

THE STORY OF MAXWELL LANE

Marilyn Aronberg Lavin

Princeton, New Jersey



A. Aerial View, Princeton Battlefield State Park and Institute for Advance Study, NW Princeton, NJ.

**THE STORY
OF
MAXWELL LANE**

A Historical View

Marilyn Aronberg Lavin

Princeton, New Jersey

**Marilyn Aronberg Lavin ©
2016**

OWNERS OF MERCER MANOR

William Penn

Benjamin Clarke

William Olden

Job Gardner Olden

Benjamin and Rose Lombard

Harry Bryan Owsley

Robert Chester Maxwell

The Institute for Advanced Study

List of Illustrations (Mercer Manor)

A. Aerial View, Princeton Battlefield State Park and Institute for Advance Study. (Google Maps)

Fig: 1 56 Maxwell Lane, Princeton, N.J., Lavin residence, ca 2010. (Photo: Author)

Fig: 2a. T.U. Walter/J.H. Windrim, St. George's Hall, 13th and Arch
Streets, Philadelphia, 1836/1876, demolished ca. 1902. (Photo: SWALLAC)

Fig: 2b. Anonymous, St. George Killing the Dragon, bronze sculpture,
Philadelphia, 1877, Martin Luther King Drive. (Google Image)

Fig: 3 Newkirk Portico, interior facias, inscribed names of the
architect, mason, and date. (Photo: Author)

Fig: 4 John Trumbull, Portrait of Hugh Mercer, 1791, graphite drawing
on off-white laid paper, 12.5 x 7.9 cm, New York, The Metropolitan
Museum of Art. (Photo: Courtesy the Museum)

Fig: 5 Charles Smith Olden. (Google Image)

Fig: 6 Drumthwacket, detail. (Google Image)

Fig: 7 Mercer County Traction Co., Trolley Car (Google Image)

Fig: 8 Harry Bryan Owsley (Source unknown, Google Image)

Fig: 9 Mercer Manor, 410 Mercer Road, Princeton, N.J., demolished 1956. (Photo: SWALLAC)

Fig: 10 Generalized Plan of Mercer Manor, detail, October 1946. (Photo: SWALLAC)

Fig: 11 Mercer Manor Doorway, destroyed 1956. (Photo: SWALLAC)

Fig: 12 Mercer Manor, Stewart Fireplace. (Photo: after Stansfield),

Fig: 13 New York, Fifth Avenue Astor House, Corinthian Pilasters.
(Photo: after Catalogue of Astor Sale, 1912)

Fig: 14 Robert Chester Maxwell. (Courtesy David C. Maxwell)

Fig: 15 R.C. Maxwell Billboard, advertising the R.C. Maxwell Outdoor
Advertising Co. (Photo: DURL)

- Fig: 16 Chesterfield Billboard, Steeple Chase Pier, Atlantic City, N.J., 1926. (Photo: DURL)
- Fig: 17 R.C. Maxwell on the links. (Photo: DURL)
- Fig: 18 Abraham Flexner. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 19 Louis Bamberger. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 20 Samuel D. Leidesdorf. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 21 Herbert H. Maass. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 22 Oswald Veblen. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 23 Frank Aydelotte. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 24 Robert Oppenheimer. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 25a. C.S. Sincerbeaux Plan, Portion of Mercer Manor Conveyed to IAS, 1945. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 25b. C.S. Sincerbeaux, plan of Maxwell Private Property, revised in 1949. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 26 After an unidentified Trenton, N.J. Newspaper R.C. Maxwell Obituary, March 9, 1955. (Ph DURL)
- Fig: 27 David C. Maxwell in front of the East State Street Office, c. 1977. (Photo: DURL)
- Fig: 28 Newkirk Marble façade and Portico, 1836; façade destroyed, 1957. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 29 Angle view of Fig. 28. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 30 Portico Marble Blocks, 1957. (Photo: SWALLAC)
- Fig: 31 Princeton Battlefield State Park, Portico from the back, 2016. (Photo: Author)

THE STORY OF MAXWELL LANE



Fig. 1 56 Maxwell Lane

When I moved to Princeton in 1974 as the spouse of a newly appointed professor at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS), my husband Irving and I were given a choice of dwellings to buy. They were all owned by the Institute, designated as for sale exclusively to Institute faculty. As it happened, there was a house by a student of the Viennese architect Richard Neutra recently vacated by a famous mathematician (who had found it “too modern”), with which we fell in love immediately. It was at 56 Maxwell Lane [Fig. 1], a street with only five houses, that runs from Mercer Road to what is now called Einstein Drive. The house, dated 1958, is diagonally across from number 63 built after the death of

Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967; Director, 1947-1966, see Fig. 25) for his wife. The history of what became our home, as well as all the properties on this short street, is a story unto itself. But what intrigued me, and what I will write about now, was the name of the street: Maxwell Lane.

