The New Market in Second Street

For the first sixty years of Philadelphia's history, the great market in High, now Market, Street supplied the provisions for the entire city. But as Philadelphia spread out, householders in the newer parts of the town found it inconvenient to shop at the central market and proposals for an additional one to be built at Second and Lombard streets on Society Hill were brought forward.

Council began to plan for a market in Second Street as early as 1741. Before anything could be done about building a market house, arrangements had to be made to widen Second Street, originally fifty feet in breadth, in order to find room for a market place between Pine and Cedar (South) streets. Warrants were issued to survey several lots along Second Street within these bounds, and the owners of all lots on both sides of the street were asked to grant the city forty feet of their land so that a market place one hundred and thirty feet wide could be laid out. This space was judged sufficient to take care of the flow of traffic on market days, leaving passage way for wagons, barrows, and people on either side of the market stalls, which were to be erected in the center of the street.¹

In all probability, the widening of Second Street was not accomplished without delay and argument. Some of the property owners of the neighborhood must have been seriously inconvenienced by the loss of part of their ground. John Morris, for example, had to demolish his house when the street was widened. He was not required to give up this part of his property without any return, however, for Joseph Wharton, a wealthy merchant and one of the principal landowners in the district, noted in his ledger that he had paid £10 to

¹ Report of the Solicitor on the Titles to the City Property Pursuant to the Resolutions of Council of the 8th of March and 9th of August, 1810, 86-100, in Department of Archives, City of Philadelphia (City Archives). The owners of the land on the east side of Second Street were: "Samuel Powel; Anthony Morris; Anthony Morris bought Lawrence Growden; Joseph Wharton bought Lawrence Growden; Bought W. Allen; Joseph Wharton; The Proprietaries." On the west side the owners were: "The Proprietaries; the Frankford Co.; Edward Shippen bought of Lawrence Growden; Lumbard Street 50 feet; William Allen Esq; The Proprietaries." Manuscript map showing the streets and owners of lots from Pine to Cedar, Front to Third, in The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).
Morris "In part of the Purchase money which Edward Shippen agreed with him for the Pulling Down his House in order for the making the Market Place the Bredth which it now is." Wharton added that this £10 was in addition to his contribution of "all the Front of my Ground." Although I have found no other records of payments made to Second Street landowners, it is likely that some others were also reimbursed for their losses. Any similar payments that were made would probably have resulted from private agreements between the owners and Wharton and Shippen, the backers of the New Market project, and not from arrangements made between the owners and the city, in spite of the fact that it was the latter which condemned the land for public use.

Four years elapsed between the time Council first took action in the matter of a new market and the time when they were ready to entertain proposals for building the stalls. Persuading the property owners to go along with the scheme and arranging the legal matters involved in the widening of Second Street obviously took time, but by July, 1745, the market place was ready and the sponsors could take their plans for the market house to Council. At a meeting of that body, July 1, 1745, Edward Shippen, who was then Mayor of Philadelphia, and Joseph Wharton proposed to build "Sixteen Stalls in the New Market place, Viz. Eight Stalls in Second Street to the Southward of Lombard Street, and Eight Stalls to the Northward of said Lombard street . . . at their own Costs and Charge." The stalls were to be "Built after the same Modell as the present Stalls in the West Side of the Court house of this City." Shippen and Wharton asked to have the right to collect the rents for these stalls until "such Time as the Principall Money and Interest they shall Advance for Building said Stalls, are reimbursed them." The city would have the right to take over the market at any time upon payment of the money owing the entrepreneurs, less whatever they had already collected in rents. Council accepted this offer, requiring only that eight of the stalls be built forthwith and the other eight "With all Convenient speed" and that the market "shall be Under the Direction, from Time to Time, of this Board."

2 Joseph Wharton, Ledger Book B (1736-1793), 51, HSP.
3 Minutes of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia, 1704 to 1776 (Philadelphia, 1847), 446, hereafter cited as Minutes. The courthouse was, of course, the High Street Court House built in 1707.
The New Market, like its model on the west side of the courthouse, was a shed with brick piers supporting a gabled roof over an arched and plastered ceiling. In general, it conformed to the style of rural markets in England and the Low Countries. An examination of the old shambles, as the permanent stalls in the market sheds were called, which still stand north of Lombard Street shows that the roof of the 1745 market was probably supported by nine pairs of piers, of which eight remain. Judging from the existing evidence, the original ground plan provided for a terminal cross aisle between the first two sets of piers, then two stalls, one on each side of the center aisle, two more sets of piers with a cross aisle between them, four more stalls separated by a pair of piers, another cross aisle between piers, the last two stalls, and in all probability another terminal cross aisle at the north end of the shambles between the last two pairs of piers. The terminal cross aisles would have served to shelter the stalls from a driving rain.

