THE DUNLAP HOUSE

BY JOHN JAMES BARRALET, 1807

Courtesy of Girard College
Very few views of Philadelphia as it appeared in its earlier years exist and it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that any artist undertook the production of a set of scenes portraying the city’s buildings, life, and streets as a contemporary might have seen them. This initial set of views, the work of “W. Birch & Son” was issued at the end of the decade 1790-1800, during which Philadelphia was the capital of our infant republic.

The inclusive character and the competence of the Birch views left little room for any similar undertaking, but the success of the venture directed attention to this field of artistic endeavor and elicited at first a few, and then increasing additions to the city’s visual record. Most of these later views are well known through engravings or other reproductions and are to be found in the larger historical collections. Most also are catalogued in the works of the several artists and illustrators. One, however, with a charm worthy of a wide audience and of interest not only as an early Philadelphia view, but apparently as the only contemporary record of the historic Dunlap House, at the southeast corner of Market and Twelfth Streets, seems to have escaped art-historical listing. The painting, dated 1807, and reproduced with this article, is the work of John James Barralet, a colorful, crippled, eccentric Irishman and the
author of other Philadelphia views of that period. Upon completion, it appears to have gone into private hands and to have dropped completely out of sight. This is in contrast with his well-known “North View of the Permanent Bridge over Schuylkill from Race Street Bank” which, painted several years later, was shown in the first annual exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1811 and has been in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for many years.

The 1807 painting of the Dunlap House, throughout its more than a century and a half of obscurity, seems to have been reproduced only once, and then as an “atmospheric” illustration in Wildes’ biography of Stephen Girard, where it appears without identification except as “A Philadelphia Street in Girard’s Time.” One suspects that the painting must have caught Wildes’ eye in the course of his researches at Girard College, but how it reached that institution, or when, has not been found in the College records or in the Girard papers. Even the notation on the back of the painting “Dwellings built by Stephen Girard, 12th and Market,” and a 1951 inventory, in which it was confused with “Girard’s Water Street House,” testify to its long anonymity and unknown provenance. Despite this lack of identity, a drawing unquestionably based on the painting appeared in Scharf and Westcott’s History of Philadelphia and, close to half a century later, in Jackson’s Encyclopedia of Philadelphia. In neither instance is there any mention of the original author of the view or of the existence of the painting from which it came.

David J. Kennedy, whose meticulous and affecting water colors preserve so much of nineteenth-century Philadelphia for us, also recognized the Dunlap House as a monument for his brush, and

2 Harry Emerson Wildes, Lonely Midas (New York, 1943), opp. p. 64.
3 R. D. Schwarz, Curator, Girard Collection, Girard College, to the author. The assistance of the Girard College staff, especially Alfred Moscariello, Business Manager, and Mrs. Phyllis Abrams, Assistant to the Curator, is also gratefully acknowledged.
4 J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia 1609-1884 (Philadelphia, 1884), II, 926. The view is identified as “John Dunlap’s House.”
5 Joseph Jackson, Encyclopedia of Philadelphia (Harrisburg, 1931), I, 309. Here the view is labelled “Residence of Joseph Bonaparte, Southeast Corner of Twelfth and Market Streets.”
included it among his views, but under the name "Prince Murat-Bonaparte's Residence." Unfortunately, Kennedy never saw the house, having arrived in the city some years after it was demolished, so that his view must be a copy of an earlier unidentified illustration. Unlike his usual brightly colored scenes, the house is starkly drawn against a dark background, lacking all detail and with significant architectural differences as compared with Barralet's view. This raises interesting questions regarding the view—did Barralet take liberties in his composition, or did he reproduce the house and its setting as it was? There are several lines of evidence that strongly favor the latter choice.

Much of Barralet's best work had been done on illustrations requiring accurate and realistic depiction of landscapes and architectural views. Thus, his drawings in Grose's *Antiquities of Ireland,* which added significantly to his reputation, have been characterized in the *Dublin Historical Record* as "faithfully recorded." Two others noted in the same article, "Harcourt Lock" and "Sarah's Bridge," both of which may be seen in the Civic Museum, Dublin, are comparably cited as "uncannily accurate." Although the faithfulness of the scenery is of primary interest, the excellence of the figures in the two drawings is notable and shows Barralet at the height of his powers.

Comparison of the 1807 painting with available Philadelphia records provides interesting corroboration of the picture's scenic details. The poplars lining both sides of Market Street were planted in 1795, not by the city, but with private funds obtained by subscription by none other than John Dunlap himself and his collaborator Richard Wells. Further, the unusually detailed and careful city map published by John Hills in 1796 shows that the trees ex-

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7 Francis Grose, *Antiquities of Ireland* (Dublin, 1791), *passim.*
9 "Harcourt Lock" was a lock on the Grand Canal terminating in Dublin. "Sarah's Bridge" (a span over the River Liffey in Dublin), named for Sarah, Countess of Westmoreland, was published in February, 1793, by Barralet and his brother, John Melchior Barralet, an artist in London.
10 Jacob Cox Parsons, *Extracts from the Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer, 1765-1798* (Philadelphia, 1893), entry of July 1, 1795—"Paid John Dunlap and Richard Wells five dollars toward the trees planted on both sides of Market Street to the Schuylkill this spring; done by subscription."
tended from Eighth Street all the way to the Schuylkill. An unusual
and interesting variation of this symmetry appears in the double
row which Hills shows on the south side of Market between Eleventh
and Twelfth. This curious feature may indeed be seen in Barralet’s
painting, and close inspection shows the presence of other trees
located at random in the open lot to the east of the house, also in
agreement with Hills’s delineation. This tree-studded aspect of the
square was not altered until 1831 when the lot was cleared in
anticipation of the construction of business and residential build-
ings.\textsuperscript{11}

