute Free Library: John Churchman, To the American Philosophical Society This Map of the Peninsula between Delaware & Chesapeake Bays (reprint, Washington, 1937); Delaware, engraved by A. Doolittle (New Haven, 1798); Delaware from the Best Authorities . . . , engraved for Carey’s American Edition of Guthrie’s Geography Improved, W. Barker, sculp. (Philadelphia, 1795); J. Denison, Map of the States of Maryland and Delaware (Boston, 1796); Map of the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays with the Peninsula between them, copied by Andrew Skinner, 1780, photostat from MS. map; Map of the State of Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland . . . from Actual Survey and Soundings Made in 1799, 1800 & 1801, Francis Shallus, eng. (Philadelphia, n.d.); Joseph Scott, “Map of Delaware River and Bay . . . 1795,” from United States Gazetteer (Philadelphia, 1795); D. F. Sotzmann, Maryland und Delaware (Hamburg, 1797); “States of Maryland and Delaware from the Latest Survey,” engraved for Payne’s Geography (New York, 1799).

17 T. Rodney, Diary, May 11, 1788, Rodney MSS.
the roads, and by the bridges, which are almost all constructed of wood. Over them, however, were brought the mails, south, like the duke, from Philadelphia. Regular stage-coach lines were established, and through them Delaware was linked to Philadelphia in still another way.

Along the routes of communication from Philadelphia to Delaware came a steady flow of printed matter. Philadelphia newspapers circulated in the Lower Counties, as their advertisements and their letters from readers indicated. Almanacs, magazines, and books came to Delaware from the same source or at least by way of it. Lists of subscribers printed in the back of many of the Philadelphia books of the period give proof of the literary interests of Delawareans.

Not content with importing printed matter from Philadelphia, Delaware obtained from that city the person of its first printer. Like many a member of his profession this man, James Adams, was an immigrant from the north of Ireland, in his case, Londonderry, where he had learned his trade. In Philadelphia he had worked for Franklin and Hall, who did some official printing for the Delaware legislature. No doubt it was through this connection that Adams was encouraged to come to Wilmington and set up the State’s first press in 1761. Nor did Adams terminate all business connections with

18 Rochebouc, Travels, III, 487. William Cobbett spoke of the roads as being "impassable after the least rain." William Reitzel, ed., The Progress of a Plough-Boy to a Seat in Parliament . . . (London, 1933), 60. Cobbett was one of the many ambitious men who moved from Delaware to Philadelphia because of the opportunities offered in America’s metropolis of the day. Ibid.
19 Harvey C. Bounds, Postal History of Delaware (Newark, 1938), 16.
20 For example, the Pennsylvania Packet for January 2, 1775, carried the minutes of the committee of observation of New Castle County, a note concerning a lottery for the Newark Academy, and an offer of a reward for the return of a stolen "chestnut sorrel horse" to Benjamin Petterman, of Newport. The Pennsylvania Journal for April 9, 1777, announced the marriage of Dr. James Wynkoop and Hetty Patterson, both of New Castle County, and advertised real estate for sale in Murderkill Hundred, Kent County, and in Newark, New Castle County. Such Delaware items seem to have been less common in Philadelphia newspapers of the 1790’s, probably because Delawareans were then more easily reached by the newly-established Wilmington papers.
21 Seventy-six copies of Oliver Evans’ The Young Mill-Wright & Miller’s Guide (Philadelphia, 1795) were subscribed to in Delaware before publication. Forty-one Delaware subscribers are listed in the bound volume of Carey’s American Museum for 1789 (vol. V).
Philadelphia on coming to Wilmington. He is known to have lent the services of an apprentice to another Irish-born Philadelphian, Mathew Carey. With him he also exchanged oversupplies of the books that he sold in his shop.\footnote{Richard G. Stone, Hezekiah Niles as an Economist, in Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, ser. LI, no. 5 (Baltimore, 1933), 36.}