Some slight variation in the height of the piers and in the framing of the roof in different sections of the shambles illustrates the city’s procedure in the financing and erecting of this particular public building. Ordinarily, Council would have borrowed the necessary money from an affluent citizen or two, or have divided the cost among the aldermen and councilmen, as was done when the market house was built in High Street in 1709, then would have arranged with carpenters and masons to have the building erected, and have supervised the work as it progressed. The case of the New Market was quite different. Wharton and Shippen did not propose to lend the city what money it needed for the market, leaving the building of the stalls to Council; they expected to build the stalls themselves as well as to pay the cost of their construction. The fact that the stalls of the Second Street market house were built privately and at different times by several persons acting more or less independently, although

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4 The market house built in 1741 on Market Square, Germantown, was almost identical in design with the New Market in Second Street built four years later.
6 Minutes, 1704–1776, 64.
7 Wharton, Ledger Book B, 51, 155. Watson is in error in suggesting that Wharton and Shippen lent the money only. See John Fanning Watson, Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania... (Philadelphia, 1927), III, 185.
Neither Wharton nor Shippen were acting as disinterested philanthropists. Both men owned considerable property in the Society Hill area and, although neither shopping centers nor supermarkets had been heard of, both men realized that a conveniently situated market would enhance property values in their neighborhood. They went to a good deal of trouble and to some expense to get the New Market going, and they fully expected to be repaid in one way or another. How promptly the market justified their expectations may be inferred from the references to it in the advertisements of houses for sale in the area after 1745.\(^8\)

Joseph Wharton's Ledger Book B, which contains an account of some of his expenses incident upon the building of the New Market, also indicates pretty clearly his attitude toward the whole business. Wharton accompanied these accounts by a long and almost illegible memorandum describing his interest in the market from the time of its inception. This memorandum was written in 1770, twenty-five years after the building of the market, and at a time when Council was inquiring into the financial status of the New Market with a view to taking over its management. The city fathers decided in 1769 that, after almost twenty-five years of profit-taking, the angels of the Second Street Market should have been fully repaid, principal and interest, and they named a committee of Council—Samuel Rhoads, Alderman, William Logan and George Clymer, Common Councilmen—to look into the matter.\(^9\) Up to that time Wharton, according to his own statement, had never kept any formal record of his receipts and disbursements connected with the New Market. Those that he had were noted, he said, only "on the Backside of my Day Books & Lose Papers from the year 1745 to this the year 1770." Now, he decided, "Better Late than Never to open an account of Debt & Credit."\(^10\) Whether in so doing Mr. Wharton was preparing to defend his conduct and his financial maneuverings to the public, that is, to the committee of Council, or whether he was merely bent

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\(^8\) See, for example, advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Nov. 28, 1745, Apr. 3 and Oct. 9, 1746.

\(^9\) *Minutes, 1704–1776*, 744.

\(^10\) Wharton, Ledger Book B, 155.
on justifying himself to himself remains a question. In either case, Wharton's figures must be used with caution. He was estimating his costs twenty-five years later, and his estimate was quite obviously an ex parte one.

Wharton's share in the operation had included the building of four stalls south of Lombard Street. He says that on August 8, 1745, "I beginn to Purchase materials & so forth for the New Market Stalls which I had agreed to Build, viz., those four below Lombard Street & opposite to my house & Interest but they were not quite finished till about the 9th mo 1746. The accounts or expenses which they Cost me I was not so Careful to set down or Keep as I ought to have been . . . but I am under no Doubt they cost me at Lest Seventy pounds." In addition to building these four stalls, Wharton also undertook the paving, regulating, and posting of the ground between the eight north stalls and the eight southern ones. This job cost him £46 5s. 8d.—for brick, sand, and gravel, wages for his three Negro men and his team, and for the charge made by John Palmer for paving "between the market houses." Against this bill of £46 5s. 8d., Wharton had received from "Sundry subscriptions" £31 os. 8d., leaving a balance due him, according to his reckoning, of £15 5s. And in case anyone should think his estimate of the original cost of the four stalls too high, Wharton agreed to throw in the £15 5s. due from the paving operation and call it £70 for everything.\(^\text{11}\)

Unfortunately, Shippen's accounts have not been found, so that there is no easy check on the accuracy of Wharton's memory. In fact, Shippen may have been a rather inactive partner in the New Market. Wharton claims to have had charge of the management of Shippen's stalls as well as of his own, and he thought that he should have had some extra allowance made him for "the Trouble I have had in attending the Stalls for Nigh twenty-five year to keep them from Time to Time from being Broke or Distroyed more than they are as Likewise the Trouble of Keeping all the accounts of Both Building the Stalls, Letting them out and Receiving the Rents. . . ."\(^\text{12}\)

How Wharton proposed to square this last statement with his earlier admission that he had never kept proper accounts of the New Market operation is a puzzle.