Just above the walled enclosure, abutting the eastern edge of the
house, one sees a distant structure capped by a flat-domed roof.
This was the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts which faced
Chestnut Street between Tenth and Eleventh. Completed in 1806,
it had been opened to the public only a few months before Barralet
recorded it in his view. Another building of interest, visible in the
middle distance just under the foliage of the trees, is the structure
partly covered by a dome topped in turn with a cupola or lantern.
This was the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania,
just constructed on Ninth Street from plans by Latrobe and still
being readied for classes. It adjoined on the south the building
which housed all the other activities of the institution, the so-called
“President’s House.”\textsuperscript{12} Originally commenced in 1792 by the Com-
monwealth of Pennsylvania as an executive mansion for Washing-
ton, it was not completed until 1797, when it was offered to Adams,
who was horrified at the thought of having to furnish such a mansion
and who preferred to remain in the Market Street house of his
illustrious predecessor. It was thus clear, a few years prior to the
government’s removal to the District of Columbia, that the state
had a white elephant on its hands. In 1800 it was put up at auction
and the University, then on Fourth Street and in need of new

\textsuperscript{11} William J. Duane for the Girard Trustees, Report to the Select and Common Councils
of the City of Philadelphia. Samuel Hazard, \textit{Register of Pennsylvania} (Philadelphia, 1828-
1835), IX, 40-42.

\textsuperscript{12} I am indebted to Francis James Dallett, Archivist, University of Pennsylvania, for
information regarding the Latrobe building and for calling my attention to the wash drawing
by Strickland (in the collection of the HSP) that gives a perspective view of both buildings
from a point on the east side of Ninth Street.
quarters, purchased the building for about half its cost. After suitable interior alterations it was opened for classes in 1802.

The remaining part of the view eastward on Market Street shows the end of the market sheds, which at that time terminated at Fourth Street. Above the sheds, one sees the upper part of the old Court House surmounted by its belfry. On each side there is a glimpse of the Delaware bounded in the distance by the indistinct Jersey shore. Thus the painting, compared with contemporary records, appears to be practically a camera's eye view of the scene and, inferentially, of the house.

By 1807 the dwelling had already sheltered a series of tenants who had left their mark on the pages of American history. Built in 1789, its grounds included the entire city block, Market to Chestnut, Eleventh to Twelfth Streets, land that had been acquired by Dunlap in 1780 and 1782. The imposing residence was initially rented to Edmund Randolph whose long and distinguished patriotic service had resulted in his appointment as Attorney General in Washington's cabinet. After Randolph's tenancy, it was leased in 1792 as the French Legation, housing in turn a succession of French ministers beginning with the Chevalier de Ternant.

In 1793 de Ternant was replaced by one of the most curious diplomats in our national annals, the meteoric and notorious "Citizen Genet." Landing at Charleston, South Carolina, on April 8th, he proceeded to compromise American neutrality by fitting out privateers to prey on British shipping and eventually to recruit soldiers to filibuster in Spanish Florida and Louisiana. To "work up public opinion on the way," he set out for Philadelphia by carriage and, cheered by crowds on his northerly progress, arrived in the city on May 16th. For several weeks he was the center of lively receptions and dinners, the intent of which he appears to have thoroughly misunderstood. By early July, Jefferson, initially dis-

13 Jackson, IV, 1020-1021.
14 Tax Assessment Records, Middle Ward, 1789. Department of Records, City of Philadelphia. A partial description of the interior construction of the house and the dimensions of the outbuildings is available in an insurance survey made by the Mutual Assurance Co., the date of the policy being Aug. 6, 1794.
15 Deed Book EF, Section 27, 1807, Department of Records, City of Philadelphia.
posed in his favor, was moved to complain to Madison that the new minister was a calamity: "Hot-headed, all imagination, no judgment, passionate, disrespectful & even indecent toward the President." But Genet, mistaking his popularity for general approval of a national pro-French policy contrary to the government's official neutrality, reported to Paris with euphoric self-assurance that "Old Man Washington can't forgive my success." Indeed, Old Man Washington couldn't, and in the latter part of August decided to send the troublemaker packing by demanding his recall.

With the slow pace of communications in that era it took six months before it was learned that Robespierre not only approved the recall, but requested that his offending minister be returned under arrest. The shadow of the guillotine seemed much worse than life in a backwoods republic, so Genet, exercising unusual judgment, solved his dilemma by marrying Cornelia Clinton, daughter of the politically powerful Governor Clinton of New York, and settling down to life as a country gentleman.

Genet's successor, Joseph Fauchet, arrived in February, 1794, and was resident for somewhat more than a year before leaving behind the ugly suggestion of double-dealing on the head of the unfortunate Randolph, who in the interim had become Secretary of State. Suspected of anti-administration activities through an intercepted letter from Fauchet to his government, Randolph was called to account in a cabinet meeting by an angry and suspicious Washington. Unable or unwilling to make an explanation, he abruptly resigned in disgrace. The incident left a stain on his name that was never satisfactorily removed. The last emissary to inhabit the Dunlap house before the French Directorate suspended diplomatic relations in November, 1796, was Pierre Auguste Adet. Having been in residence for more than a year preceding the rupture, he remained to intrigue in American politics before departing in May, 1797.

19 Minnigerode, 288.
20 Morison, 345.
With the house vacant, and with a wife, six daughters, and a son to shelter, Dunlap at last decided to occupy his own premises. He was now retired, was the possessor of a comfortable fortune from his printing business, newspaper publishing, and land speculation and could look back with satisfaction on a substantial accomplishment. Born in Strabane, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, fifty years earlier, he had been brought to Philadelphia by his parents as a lad of nine and apprenticed a year later to his uncle William Dunlap, a printer and bookseller then in business on Market Street. Over the next nine years the association proved to be mutually agreeable, but, while the younger Dunlap learned the minutiae of the printing business, the elder yearned to escape it, hoping for ordination in the Anglican communion. Opportunity knocked in 1766 and, disposing of his book business at auction, William departed for London leaving his printing shop to be managed by young John. His quest was unexpectedly successful and he was able to return within a year to await a call. Early in 1768 he became rector of the parish of Stratton, King and Queen’s County, Virginia and, on his departure, John, fully versed in the business, became its proprietor.