The famous publisher of The Register, Hezekiah Niles, is another printer who might be called a Philadelwarean. Born in Wilmington, he was apprenticed at the age of seventeen to Benjamin Johnson, a Philadelphia printer. In three years with Johnson, Niles must have learned his trade well, for he eventually became known as “the fastest typesetter in the business.”\footnote{Ibid., 41.} Returning to Wilmington in 1797, he collaborated with James Adams’ son John in the publication of an almanac. After publishing sermons and political essays he formed, in 1799, a partnership with Vincent Bonsall, which lasted only two years when the firm failed after publishing an edition of John Dickinson’s Political Writings.\footnote{Ibid., 37-38.} Shortly thereafter Niles moved to Baltimore, where “his opportunity for success as a publicist was much greater than it ever had been in Wilmington,” since the Delaware city “had too many printers and was close to Philadelphia, the center of the art.”\footnote{Ibid., 53-59.}

Printing was not, of course, the only Delaware business that maintained close connections with Philadelphia. Something has already been said of the trade in agricultural and forest products. Prices current for the Brandywine flour mills were regularly listed in the Philadelphia newspapers, and properly so. For those mills were the principal part of an industry so considerable that a New England geographer of the period claimed, “Wilmington and its neighborhood are probably already the greatest seat of manufactures in the United States.”\footnote{Morse, Abridgment, 115. “The most notable concentration of mill industries in America was at Wilmington, where an ample and reliable water-power in the chief grain-growing district of America was united with river and ocean navigation.” Victor S. Clark, History of Manufactures in the United States (Washington, 1916), I, 185.} Moreover, the greatest part of this flour was bought by Philadelphia merchants for exportation.\footnote{Rochefoucault, Travels, III, 530.}

One can hardly speak of the Delaware flour mills without recalling...
the name of their greatest mechanic, Oliver Evans, a true Philadel-
warean. Born in or near Newport in 1755, son of a cordwainer turned
farmer, Evans was apprenticed to a wheelwright, whom he later left
to join his brothers at their mill. Early in his life the examination of
a Newcomen atmospheric engine persuaded him "that there was a
power capable of propelling any waggon, provided," as he wrote,
"that I could apply it; and I set myself to work to find out the means
doing so." While engaged in the attempt to perfect an amphib-
ious steam dredge, his Orukter Amphibolus, he invented various
labor-saving devices for the milling industry, which were patented
to him in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware, and by the federal
government. The promotion of this work together with the prepa-
ration of his first book probably caused him to sell his share in a
mill on the Red Clay Creek, Delaware, and move to Philadelphia in
1792. The remainder of his life contributed to the enrichment of
that city's cultural history, though his contribution was insufficiently
appreciated in his day.

Social contacts and family relationships linking Delaware and
Philadelphia were so numerous that rare was the Delawarean who
did not have friends or relatives in the metropolis. The renowned
seamstress, Betsy Ross, for example, was married to John Ross, son
of the Reverend Aeneas Ross, rector of Immanuel Church, New
Castle. The playwright and novelist, Robert Montgomery Bird, was
reared by his uncle Nicholas Van Dyke, also of New Castle. Governor
Thomas Mifflin was related to the rugged Quaker abolitionist and
prohibitionist, Warner Mifflin, of Kent County. Chews, Rodneys,
Reads, Dickinsons, Bayards, Gilpins, Shallcrosses, Leas—and so on

30 *Ibid.*, 4. Joseph Tatnall and his son-in-law Thomas Lea were the first of the Brandywine
millers to install Evans' devices. An Isaac Lea married the daughter of Mathew Carey in 1821,
32 Bathe and Bathe, *Evans*, 28, 32.
33 One might note that Evans' contemporary and rival, John Fitch, was a pioneer in a new
medium of transportation between Philadelphia and Delaware, since Fitch's steamboat made
at least thirty-one trips on the Delaware in 1790, going as far north of Philadelphia as Trenton
and as far south as Wilmington. Greville Bathe, "A Digest of Fitch's Steamboats, 1786–1792,"
through the roster of the Lower Counties' first families, almost without exception—all had similar connections.  

These connections were constantly strengthened by visits back and forth. Health, pleasure, and business occasioned a constant commerce between the areas. The Delaware politician who arrived in Philadelphia to attend Congress spent some of his free time in looking up old acquaintances, as did the student and the merchant. In turn, Philadelphians sought out their friends from the country when the city was ravaged by the plagues of the 1790's or when the changing fortunes of politics brought temporary disfavor, as to a Dickinson or a Chew. And then as now many Delawareans came home to die.