The Council minute directing Rhoads, Logan, and Clymer to inquire into the affairs of the New Market says nothing about asking either Wharton or the Shippen family to make any return to the city of any money they may have received as rent for the stalls, but evidently some such suggestion had come up, for Wharton refers to it in this memorandum. He was, naturally, indignant at the notion. Instead of paying the city interest, he thought that the city should pay him interest on the money he had put out from 1745 to 1770, and he calculated that Philadelphia owed him about £200 to date. Interest aside, even after he had credited himself with all his receipts from the market, both in cash and in meat, he figured that £64 8s. was still due him if he was to get back the money he had spent on the market. Wharton complained, incidentally, that he had frequently been obliged to take some of his rent in meat for which he had been charged top prices and supplied with more than he could use. There is no record that Wharton was ever paid the £64 plus he estimated the city owed him, and it is quite possible that he never expected to receive this sum or any part of it. For after adding up his expenses, including cash, time, and trouble, he concluded contentedly, "However, let all those things be as they may, it has and will turn out Equal to my Expectation in the Long Run."13

The city was satisfied, too, for it forthwith took over the operation of the New Market and, on October 6, 1772, ordered the clerk of the market to "take proper Care of that Market, and receive the Rent of the Stalls."14

Shortly thereafter, on January 29, 1773, Council decided to renovate the Second Street Market—repair the old stalls and add some new ones "for the better Accommodation of the Inhabitants residing in that part of the City." Nothing was done immediately, apparently because of a lack of funds, but six months later, on June 24, the question of enlarging the New Market again came before Council, and once more it was resolved to repair the old stalls and add enough new "single Stalls to the Southward or Northward of those now standing" to bring the total number up to twenty. Alderman Rhoads, Mr. Samuel Powel, and Mr. John Wilcocks were appointed to see to the building of the new stalls and the repairing

13 Ibid.
14 Minutes, 1704-1776, 776.
of the old ones, and were empowered to draw on the city treasurer for the cash needed to defray the expenses of the repairs and additions.\textsuperscript{15} It looked as though the work would proceed this time. Council had a definite plan, a committee to see that it was put into effect, and, apparently, the money to pay the bills. But once again the proposal came to nothing. The Council minutes offer no explanation for stopping the work, but it is possible that the Second Street Market project was shelved when the opposition to the extension of the High Street Market grew to riotous proportions, as it did by June 17, 1773.\textsuperscript{16} Work was stopped on the High Street Market then, and nothing was done to enlarge either market until after the Revolution.