Now his own master and ambitious to find new sources of revenue, young Dunlap turned his hand to newspaper publishing. At the end of October, 1771, he began issuing The Pennsylvania Packet; and the General Advertiser as a weekly. Like his other ventures, the paper prospered and over the next thirteen years it became successively a bi-weekly, tri-weekly, and finally in September, 1784, the first successful American daily, under the appropriately altered name The Pennsylvania Packet, and Daily Advertiser. Solidly launched in business, Dunlap was married in Christ Church on February 3, 1773, to Elizabeth (Hayes) Ellison, a young widow who had emigrated from Liverpool with her father several years earlier.

Though settled, sober, and industrious, the young man was not without Irish spirit. He had always been fond of riding and, as the difficulties with England increased and military groups began to

22 Thomas, 253.
23 Christ Church marriage records.
form, he joined with a small number of fellow equestrians in November, 1774, to found what is now the First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry. Staunchly patriotic and fully aligned with the Revolutionary cause, he became printer to the Continental Congress.

Following the passage of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, Congress ordered that it "be authenticated and printed" and "that the committee appointed to prepare the declaration superintend and correct the press." The declaration was written by Jefferson and his rough copy, resulting from committee amendments, he transcribed into a "fair copy," placing it in the hands of Congress on June 28th. It was this text that was debated July 3rd and 4th and, after many changes, ratified, signed by Hancock as President of Congress, and attested by Charles Thomson as Secretary. It would seem that their effort on the 4th would have been a day’s work, but a roster of urgent business remained before the session could end. It was therefore late afternoon before the delegates adjourned.

Jefferson, Adams, and Franklin were the active members of the Declaration committee and, because of the congressional order, had still to "superintend the press." It is unlikely that Franklin, the master printer, exhausted by a trip to Canada on behalf of Congress and plagued by gout, took the charge seriously, and (from the broadside that appeared the next morning) it also seems unlikely that Jefferson and Adams fulfilled their obligation. Somehow, the much-amended "fair copy" reached Dunlap’s shop and because of its urgency and great importance, it seems almost certain that Dunlap himself, perhaps with assistance, worked on it late into the night to get it completed. He was young, a mere twenty-nine, and deeply committed; and who else would have authorized that final line: "Philadelphia: Printed by John Dunlap."

It is interesting that in the rough Journal of Congress for July 4, a space was left to receive the amended "fair copy" that had gone to the printer. Instead what was placed there was John Dunlap’s
What became of the "fair copy," the historic Declaration, is a mystery. Whether it was thrown away after its printing was completed in Dunlap's shop, or whether it was lost by Charles Thomson, no one knows. The earliest official copy of the Declaration is, therefore, the broadside printed by Dunlap and distributed on July 5th to state assemblies, committees of safety, and to the various units of the Continental Army.

Whatever lift the Declaration contributed to army morale, the war went badly that fall and early winter. As December wore to a close the Continentals had retreated across New Jersey and escaped to temporary safety on the west bank of the Delaware. To prevent the army from disintegrating, a victory was necessary, and Washington decided on the gamble of a counterstrike. With Philadelphia threatened, the First Troop was in service, and Dunlap, one of its three officers, served with distinction in the ensuing battles of Trenton and Princeton. After these engagements, the army moved to winter quarters at Morristown, where Washington detached the Troop with a letter expressing his high regard for its service.

The following September the defeat at Brandywine once more opened the way to Philadelphia for Howe's forces, and the Troop, Dunlap included, was active with Washington's army. Dunlap's service was brief for, after the British occupation of the city, the Battle of Germantown, and action in skirmishes in October, the Troop was detached. Dunlap then joined the many who had fled to Lancaster and from there continued to publish his Pennsylvania Packet until the following July. In the meantime, his printing office, on Market Street near Second, had been commandeered for use as the main guard house of the British forces. During the remainder of the war, the Troop was in service on only three other occasions, and then for limited periods, but on each of these Dunlap was present as Lieutenant and second in command.

28 Hazelton, 170; Malone, 80.
29 Chidsey, 98; Malone, 80.
30 The signed copy on parchment, now revered as the Declaration, was prepared on July 19, and signed on Aug. 2, 1776. Hazelton, 204.
31 Pennsylvania Archives, 2nd Series, XI, 733.
After the war, when his Pennsylvania Packet became a daily, Dunlap and his former apprentice, David C. Claypoole, continued the paper under their joint names for the next six years. Together they printed the second of the nation's great documents, the Constitution. The Convention, which had been in secret session since May 25, 1787, during that steaming summer, had by July 26th agreed sufficiently on the form and powers of a national government to adjourn for ten days, while the five members of the Committee on Detail (which included Edmund Randolph) struggled to produce a trial document embodying the agreements that had already been reached. Through their strenuous efforts and night work on the part of Dunlap and Claypoole, sixty carefully guarded printed folio pamphlets of seven pages with wide margins for notes and changes were available for the delegates on Monday morning, August 6th. Further debate and compromise produced another version, the work of the Committee on Style, which the printers issued on September 12th. The final document was approved by the Convention on September 17th and all, except three of those present, signed it; one of the three, interestingly enough, was Edmund Randolph who had been so active in its preparation. Washington in his diary for the day noted that "the business being thus closed, the members adjourned to the City Tavern . . . dined together and took a cordial leave of each other after which I returned to my lodgings . . . and retired to meditate on the momentous work that had been executed." On September 20th the Constitution was laid before Congress in New York, but Dunlap and Claypoole had already made the full text public in the September 19th issue of the Pennsylvania Packet.

