Those who spend idle hours browsing the art and architecture sections of used bookshops are likely to be familiar with the name Harold Donaldson Eberlein. His long list of publications includes almost forty books and scores of articles spanning over fifty years from at least 1911 to 1962. In these works, Eberlein addressed an impressive range of subjects, including history, historic and contemporary architecture, interior decoration, the decorative arts, gardening, travel, and biography.

His success as an author was the result of several factors. He was extraordinarily industrious, particularly during the first two decades of his career. He was a sharp-eyed observer, with a gift for developing multiple works from a given source or group of sources, and was equally adept at reusing previously published material. To his good fortune, Eberlein's output found a market among readers who needed historical information for many reasons, most of them linked to the influence of the colonial revival that flourished during the first half of the twentieth century. Some probably needed practical information on historic architectural or decorative styles. As the twentieth century moved into its second decade, Eberlein helped to codify and disseminate new standards of taste that required greater knowledge of those styles. In so doing, he helped direct consumer choices. Others, seeking to place themselves in relation to the colonial past, may have

1 The Athenaeum of Philadelphia and Jacquelyn Gwyn, Harold Donaldson Eberlein, 1875–1965: A Bibliography (Philadelphia, 1964). While quite extensive (332 entries), the bibliography does not include all Eberlein's work.


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been more interested in the combination of architectural and genealogical history that was so prominent in many of his works.

Although not a native of Philadelphia, Eberlein considered himself a Philadelphian: he lived most of his life there and wrote extensively about its history and architecture. As a young man, he immersed himself in the culture of the city's elite, building a detailed and intimate knowledge of Philadelphia's families and institutions. Social contacts were important sources of information, and Eberlein worked hard to establish and maintain them.

Harold Donaldson Eberlein was born on July 16, 1875, in Columbia, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the second son and youngest of the four children of Hester Ann Crook Eberlein and Samuel F. Eberlein. The 1870 census listed Samuel Eberlein as the vice president of an insurance company, while an 1874-75 Columbia directory listed him as a coal merchant, an occupation possibly related to iron manufacturing, one of the city's primary industries.

The Eberlein family left Columbia for Philadelphia about 1880. City directories of the early 1880s list the occupations of both Samuel and his elder son Jefferson as "clerk," suggesting office or managerial work. Young Harold was enrolled in the Academy of the Protestant Episcopal Church on September 17, 1885. Established in 1785, the academy had educated the sons of many of the city's most prominent families. Then located on Locust Street in downtown Philadelphia, the school featured a curriculum that strongly emphasized the classics. A grading sheet from the first semester of Eberlein's fourth form (sophomore year) lists the standard range of subjects: Greek, Latin, English, mathematics, and history. The school's register indicates that he received free and half-pay tuition for at least some of his years at the academy, assistance possibly granted on the basis of financial need.

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5 Eberlein to LCP; Gopsill's Philadelphia City Directory (Philadelphia, 1883), 484.

6 Register, Academy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, n.p., Charles Latham, Jr., Archives, Episcopal Academy, Merion, Pa.
need or scholastic merit. Eberlein excelled at the academy, receiving recognition on school commendation days for work worthy of "honors" and "highest honors." Eberlein was graduated from Episcopal Academy in 1892. He continued his education at the University of Pennsylvania, graduating with a bachelor's degree in the class of 1896. He pursued graduate studies at Penn with the goal of attaining a doctorate, concentrating on English and medieval history, but never completed the advanced degree. In 1899, Eberlein returned to the Episcopal Academy as a member of the faculty, which then included many other University of Pennsylvania alumni. Eberlein remained at the academy for five years, teaching many of the subjects he had studied during his years as a pupil. In addition to Latin, Greek, and history, he taught art classes and served as the school's choirmaster and organist. After leaving the academy in 1904, Eberlein went on to teach Latin for three more years in three different schools.

Perhaps his frequent changes in employment resulted from growing dissatisfaction with teaching, for it was during those years that he moved closer to becoming a writer and historian. A journal with sporadic entries made between 1894 and 1910 gives some insight into Eberlein's development from college student to blossoming author. The earliest entries, dating from June 1894, are simple records of readings and assignments, with brief notes about social calls, financial obligations, musical performances that he gave, and lessons that he taught. At the end of June, the entries stop until March of 1895, when they become more expansive and narrative in character. Accounts of travels through the Philadelphia-area countryside are interspersed with notes on flowers in bloom, sometimes designated by their scientific names, a foretaste of the schoolmasterly precision that would be a hallmark of his writing. His detailed accounts of scenic views, weather

7 For a general history of the school, see Charles Latham Jr., The Episcopal Academy (Devon, Pa., 1984). A partial record of Eberlein's grades is in the Faculty Grade Books in the Latham Archives; his tuition status is recorded in the Register. It was the intention of the Academy's founders that the school should provide free tuition opportunities; see Latham, Episcopal Academy, 31. Among his awards for academic achievement, Eberlein received "commendation with the highest honor" at the Academy's commendation day, April 11, 1890; Academy of the Protestant Episcopal Church Commendation Day program, Latham Archives.