It was probably while the extension of the New Market was being discussed that the ubiquitous Joseph Wharton came along with a counterproposal. Among his business papers is a rough draft, undated, of a scheme for a market. Mr. Wharton’s notes are not complete, nor are they very clear, and I am not prepared to say precisely what he had in mind, except that he seems not to have wanted to continue the existing market either up or down Second Street. Instead, he advocated a market for Southwark, where he also owned considerable property, and the lateral extension of the stalls in the Second Street Market. This could be done without bringing the stalls too near to the fronts of the houses, he thought, by designing two rows of stalls so that they would occupy twenty-three feet of ground instead of thirty-three feet as heretofore. He also proposed that the height of the roof over the stalls be lowered by five feet, and the height of the supporting piers by two feet. This would make the market much “warmer & more Comfortable to Both Byers & Sellers.” If such an arrangement were adopted, Mr. Wharton was of the opinion that the city could build “Double the Number of Stalls” that could be had by “Continuing them.” He concluded, “Second Street Joyned to the Proposed Southwark market will be Quite Sufficient for Both Places for Perhaps 50 year to Come. . . .”\textsuperscript{17} This plan, too, if it was presented to Council, came to nothing.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[15] \textit{Ibid.}, 780, 787.
\item[17] Undated manuscript in Joseph Wharton Business Papers, Edward Wanton Smith Collection, HSP.
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Two maps, one issued by Matthew Clarkson and Mary Biddle in 1762 and based on Nicholas Scull's plan of the city, the other Benjamin Eastburn's map of 1776, illustrate graphically the development of the New Market at the end of the pre-Revolutionary period. Both show the market as two small blocks extending up and down the middle of Second Street a little way north and an equal distance south from Lombard Street. Another map of Philadelphia, drawn by A. R. Folie and published in 1795, places the market in precisely the same position. These maps indicate that the market did not grow in size, however much it may have grown in volume of business, during the first fifty years of its history. James Thackara's "View of the New Market from the Corner of Shippen & Second-Streets Philad, 1787" also presents the market as it was in the first stage of its growth and corroborates the evidence of the maps regarding its lack of development prior to the Federal period.\footnote{Plan of the improved part of the City surveyed and laid down by the late Nicholas Scull Esq. . . Published . . Novr 1st 1762. Sold by the editors Matthew Clarkson and M. Biddle in Philadelphia; and A Plan of the City of Philadelphia the Capital of Pennsylvania, from an actual survey by Benjamin Eastburn [sic] Surveyor General, 1776 (London, 1776), HSP. Also see To Thomas Mifflin, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the State of Pennsylvania, This Plan of the City and Suburb of Philadelphia is respectfully inscribed by the Editor, drawn by A. R. Folie, engraved by R. Scot & S. Allardice, HSP; and The Columbian Magazine for February, 1788, HSP.}

Council minutes are the first source for a history of a public building like the New Market, but they are a very exasperating source, for they usually report just enough to indicate that something is brewing and then drop the matter at issue. Sometimes a petition, an advertisement in a newspaper, an ordinance, or an act of Assembly will throw a little light on what the councilmen were up to, but sometimes no further information can be found. This is the case with regard to the committee of Council appointed in 1795 to "enquire concerning the propriety of extending the New Market in Second Street." The committee reported to Council on March 16, 1795.\footnote{Minutes of the Common Council, 1791–1796, meeting of Mar. 16, 1795, City Archives. This manuscript volume is unpaged.} Its report was adopted. The minutes make no note of its contents, but from action taken by Council about six months later, it may be inferred that the committee had recommended the extension of the New Market southward to Cedar Street and the building of a fire engine house there at the market's southern terminus.
Some months later, on September 7, 1795, Council, acting on a petition of inhabitants from Dock and New Market wards, directed the city commissioners who were in charge of enlarging the market to build “over the southernmost part of the Market, now erecting in New Market Ward, a room of the dimensions of twenty-seven feet by seventeen feet agreeable to the plan made by the Person employed by them in erecting the said market.” On the same day, another report was read on still another memorial presented by the residents of the district suggesting that this fire engine house be crowned with a cupola. The report on this memorial was ordered tabled. Presumably, it was adopted later, for William Birch’s well-known print of the “New Market in South Second Street,” engraved in 1799, shows the market complete with a cupolaed house at its southern end. Two maps of the period also show the market at this stage. The first, a revision by Robert Scott of P. C. Varlé’s map and published in 1796, shows the New Market in Second Street extending from Stamper’s Alley on the north to Cedar Street on the south. John Hills’s map of 1797 not only shows this southward extension of the New Market, but it also indicates the presence of the fire engine house at Cedar Street.

It was not long—less than ten years, in fact—before the Second Street Market was again in need of an addition in order to accommodate the victualers and country people who filled its sixty-eight stalls and thirty-three wooden stalls to overflowing on market days. Philadelphia was growing rapidly in the region of Society Hill, and there was a real need for increased market facilities. Not all Philadelphians were convinced that the best solution to their shopping problems lay in the expansion of the New Market in Second Street,

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20 Ibid., meeting of Sept. 7, 1795.
21 Ibid.
22 To the Citizens of Philadelphia This Plan of the City and Its Environs is respectfully dedicated by the Editor. P. C. Varlé, Geographer & Engin. del. Scott sculp. Phila (Philadelphia, Bradley & Co., 1796); and Plan of the City of Philadelphia and its environs (shewing the improved parts) . . . dedicated to the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens . . . by . . . John Hills May 30, 1796, Surveyor and Draughtsman. Engraved by John Cooke of Hendon. Published and sold by J. Hills, 1797. Both maps are in the HSP.
23 These “wooden stalls” were probably the temporary stalls which were erected outside the shambles on market days. See “A List of the Occupiers of Stalls in 2d Street Market, 1802. Returned by Mr. Stewart, Clerk,” Petitions to the Councils of Philadelphia, 1783–1831, f. 21, HSP.
however. The inhabitants of Dock Street, for example, had petitioned Councils\(^{24}\) for a market in their neighborhood the preceding year, on April 16, 1803. When their efforts failed to produce the desired action, they carried their request to the state, petitioning the General Assembly for a market. In this latter document the Dock Streeters declared the old High Street Market to be inadequate to the city’s needs and damned the newer markets “on Callow-Hill and Society-Hill (however convenient and useful they may be for the supply of their particular Neighborhoods)” because they were so far from the “Center of the City” that the farmers were reluctant to “risk the Sale of their Provisions in any great Quantities” there.\(^{25}\)