Through the society of both places flitted the tragic figure of Mary Vining, sister of a Congressman, acquaintance of noblemen, beloved of a dashing soldier. The Vining gaiety which made the brother and sister politically and socially so charming led to the family's downfall. John Vining was Delaware's first member of the United States House of Representatives and was justly famous for his oratorical ability and his promise as a trial lawyer. But he flourished early and for a short time only. Improvidence, drink, and disease seem to have ruined his career, though an early death spared him a disillusioning age. Mary was not so fortunate. After Anthony Wayne's death she retired from the gay world and devoted herself to the care of her brother's children. Let her be remembered as she was in 1783 when the Venezuelan patriot, Miranda, met her in Philadelphia with her friends, Peggy Chew and Sally Shippen. A woman, he described her, whose conversation "is sought after by strangers and men of good taste." "A mixture," he added, "of bizarreness and capriciousness in her conduct produce often an almost incompatible contrast with her singular knowledge and good

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34 Among the Negroes too such bonds existed. For example, Lydia, a young slave girl, escaped from her master at Lewes in 1799 and was assumed to be making her way to Philadelphia, where her husband, a free Negro, lived. Wilmington, Mirror of the Times November 20, 1799. Rochefoucault wrote that "the smallness of the state, its vicinity to Philadelphia, its situation on the edge of the bay or the river Delaware, affords the Negroes very easy means of running away from their masters; which I am told they very frequently do." Travels, III, 335.

35 President Washington considered calling Congress to meet in Wilmington in 1793 to escape the plague in Philadelphia. See his letter to Jefferson, October 11, 1793, W. C. Ford, ed., Writings of Washington (New York, 1891), XII, 335.
ideas." Not so favorable is the picture painted of her a decade later by the Anglo-Irish refugee, Hamilton Rowan, who knew her in Wilmington. "And now for Miss V.—eternally gabbling French," he wrote his wife. "She is never happy unless when talking of the Compte de Lucerne, the Duc de Biron, and other French nobles who were here during the revolution. She wears rouge from her chin to her head, I believe, and is about fifty."

Voluntary societies further strengthened the bonds that casual social intercourse or the chance of relationship had knit. Most of the Masonic lodges in Delaware, including those of Middletown, Wilmington, New Castle, Dover, Smyrna, and Lewes, were members of the Grand Lodge of Pennsyl vania, until in 1806 a schism, attended with much bad feeling, resulted in the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Delaware.

In 1794 "at a respectable Meeting of Citizens of New Castle County in the town of Newcastle," according to a contemporary newspaper account, "it was unanimously agreed to form themselves into a political Society." This group, which called itself the "Patriotic Society of Newcastle County, in the State of Delaware," might seem, considering the date of its formation, to be a local copy of the Philadelphia Democratic Society and of the other similar societies then prominent throughout the nation. This suspicion is furthered by the presence among the members of such ardent democrats as Dr. James Tilton, gruff but likable eccentric, and Robert Coram, English-born schoolmaster and Revolutionary sailor whose work Professor Beard has recently discussed in his *American Spirit*. But certain other names among the list of members—Kensey Johns, John Stockton, James Booth—suggest that caution should be exercised in any political evaluation of this group. At any rate the presence in Philadelphia at the beginning of this decade of Caesar A.

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37 Wilmington, November 1, 1796, Archibald Hamilton Rowan, *Autobiography* (Dublin, 1840), 301. Three years later Rowan complained again: "Miss Vining lately forced Heloise upon me." To Mrs. Rowan, Brandywine, November 17, 1799, *ibid.*, 346.
38 J. Hugo Tatsch, *Freemasonry in the Thirteen Colonies* (New York, 1933), 158-166.
39 Wilmington, *Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser*, June 14, 1794.
40 Pp. 126-137. Coram's book was entitled *Political Inquiries to Which Is Added a Plan for the General Establishment of Schools throughout the United States* (Wilmington, 1791).
41 Wilmington, *Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser*, July 2, 1794.
Rodney, nephew of the war governor and first prominent official of Jefferson's party in Delaware, hints at a Philadelawarean relationship in the development of this first strong party organization.  