The power of the government to levy excise taxes, strongly championed by Hamilton, had encountered bitter opposition at

36 Van Doren, 161.
37 Randolph and Mason, both Virginia delegates, refused to sign insisting that the Constitution be submitted to state conventions for their amendments. After these conventions they wished to have a second general convention to reject or incorporate such amendments. *Ibid.*, 165, 171–172.
various times before the summer of 1794, but in that year organized violence against the tax on whiskey erupted in western Pennsylvania. This "Whiskey Rebellion" loomed as a test of the government's power to enforce federal laws and, with a rebel force swelling to a rumored strength of 5,000, Washington felt the situation sufficiently serious to issue a call for 13,000 militia from Pennsylvania and neighboring states. The First Troop was among the military units responding, and Dunlap, whose modesty had twice before caused him to decline the captaincy in deference to fellow members holding higher army rank during the Revolutionary War, had just accepted this honor. The prestige of the Troop, his rank as Captain, and his previous service all combined to result in his selection as commander of cavalry forces, with the rank of Major, for the duration of the campaign. The Troop left Philadelphia on September 19th to join the main army commanded by Washington himself, who stayed long enough to be sure that no large-scale engagement would take place. The rebels, overawed by the size of the federal forces, rapidly melted away and Dunlap and the Troop, their duty ended, returned to the city on Christmas day.

As on previous occasions, the Troop earned the Commander-in-Chief's high regard, and the reports on Dunlap's leadership provide another opportunity to appraise his character. During his short time in the field we learn that "he gained the reputation not only for strict adherence to discipline and duty, but for . . . kindness and humanity as a man." Another rather quaintly worded statement tells us that "in taking prisoners, [he] treated them with as much politeness and attention as the situation would admit of, and engaged their gratitude by accompanying unavoidable severity with humanity." This expedition proved to be Dunlap's final field service, although he continued to lead the Troop in all its activities for another nine years when, in 1803, he resigned and was placed on the Honorary Roll.

In the early summer of 1807, for reasons that are not clear, Dunlap entered into negotiations with Stephen Girard for the sale

39 History of the First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry (Philadelphia, 1895), 143.
40 Ibid., 143.
41 Ibid., 143.
42 Ibid., 34.
of his city block with all its structures, including his house, stable, and two rental buildings, 3 and 5 South Twelfth Street. The indenture of sale was drawn up on July 1st, the agreed price being $100,000, a considerable fortune for those years. The difference in time between the date of the sale and the production of Barralet's view of the house could not have been more than a few months, as judged by the internal evidence of the painting, and it seems therefore almost certain that the two events were related. Considering the character and outlook of the two participants in the transaction, and the fact that Barralet lived within a few sparsely settled city blocks of Dunlap during the previous decade, the probability is that Dunlap commissioned it, a surmise not at variance with the lack of information about the painting in the Girard papers.

Three months after the sale, Dunlap made his last will, a document that seems singularly brief considering the fortune to be devised. There is the suggestion of haste in its drawing because he added an important codicil only two weeks afterward, increasing the inheritance of his son. Surprisingly, the family did not move out of the house after its sale, but remained two more years, renting it from Girard. Dunlap's last residence was on the northeast corner of Thirteenth and Chestnut, where he died on November 27, 1812.

Girard's acquisition of the Market Street house by no means ended its interesting history. In 1815 it reverted once again to diplomatic use, being occupied by Baron de Kantzow, the Swedish minister to the United States. After de Kantzow's stay, the house received its most celebrated tenant, Joseph Bonaparte, the elder brother of Napoleon. Joseph had been made King of Naples in 1806, and two years later King of Spain, although the latter sovereignty, during the five years of his reign, was largely titular. Following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, Joseph, leaving his wife and children behind, fled with a small party that reached New York on August 20, 1815. Styling himself the Comte de Survilliers and anxious to regularize his presence in the United States, he set out

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43 Deed book EF, Section 27, 133, 1807, Department of Records, City of Philadelphia.
44 Philadelphia Directories.
45 Register of Wills, Philadelphia County, 1812, Book #4, Will #132, p. 227.
46 Poullon's American Daily Advertiser, Nov. 30, 1812. A portrait of Dunlap, painted almost certainly after his retirement, was done by Rembrandt Peale and is reproduced in History of the First Troop.
a few weeks later for Washington to assure President Madison that he wished only a peaceful refuge and would not be a party to foreign political intrigue. En route, he arrived in Philadelphia with several companions on the evening of September 11 and went to the Mansion House Hotel (the former home of William Bingham), but found that no accommodations were available. Henry Clay, then staying at the hotel with a small party, heard of Joseph’s plight and relinquished his own reservations to the former monarch.

Alexander J. Dallas, Madison’s Secretary of the Treasury, also in Philadelphia at the time, immediately sent the news to his chief. Madison, forewarned from other sources as well, and fearing diplomatic complications if he received Joseph, had his carriage intercepted a few miles outside Washington with the message that an interview would not be granted. The mild-mannered Joseph apparently accepted the rebuff without contention and returned to Philadelphia.

Settling temporarily in rented quarters, he began searching for a more permanent abode in agreement with the advice that his brother Napoleon had offered before they parted in France, that he settle between New York and Philadelphia, close enough to either to receive news promptly and far enough from both to discourage unwelcome visitors. In the spring of 1816 he rented “Lansdowne,” the former country house of the Binghams situated in what is now Fairmount Park and, a few months later with the assistance of Stephen Girard, bought property in New Jersey on the Delaware River near Bordentown, where he began the construction of a country estate, “Point Breeze.” This continued to be his principal home during the period of his residence in the United States.

The association between Girard and Joseph that had begun as a business and banking relationship, soon became a social one also, as he with several Bonapartist émigrés, including the Maréchal Emmanuel de Grouchy, Generals Henri and Charles de Lallemand, and Lefebvre-Desnouettes, gathered on occasion for Sunday afternoon dinner and staid conviviality at Girard’s Water Street home.