First, I was disabused of the notion, although it would have been appropriate for the Institute, that the street name was in honor to James Clerk *Maxwell*, the nineteenth-century Scottish mathematician known for his *Dynamical Theory of the Electromagnetic Field* (1865). What we were told, rather vaguely, was that there had been a great mansion near our property owned by a man named Maxwell, filled with antiques and furnished with dismantled parts of other notable houses. The structure had been torn down except for the marble portico which was salvaged and set up on the north-west side of Mercer Road at the edge of Princeton Battlefield State Park. Hence the name of the street. Not too many years before we moved in the Beatle Paul McCartney had written a kind of surrealistic song called “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer,” that had intrigued Irving, and one of his first actions was to paint the little hammer-shaped arm on the mail box silver, as a symbol of our new place in the universe.¹

More than forty years have passed since that first move, and now quite modern controversies concerning the name of our street have come to light. The issue involves the land on which the historic Battle of Princeton took place. Members of the Princeton Battlefield Society in various public venues describe a counter attack by General Washington as having been fought in an area of the Institute’s property called “Maxwell’s Field.” Such terminology, from the little I knew, struck me as anachronistic, and my interest in the Maxwell name began to revive.

Spoiler Alert: I am not an Americanist. I am, by profession, an art historian, a specialist in fifteenth-century Italian painting, and in particular the work of Piero della Francesca.

I decided, none the less, to pursue the question of the “Maxwell” name from a scholarly point of view, and thus I set out my results out here.

The story begins in 1836, almost simultaneously with the founding of Princeton Township (April 9, 1838), not in Princeton but in Philadelphia. The East coast banker, railway magnet, and civic leader,

Matthew Newkirk (1794-1868), ordered a stunning mansion to be built on the corner of 13th and Arch Streets, by the architect Thomas Ustic Walter (1804-1887), young at the time but the future re-designer of the national capital dome in Washington, D.C. The Philadelphia building was rigorously neo-Classic in style with a portico modeled to some extent on the Athenian Erechtheum, with a triangular pediment, frieze with three fascias, and four fluted, immaculately carved Ionic columns. Along with a podium, and the cladding of the façade, all was carved of beautiful white Chester, PA, marble. In fact, the portico is signed in the center intercolumniation on the back of each of the three descending fascias: the architect's name on top; J. Struthers and Sons, Masons, on the second, and below, the date 1836 [Fig. 2].²

In 1875, more than ten years after the death of Newkirk, the sumptuous home was purchased for \$70,000 by the Philadelphia Chapter of the Society of the Sons of St. George as their meeting house.³ This venerable organization kept the façade including the portico, adding a monumental bronze statue of their patron St. George Killing the Dragon, at the peak of the pediment.⁴ They then had the building elongated toward the rear for greater size. The designer of this addition was James H. Windrim, architect, the builder was George Watson, contractor; the cost was \$49, 675. What was now called St. George's Hall [Fig. 3a and b] opened and was dedicated on April 24, 1876, and became a landmark as downtown Philadelphia expanded.

In the next years the city grew rapidly and the Society again wanted new quarters. The building was put on the market, and in 1896 was bought for \$160,000 by Prof. Henry C. Lea (1825-1909), a great scholar of mediaeval history.⁵ Although famous for his intellectual activities, Lea was also an entrepreneur, and within a short time he re-sold the property to another speculator who planned to replace it with an apartment block. Although there is some discussion about the actual date, it was early in 1902 that St. George's Hall was torn down, razed that is, all but the marble façade and portico.⁶

The scene now shifts from Philadelphia to Princeton.