Other Philadelphia societies had their influence on Delaware. A society to promote the manumission of slaves was founded in Delaware in 1788, thirteen years after a similar society had appeared in Philadelphia. Warner Mifflin worked as valiantly for the abolitionist cause in Delaware as did Anthony Benezet in Philadelphia. Nor did Mifflin confine his efforts to this State. He travelled to every yearly meeting and would have gone abroad if a general meeting of ministers and elders had not disapproved his plans in 1786. Mifflin frequently visited Philadelphia either to attend meetings of Friends or on business, for his wife had considerable property there. Shortly after the Battle of Germantown he passed, without passport, through both the British and American lines in order personally to urge Howe and Washington to end the war through a compromise. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur was so taken by this adventure that he described it at length in his Letters of an American Farmer. Brissot de Warville repeated the tale, and soon Mifflin was receiving congratulatory letters from France.

Philadelphia's American Philosophical Society, America's premier learned society, had several Delaware members, among them Dr. James Tilton and Dr. Nicholas Way, the latter of whom endeared himself to Philadelphians by the care he gave refugees from the yellow fever epidemics. Many more Delawareans were members of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture and their letters respecting agricultural experiments in Delaware were often published in the society's Memoirs. In the first volumes of these Memoirs, for example, were articles by William Young, of Brandywine, "On Smut in Wheat," and by Dr. Tilton "On Peach Trees," and "On the Fruit Curculio." The second volume contained articles by

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42 Hezekiah Niles, another ardent young Delaware Jeffersonian, was in Philadelphia in the mid-1790's. Stone, Niles, 36-37, 39.
45 Ibid., 223.
46 Ibid., 41-69, 102.
47 Philadelphia, 1808.
48 Philadelphia, 1811.
William Young, Major Philip Reybold, "grazier," of Delaware City, Abraham Perlee, of Wilmington, Dr. William Baldwin, of Wilmington, and the Reverend Dr. Charles Wharton, of Prospect Hill. The membership in Delaware included Peter Bauduy, refugee from Haiti and architect of Wilmington's Old Town Hall; James Bellach, of Dover, whose opinions on peach trees were quoted by Richard Peters; Eleazer McComb, state auditor of Delaware and merchant of Wilmington and Dover; Vincent Lockerman, farmer and politician, of Dover; and Major John Patton, Congressman, of Kent County.

Most of the leading religious denominations also contributed to strengthen the relationship between Philadelphia and Delaware. After the Duke of York's grant of the Lower Counties to William Penn, the Society of Friends naturally became interested in this territory as a prospective field of settlement. Wilmington largely owes its growth to first importance in the State to a Friend, William Shipley, who moved there in 1731 from Ridley, Pennsylvania. His interest in the town, according to tradition, was aroused by his wife, née Elizabeth Levis, who first saw it when she was making a visita- tion to the Friends of Maryland and Delaware. Friends' groups in Delaware remained affiliated with the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and some local members such as Warner Mifflin and Dr. Nathaniel Luff seem to have gone to great pains to be in attendance upon the central body.

Before the Revolution most of the great landholders of Delaware were members of the Anglican communion. After independence was won, the Protestant Episcopal Church held much of the old membership and regained most of the old prestige of the Church of England. In the fall of 1786 a general convention met in Wilmington and signed testimonials for the elevation of William White, Samuel Provoost, and David Griffith to the office of bishop by the hierarchy of England. Delaware comprised part of the diocese of Bishop White

49 Memoirs, I, 184-186.
50 Anna T. Lincoln, Wilmington, Delaware: Three Centuries under Four Flags (Rutland, Vt., 1937), 70-71.
51 The Philadelaworean connection is well illustrated by the life of Dr. Nathaniel Luff, as revealed in his Journal (New York, 1848).
from the time of his consecration until 1804. Ministers of the church in Delaware often had close personal relations with Philadelphia. So the Reverend Aeneas Ross, of New Castle, was a brother of John and George Ross, the Pennsylvania statesmen. Charles Wharton, Maryland-born ex-Jesuit, was a member of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, his interest in it having already been noted above. The Reverend Samuel McGaw transferred his pastoral care from Dover, Delaware, to St. Paul's, Philadelphia.

In the mid-eighteenth century the most rapidly growing denomination in Delaware was the Presbyterian. The Presbytery of New Castle had been formed in 1716 by a division of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. From it the Philadelphia Synod permitted the Lewes Presbytery to separate itself in 1735 and, after a period of reunion, again in 1758. Both the Lewes and New Castle presbyteries were within the jurisdiction of the synod of Philadelphia. This synod patronized the academy founded at New London, Pennsylvania, by the Reverend Francis Alison and removed to Newark, Delaware, by the Reverend Alexander McDowell, from which institution Delaware College developed in the next century. In this school Charles Thomson, John Ewing, Matthew Wilson, James Latta, Hugh Williamson, David Ramsay, Thomas McKean, George Read, and James Smith, many of whom could be called Philadelwareans, were educated.