8 Register, Academy of the Protestant Episcopal Church (transcript), n.p., Latham Archives; General Alumni Catalogue of the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1922), 95; Eberlein to LCP; Register, Latham Archives; Tabula 1904 (Episcopal Academy Annual), 11, Latham Archives.
conditions, and wildlife are strikingly vivid, and have the quality of one honing his skills of observation and description. Eberlein also noted his frequent performances at several churches, demonstrating that his musical gifts found ample expression.9

After an unexplained hiatus of more than ten years, the diary resumes in 1908, with the final entry made in July 1910. This section makes frequent but unspecific references to writing and research projects that occupied a growing proportion of his time. As early as 1902, Eberlein had contributed items of historical interest under the nom de plume “Scribbler” to Quaker Quality, an apparently short-lived Philadelphia-area weekly.10 On August 16, 1908, Eberlein wrote, “This afternoon... I have been busy straightening out a lot of my old MSS and papers. I hope to get all my notes and material in such shape that I can make use of them without burrowing through a lot of rubbish.”11 It is unclear whether he sought to publish these manuscripts, or whether he was still pursuing his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania. Whatever his motive, it is clear that Eberlein understood the value of his previous research, as his later career would repeatedly demonstrate.

By the summer of 1910, Eberlein was striving actively to establish himself as an author. On July 10, he wrote that he had “selected... photographs... for the September number of American Suburbs.” The entry continues: “On Tuesday, took the photographer out to the Grange [a Philadelphia-area house with seventeenth-century origins] in the morning to finish getting the pictures to illustrate my Grange article. On Thursday morning I went down to Lippincott’s and had a long talk with Mr. Holloway about the ‘old house’ book.”

9 Harold Donaldson Eberlein diary, 1894–1910, private collection. Eberlein noted that he served for more than six years during the period covered by the diary as organist and choirmaster at St. Paul’s Church (Episcopal) in Camden, New Jersey. This was probably his longest musical appointment. Eberlein to LCP.

10 Some of Eberlein’s “Scribbler” items in Quaker Quality include “Social Life in Pre-Revolutionary Days,” Quaker Quality, March 1, 1902, 6; “Eating and Drinking in Colonial Times,” Quaker Quality, March 8, 1902, 9; and “The Vanities of Our Forefathers,” Quaker Quality, April 19, 1902, 8. Copies of the articles along with Eberlein’s manuscript for the last of these three are in the Eberlein Collection, Portrait of a Colonial City, Portrait of a Colonial City/Notes, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Eberlein’s early career also included work for the Philadelphia Evening Telegraph and the Philadelphia Public Ledger, obituary, The Evening Bulletin, July 27, 1964, 12.

11 Just over two months later, on Oct. 4, 1908, he noted, “I spent the afternoon at the University making arrangements to have my credits for Ph.D. of former years still considered valid.” Eberlein diary, Aug. 16, 1908.
Eberlein's Grange article was almost certainly meant for eventual inclusion in what would be the first of many "old house" books. Written in collaboration with fellow University of Pennsylvania alumnus Horace Mather Lippincott, The Colonial Homes of Philadelphia and its Neighbourhood established at its publication in 1912 Eberlein's nearly lifelong association with the venerable Philadelphia publishing firm of J. B. Lippincott. In early correspondence the firm expressed caution about the terms under which it would publish Eberlein's first effort. Only after the receipt of a "sufficient" number of subscriptions would Lippincott publish the book, and only after production expenses were met would royalties accrue to the authors.

As with many of his books ostensibly about historic houses, Colonial Homes of Philadelphia focused as much on the families and personalities associated with the houses as on the buildings themselves. Colonial Homes combined historical anecdotes, genealogical information, and straightforward descriptions of houses and interiors, along with quotations and passages (sometimes lengthy and set in small type) selected from other sources. There were no footnotes and only a brief bibliography. He even succumbed to the occasional flight of fancy, which could "people the rooms with a shadowy throng of those that once dwelt there... There stands the old captain in a cocked hat, his armless sleeve hanging limp at his side... [here] a dame arranged in flowered brocade... [and] the gallant Spanish Don."

12 Eberlein diary, July 10, 1910; Harold Donaldson Eberlein and Horace Mather Lippincott, The Colonial Homes of Philadelphia and its Neighbourhood (Philadelphia, 1912). For the section on the Grange, see pages 158-66. Horace Mather Lippincott Jr. graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1897 and was the author of several books on Philadelphia history. Although a number of his works were published by Lippincott, he was not a member of the firm. (His son, H. Mather Lippincott Jr., recalled that his father was a distant cousin to Joseph W. Lippincott, grandson of the firm's first president and a 1908 Penn graduate who joined the firm that year and who served as its president from 1926 to 1949.) As a young man, he worked in his father's wholesale lumber business, and later made his career working for the University of Pennsylvania alumni organization. General Alumni Catalogue, 101; author's interview with H. Mather Lippincott Jr., Feb. 24, 1999. Edward Stratton Holloway studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and worked as an art advisor to the Lippincott firm. He would later be one of the co-authors (with Eberlein and Abbot McClure) of The Practical Book of Interior Decoration (Philadelphia, 1919). For biographical information on Holloway, see Who's Who in America, 1924-1925 (Chicago, 1924), 13:1604. For information on Holloway's work at Lippincott, see J. Stuart Freeman Jr., Toward a Third Century of Excellence: An Informal History of the J. B. Lippincott Company (Philadelphia, 1992), 107-9; for biographical information on Joseph W. Lippincott, see 60-63. Terms for royalties on Colonial Homes are set out in J. B. Lippincott to Harold Eberlein and Horace Lippincott, Nov. 2, 1911, 1911 Letter Book no. 57, 451-52, Lippincott Archives. Since the completion of research for this article, the J. B. Lippincott company archives were deposited at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