The argument seems to have had little basis in fact, but to have been a case of special pleading for the maintenance of an older area in danger of losing some of its former prestige and population to newer parts of town. As such it has a modern ring, anticipating the twentieth-century struggle between the city proper and its outlying regions.

In January, 1804, the city fathers considered a bill “for extending the shambles in the New Market.” This was passed March 28, 1804, and the city commissioners were directed to extend the market “in complete uniformity with the part already erected, to within thirty feet of the south line of Pine Street with the addition of two fire engine houses, to be continued from the north end of the said market house . . . to within fifteen feet of the said south line of Pine Street, to be built of the same materials as the aforesaid market house.” An appropriation of $1,400 was approved to put this ordinance into effect.\(^{26}\)

Evidently, the commissioners had some trouble in finding anyone who could present a satisfactory plan for this extension, for on May 9, 1804, they reported to Councils the “time of advertising for

\(^{24}\) Note that in 1796 the old arrangement for a Council composed of aldermen and common councilmen meeting together had been changed. From that year Philadelphia had a bicameral council composed of the Select Council and the Common Council, with the two groups meeting separately.

\(^{25}\) See Petitions to the Councils of Philadelphia, 1783–1831, ff. 23, 24, and Petition of some Inhabitants of Philadelphia to the General Assembly for the establishing of a market in Dock Street, undated broadside in Society Miscellaneous Collection, Petitions, Box 4a, HSP.

\(^{26}\) Minutes of Common Council, III, 62, 63, 67, City Archives; and American Daily Advertiser, Apr. 7, 1804.
proposals for materials and workmanship for the Second Street Market closed” and Councils directed them to continue to advertise and to report back again on May 21. This time their efforts were successful, and on May 30 they were ordered to proceed with the work “without further delay.”

Again, a lack of funds threatened the building program. At this point, Joseph Wetherill stepped forward and offered to lend the city $1,000 “for one year, with legal interest, for the erection of a Building at the North end of the New Market in Second Street.” On August 16, 1804, Councils authorized the mayor to accept Wetherill’s offer. Incidentally, Wetherill was not repaid—his principal plus six percent interest—until 1807, several years after the agreed upon date. His loan made possible the building of the little fire engine house, known today as the “Head House,” which stands at the Pine Street end of the market.

A detailed description of the new building was given in “A Supplement to an ordinance entitled ‘An ordinance for extending the Market in Second Street, and for other purposes,’ ” published by Zachariah Poulson in the American Daily Advertiser, August 20, 1804. This ordinance directed the city commissioners to “cause to be erected at the north-end of the shambles in Second Street, a brick house, beginning within eight feet of the south line of Pine Street, and extending twenty-six feet in length southward, more or less, by thirty feet in breadth east and west, two stories high, the lower story to be so constructed as to hold two fire engines, with their apparatus as provided by the ordinance to which this is a supplement; the second story to be finished in one room with as many closets therein as the City Commissioners may think necessary, for the use of such fire companies as may think proper to meet therein, and for other purposes. That there be three windows in the North end and two in each side, of such dimensions as the Commissioners shall think conformable to the size of the building, and that there be left an aperture in the wall of the north end suitable to fix a clock in. And furthermore that they cause to be erected, on the top of said

27 Minutes of Common Council, III, 75, 77, 79, City Archives.
28 Ibid., 86–87; and “Ordinance for raising supplies for the year 1807,” Chapt. 97, John C. Lowber, ed., Ordinances of the Corporation of the City of Philadelphia . . . (Philadelphia, 1812), 210. HSP.
building, a cupola sufficiently high and strong, on which to hang an alarm bell. And that in all other respects the said building be finished in a similar manner with the house already erected at the south end of said shambles.” The alarm bell mentioned in the ordinance, and also the clock, were contributed by the citizens of the “lower District of the City” and the commissioners were ordered to put both in place and to keep the clock in good repair.29

