

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

The following letter is one of four written by Robert Fulton in the Society's manuscript collection. These are not included in "A Preliminary Guide. Part One," which lists only large groups of personal papers classified AA. The Fulton letters will be listed with other small groups of similar material, classified AB, in the next installment of the guide.

Devonshire Jan'y 20th 1792

My dear Mother

This morning I rec'd a package of letters from Philadelphia among which were one from you and from Abraham and two from M^r. Morris one of which was for M^r. West—In consequence of my leaving London in June last for to do some business for Lord Courtney in Devonshire—which is about 200 miles from London the letters by some accident have not reached me till now. As you rely on it I should have answered them by the first Conveyance—But I rec'd them with infinite pleasure as they come from you and informed me of your good health.

And now I will attend to the particulars. As I am well convinced every incident relative to my life will communicate pleasure to you. You express much desire to know how my pictures were rec'd at the Royal Academy—this I believe I answered before but possibly the letter has miscarried. You will be pleased to hear that I sent eight pictures which rec'd every possible mark of approbation that the Society could give but these exertions are all for honor—there is no prophet arising from it. It only tends to create a name that may hereafter produce business—

My little tour through France proved very agreeable and was of some service to me as a painter in as much as I saw the works of some of the most able masters in the art—which much improved my eye and task—M^r. West and me are on a very familiar footing and when he is in town pays me much attention which is extremely agreeable as we live near each other. This evening I forwarded M^r. Morris's letter to him which I have no doubt he will be very happy to receive and I shall call on him immediately on my going to London which I suppose will be in about six months. When I wrote you last I beged you would settel every thing to your mind relative to the Lotts and after regulating

every thing with M^r. Hays (?) and putting me in the way how to act. I would transfer my right in the manner you can best settel among yourselves—tho I could wish one of them were sold to pay pollock—For I realy feel my honor concerned in keeping the poor man so long out of his money nor had I the least idea of its remaining to long unpaid or I should have endeavored by some means to have it done—but I hope when I hear from you next in answer to these letters you will have everything so situated so as I may transfer them to your wish. And if no other method can be found—one lott ought to be sold to pay polk—

It gives me much pleasure to hear of Abrahams attention to you—tho I am sorry he has run away with the idea of my getting rich—I only wish it was true—but I cannot concieve from whence the report arose—

And I must now give some little history of my life sinc I came to London. I brought not more than 40 guineas to England and was set down in a strange country without a friend and only one letter of Introduction to M^r. West—hear I had an art to learn by which I was to earn my bread but little to support whilst I was doing it. And numbers of emanant men of the same profession which I must excell before I could hope to live --Many many a silent solitary hour have I spent in the most concerned studdy anxiously pondering how to make friends to support me till the fruits of my labours should [be] sufficient to repay them thus I went on for near four years—happily Beloved by all who knew me—or I had long ere now been crushed by Poverties Cold wind and Freezing rain—till last summer I was invited by Lord Courtney down to his country seat to paint 3 pictures of him which gave his Lordship so much pleasure that he has introduced me to all his Friends—And it is just now that I am beginning to get a little money and pay some debts which I was obliged to contract so I hope in about 6 months to be clear with the world. or in other words out of debt and then start fair to make all I can—You know dear Mother this is very different from being [*illegible*] not that I can say I ever was in absolute want heaven has been kind to me and I am thankfull—hoping now to go on Smoothe and happy so the absanc from my friends will admit of—

My Poor Sister bell I hope she and her little family will be happy I hope she will not think I forget her because I dont write her She may believe me she occupies much of my thoughts And I wish much to know why Payton left the situation of the saw mill but none of you

have informed me—I am happy to hear that all relations are well I shall write to them separately I enjoy excellent health which I hope will continue till I may have the happiness of seeing you—Please to Remember me kindly to M. Smith and all friends And may Heaven continue its blessings towards you is the most unfeigned wish of your obedient Son

Robert Fulton

M^{rs} Mary Smith
Washing Town Washington
County
Pennsylvania

Abraham Smith Fulton was the younger brother of Robert Fulton.

David Morris was the husband of Fulton's sister, Isabella.

Benjamin West (1728-1820) was a famous painter noted especially for his historical and allegorical pictures but also celebrated as the principal teacher of such great American artists as Gilbert Stuart, John Trumbull, Rembrandt Peale, Robert Fulton and Samuel F. B. Morse.

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SEPTEMBER 1964-DECEMBER 1965

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Tracey, Dr. Grace L.
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Ward, Mrs. E. B.
Weidlein, Mr. Edward R., III
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Wisniewski, Mr. John P.

In Memoriam

SEPTEMBER 1964-DECEMBER 1965

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Burke, Mrs. Kenneth R.
Coney, Mr. Aims C.
Crump, Mr. Edward, Jr.
Dann, Mr. Alex W.
Denny, Mrs. Harmar D. (Mrs.
 Mary Blair Burgwin Denny)
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Graham, Hon. Louis E.
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Locke, Mr. Charles A.
Marsh, Mr. James I.
Mellor, Mrs. Elizabeth Burt
Miller, Miss Catharine Robbins
Miller, Mr. Torrance
Moore, Mr. E. Earl
O'Neill, Mr. J. Henry
Packard, Miss Margaret M.
Rea, Mrs. James Childs
Robertson, Mr. A. W.
Rodgers, Mr. Raymond W.
Scaife, Mrs. Alan Magee
 (Mrs. Sarah Mellon Scaife)
Stewart, Mrs. Douglas
Taylor, Mrs. Matthew
Thumm, Miss Emma Florence
Young, Mrs. Lemuel W.