Many of the members of the Presbyterian ministry helped personally to tighten the bonds between Philadelphia and Delaware. Such was the effect of Francis Alison’s continuing interest in the academy he had founded, even after he had left it to become rector of the Academy of Philadelphia in 1752 and vice-provost of the College in 1755. Dr. John Ewing, provost of the University of

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53 Ibid., 236.
54 James M. Buckley, History of Methodists (New York, 1898), I, 225.
56 Ibid., 17; MSS. Records of Lewes Presbytery, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, I, 1.
Pennsylvania, went to England in 1775 with Dr. Hugh Williamson to solicit funds for the Newark Academy. Matthew Wilson, ardent Whig and rector of the Lewes church, was granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Pennsylvania. His son, James Patriot Wilson, became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. John Miller, Boston-born pastor of the Dover and Smyrna churches, was awarded the Master of Arts degree at Pennsylvania in 1763. Two of his sons who were educated at the University of Pennsylvania afterwards became very distinguished men in their fields, Edward as a physician and Samuel as a minister.

A phenomenon of the late eighteenth century was the rapid progress of Methodism on the Delmarva peninsula. As soon as organization was achieved by the Methodists, Philadelphia became their nominal regional center, for Delaware was part of the Philadelphia Conference. The seat of the conference in the 1790's, however, seems to have been Smyrna, Delaware, and the peninsula rather than the metropolis was the real center of this faith. The emphasis that was placed on spiritual conversion rather than on education robbed the cultural center of the influence it might normally have been expected to exert on Delaware Methodism. Its ministers came directly from the farms rather than by way of the schools of the city. Only as Methodist organization developed to the point where it needed certain urban facilities, did Philadelphia begin to exert much cultural influence on Delaware through this denomination. After the Methodist Book Concern was established in 1792 in Philadelphia, the usual philadelwarean ties began to form, for the Reverend Ezekiel Cooper was called from his Wilmington pastorate in 1798 to become its director.

of the Philadelwarean connection is that seven of the thirteen trustees of the Newark, Delaware, Academy, as named in its charter of 1769, were then Philadelphians—William Allen, Andrew Allen, Francis Alison, John Ewing, Hugh Williamson, Charles Thomson, and James Mease. An eighth trustee, Thomas McKean, moved to Philadelphia in the next decade.

Ryden, "Newark Academy," 213.

59 Sprague, Annals, III, 21.
60 Ibid., 178-180.
61 Ibid., 169-172, 600-612; Samuel Miller, ed. Medical Works of Edward Miller . . . with a Biographical Sketch (New York, 1814), xvii.
62 Henry Boehm, Reminiscences (New York, 1865), 44, 48, 68; Ezekiel Cooper, Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America (New York, 1887), 119, 233.
63 Cooper, Beams of Light, 259, 264.
Richard Bassett, the most distinguished Delaware Methodist layman of the eighteenth century, was well known in Philadelphia. Sometimes called the richest man on the peninsula, with homes in Wilmington and Dover and on Bohemia Manor in Maryland, Bassett became a very ardent convert. A chapel in Dover was built largely by his support. He frequently spoke at St. George’s Church in Philadelphia and was known as a “sweet singer.” So great was his love for the Wesleyan hymns that at camp meetings he used to pitch his tent near those of the Negroes so he could hear their music, which he called his harp. Bassett’s daughter, his only child, married James A. Bayard, of Philadelphia, and through this connection has arisen the longest senatorial dynasty in American history, every generation of this family having produced at least one United States Senator since Bassett himself was elected to that office in 1789.