13 Colonial Homes, 120.
Eberlein’s reliance on family history in his writing about architecture is not only characteristic of the colonial revival, it almost certainly reflects his approach to the material through social contacts. His diary portrays a young man who was religiously, musically, and academically active, and who used those activities to build a network of useful relationships. The Episcopal Academy and the University of Pennsylvania provided Eberlein, a young man of modest origins, opportunities to develop associations with, if not acceptance into, Philadelphia society. He must have felt keenly his outsider status; in response he attempted to link himself to the city’s established society. Eberlein’s efforts early in the twentieth century to trace his family’s genealogy were part of a strategy to tie himself to the Anglo-American elite of colonial Philadelphia, to provide a family history that would put him on the same ancestral footing as those whose friendship he cultivated.

The Eberlein family was descended from Johannes Eberlein (1754–1822), a German mercenary who settled in Wright’s Ferry (later Columbia) following the Revolution. But a German ancestry would not do, for it failed to provide the cachet needed for entry into the Anglophile elite. Instead, he concentrated on establishing his relationship through his paternal grandmother to John Key, celebrated as the first child born of English parents in the city of Philadelphia. By virtue of this connection Eberlein proudly claimed a Philadelphia lineage of the greatest antiquity, while giving little or no acknowledgment to his Lancaster county origins and German heritage.\footnote{The story of John Key may be found in John Fanning Watson, \textit{Annals of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania, in the Olden Time} (1870; reprint, 3 vols., Philadelphia, 1927), 1:511–13. Responding to a family member’s request for genealogical information, Eberlein wrote, “Despite a Bavarian surname, your grandmother’s family is NOT German. It’s thoroughly Scottish and English. Our Bavarian Great Grandfather, Johann Friedrich, was a Hessian captured and, after release, stayed here and married, his wife and all her family of purely English descent”; Eberlein to Edith Harrington, Feb. 14, 1964, original in George Caley collection. Eberlein’s own genealogical notes, copies of which are also in the Caley collection, show his work to establish the relationship between his grandmother, Rebecca Brabson, and John Key. Eberlein referred to his relationship to Key in an interview with newspaper columnist Virginia Biddle; see “The Philadelphia Scene” in \textit{The Sun}, Aug. 3, 1952, 1.}

If his German background presented any barriers, they did not prevent Eberlein from moving ahead with his writing career. Just before \textit{Colonial Homes of Philadelphia} was published, his work began to appear in national periodicals. Among the earliest was “The Best Use of Brickwork,” published in a 1911 issue of \textit{House and Garden}. Over the years, many of Eberlein’s
features would appear in its pages; his relationship with *House and Garden* probably strengthened significantly after 1914 when Richardson Wright became the magazine's editor. Born in Philadelphia in 1887, Wright had enrolled in 1903 at the Episcopal Academy, where he would have known Eberlein as a faculty member.  

In the years leading up to 1920, Eberlein wrote an impressive number of articles and books, his work appearing in periodicals such as *American Suburbs*, *Architectural Record*, *American Homes*, *Suburban Life*, *Travel*, *House Beautiful*, and *Arts and Decoration*. So prolific was his output that he adopted pseudonyms, enabling him to publish several articles in the same or successive issues of a magazine without appearing to monopolize its content. The pseudonyms also enabled Eberlein to get more use from his material. Sections of books could, with some rewriting, appear under a pseudonym in periodicals at approximately the same time.  

Eberlein's books of the 1910s, many published by Lippincott, included much material that first appeared in periodicals, with interrelated writings often building in logical progression. After *Colonial Homes* came *The Practical Book of Period Furniture* (1914), followed by *The Architecture of Colonial America* (1915); *Interiors, Fireplaces, and Furniture of the Italian Renaissance* (a volume of photographs) and *The Practical Book of Early American Arts and Crafts* (1916); and *The Practical Book of Interior Decoration* (1919). Many of these early books, particularly those in Lippincott's Practical Guides series, present a great deal of information, both visual and narrative, in a systematic format. Eberlein eventually wrote or co-wrote six "Practical Books" for Lippincott, effectively combining his earlier experience as a teacher with his new profession as an author. A review of *The Architecture of Colonial America* might have been referring to a

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15 Eberlein, "The Best Use of Brickwork," *House and Garden*, Feb. 1911, 85-87, 118-19; this is the earliest item in the Athenaeum and Gwyn Bibliography. Richardson Wright served on the *House and Garden* staff from 1914 until 1950; see *House and Garden*, Oct. 1961, 129. Wright's enrollment at the Episcopal Academy is recorded in the Register, Latham Archives.

number of Eberlein's works when it noted his achievement in "summarizing our present knowledge of the subject in a brief but well-compacted survey." The reviewer praised Eberlein's "freely and easily" written prose, and his "generally careful" use of "dates and historical facts." The same reviewer went on to comment on two qualities characteristic of much of Eberlein's writing and scholarship: his penchant for British spelling and usage, and his less than copious documentation of sources.\footnote{Athernaum and Gwyn, \textit{Bibliography}, 1-3, 7, 9, 13; undated review from \textit{The Nation}, copy in Eberlein file, University of Pennsylvania Archives and Records Center.}