MRS. ALAN MAGEE SCAIFE

In the death of Sarah Mellon Scaife, widow of Alan Magee Scaife, the community has lost its most generous benefactress. Mrs. Scaife, born in 1903, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Beatty Mellon, died on December 28 at Western Pennsylvania Hospital after a brief illness. She is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Cordelia Scaife May of Ligonier, Pennsylvania; a son, Richard Mellon Scaife; a granddaughter, Jennie King Scaife; and a brother, Richard King Mellon.

Mrs. Scaife attended the Thurston School in Pittsburgh and the Spence School in New York. Although of a modest and retiring nature, she was possessed of a keen sense of humor and a wholesome *joie de vivre*. After her marriage in 1927 she and her husband traveled extensively and she early assimilated a wide variety of enthusiasms which fashioned her mind toward many benevolences. Her generosity ran the gamut of charitable interests and she gave largely through her Foundation to churches, schools, colleges, hospitals, museums, and art galleries. Her kindnesses touched the lives of thousands of individuals, her charity knowing no limit of race, color or religion. Well-deserved honors were conferred upon her during her lifetime by city and state for her philanthropies.

Last rites were fittingly held for Mrs. Scaife in the East Liberty Presbyterian Church, a beautiful edifice given by her father and mother, built on the site of previous churches where her ancestors had worshipped.

The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania has lost one of its most loyal members and generous contributors. It feels privileged to share in some small measure the loss which her family has suffered.

CHARLES A. MCCLINTOCK

HARMAR D. DENNY

Word was received today, January 7, 1966, of the death of Mr. Denny while on a visit with his daughter, Mrs. Archibald Angus, in England. It seems fitting that we should reprint in part the article which appeared in our magazine in April 1963.

"At the Annual Meeting of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania held in its building on January 21, 1963, Mr. Harmar D. Denny was unanimously elected President for the year 1963.

"Mr. Denny brings to this office a background in Pittsburgh second to none. His paternal great-great-grandfather, Ebenezer Denny, was the first mayor of Pittsburgh, and his forbears include the Croghans, the Wilkins, and the O'Haras.

"Of the many qualifications Mr. Denny has for this office, one which is paramount is his deep and dedicated devotion to Pittsburgh. He has for many years indicated a sincere interest in the Historical Society both by presenting to its library many valuable historical papers and by serving since January 29, 1936, as a member of the Board of Trustees.

"A graduate of Yale University and the University of Pittsburgh Law School, Mr. Denny served as a flyer in the First World War, and as a Lieutenant Colonel Air Corps Inspector of Training in the Second World War. In the post-war years he was elected Director of Public Safety in the city of Pittsburgh. Later, after serving as a member of the 82nd Congress, Colonel Denny was named, under the Eisenhower Administration, a member of the Civil Aeronautics Board where he served for seven years.

"His interest in youth welfare in America has been exemplified by his work in the Boy Scouts of America, for which he has been awarded the highest honors."

ANNOUNCEMENT

of a New Book Published by The Historical Society
of Western Pennsylvania

THE MAURICE AND LAURA FALK FOUNDATION

A Private Fortune—A Public Trust

by Agnes Lynch Starrett, 1966. Price \$2.00.

First complete history of a Pittsburgh foundation. A facet of Western Pennsylvania history. Practical expression of a philanthropic philosophy that a man's private fortune is a public trust.

The story of a coherent design-for-giving, centered in Maurice Falk's purpose to give away within thirty-five years his surplus earnings beyond personal needs to sound causes benefiting as many people as possible, and structured by a Board of Managers and an Executive Director — building grant on grant to reliable institutions; augmenting or supplementing other giving without displacing it or duplicating it; pioneering in fields basic to human welfare (economic research, political education, medicine, and culture) and withdrawing when greater support has come from other sources.

The Board of Managers and the Executive Director are Pittsburgh leaders dedicated to helping make Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania a capital of economic, political, educational, medical, and cultural strength, by support to the basic human structure of society — locally, nationally, and in democracy emerging in other lands.

"The author has compiled an excellent history of the Maurice and Laura Falk Foundation . . . it is written with warmth and a keen perception of the steadfast aim of all concerned to fulfill the expressed purpose of the generous donor."—ARTHUR E. BRAUN

The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

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TELEPHONE: 681-7000

Officers — Stanton Belfour, president; Stanton C. Crawford, Harmar D. Denny, Charles A. McClintock, Charles M. Stotz, vice presidents; Cortlandt W. W. Elkin, M.D., secretary; John W. R. Creighton, treasurer.

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Staff — Robert D. Christie, director; Prudence B. Trimble, librarian and editor; Lawrence S. Thurman, museum consultant; Myrl I. Eakin, office secretary.

Everyone interested in the history of Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania is welcome to join this organization, and a simple application or request for information addressed to its office opens the way.

Moreover, both members and friends are invited to provide much needed material, as well as moral support, so that the Society may render increasingly effective public service. Members are privileged to enroll under classifications calling for more than the minimum fee; and friends as well as members may add to the resources through gifts or bequests.

The effect of substantial contributions toward the endowment of the Society would be immeasurable; for this Society is the century old medium for expression of a community's regard for its historical heritage.

Bequests may be worded simply as follows:

<p>I hereby give and bequeath to The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania in the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the sum of dollars.</p>
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