Another sect which was growing fast in the late eighteenth century was the Baptists. They too maintained an organizational tie with Philadelphia, for most of their congregations in Delaware were members of the Philadelphia Baptist Association until they formed a separate state association in 1795. The most interesting figure among the Delaware Baptists of this period was the Reverend Morgan Edwards. Born in Wales in 1722, he became a minister at the age of sixteen. He was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia from 1761 to 1772, when he resigned and moved to the Welsh Tract, near Newark, Delaware, where he had bought a farm on which he lived until his death in 1795. Historian of the early Baptists, a founder of Brown University, frequent lecturer on divinity in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New England, Edwards is reputed

65 John Lednum, History of the Rise of Methodism in America (Philadelphia, 1859), 274–275. Lednum writes that Bassett “had a tent at the first camp-meeting held on the Peninsula, in 1805, at Faron’s Hill, near Smyrna; and when Mrs. Bassett was shouting, full of the love of God, as she often was, she would as soon embrace a pious dusky daughter of Africa, in her rejoicing, as a white sister.” Ibid., 275.
66 James A. Bayard, the second, referred to above, was a United States Senator from 1805 to 1813; Richard H. Bayard from 1836 to 1839 and from 1841 to 1845; James A. Bayard, the third, from 1851 to 1864 and from 1867 to 1869; Thomas F. Bayard, Sr., from 1869 to 1885; and Thomas F. Bayard, Jr., from 1922 to 1929.
to have been the only Tory among the American Baptist clergy during the Revolution. 68

The medical and legal professions, even more than the ministerial, bound Delaware to Philadelphia. Late eighteenth-century Philadelphia was particularly renowned for the quality of its physicians and as the American center of scientific knowledge, so it is not surprising that most of Delaware's leading physicians studied there. One of the most distinguished men produced by the Lower Counties in this period was Edward Miller, son of the Presbyterian minister at Dover. After studying at Newark Academy and with Dr. Charles Ridgely in Kent, he proceeded to the University of Pennsylvania, from which he was granted the bachelor's degree in 1785 and the doctorate in 1789. He practiced for a while in Somerset County, Maryland, and in Kent County, Delaware, but moved in 1796 to New York, where he became famous as a founder and editor of the Medical Repository, port physician, and professor in the College of Physicians and Surgeons. 69 The Dr. Ridgely just mentioned had also acquired his medical training in Philadelphia, where he had studied at the Academy and with Dr. Bond. Returning to Dover to practice, he took an active interest in politics, becoming by the outbreak of the Revolution the acknowledged leader of the court party in Kent County.

Politics was not an unusual avocation for a Delaware physician.


69 Dictionary of American Biography, (New York, 1933), XII, 622-623; Miller, Works of Edward Miller, xiv–xvii, xx, xxvii–xxviii, xxxi, lxiii, lxv–lxvi. The Rev. Samuel Miller writes that his brother, Dr. Miller, moved to Dover, Delaware, from Somerset County, Maryland, because, among other reasons, "he was anxious to be placed in a situation which admitted of more easy and convenient intercourse with Philadelphia, which, at that time, he regarded as the principal focus of medical information and improvement in the United States, and as the most convenient medium, within his reach, of communication with the European world." Miller, Works of Edward Miller, xviii. "During Dr. Miller's residence in Dover, he was in the habit of visiting Philadelphia at least once every year. To this annual visit he was induced, not only that he might enjoy the pleasure of seeing his relatives there, . . . but also that he might have an opportunity of personal and unreserved intercourse with some of the most illustrious Physicians then residing in the United States; that he might collect all the new medical and other valuable publications from abroad, which flowed into that literary emporium; and that the various articles of medical news, which his correspondents had failed of transmitting to him, might not wholly escape him." Ibid., xx.
Usually a man of this profession was the best educated person in his neighborhood and was looked upon by his neighbors as a master of all knowledge, a guide through all perils. Such was a role that James Tilton never shunned. This sentimental, excitable, rough old bachelor delivered lectures to philosophical societies, answered with a lengthy essay a French scholar’s request (sent him via the Philadelphia Agricultural Society) for information on the state of Delaware agriculture, surveyed the history of Delaware’s climates and diseases for Philadelphia’s Dr. Currie, published a fiery pseudo-historical denunciation of Delaware’s leading politician, and discoursed at length on the virtues of what he called a “Virgilian breakfast” and the evils of such foreign imports as tea, wine, and fine cloth. After studying at Nottingham Academy, he attended the University of Pennsylvania and was graduated with the first class to be granted medical degrees in the English colonies. He kept his contact with Philadelphia through his membership in the Philosophical Society and the Agricultural Society and his correspondence with Benjamin Rush. As an army surgeon during the Revolution he devised the Tilton hut, which afforded ventilated, warm housing and saved the lives of many of Washington’s soldiers during the winter spent at Morristown. A staunch patriot he served as state legislator, state treasurer, Congressman, and as first surgeon general of the United States Army during the War of 1812. It was characteristic of the man that among all his achievements, he took a fierce pride in the fact that he appeared at a White House reception dressed not in the foreign imports that he hated, but in good Delaware homespun.