Another review of \textit{Architecture of Colonial America} remarked on the book's "vast fund of entertaining . . . anecdote . . . and [a] prose style that perfectly fits a courtly and self-respecting era."\footnote{Review in \textit{Boston Transcript}, Jan. 5, 1916, 26, excerpted in \textit{Book Review Digest 1915} (White Plains, N.Y., 1916), 141.} As he had done in \textit{Colonial Homes of Philadelphia}, Eberlein made liberal use of anecdotal material throughout his career; some of his work relies on it so heavily as to become almost a series of anecdotes strung together. In the "old house" books this quality is particularly evident, highlighted by a format that considered the houses individually, largely through the genealogies and histories of their owners and without much synthetic analysis. The reviewer's impression of Eberlein's courtliness of expression was probably a response to several characteristics. Along with his stylistic Anglophilia, Eberlein was often fond of archaic terms, complex sentence structure, and Latinate vocabulary. While perhaps not surprising in a medieval scholar and Latin instructor, they combine to give much of Eberlein's writing—especially the earlier work—a somewhat mannered and pedantic flavor.

With \textit{Colonial Homes} Eberlein established himself as a credible writer at Lippincott, his work no longer requiring substantial advance sales prior to publication. His attitude toward deadlines soon became more casual. In June of 1913, delays in delivering manuscripts were cause for frustration at Lippincott. The firm acknowledged sympathetically that \textit{The Practical Book of Period Furniture} was "not a work which [could] be pushed beyond a certain speed," but urged him to complete it so that the book could be available as advertised.\footnote{Joseph W. Lippincott to Eberlein, June 3, 1913, 1913 Letter Book (number unknown), 474-75, Lippincott Archives.}

From the close of the 1910s through the early 1930s, Eberlein spent a
considerable amount of time in Europe. He volunteered to serve in the American forces during the First World War, but was declined, probably owing to his age. His talents later found a place in the British Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office. Eberlein noted that this employment required frequent travel between London and Rome, but he did not specify the exact nature of his duties. Another extended European sojourn came following his mother's death in 1923. Eberlein spent approximately ten years in Europe where he found ample opportunity to exercise his powers of observation and his historical curiosity. He also began to gather material that would inform many of his future publications.\textsuperscript{20}

By the early 1920s, the European travels and studies began to show strongly in Eberlein's output. Throughout the decade, he published numerous books and articles on European subjects, while continuing to produce a smaller number of works on American topics. So productive was Eberlein during this period that his publisher expressed concern for his health. "You are so tremendously industrious that I often wonder how you manage to carry on without at least an occasional rest to relieve the strain," wrote Joseph Lippincott.\textsuperscript{21}

Eberlein's work during the 1920s continued the pace of the previous decade and included \textit{Villas of Florence and Tuscany} (1922) and \textit{Details of the Architecture of Tuscany} (1923). Collaborative efforts included \textit{The Smaller Houses and Gardens of Versailles}, written with Leigh Hill French Jr. and \textit{Small Manor Houses and Farmsteads in France}, written with Roger Wearne Ramsdell (both 1926). \textit{Small Manor Houses and Villas of Florence and Tuscany} are similar in format and approach. Here Eberlein gave greater emphasis to the historical development of architectural forms and styles than he did in many books on American subjects heavy with genealogy. Their narrative pace is less hurried, without the sense of content compression evident in works like the Practical Books. Both were lavishly illustrated with full-page photographs, but for neither did Eberlein provide notes or a bibliography.

Mediterranean subjects received attention during the 1920s as well. \textit{Spanish Interiors, Furniture and Details from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries}, primarily a volume of photographs, was published

\textsuperscript{20} Eberlein to LCP.
in 1925, and The Practical Book of Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese Furniture, another collaboration with Ramsdell, was published by Lippincott in 1927. Eberlein addressed English subjects in The Smaller English House of the Later Renaissance (1925) and The English Inn Past and Present (1926), both written in collaboration with A. E. Richardson.22

Lippincott later published Little Known England, one of two travelogues to appear in 1930. For this book, illustrated with photographs, line drawings, and fold-out maps, Eberlein adopted a less formal style and drew extensively on the descriptive abilities he had been cultivating since his years as a diarist. Addressing the reader throughout the itinerary directly as “you,” or as part of the “we” of an imaginary tour group, Little Known England was much more conversational and less overtly didactic than his books of the 1910s. Even so, one reviewer objected to Eberlein’s stylistic affectations, “the ‘perchances,’ ‘betakes,’ and ‘ablooms’ which seem inevitably to characterize the manner of those who write on the country.”23

Although the majority of Eberlein’s work during the 1920s stemmed from his years in Europe, he continued to write on American subjects. Lippincott published The Manors and Historic Homes of the Hudson Valley (very much in the mold of Historic Houses of Philadelphia) in 1924 and Manor Houses and Historic Homes of Long Island and Staten Island in 1928. Decorative arts subjects continued as well; The Practical Book of Chinaware, written with Ramsdell, was published in 1925. The full extent of Eberlein’s contributions to works of architectural and decorative arts scholarship of the time may well be greater than his bibliography indicates. As an example, a disagreement with Nancy McClelland apparently resulted in Eberlein’s being denied co-authorship of her Historic Wall-Papers (1924).24

