It is fitting that The Historical Society of Pennsylvania owns the Penn family archives. This magnificent collection was purchased in London in the early 1870's. In addition to these manuscripts, the Society has acquired many memorabilia of the Proprietors of Pennsylvania, including their portraits.

Our earliest Penn acquisition came in 1833 when Granville Penn, in presenting us with the well-known portrait of William Penn in armor, wrote: "I shall send you a very perfect portrait of William Penn, your Founder and my Grandfather, painted when he was at the age of twenty-two years. As we have in our family duplicates of this Portrait, I have long been desirous of depositing one of them in the city which owes its origin and existence to him." This portrait, representing Penn in 1666, hangs today above the mantle in the Society's Assembly Hall. Although no one knows what has happened to the original from which this was copied, there is no doubt that our Penn in armor was painted late in the eighteenth century. The two other known copies to which Granville Penn alluded have also been independently expertized as late eighteenth-century paintings.¹

In June of this year, the Historical Society made another important addition to its collection of Penn portraits by purchasing

colored chalk drawings of William Penn and his second wife, Hannah Callowhill, at a Sotheby auction in London. Nothing is known of the circumstances under which these likenesses were sketched, and, while experts have agreed that they are by Francis Place, evidence that they are indeed portraits of William and Hannah Penn depends upon the following story.

Francis Place (1677–1728) gave up the study of law in 1665 and settled down to an artist's life at York. He was a versatile man "having great gifts for drawing and engraving," according to his biographer. Unfortunately, there is no unchallengeable evidence that Place ever met Penn, but the possibility of their meeting exists and the presence of the portrait suggests the strong probability that the Penns visited York. Several theories have been advanced as to what brought Penn to York, what relatives or friends he came to see. Without going into these presumptions, a visit by Penn to York was not an unlikely event.

After the artist's death, his widow left her home and disposed of some of her husband's paintings. It seems that the Penn portraits went to one of the Pembertons, who, like the Surtees family soon to be mentioned, were relatives of Francis Place.

In 1733 Elizabeth Pemberton, a third cousin of the artist, married James Allan. Their son George (1763–1800), known as "the Antiquary," added many manuscripts to his father's collection and formed a museum at Blackwell Grange. This museum was maintained by his son George (1767–1828) until 1822, when he sold a number of portraits by Francis Place. Those of William and Hannah Penn were purchased by Robert Surtees. In his History of the County Durham, published in 1840, Surtees comments on "several admirable paintings by Francis Place" and specifically mentions the Penn portraits.

Shortly after Surtees' death, these portraits were sold to John Allan, a cousin of George Allan, and descended from him by inheritance to Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, from whom the Historical Society acquired them at Sotheby's. So much, then, is known about these portraits. It can only be inferred that Place met the Penns,

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2 Article by Lionel Cust in Dictionary of National Biography, XLV, 390.
WILLIAM PENN
The Armor Portrait
but it is indisputable that after Place's death two of his portraits long identified as William Penn and Hannah Penn had come into the hands of a relative of the Place family.4

Drawn with colored chalk on buff paper, both portraits are signed by Francis Place.5 Place's biographer, writing in 1896, noted, "Among his crayon portraits is one which is probably the only authentic likeness of the famous William Penn." Years before this statement was put on paper, the existence of the portraits had come to the attention of Philadelphians. A Quaker historian, after studying them and reviewing their history, which was similar to what has been recited here, came to the conclusion: "There is a marked similarity between the portrait in armor and Place's picture, and a striking difference between these and the generally received likenesses of this great man. I am of the opinion that the [Place portrait] is the most authentic correct portrait of Penn known, and certainly it is the most interesting which has ever appeared. Care has been taken to verify its history, and there can no longer be any doubt as to its genuineness."6

In comparing Place's picture of Penn with the portrait in armor, the difficulty arises of contrasting the face of a young man with that of a much older man. How old the Penn of Place's portrait was is impossible to say. He looks about fifty, but could possibly have been older. Hannah, who was twenty-four years younger than Penn, looks from her portrait to have been about the same age as he. This suggests that the portraits were not drawn in the same year, or that Penn aged slowly while Hannah, who had eight children, aged comparatively rapidly.7

At all events, allowing for the artistic limitations in the skill of the various painters involved, there are significant points of similarity between the Penn in armor and Place's small pastel, as well as be-

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4 I am indebted to Mrs. A. Wallis of Darlington, County Durham, England, who has made a careful study of the history of the portraits and sent us a typescript of her findings.

5 Place's signature appears on the front and back of each drawing. The William Penn portrait measures 117/8" x 89/16"; the Hannah Penn portrait measures 97/8" x 89/16".


7 For the number of Hannah's children and her date of birth, see Henry J. Cadbury, "Hannah Callowhill and Penn's Second Marriage," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXXXI (1957), 76-82.
tween the Historical Society’s oil portrait of Hannah Penn as an older woman and Place’s crayon sketch. Evidence that Hannah may indeed have aged early is seen in the oil painting of her in which she looks like a very old lady—and yet she did not live to see her fifty-seventh year. Our painting of Hannah was done by John Hesselius about 1742 from an original which is now lost.\(^8\)

From the accompanying reproductions of the Historical Society’s portraits, old and new, the reader can make his own deductions about their similarity or difference. It seems reasonably evident, however, that the Place pictures were accepted as the likenesses of the Founder and his wife from earliest times. It was the belief of the Allan family, as recorded a century ago, that the pictures had come into their possession from the artist himself, and that there was no doubt as to their identities.

The reproduction of these unique drawings in this October issue may serve as a reminder of another October two hundred and seventy-five years ago, when William Penn first set foot in Pennsylvania.

The Historical Society
of Pennsylvania

R. N. Williams, 2nd
Director

\(^8\) Sawitzky, 129.
Hannah Penn
By Francis Place