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47 Jackson, I, 309.
49 George Mifflin Dallas, Life and Writings of Alexander James Dallas (Philadelphia, 1871), 447.
50 Bertin, 7.
51 Ibid., 28.
The situation had its irony as Girard, whom Philadelphia society fastidiously shunned, was on familiar terms with all the prominent refugees, not to mention the exiled King, whom all Philadelphia yearned to meet.\textsuperscript{52}

The isolation of "Lansdowne" in the winter prompted Joseph to maintain a city residence, and it was in this way that the Dunlap House received its most distinguished tenant in the latter part of 1816.\textsuperscript{53} Evidently the house pleased him, for, despite his occupancy of "Point Breeze" in 1817, he not only continued his lease on the Market Street residence but sought to purchase it. Girard, who said that he denied Joseph no reasonable wish, agreed to its sale only if his tenant would cover the ground with silver dollars standing on edge!\textsuperscript{54}

Despite his easy social manners and a widening circle of friends, Joseph found the separation from his family a source of increasing unhappiness. His wife Julie, who had originally intended to follow him, remained in Europe in poor health, along with their daughters Zenaïde and Charlotte. To add to his woes, his Point Breeze mansion caught fire and burned to the ground early in January, 1820. Another building on the grounds was promptly converted to serve as a residence and Charlotte, his younger daughter, arrived to occupy it with him in December, 1821. For an adequate social life, much of their time during the winter season in this and the following two years of her stay were spent in their Philadelphia house.\textsuperscript{55}

Charlotte proved to be an amateur painter of some talent and exhibited in the annual exhibitions of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1822, '23, and '24.\textsuperscript{56} Zenaïde, who had married her cousin Charles Lucien Bonaparte in 1822, arrived with him in Philadelphia early in September, 1823. The young couple occupied the house until the following spring and it was there that their first child, Prince Joseph Lucien Charles, was born on February 13, 1824.\textsuperscript{57} Charles Lucien, the young father, became an accomplished scholar in ornithology and his \textit{American Ornithology}, published in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} Wildes, 242.
\item \textsuperscript{53} \textit{New York Evening Post}, Aug. 20, 1817.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Wildes, 242.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Bertin, 281.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Rutledge, 225.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Bertin, 291.
\end{itemize}
Philadelphia in 1825, brought him to serious scientific notice. Joseph, anxious to keep the young family close to him, especially after Charlotte's return to Europe in the summer of 1824, built a house to accommodate them on his Point Breeze estate and, with this change, the Market Street house passed to other occupants.

The last tenants of the mansion were Dr. John Y. Clarke and his wife, Girard's niece (née Henriette Girard) who was the widow of General Henri de Lallemand. During the Clarke's occupancy in 1831, Girard began plans to develop his city square for shops along Market Street and a row of residences on Chestnut. Although the aged financier did not live to see his plans go into effect, they were carried on, almost without interruption, by his trustees. To make way for this change, the house was torn down and thus all its long associations with patriots, plenipotentiaries, and princes came to an end in 1832.

But what can be said now about Barralet whose painting preserves for us a charming scene of a bygone era? Was he too, like the tenants of the house and those associated with it, among the favored and the affluent? The story is one of darker contrasts. Of his parentage the records disclose very little and, because of the family name, it has been assumed that his father was of French origin. The exact year of his birth is uncertain, but various circumstances place it in Dublin in 1747. Whether he came into the world crippled (a dislocation of the head of the thigh bone), or whether this handicap was the result of a childhood accident, remains unknown. At any rate, it would appear that this incapacity may have directed him to less active and more imaginative interests than his playmates, for one first hears of him as a student in the "Landscape and Ornamental Drawing" section of the Dublin Society's Art School under James Mannin. The lad evidently showed talent, for at the end of his course, at age seventeen in December, 1764, an entry in the Society's record shows that James "Balleret" won a premium of fifteen shillings for "Inventions and Designs in Patterns."
Following the completion of his schooling there are conflicting records of his activities during the next five years. Strickland\textsuperscript{61} says that he worked as an artist and earned a considerable reputation as a teacher in Dublin. But during the same years there is at least one record that places him among artists in London. New organizations of artists were then the vogue; to the well-established Society of Arts and the newer Free Society of Artists, there was added in 1765, the Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain, and in 1768, largely through the efforts of the Pennsylvania-born Benjamin West, the Royal Academy of Arts. Barralet eventually exhibited in the shows of all these groups and, in connection with the Incorporated Society of Artists, Pye has compiled a list of 211 members including Barralet who signed a “Roll Declaration”\textsuperscript{62} in 1766, affirming support of the organization. Whether or not Barralet’s inclusion was a mistake, it is certain that he was in the British capital by 1770, for the Royal Academy’s exhibition program for that year lists the titles of three drawings which he entered, together with his address.\textsuperscript{63} During the next ten years he exhibited annually with one or the other of the four societies. By 1773 he was offering instruction in his own drawing academy on James Street, Golden Square. The following year, the Society of Arts recognized his talent by awarding him a gold palette for his “View of Brentford from Kew.” In 1777 his academy was located at 24 St. Albans Street, Pall Mall, and in the same year he was elected a Fellow of the Incorporated Society of Artists;\textsuperscript{64} and also exhibited six landscapes in chalk in the Great Room, Royal Exchange, Strand. In characterizing this work, Anthony Pasquin states that “he drew landscapes in Italian chalk, in which he affected to imitate Vernet.”\textsuperscript{65}

In May, 1779, Barralet’s former teacher at the Dublin Society’s School, James Mannin, was forced to withdraw from his duties

\textsuperscript{61} Walter G. Strickland, \textit{A Dictionary of Irish Artists} (London and Dublin, 1913), I, 25. Strickland’s brief biography is the source of most of the other shorter and generally less accurate accounts.

\textsuperscript{62} John Pye, \textit{Patronage of British Art} (London, 1845), 120.

\textsuperscript{63} Algernon Graves, \textit{The Royal Academy of Arts, 1769–1904} (London, 1905), I, 123.