As the Great Depression took hold in the 1930s, Eberlein produced

22 Eberlein’s works of the 1920s are listed in Athenaeum and Gwyn, Bibliography, 4-11; the Bibliography does not list the collaborations with Richardson.
23 The other travelogue was Down the Tiber and up to Rome, written with Geoffrey J. Marks and Frank A. Wallis (Philadelphia, 1930). The review of Little Known England is from Saturday Review, Aug. 16, 1930, 210, excerpted in Book Review Digest 1930 (New York, 1931), 311.
24 After a meeting with Nancy McClelland, Joseph Lippincott wrote Eberlein that she would “punish ... [him] by the omission of [his] name from joint authorship if [he] did not 'come across' with certain English material...” Lippincott urged settling in favor of joint authorship, probably to increase the book’s salability. Lippincott to Eberlein, Nov. 1, 1923, Publication Letter Book No. 152, 100, Lippincott Archives.
fewer books. Between 1931 and 1936, he added only four volumes to his bibliography, none drawing on the European subjects that had been his mainstay during the previous decade. Three were on home building and decoration, familiar territory for Eberlein. The fourth, *The Rabelaisian Princess, Madame Royale of France*, will be discussed in more detail below.  

The Depression years of the early 1930s seem to have been a period of financial difficulty for Eberlein, requiring more creative ways of using his skills. Responding to a request that he accompany his brother Jefferson on a trip to Bermuda, Eberlein replied, “I have to be right here... watching like a cat for a mouse, ready to pounce on anything that comes along that will bring in a few dollars.” The letter went on to describe one of the means that Eberlein employed to bolster his income while continuing to research and write: acting as a tour guide. “The present lull in the magazine world is what’s making me try to get up the tour—so there will be something to keep me going and give a little profit during the time I can’t expect much return from magazine work.” A letter from a Baltimore travel agency in December 1932 makes the nature of such arrangements clear. Agent Elizabeth Persons asked Eberlein to “meet us... and continue in the capacity of chauffeur-lecturer with your Daimler and drive us thru [sic] to Paris following the route approximatelly [sic] as planned.” For 12,000 kilometers of tour guiding, Eberlein was to receive $900, plus a bonus of $100 for each additional seat he could sell on the tour. His letter to his brother describes his attitude toward such endeavors: “I’m not looking forward to the motor trip as a source of unmixed pleasure... I’m looking at it from a purely cold, businesslike point of view. I am qualified to do it, anyone who goes will certainly get the worth of their money, and I shall get a small profit and my expenses for the trouble.” Even if he found little pleasure in such excursions, he felt perfectly at ease. In his letter we hear the voice of one who combined extensive travel experience and knowledge of historical subjects with a teacher’s instincts to become an able tour operator: “I’ve been all over the ground so often that I know just how long it takes traveling easily; and I’ve taken different groups of people over a great deal of the route and realize fully about how much can be done in a day without tiring them.”

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25 *Athenaeum* and *Gwyn*, *Bibliography*, 11-14.

26 Harold D. Eberlein to J. G. Eberlein, n. d.; Elizabeth Persons to Eberlein, Dec. 4, 1932. Similar requests came from other travel agents, such as that from the Walter H. Woods Company, Boston, which asked Eberlein to “consider... organizing and leading an ‘antiquing’ group in Europe in 1932”;
Eberlein's financial situation was relieved to an extent by an inheritance following his brother's death in the summer of 1940. Many years before, Jefferson Eberlein had left Philadelphia for Allentown, where he found employment with an iron foundry that had family connections. By 1906 Jefferson Eberlein was secretary for the Donaldson Iron Company in Emmaus near Allentown. The firm originated as the Emmaus Iron Company in 1870. When it was incorporated as the Donaldson Iron Company in 1886, John Donaldson, Jefferson's uncle by marriage, served as president. In 1930, Jefferson Eberlein resigned from the firm as president after forty-six years of service. Stocks and securities constituted much of the inheritance, and Eberlein meticulously tracked his income from them in a series of small account books.\textsuperscript{27}

Some years before his financial fortunes brightened, Eberlein had made a new acquaintance who would play an important role in his late career. About 1933, he met Cortlandt Van Dyke Hubbard, a Boston native born in 1912 and graduated from Harvard in 1934. The two first met in Camden, Maine, a popular summer resort for wealthy Philadelphians. Eberlein was acquainted with one such vacationer, W. Griffin Gribbel, the noted collector of American glass, who later would become Hubbard's father-in-law. Hubbard moved to Philadelphia in the late summer of 1935, hoping to find employment with Eberlein's help. Eberlein gave introductions to prospective employers, drawing on associations with former students from the Episcopal Academy and elsewhere, but none produced the desired result. Eberlein suggested that the two might work together on further publications, with Hubbard serving the photographic needs of the endeavor. Eberlein's earlier photographic work had been problematic, and such an arrangement would leave him free to concentrate on writing.\textsuperscript{28} The pair's first collaboration appeared in 1935 with an article on