The market was extended once more before 1810. On September 14, 1808, Mr. Ritchie, one of the councilors, presented a petition to the Common Council asking that two rows of stalls be added on each side of the present shambles. A joint committee of Councils was appointed to study the matter and the city commissioners were asked to report on the practicability of extending the eaves of the present market to cover the two additional rows of stalls “without injury to the present building or without darkening too much the interior of the Market.” The commissioners were to make their report, including an estimate of the probable cost of extending the eaves, building the stalls, and laying a brick pavement the width of the eaves on both sides, as “speedily as possible.”30 The commissioners reported on November 24, 1808, but Councils did not get around to approving their report and passing the necessary ordinance to put it into effect until March 27, 1809.31

When the commissioners were finally directed to go ahead with the job, they were cautioned that nothing in the directive should be construed to authorize them “to take down the houses at the ends of said Market-house or either of them.” At the same time the mayor was given the authority to borrow $5,500 to finance the building of the extension.32 Advertisements were published in the newspapers inviting builders to submit written proposals for erecting the addition, which was to be built according to a plan drawn by Cornelius Stevenson. This plan, “with an explanation of the manner in which it is expected to be done,” was available for inspection at the home

29 Minutes of Common Council, III, 88, 89, City Archives. According to J. T. Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia, 1884), I, 597, the clock was not installed until 1819.
30 Minutes of Common Council, III, 269, 271, City Archives.
31 Ibid., 279, 285, 289, 293.
of James Ker, one of the commissioners. Stevenson’s plan, which cost the city $35, incidentally, called for an addition of nine feet nine inches to each side of the market. The extended eaves were to be supported by “turned columns on stone plinths, the whole to be done in workmanlike manner, and of the best materials.”

Work on the building had hardly started when the Select Council raised an objection to the materials being used. They reported, June 8, that these were of “very inferior quality,” the timber particularly, and suggested that inquiry be made forthwith into the conduct of the city commissioners. As usual, the Councils appointed a joint committee to investigate the charges. This committee reported to the Common Council on June 26. Its report was read and tabled. On July 6, the Select Council informed the Common Council that they had adopted the resolutions which the joint committee of inquiry had appended to its report and asked Common Council to do the same. This request, too, was ordered to lie on the table. And that is the last time the matter is mentioned. Were the commissioners guilty of looking the other way while a contractor lined his pockets—and theirs too, perhaps—by charging the city for first-grade lumber while delivering third-grade or worse? Was the whole thing nothing but groundless gossip? Or, a case of conciliar jealousy?

Maps, and Joseph Pennell’s etching of the market which shows the turned columns with their stone plinths, document this last development of the Second Street Market. John A. Paxton’s map of Philadelphia, published in 1811, shows the New Market extending all the way from Pine to South Street. Another map by Paxton, this one dated 1820 and drawn for the use of firemen, shows the market with a fire engine house at its north or Pine Street end (the Fellowship and Hope Hose companies had their headquarters here) and with the other, older engine house at the south or Cedar Street end. There the Southwark Hose was quartered.

33 Advertisement by the city commissioners in American Daily Advertiser, Apr. 1, 1809; and Minutes of Common Council, III, 309, City Archives.
34 Ibid., 301, 303, 305.
35 Pennell’s etching reproduced in Elizabeth Robins Pennell, Our Philadelphia (Philadelphia, 1914), 115. To the Citizens of Philadelphia This New Plan of the City, and its Environs Taken from Actual Survey Is Respectfully Dedicated . . . John A. Paxton, Sc⁴ W. Harrison, drawn by W. Strickland (Philadelphia, 1811); and New Map of the City of Philadelphia for the use of Firemen and others is most respectfully dedicated to the Citizens and Members of the Engine & Hose Companies . . . John A. Paxton [1820], HSP.
Philadelphia's markets were famous for the variety and quality of the food offered for sale, and for the careful regulation of the markets' operations which guarded the health and welfare of the citizens. When he visited the city at mid-century Peter Kalm noted wistfully, "Provisions are always to be got fresh here," and he wished that some means might be used to persuade the country people of Sweden to supply the Swedish towns with produce in season in a like manner. And Benjamin Franklin, deciding that Philadelphia's "well-furnished plentiful markets" made a kitchen garden unnecessary, announced his intention, in a letter to Mrs. Mary Hewson, May 6, 1786, to convert his garden into "grassplots and gravel walks" and to plant it with trees and flowering shrubs instead of with peas and cauliflowers.36