Of his Pennsylvania classmate, Dr. Nicholas Way, mention has already been made. Another Pennsylvania graduate was Joshua Clayton, physician and Congressman and first governor of Delaware, the father of one Senator and the uncle of another, and the collateral ancestor of still a third, the present Senator Clayton Douglass Buck. Another physician-Congressman was Henry Latimer who studied both at Pennsylvania and at Edinburgh. The same schools were attended by Dr. George Monro.

The Philadelphia connection which is so apparent in the case of these physicians is equally obvious in regard to the Delaware lawyers of the late eighteenth century. George Read, the leader of the Dela-
ware bar during the Revolution, studied law under John Moland of Philadelphia and was admitted to practice in that city at the age of nineteen. His brothers-in-law, George and John Ross, were Pennsylvania lawyers and politicians. His friend and contemporary, John Dickinson, was born in Maryland, reared in Kent County, Delaware, and studied law in Philadelphia. After marrying Mary Norris, Dickinson divided his adult life between Pennsylvania and Delaware, being, in 1782, governor of both states at the same time.

Another contemporary, and equally a Philadelwarean, was Thomas McKean. Born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, he came to Delaware to study law with a cousin, David Finney, of New Castle, and remained in this State to win fame and political preferment. In 1771 he moved back to Philadelphia and was chosen Chief Justice of Pennsylvania in 1777, but served concurrently for several years as Congressman from Delaware.

Gunning Bedford, a cousin of Delaware’s Governor Gunning Bedford, the terms “Junior” and “Senior” usually being applied to the men respectively for clarity, was born in Philadelphia and was educated at Princeton. After studying law with Joseph Reed in Philadelphia, he moved to Dover and became Attorney General of Delaware. James A. Bayard was also born in Philadelphia and educated at Princeton. After studying in the law offices of Reed and Ingersoll in Philadelphia, he too came to Delaware and soon began a distinguished political career.

The formula was reversed by Benjamin Chew, who was born in Maryland but moved at an early age to Delaware with his father, the elder Chew becoming an important official in the colonial courts of the Lower Counties. After studying law in Philadelphia with Andrew Hamilton and in London at the Middle Temple, he was admitted to the bars of both Delaware and Pennsylvania and divided his time between these two states until he took a house in Philadelphia in 1754. Though he still retained an interest in Kent County, where he owned considerable property, his life thereafter is chiefly part of the Philadelphia story.

A discussion of the Philadelphia connections of Delaware’s lawyers leads naturally to a similar discussion of the State’s politics. Here is

found what may well be a unique situation in American politics. On February 3, 1782, the General Assembly chose a new delegation of four to represent Delaware in the Continental Congress. The oddity in the case lies in the fact that of these four men only one was at that time a resident of Delaware—and that one man, Caesar Rodney, was dying of cancer and did not attend Congress during this term. Of the other three delegates, one, Philemon Dickinson, was a New Jerseyite, and two, Thomas McKean and Samuel Wharton, were Philadelphians.

Several reasons for this surprising experiment in a typically English form of non-representation may be suggested. First, the salaries of the delegates were to be paid by the states and Delaware was often slow in appropriating funds for this purpose. The financial sacrifice involved in attending Congress caused many Delawareans to refuse to serve there. For men who had homes in Philadelphia, however, no such sacrifice was entailed. Second, the initiation of government under the Articles of Confederation in 1781 made the attendance of two delegates necessary for a state’s vote to be counted. Since a division of the two would void that vote, three members was the only satisfactory delegation. The choice of one or more Philadelphians in the delegation simplified the problem of meeting the attendance requirement.

A third reason for the choice of non-residents may be the Philadelphian connection. Consider the position of the non-residents whom Delaware chose. Philemon Dickinson, Thomas McKean, and Samuel Wharton represented the landholding-mercantile aristocracy of the Delaware River Valley. Rodneys and Dicksons, Reads and Whartons were essentially of the same economic class; that some resided in Philadelphia and some in Delaware occasioned little division in their respective interests. As a matter of fact, these families showed a tendency to expand over four states in a single generation. Both Dicksons and Reads came from Maryland through Delaware to Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The Baynton and Wharton firm’s debts in Delaware were collected by George Read. The presence of his cousin in New Castle had helped draw Thomas McKean there.