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\item Helen Freeman to Eberlein, n. d. All from unpublished book on wines, Wine Book Material, Eberlein Collection, HSP.
\item \textit{Haines and Worman's Directory of the City of Allentown} (Allentown, 1894), 91; \textit{Directory of the City of Allentown} (Allentown, 1906), 162; Preston A. Barba, \textit{They Came to Emmaus}, (2d ed., Emmaus, Pa., 1960), 220; Charles Rhoads Roberts et al., \textit{History of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, and a Genealogical and Biographical Record of Its Families} (3 vols., Allentown, Pa., 1914), 3:972–74; John D. Weaver scrapbook of Emmaus newspaper clippings, n. p., Lehigh Valley Historical Society, Allentown, Pa.; will of Jefferson G. Eberlein, May 22, 1940, Orphans Court, County of Philadelphia, will no. 4247, book 201, 134–36; schedule of distribution, estate of Jefferson G. Eberlein, Orphans Court, County of Philadelphia, no. 3116, 1940 (copy in George Caley collection); Eberlein account books, Eberlein collection, HSP.
\item For a brief biography of Hubbard, see Cortlandt Van Dyke Hubbard, \textit{History of the Penn Club} (Philadelphia, 1976), 259–60. Gribbel's glass collection was dispersed in Philadelphia in 1947; see \textit{The...}
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contemporary silverware in *Spur*. By 1936 practically all Eberlein’s work featured Hubbard as co-author. Their first books, *Glass in Modern Construction* and *The Practical Book of Garden Design*, appeared in 1937.

With the beginning of his association with Hubbard, Eberlein’s output returned to a more American focus. Perhaps prompted by the possibility of incorporating new photography by Hubbard, several books reviewed subjects that Eberlein had addressed in earlier volumes. *Historic Homes of the Hudson Valley* (1942) revisited much of the material from *Manors and Historic Homes of the Hudson Valley* (1924), just as *Portrait of a Colonial City* (1939) recalled his first book, *Colonial Homes of Philadelphia*. Evidently, Eberlein felt no compunction about reusing material in as many ways as possible. Passages from early works appeared nearly verbatim decades later, as Eberlein sought to get the most out of his labors. While this practice maximized efficiency, it also tended to make his style more homogeneous, weighting it toward that of his earlier production.

Although *Portrait of a Colonial City* borrowed much from the earlier *Colonial Homes of Philadelphia*, it framed the sections on private houses with more social history and included notes on sources, not as footnotes per se, but as brief bibliographic citations for each house’s entry. The later book also had an even more prominent genealogical emphasis, with one or more owners’ coats of arms emblazoned at the beginning of each entry.

Notwithstanding the alliance with Hubbard, Eberlein’s rate of production slowed even further, perhaps owing to Hubbard’s Second World War navy service, to Eberlein’s advancing age, or to his reduced reliance on royalties. Publications were sporadic during the war years, with only two books and four articles between 1941 and 1944. From 1945 to 1950, the pair added only *Diary of Independence Hall* (1948) to their list of books. The *Diary* was something of a departure for Eberlein, in both style and the use of

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*Rare and Renowned Collection of Early American Glass Assembled by the Late W. Griffin Gribbel* (Philadelphia, 1947), with a forward by Eberlein and Hubbard. Details of Hubbard’s association with Eberlein were related to the author in an interview, June 6, 1996. Hubbard recalled that Richardson Wright of *House and Garden* noted problems with Eberlein’s photos. Edward Stratton Holloway of the Lippincott company mentioned such problems with images Eberlein supplied for *The Manors and Historic Homes of the Hudson Valley*. Holloway to Eberlein, Nov. 17, 1920, Publication Letter Book No. 129, p. 5, Lippincott Archive.


30 As an example of Eberlein’s reuse of material, compare anecdotes of Nicholas Wain in *Colonial Homes of Philadelphia*, 38–40, and the nearly identical text used in *Philadelphia Scrapple: Whimsical Bits anent Eccentrics and the City’s Oddities* (Richmond, 1956), 30–32.
historical sources. More overtly popular in approach than any of his previous books, *Diary* is a journal-like chronicle of events that took place in the landmark building from the early eighteenth century through the early nineteenth. Most striking is Eberlein’s use of the present tense to discuss historical events and many contractions (such as “he’s” and “isn’t”) in the narrative passages that link quotations from historical documents. The use of such documents (cited here as they were in *Portrait of a Colonial City*) was not new for Eberlein, but in the *Diary* it is so extensive that it frequently dominates his narrative. Reacting to the uncharacteristic informality and rapid pacing, one reviewer found the “effort to be equally colloquial and engaging” to be somewhat overdone.31

In the remaining years before Eberlein’s death in 1964, the collaborators produced only three more books, the brief *American Georgian Architecture* (1952), *Historic Houses of George-town and Washington City* (1958), and *Historic Houses and Buildings of Delaware* (1962). Up to the close of his career, Eberlein continued to reuse some of his earliest work, *American Georgian Architecture*, for example, looks back as far as *Architecture of Colonial America* (1915).32

Eberlein and Caroline Cadwalader were co-authors of the anonymously published *Philadelphia Scrapple: Whimsical Bits anent Eccentrics and the City’s Oddities* (1956).33 The book has a retrospective quality that could come only from someone like Eberlein, an insider-outsider commenting on his favorite subjects—Philadelphia and its society—that came easily with his playful quasi-anonymity near the close of his career. After decades of studying the city’s history, absorbing its culture, and gathering details about its residents, living and dead, he wrote with wry detachment about the character, foibles, and follies of Philadelphia.