\textsuperscript{64} Minute Book, Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain, Oct. 2, 1777. I am indebted to Philip James, Librarian, Royal Society of Arts, London, for the citation to these minutes.

\textsuperscript{65} Anthony Pasquin (John Williams), \textit{An Authentic History of the Professors of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture Who Have Practiced in Ireland} (Dublin, 1796), 41.
because of illness, and on his recommendation Barralet, then in Dublin, was approved as his substitute. Because of Mannin's death in June, the appointment was extended until "the general election of officers on the second Thursday in November next," the Society's Minutes noting in addition that he "had taken extra-ordinary care of the said school." Encouraged doubtless by the approval of his services, Barralet applied for permanent appointment to the post, but when the selection was made it went to William Waldron, one of his classmates of 1764. Pasquin, in commenting on the choice, says that Waldron received the appointment because of "the protection of the Duke of Leinster."

There is probably good reason for this observation, but perhaps a more telling one appears in the Society's Minutes for December 2nd. They note initially Barralet's petition for recompense for his services and then a request for a "Certificate of... Conduct during said time as he means shortly to return to London." Why a certificate of conduct if his "extraordinary care" of the School had been recognized? The answer lies in a further notation stating that the Society was informed through one of its members "that a Disturbance had happened in the Society's School for Ornament-Drawing, owing to a Disagreement between the Master of the said School and the Boys instructed therein."

This is the first record that appears regarding a side of Barralet's character that was to become increasingly evident during the years of his life in Philadelphia, an inability to see the opposite side of a difference and a quick and blustering display of temper on being crossed. Evidently the incident was smoothed over because we find that the Society not only granted him £15, "being in full as Salary for his attendance for three months in Superintending the Society's School for Ornament-Drawing," but subsequently voted him "an additional Gratuity of £45 sterling in consideration of his great Merit as an Artist, and his Diligence and Attention in superin- tending said School." A gratuity three times his salary! An odd ending to the loss of a desired position and a school disturbance.

Following his departure from the School, Barralet did not return.

66 Minutes, June 24, 1779.
67 Pasquin, 41.
68 Minutes, Feb. 3, 1780.
to London, but remained in residence in Dublin for the next thirteen years, first at 2 Georges Court, Great Georges Street, later at 22 South Cumberland Road, and finally in Ballsbridge. In May, 1780, four of his drawings were shown in the exhibition of the Society of Artists in Ireland: "King William giving orders to Sir Albert Conyingham at the Head of the Enniskillers"; "Inside View of Holy Cross Abbey"; "Inside View of Cashel Cathedral"; and "Southeast View of the Rock of Cashel." In the same year, accompanied by a fellow Irish artist, Gabriel Beranger, he made an antiquarian sketching tour through the counties of Wexford and Wicklow. Twenty-three of the drawings made on this tour appeared more than ten years later in Grose's Antiquities of Ireland, already mentioned, and these, with his illustrations for Milton's Views of Seats in Ireland, were highlights in his career.

In 1782 he painted scenery for the Crow Street Theatre and about the same time he became interested in glass staining with Richard Hand. This association culminated in 1785 in a joint exhibition, "Pictures Stained in Glass," held at 14 New Buildings, Dame Street. Unfortunately, the artists' enthusiasm was not shared by the public and the exhibition was closed because of poor attendance.

In the succeeding eight years there are numerous records of Barralet's work in Dublin, chiefly through his many drawings and book illustrations. The latest date for these drawings appears to be early in 1793, and his whereabouts during the remainder of that year and most of 1794 are uncertain. A clue, however, is provided by his naturalization certificate issued in Philadelphia, October 9, 1802, when he became a United States citizen. On that document he declared himself "a native of England, county of Middlesex, parish of St. James, London." It would thus appear that before deciding to emigrate he had returned to London with the expecta-

70 Strickland, I, 28.
71 Ibid., I, 447.
73 For the limits of the parish of St. James, see Parish Clerk's Company (London, 1732). The parish church was on Clerkenwell Green now in the heart of London. Barralet lived in that neighborhood in 1778.
tion of settling there. At that time opinion among London artists, especially the less well established, reflected the belief that good opportunities existed in Philadelphia. As the seat of the new government and a focus of expanding business activity, it offered, in imagination at least, commissions for portraits, miniatures, book illustrations and commercial art. Lured by this prospect, a spate of artistic English immigrants reached the city in 1794.

Charles Willson Peale, who had nursed the idea of founding an academy of fine arts, concluded that this influx of artists offered the opportunity to make it a reality. Persuaded by his enthusiasm, some thirty artists—native and foreign, professional and amateur—gathered in his museum rooms in the American Philosophical Society's building, "Philosophical Hall," on Fifth Street, around the corner from Independence Hall, on Monday, December 29, 1794. After discussion, all present signed a document signifying their intention to devote their "utmost effort to establish a school or academy of architecture, sculpture, painting, etc., within the United States." Among the signatures, in a clear, firm, round hand there appears the name, John James Barralet. This seems to be the first record of his presence in Philadelphia.

At first it appeared that the "Columbianum or American Academy of the Fine Arts," as it came to be designated, was well launched. New members were quickly added and a committee of nine was appointed "to define the important objects to be embraced by the Society, to form the outlines of a constitution, and to write such gentlemen as they may consider of advantage to the Society." The committee was composed almost equally of native artists and newly arrived foreigners, and the fact that Barralet was chosen from among the latter indicates the professional esteem in which he was held by his colleagues. But the initial amity in which the project was launched soon evaporated amid disagreements and outbursts of temper. A group of eight members, mostly foreign, submitted their resignation, Barralet's name being at the head of the list. This secessionist group then attempted to represent themselves as the "Columbianum," but, being unable to attract new

75 Ibid.
members, soon disbanded. The original “Columbianum” lived long enough to sponsor an exhibition by its members in June, 1795. The most notable contribution was Peale’s “The Staircase Group,” a life-sized trompe l’oeil so skillful that it was rumored that Washington bowed to the figures in passing.