Dr. James Mease, a literary physician whose Picture of Philadelphia written in 1811 is one of the best portraits we have of the city, attributed the improvement he discerned in the general health of Philadelphians to the "proportional diminution in the use of animal food, . . . and the increased use of vegetable aliment" in their diet. Although Dr. Mease does not expressly say so, the quantity, variety, and quality of the fruits and vegetables displayed for sale in the markets was at least partly responsible for this change. Dr. Mease also noted, incidentally, that the "quantity of provisions, animal and vegetable, brought to market during the year, is immense, and much beyond the wants of the inhabitants. . . ."37

Franklin and Mease were both Philadelphians and may have entertained a certain prejudice in favor of its markets, but B. L. C. Wailes of Natchez, who visited the city in 1829 and included a trip to the markets in his tour of Philadelphia's sights, had a stranger's more impartial view. Commenting on his inspection tour, Wailes mentioned the "profusion" of meats and vegetables "of the finest kind" displayed in the market and remarked that Philadelphia beef "is unrivaled in the world."38 No wonder Philadelphians ate more of it than Dr. Mease thought they should.


The food business was big business, and keeping the markets properly regulated required the time and attention of a good many people, not least among them the clerks of the markets. There were two clerks of the High Street Market, but the New Market never seems to have had more than one. The clerk, appointed annually by the mayor, was required to give a bond for the faithful performance of his duties. These included the collection of the rents of the stalls, the settling of all disputes between buyers and sellers, the examination of the scales to ensure that the victualers gave accurate weight, and the prevention of the sale of contaminated food. A clerk's salary was not large; even in the 1850's the clerk of the Second Street Market was paid only $500, and earlier he received much less. But half of any food confiscated for insufficient weight was his (the other half went to the almshouse), and other unspecified perquisites doubtless augmented his salary. 39

Market days at the New Market were Tuesdays and Fridays, from daylight to two in the afternoon between April 1 and September 1, and from daylight to three P.M. during the winter months. 40 For awhile a market was held on Sundays also, but this practice offended the inhabitants of New Market Ward and a group of them petitioned the president and members of the Select Council to have this market discontinued "not from religious reasons only," but because the "morals of the young are thereby depraved in a very alarming degree: on the evening of Saturday the Butchers Boys, dissipated men, and idle women collect, and the Market during the whole night is the scene of every species of riot and debauchery; the people in each side of the street are not only molested by their wicked and vulgar noise but even are prevented from sleeping." The petitioners recognized that the workingmen who were not paid until late Saturday afternoon would have no Sunday dinner if they had no opportunity to buy one after they received their weekly wages, and

39 Dr. Mease reported that in 1811 the clerks were paid $2.50 for every $100 of stall rent collected, with an extra $50 added to the total salary. See Picture of Philadelphia, 122. Also see Minutes of the Common Council, 1789-1792, 82, 83, 87, HSP; Minutes of Common Council, 1791-1796, meeting of Dec. 15, 1794, City Archives; Hilary Baker to the Select Council, Oct. 24, 1796, in Society Miscellaneous Collection, Mayors of Philadelphia, HSP. Clerks' requests for salary increases are mentioned in Minutes of Common Council, III, 117, 499, City Archives.

40 Minutes of Common Council, 1789-1792, 121-122, HSP; and An Ordinance for the regulation of the Market held in Second Street, Jan. 2, 1800, Chapt. 40, Lowber, 165-172.
suggested that a Saturday evening market, to be held until nine o’clock, be substituted for the Sunday one. Councils agreed to this request and passed ordinances to that effect on March 3 and May 29, 1806.\textsuperscript{41}

Not only the days on which markets were to be held, but the kinds of provisions sold and the places in the market where the different types of foods were to be displayed were regulated by city ordinance. In 1800, for example, the sellers of fresh and salt fish were required to “stand in a single row on each side of the market place” beginning at Pine Street and continuing southward for forty feet. Next came the vendors of “roots, herbs and vegetable provisions, raised on their own farms and gardens.” These kitchen gardeners also took over the area between the north and south shambles and shared with the sellers of fruit and garden seeds the stands under the eaves on the east side of the shambles. Butter, eggs, and other country produce was sold from stands set up under the eaves on the west side of the north shambles. Meal could be purchased on the west side of the south shambles at the Lombard Street end, and “Manufactures of America” on the same side at the Cedar Street end.\textsuperscript{42} The butchers occupied the stalls in the market house proper. For these rent was paid, and anyone who took over a stall without the formality of paying for it was fined $2.00 and costs.\textsuperscript{43} The “country people,” who came from New Jersey or from the farms south of the city, were usually not charged anything if they brought their wares to market and offered them for sale from baskets or carts ranged along the curbs. A charge was made for the use of the stands under the eaves, however.