Not surprisingly, *Philadelphia Scrapple* sheds much light on Eberlein’s attitudes toward his adopted city and his experience of life there. More of those attitudes are discernable in a less expected place, Eberlein’s only published book-length biography, *The Rabelaisian Princess, Madame*


32 Athenaeum and Gwyn, *Bibliography*, 16-17.

Royale of France. The book was brought out in 1931 by Brentano's of New York because, as he quipped, "it was too shocking for a certain Philadelphia publishing house." Although hardly shocking by today's standards, the biography of Elizabeth Charlotte, sister-in-law to Louis XIV, may have had special meaning for Eberlein because of parallels he perceived in their lives. "Madame was a German," Eberlein wrote of his subject, "and a German she always remained to her dying day. However much she might accommodate
herself to the ways of the Court world in which she lived, she never . . . forgot that she was in it but not really of it [author’s emphasis].’ As a result of her “quasi-detached point of view,” her observations on court life were “more accurate than [those of] almost any French narrator.” Eberlein might have described his own viewpoint and relationship to Philadelphia in similar terms, seeing a distant reflection of his experience in the life of Elizabeth Charlotte. Both lived their early lives outside the major urban centers that would later be their adopted homes. Eberlein shared German ancestry with Madame Royale, but the significance of that heritage seems to have been very different for them. Eberlein obviously admired Elizabeth Charlotte for holding proudly and stubbornly to hers while still commanding the respect of French courtiers. Perhaps Eberlein envied her self-assurance, remembering how he had felt compelled to shake off his Hessian inheritance in an attempt to achieve social position. He gained access to the city’s upper class, whose houses and histories supplied him with subject matter for decades. He wrote about the city’s fine houses and its hallowed institutions, but he did not live in the homes nor belong to the exclusive clubs.

In The Perennial Philadelphians, his 1963 study of Philadelphia’s upper class, Nathaniel Burt described this world to which Eberlein was drawn as one “full of charm . . . full of snobbery.” It was a world of families and houses that Eberlein had “devoted a lifetime to cataloguing . . . in scholarly and knowing detail.” One can readily imagine Eberlein playing the “ancient and venerable” role of the “stray bachelor” at endless rounds of dinner parties, carefully gathering stories and noting possessions. Recollections of those who knew him confirm that Eberlein worked hard to place himself socially, but that ultimately he remained unaccepted. H. Mather Lippincott Jr., son of Eberlein’s co-author on Colonial Homes of Philadelphia, noted that his father remembered Eberlein as a social climber trying to force his way into old Philadelphia society. Long-time collaborator Cortlandt Van Dyke Hubbard recalled that Eberlein glibly conveyed the impression of having much greater wealth than he actually did, a skill doubtless perfected in the fertile settings of the elite schools in which he studied and taught.

35 Nathaniel Burt, The Perennial Philadelphians (Boston, 1963), 520, 521. Horace Mather Lippincott Jr., interview by author, Feb. 24, 1999; Cortlandt Van Dyke Hubbard, interview by author,
Of course Philadelphia during Eberlein's lifetime was much more than the sum of the colonial houses and prominent families to which he returned again and again in his writing. It was a formidable industrial city, with all the social problems that accompanied American life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Eberlein's personal brand of history had a strong scholarly component, but it also partook of the irony of antimodernism, the impulse common to his era that looked to the past for help in coping with the problems of the present and the uncertainties of the future.

In *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, Jackson Lears has asserted that the period's widely manifested antimodernism was a complex response to a perceived need to seek and establish new sources of cultural authority in the midst of a rapidly changing society and to find therapies to counteract the enervating qualities of modern life. Faced with what they saw as the weakening of traditional authority structures, Lears argues, Americans turned overwhelmingly to the past, to the realms of history and memory, in search of models to shore them up.\(^{36}\)

Kenneth Ames's observations on the nature of the colonial revival provide a more detailed framework in which to consider Eberlein and his work. According to Ames, the core of the antimodern response included "an orientation to either preindustrial times in the past or nonindustrial alternatives in the present . . . an antiurban bias . . . and an inclination to stress simple rather than complex social structures, homogeneous, cooperative folk rather than diverse, competitive people." Related to these are xenophobia and ancestor worship, the latter most frequently expressed as an interest in genealogy and in associating historical persons with objects and architecture.\(^{37}\)

One can characterize the subjects of nearly all Eberlein's writing as preindustrial, many of them also as nonurban; his interest in genealogy is evident in his own life and in his writings. Where the reader can discern Eberlein's political and social leanings, they are strongly traditional, and they

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June 6, 1996.


are nowhere more evident than in *Philadelphia Scrapple*. The book is a paean—if rather an arch one—to the city's conservatism, a catalogue of institutions, individuals, prejudices, and habits, all demonstrating the city's proclivity to remain "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be." His comments on servants, particularly on "the older generation of blacks," sound as though they might have been written by an apologist for slavery in the style of *Gone with the Wind*. Domestic employees (or at least those representative of the ideal) demonstrated faithfulness and loyalty within a paternalistic relationship to their employers, with just the proper admixture of lovable roguishness to make them amusing. Eberlein seemed pleased to be able to write that "Philadelphia's deep-rooted conservatism . . . has helped to preserve . . . our . . . heritage of Anglo-Saxon characteristics and outlook more faithfully than in almost any other American community."38