A close trio among the secessionist group was made up of Barralet, Walter “Irish” Robertson, who had practiced in both Dublin and London, and a young Englishman, Robert Field. All three boarded at Mrs. Janet Clarke’s at the northeast corner of Sixth and Minor Streets, and were associated in the production and sale of the engraving of a miniature of Washington that had been painted by Robertson. Field produced the engraving and Barralet contributed an embellishment. Following this venture the trio disbanded, Robertson emigrating to India where he died in Futtapore in 1802.

Of necessity, Barralet turned increasingly to engraving in order to make a living. According to David Edwin, an artist well known for his work in the same medium, Barralet was the inventor of the first ruling machine for engravers in the United States, and he spent much time in improving the black used in copper-plate printer’s ink. Edwin characterizes him as a man of abilities, but adds that “he was the most eccentric man I ever knew . . . he was lame . . . [and] when he walked, it was, to use the common saying, ‘dot and go one.’ The surtout coat he constantly wore in bad weather was dipped in the mud on the lame side at every step he took. He took large quantities of snuff—was extremely irritable and passionate, and very dirty in his general appearance . . . he was also very poor but had too much pride to complain of a poverty he could ill conceal.”

Bernard H. Cone, “The American Miniatures of Walter Robertson,” American Collector (April, 1940), 6. Minor Street was situated between Market and Chestnut, and extended from Fifth to Sixth Street.

John Hill Morgan and Mantle Fielding, Life Portraits of Washington (Philadelphia, 1931), 195. The engraving appeared with the following inscription: “Painted by W. Robertson/Jon Jas Barralet Invenit 1795/Engraved by R. Field/Published by Walter Robertson, Philadelphia and New York, 1st August 1795."


These reminiscences by Edwin were recounted many years later and represent his impressions over Barralet’s lifetime. Dorothy C. Barck, Diary of William Dunlap (New York, 1930), III, 705. Under date of June 24, 1833, Dunlap writes: “To see Edwin about Barralet.”
Of even greater interest for this period in Barralet’s life is a letter written to his son John in the summer of 1798. The letter is one of the few personal records of the artist still extant and from it we learn of his marriage, something of his family relationships, some of his thoughts about his personal situation and about art in Philadelphia at that time.80

Philadelphia, August 4, 1798

Dear John

Perchance calling at the Post Office I received your letter dated the fourth March 1798 which has relieved my Great Doubt of ever hearing from any of the family, of your side of the herring Pond. I am happy to see that you are all in a good state of health. God keep you so is my sincere prayer[,] since I have been in this Country I have received two letters from your uncle Joseph81 and Mr. Billett.82 I have answered them and have had no return since, at different times I have wrote to your Mother four letters, and once your Uncle John[,]83 never received any answer—really thought you were visited by the Yellow Fever and all swept away. I remained pretty well till June 97 when I was taken with a Desentery and turn’d to a Putrid Fever and lay’d six months in a shocking state[,] half the time there was not one Person in one Hundred stayed in Philadelphia at the period of the yellow fever, began July and lasted till beginning of September[,] a great number of English Scotch and Irish laid low and attack’d the Africans which were safe before.

Thanks to the care of an Ignorant French Phisisian84 I have recovered without Mercury and plentiful bleeding which has been so successful in adding so many thousand saints to the bills of Mortality.

I was duly sensible of the kindness of Mr. Perry’s85 good Offers, if there was a Peace I would return Immediately[,] knowing the state of Art in Europe I could live without doing something which must be the case at Present. By a dream I was prepared to hear of my Fathers death, in your letter you don’t mention your sister Ann[,] I am sorry to hear that Richard has taken to the Sea hope he will find his Mistake. . . . My crossing the

80 This letter at the HSP is a typescript taken from the original which, in 1954, was evidently in the hands of the Barralet family in England. It is reproduced with the omission of two unimportant sentences and with minor changes in punctuation to make it more readable.
81 Joseph Barralet, a younger brother.
82 Unidentified.
83 John Melchior Barralet, a brother. See footnote 9.
84 Possibly a reference to Dr. Jean Deveze who came to notice for his service at the Bush Hill hospital during the 1793 yellow fever epidemic. His treatment differed markedly from that of the city’s outstanding medical practitioner, Dr. Benjamin Rush, who prescribed large doses of “mercury” (calomel) and voluminous bleeding.
85 Unidentified.
Atlantic [h]as been a good lesson to me. On my landing here found that my Proffession was not in fashion or not known. Drawing and Painting would not get the five penny bits. I was obliged to turn to Engraving for a living, for they think more of a Print than any productions in paint. I send you a likeness of General Washington that I engraved for Mr. Cambells Hume's History of England. Sold 500 in sheets at a Dollar a piece thats all I can say in its favor. John I should be much indebted to you if you would make inquirys how much Mr. Utritton sells his ready plainshed copper per pound I used to gett for 2 shillings and sixpence per pound for aquatint Plates. Our Copper won’t work in tints[,] mine is the Spirit ground which is the best and most certain I found here in my several trials. Copper plates here are of Enormous above 200 cents of its original cost. . . . I have published some things but the sales are at present slow[,] I am quite discouraged[,] I have lost some mony by Deaths and Runaways[,] I have work’d very hard since I have being here I cant go forward for my sould[,] I have drawn a View of the Port and City of Philadelphia and of New York86 and can’t gett Copper to engrave them on[,] the size is 28 inches 20 inches if I could gett two of them let me know the price.