72 Will Spencer to Thomas Duff, New Castle, October 1, 1764, Papers of the Read Family of New Castle County, Delaware (Library of Congress, Washington).
For these men whose interests extended, like the goods they sold, beyond the narrow limits of one state, it must have seemed a very convenient and quite satisfactory arrangement to have Delaware represented in Congress cheaply and with regularity by able men who were living in the capital. "I am bound," wrote John Dickinson, upon his election to Congress by Delaware, "to prefer the general Interest of the Confederacy to the partial Interests of Constituent Members. . . ." This was the point of view of the Philadelphians, coupled only with a human unwillingness to consider that the "general Interest of the Confederacy" could ever truly be in opposition to the enlightened and expanding interest of their own group.

Between 1776 and 1779 John Dickinson was three times elected to Congress by Delaware, but he twice refused to serve, having withdrawn into comparative obscurity for a time after his opposition to the Declaration of Independence had hurt his political prestige in Pennsylvania. Eventually, however, he returned to political prominence as Pennsylvania's governor, achieving that position via the governorship of Delaware, to which office he was helped by his old friend, George Read.

Thomas McKean was eight times elected to Congress from Delaware, serving there from 1774 to 1776 and again from 1777 to 1783, including a period of almost four months in 1781 when he was president of this legislative body. The last period of his service in Congress occurred after his election as chief justice of Pennsylvania. The excellent attendance record which he compiled in Congress attested to the correctness of Delaware's judgment that residents of the capital would more frequently appear in Congress if elected to it than would residents of Delaware. In their brief year in Congress Samuel Wharton and Philemon Dickinson also attended more regularly than had most Delaware delegates in the past.

The experiment in non-resident representation, however, was not continued after 1783. Particularism reared its head in Delaware and joined with party politics to oust the non-residents. Emphasis has been placed throughout this paper on the professional and com-

73 Dickinson to Caesar Rodney, Philadelphia, May 10, 1779, George H. Ryden, ed., *Letters to and from Caesar Rodney, 1756-1784* (Philadelphia, 1933), 300–301. Yet, he added, "it is my Duty to prefer the particular Interests of the State that honours Me with her confidence & invests me with a share of her power, to the particular Interests of any other State on this Continent."

commercial classes of Delaware, those to whom the Philadelwarean connection was particularly dear. But there was another Delaware, that of the small farmer, off the main-travelled roads, too busy with his agrarian chores to be conscious of the unifying Philadelwarean culture of the valley. This Delaware it was which rose in provincial fury to sweep the non-resident delegates from office in 1783 and replace them with a group of impeccable Delaware residence, of no Congressional experience, and of little demonstrated interest in attending the confederate legislature.\(^{75}\)

Though the Philadelphia influence on Delaware was paramount, other influences undoubtedly existed. The European influence was strong, but it usually came by way of the Quaker city. So too did the influence of New York and New England. West New Jersey had more direct access to Delaware across the river, but West New Jersey was only another part of the Philadelphia cultural province. Only a Chesapeake Bay culture has any valid claim to rivalry, and its influence is hard to gauge. The printers, Adams and Niles, set up offices in Baltimore; Baptist, Methodist, and Catholic ministers entered Delaware principally from the west and south; important families like the Reads, Dicksons, Chews, and Bassetts came to Delaware from the Eastern Shore. But the Eastern Shore itself was being drawn into the Philadelphia orbit (Tilghman and Bordley are examples of this) and so had a distinctive claim only on Delaware’s southwestern corner, the region around Laurel, where roads and rivers ran toward the Chesapeake rather than toward the Delaware River. And the river gave Philadelphia an advantage that Maryland could not overcome.

Not so, today. Varied means of transportation and communication render the river highway less important. Today the first state draws its political issues in large part from Washington, its romantic ideas from Hollywood, and much of its general intellectual development from New York. Washington and New York indeed are but two hours farther distant than Philadelphia. But in the eighteenth century when the complexities of life were more local in nature, Philadelphia’s influence was supreme and the Philadelwarean culture was very real.

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\(^{75}\) Ibid., 62–63.