Along with a yearning for the simpler social structures of preindustrial times, Ames notes antimodernism's orientation toward the products of preindustrial societies, "an emphasis on handicraft" that manifested itself in public arts institutions, private collections, architecture, and decorative styles. Learns states that as significant public and private collections grew during the period, so did the need for authoritative connoisseurship. Museums and their collections, increasingly shaped by the advice of scholars and experts, "became new and striking emblems of upper-class cultural authority." In such an atmosphere, precise knowledge of art history became more important and more valuable.39

Eberlein doubtless saw himself as one who could help fill this need for comprehensive and accurate information, and perhaps he was uniquely qualified to do so. In *The Practical Book of Period Furniture* he confidently asserted the book's ability to provide "the reader what he wished to know and all [author's emphasis] that he needed to know to identify and classify any piece of period furniture, whether original or reproduction." A similar tone of pride is detectable in *Details of the Architecture of Tuscany*, a collection of corresponding photographs and measured drawings "replete with suggestive value," in which an architect could find information on

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38 Eberlein, *Philadelphia Scrapple*, 70, 18, 16–28, 73. William Rhoads has noted that Philadelphia's reputation for pride in its conservatism and respect for its history was well established by the time Eberlein wrote *Philadelphia Scrapple*. See William Rhoads, "The Colonial Revival" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1974), 528–34.

39 Ames, introd. to *Colonial Revival*, 11; Lear, *No Place*, 188.
“minor but exceedingly important matters,” all rendered with “absolute exactitude and fidelity.”

Who needed Eberlein’s brand of information? What stimulated demand? Ames noted that history is “most evocatively preserved in physical surroundings,” and that trade in those surroundings was a prominent characteristic of the colonial revival. The past became increasingly commodified—bought, sold, and collected—as individuals sought to possess surroundings that provided tangible, immediate links to the past. Such a marketplace created a demand for information to guide a growing group of consumers as well as those who catered to them. Contemporary architectural and decorative styles borrowed heavily on European and American precedents from the Renaissance to the early nineteenth century. Competent knowledge of the nuances of these historical styles was necessary if one wished to negotiate successfully the currents of contemporary taste.

Eberlein felt at home with the historical background of contemporary eclecticism, and found for himself a niche in the markets that it fostered. He acknowledged the importance of the commercial audience in the introduction to The Practical Book of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese Furniture. “The contents make a threefold appeal—to the general reader, to the decorator and to the architect.” While the general reader’s interest might spring from needs related to “furnishing and decoration,” the architect and decorator would find the information “useful in the daily course of professional work.” Eberlein made similar statements in other works. He presented The Practical Book of Interior Decoration as largely educational in nature, with relevance for both purveyors and consumers of historical materials. In it, he aimed to “stimulate intelligent cooperation with the decorator . . . and to afford a sound basis of discriminating criticism and judgement, [and] to aid the householder” embarking on decorating projects large or small.

Whether or not Eberlein relished the role of providing advice to homeowners and casual collectors, he did not scorn the consumer audience; as noted above, he created or adapted much of his material for popular

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41 Ames, introd. to Colonial Revival, 10, 7.
magazines, unabashedly commercial vehicles in which editorial content and advertising were intimately related. By the time Eberlein’s writings began to appear in national magazines, the medium was already established as a primary means for defining, disseminating, and marketing mass culture in the United States, both shaping and reflecting readers’ desires. Readers of periodicals such as *Arts and Decoration, House Beautiful,* and *Country Life* during the 1910s and 1920s perused articles on antique silver, ceramics, furniture, interior decorating, and countless other topics associated with middle-class lifestyles on pages that alternated with advertisements for the very same goods and services. Though Eberlein probably considered himself a scholar first and foremost, he and his contemporary magazine writers found success in complementing the work of advertising agencies in delivering potential consumers to their clients.43

Harold Donaldson Eberlein died in Philadelphia on July 26, 1964, at eighty-nine years of age. Although best known for his writings, Eberlein was involved with a variety of historical organizations, served on the advisory board of the Historic American Buildings Survey, and is credited with being among the founders of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He died before publishing a number of manuscripts that would have demonstrated a range of interests even more extensive than that shown by his bibliography. Eberlein never completed his biography of Italian Renaissance artist and goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini, his book on the wines of the world, or the planned volumes *Social Life in the Federal Period* and *The Making of Long Island.*44

Eberlein’s books, articles, and unpublished manuscripts are the legacy of an individual’s determination to combine a facility for research and writing with a love for social and material history. Like those of many writers of his generation, Eberlein’s works are descriptive and opinionated, without much synthesis or analysis. Uncritical though they may seem today, his publications were instrumental in placing before the public a wealth of


information useful to collectors, architects, and students of history, as well as to a less specialized audience of homeowners and consumers, some of them remaining sufficiently popular to enjoy second editions or even reprints. The task that he and Horace Lippincott set for themselves in 1912 in *The Colonial Homes of Philadelphia*, "to clothe . . . bygone days with a living reality for us and breathe new life into an honorable past," was one at which Eberlein toiled throughout his life.45

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Books by Harold Donaldson Eberlein: A Chronological Bibliography


*The Practical Book of Interior Decoration.* With Abbott McClure and Edward

45 Colonial Homes of Philadelphia, 1.


Spanish Interiors, Furniture and Details from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1925


The Rabelaisian Princess, Madame Royale of France. New York: Brentano's, 1931.