My best love to Mr. Perry your Mother Brother and Sister and as soon as the war is over I will take an other trip over the little Pond. I suppose you would all be surprised at my coming very soon. I will write next to your Mother. Remain your affection’d Father

John James Barralet

No. 3 eleventh Street between Market and Philbert Street America. In your next let me know if you hear anything of Mr. Billett. This day the phisian has declared the City of Philadelphia in a State of Yellow Fever. I dont dread it[,] I have remove from the low part of the town to the highest part of it. 46 died the last 24 hours[,] the Parts of the people are gone out of town. I will try and send you some of my American Drawings. Views one New Castle on the Delaware87 the other Church Street Ferry.88

Although this letter clearly indicates Barralet’s unhappy situation in Philadelphia and his desire to go back to his former life, he never returned. Hostilities between England and France made the voyage almost impossible and, to make matters worse, sometime in the following several years his wife died, cutting his ties with his former home. It was thus clear that he would have to remain in Philadelphia. It was in this period that he entered into a brief partnership

86 Neither of these views appear to have been engraved.
87 His “North View of New Castle on the Delaware” was shown in the 1811 exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Rutledge, 21.
88 There appears to be no record of this drawing.
with Alexander Lawson, the able, steady, and industrious Scotch engraver. The combination was about as miscible as oil and water. Barralet, temperamental and improvident, generally managed to receive payment for their efforts and "always poor, kept or . . . spent it." 89

During the latter part of 1801 or early 1802, the pair were employed by the Reverend John Blair Linn to produce three illustrations for the latter's book-length poem, The Powers of Genius. As the work progressed, the young assistant pastor of the First Presbyterian Church was not satisfied with one of the drawings and, aware of Barralet's blustering temper and "his unsparing use of oaths and imprecations," persuaded Lawson to ask for the desired alterations. The result was hardly surprising; Barralet "raved like a madman at the indignity of being criticized by a yankee parson." 90

Another sidelight on Barralet at this time is provided by his naturalization. To obtain his citizenship it was necessary to have a "voucher," someone who would appear at the hearing and certify to his length of residence in the United States. The person chosen by Barralet was Richard Folwell, generally known as "Dicky," a printer who had the distinction of producing the first and second editions of the Birch views. 91 It was an interesting choice because Folwell was not only a cripple but a dwarf, and, like his friend, also highly eccentric. In fact, his behavior was sufficiently odd that he was a well-known town character. 92

One of the distinguished French refugees who sought asylum in the United States after the rise of Napoleon was Jean Victor Marie Moreau. Despite his position as one of the Emperor's ablest generals, he was accused of implication in a plot to restore Louis XVIII. Fleeing with his family, he reached Philadelphia at the end of August, 1805. Shortly after, he purchased an estate at Morrisville, opposite Trenton, and settled down to a quiet country life. 93 His fame, however, caused him to be feted in Philadelphia and Barralet persuaded him to sit for a portrait.

89 Dunlap, II, 171.
90 Ibid.
92 Scharf and Westcott, II, 934.
During the sitting an amusing incident, also recounted by Edwin,\(^4\) took place. "Barralet was then a widower, living in a part of a house and having no housekeeper. The house was in a dirty and deranged state, but in expectation of the great general, had been put in as good order as his reduced circumstances would permit." When the sitting was about half finished, muffled sounds of children's sobs were heard, and when they could no longer be ignored, Barralet rushed to a closet which he unlocked, disclosing two children in tears crying for a piece of bread. Complaining to the General, he said: "Look there now . . . what trouble I have with these brats," whereupon he removed a loaf of bread from an upper shelf, cut a slice for each child and with threats, thrust them back and relocked the door. Before the drawing was finished, the whole episode was repeated, "to the great amusement of the general."

From this tale and Barralet's 1798 letter, it would seem that the children mentioned were John and Ann, but their ages in 1805 must have been such as to make the reported events rather improbable. Whether or not the episode was embellished is difficult to assess, but a sitting did take place because a Moreau portrait by Barralet was shown in the 1814 exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.\(^5\) How long the children remained with their father is one of the many unknowns in his family life, but it seems probable that they were no longer with him in 1812, for the Philadelphia tax records of that year indicate that he was occupying a house at the corner of Sixth and Chestnut Streets with Robert Leird, Robert Ewing, and Walter Stewart.

In 1808, after a decade of residence at and near Tenth and Filbert Streets, and a year after he had painted "The Dunlap House," Barralet moved to Vine and Ashton Streets, occupying a house belonging to Joseph Ogden. This locality was a sparsely settled neighborhood near the Schuylkill River, and further from the business area of the city. There in 1809 and 1810 he was busy with drawings for the *Port Folio* magazine. His view of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, engraved by Benjamin Tanner, appeared in the June, 1809, issue and three drawings prepared from sketches by Alexander Wilson followed in the February and March

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\(^4\) Dunlap, II, 172.

\(^5\) Rutledge, 20.
issues of 1810. But the times were no better for Barralet and, as always, he was in financial straits. Falling behind in his rent, he proposed to make payment to his landlord by producing a large painting of the Market Street Bridge, which had been completed in 1805. Ogden accepted the offer and Barralet delivered the painting that now hangs in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.96

Scattered references to Barralet’s work during the years 1811 to 1815 are extant, but of his personal life we know very little. In 1813 and 1814 the city Directory lists him as a “designer and painter” living at the corner of Twelfth and Callowhill Streets, then on the northern edge of the city.

The final memento that we have of the artist is a short letter in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, dated January 2, 1815, in his usual clear hand. Its addressee is unknown, but it acknowledges the receipt of twenty dollars “via Mr. Tanner,” expresses obligation for the “benevolence” and offers the “compliments of the season.” Exactly two weeks later, on January 16, 1815, the poverty, the disappointments, and the moments of despair all came to an end. Neither the handwriting nor the contents of the letter suggested that his health was failing, and his death seems therefore to have followed a short illness. The only record of his funeral comes from a note in one of his biographies,97 which states that he was buried from the house of W. H. Morgan who, according to the city Directory of that year, was a “carver and gilder” living at 114 Chestnut Street. The city records contain no mention of his final resting place.

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96 Wainwright, 291.