When Mr. Wharton was collecting the rents for the stalls in this market, the annual rate was £3. In 1802, Mrs. Catherine Heimer, who rented stall “No. 3 in Secd Shambles,” paid $2.50 a quarter, which was just about the same amount of money. After the market was enlarged in 1809 rents went up. The Jersey farmers who were assigned the west part of the southern section of the market were

\textsuperscript{41} “To the president and members of the Select Council for the City of Philadelphia, 1805,” Petitions to the Councils of Philadelphia, 1783–1831, f. 33, HSP; Minutes of Common Council, III, 160, 174, 187, City Archives.

\textsuperscript{42} Lowber, 167.

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}; A supplement to the several ordinances heretofore passed for the regulation of the Market in Second Street, Dec. 11, 1805, Chapt. 84, \textit{ibid.}, 194.
asked to pay at least $16 yearly. This they evidently refused to do, for Councils shortly changed their minds and directed that the stalls be let for "the highest and best rents that can be reasonably obtained for the same." In 1822, Councils, dissatisfied at the return from the rentals of the stalls, considered auctioning off the places in the market to the highest bidders, but after further thought the scheme was abandoned as impracticable.44

The city commissioners and members of both Common and Select Councils found that market matters took up a good share of their time. By 1822, for example, the Councils had so much business relating to the markets that they set up a standing joint committee to which all problems regarding the operation of the markets were referred.45 During the years between 1789 and 1889, Councils passed more than one hundred and fifty ordinances regulating the city's markets. These included ordinances to provide greatcoats for the watchmen of the market houses, ordinances forbidding the smoking of cigars or the carrying of open umbrellas in market, ordinances deprecating "missles" on the roof of the market house, ordinances providing parking space for the wagons of the stallholders.46 Lighting—the lamps were lighted under the market house roof every evening although the other street lights were used only when the moonlight was not "sufficient"—and street paving—the inhabitants of Cedar Street petitioned in 1804 that it be paved so that the market wagons would not stick in the mud on their way to market in "soft weather"—also had to be arranged for.47 No wonder that in 1854 the city finally set up a department of markets to which the business of supplying the city with food could be entrusted.

As the nineteenth century advanced, street markets began to fall from favor, and by the time the consolidation of the city was effected in 1854, the Second Street Market faced a new problem. Instead of proposals for additions to be made to it, suggestions for its

44 Wharton, Ledger Book B, 155; Catherine Heimer, three receipts for stall rent, 1799-1804, Society Miscellaneous Collection, HSP; Minutes of Common Council, III, 300-301, 322, and Minutes of Select Council, 1821-1830, 30, 96, City Archives.

45 Ibid., 39.


47 Mease, 25; petition for the paving of Cedar Street "To the President and Members of the Select Council for the City of Philadelphia" [1804], HSP.
demolition began to be circulated. The engine house at Cedar Street was gone before 1860, although it evidently was still standing in 1845 when the stalls at “the north end of the hose house” were assigned to the use of the Jersey farmers and other dealers in provisions. New fashions in architecture and new marketing methods had made the market appear hopelessly out of date, and when Chief Alfred C. Eisenhower of the Bureau of City Property threatened the whole market with destruction in 1898, “Penn,” writing “Of Men and Things” for the Evening Bulletin, conceded regretfully that “the old market sheds will have to go” because they were “obstacles to improvement and sanitation.” Neither considerations of sentiment nor love of history saved the market then, but because the rentals of the stalls were profitable to the city the old building was permitted to remain.

In 1912 the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects proposed to restore the Head House and to make the market stalls and the market place into a recreation area for the neighborhood. Nothing came of their proposals, unfortunately. Today the stalls from Lombard to South Street are gone, but a plan for the restoration of the Head House and of the old market—including eight of the stalls built in 1745—has been prepared for the Philadelphia Historical Commission by G. Edwin Brumbaugh. When the little fire engine house at the crossing of Second and Pine streets is put in order, the city will have made an important contribution to the rehabilitation of Society Hill and, by preserving this unique building, will have contributed significantly to our understanding of life in Philadelphia one hundred and fifty years ago.

Philadelphia Historical Commission  MARGARET B. TINKCOM

50 See correspondence regarding this in the Horace Wells Sellers Papers, American Philosophical Society.