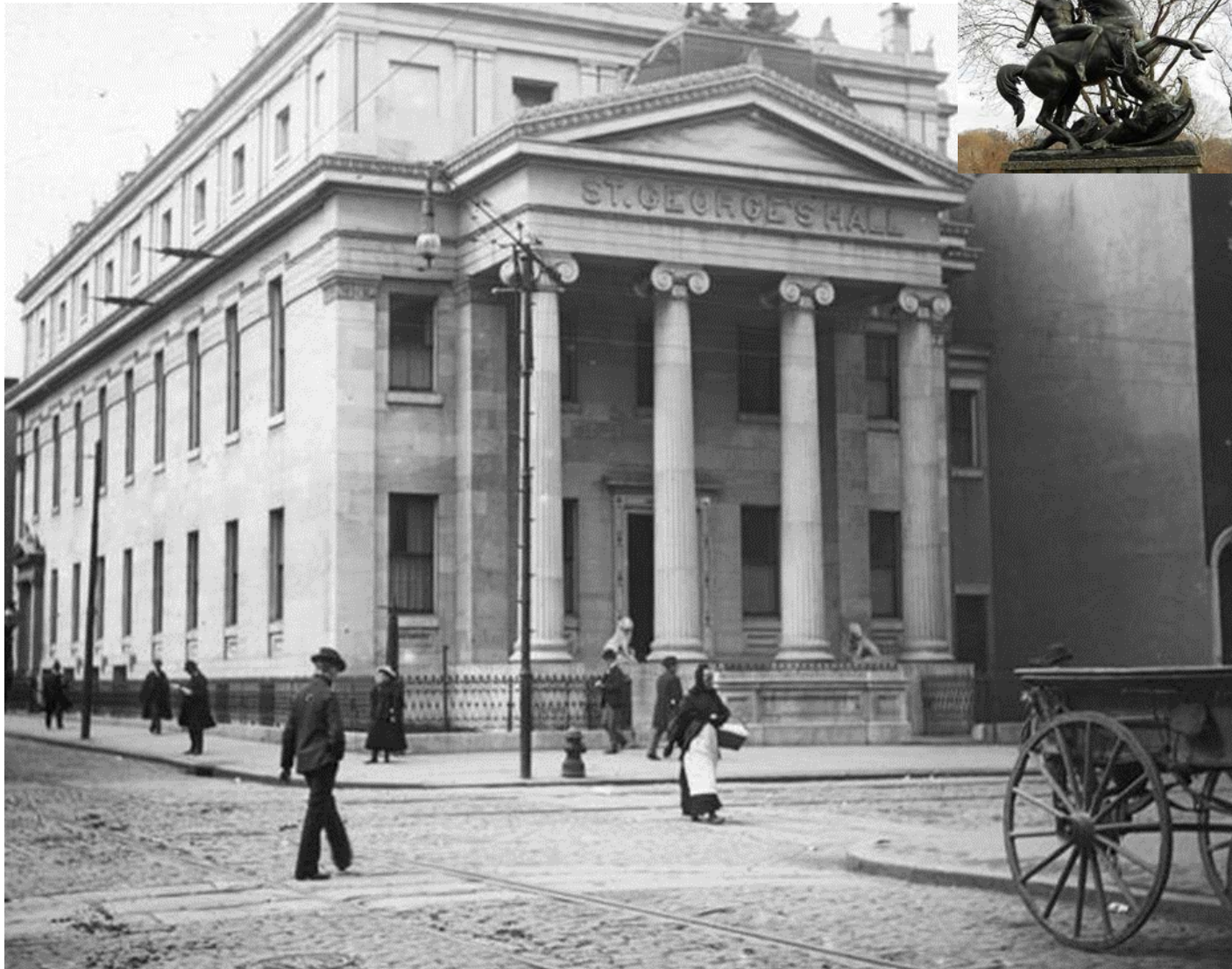


Fig.3a St. George's Hall, 13th and Arch, Philadelphia;
Fig. 3b Bronze Statue, St. George and the Dragon



Fig. 2 Portico, interior facias with Signature of Architect, Mason, and Date

A property said to be close to the spot where the heroic Hugh Mercer (1726-1777; Fig. 4), Scottish physician and Brigadier General in the American army, was killed, had changed hands many times before and after the American Revolution. The whole area of what became Princeton Township was originally owned by the Quaker Williams Penn (1644-1718), and then by the Clarke family, among

the earliest settlers in the region. In 1696 William Olden bought 330 acres from Benjamin Clarke. The history of the Olden clan and “Olden Manor,” as their acreage was named, is too well-known to be repeated here.⁷ I pick it up again in the early nineteenth century, when it becomes relevant to the “Maxwell story.”

Fig. 4 John Trumbull, General
Hugh Mercer, 1791,
Graphite drawing, 12.5 x 7.9 cm



In the early 1830s, Charles Smith Olden (1799 – 1876; [Fig. 5]) is known to have started developing land he purchased from his grandfather, James Olden.⁸ The property lay between the King’s Highway (also called Lincoln Highway; now Stockton/Rt. 206), and the “Princeton, Kingston, and

Trenton Branch Turnpike Road” (later Mercer Road/Princeton Pike), bound by Lovers Lane on the north-east and Stony Brook on the west, some 183 acres of “woods and meadows.”⁹ In 1835, he began the elaborate dwelling which he called *Drumthwacket*, after a building described by Walter Scott in one of his novels.¹⁰

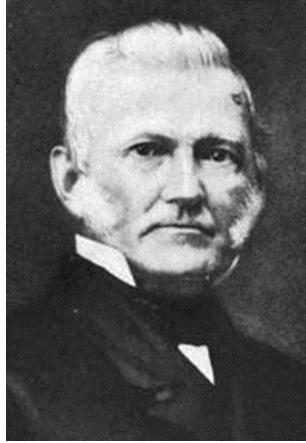


Fig. 5 Charles Smith Olden



Fig. 6 Drumthwacket, detail

It began as a stately structure [Fig. 6], by an unnamed architect, although its portico of six gorgeous Ionic columns is not unlike that of Newkirk’s contemporary Neo-Classic building by T. U. Walter in Philadelphia.¹¹

About the same time, Charles’s younger brother, Job Gardner Olden (1807-1876), acquired a large adjacent tract of farm land from the same source. On the opposite (south) side of the Pike, touching his brother’s estate at its north-east border, it fronted on a long stretch of Mercer Road. On the west it was bound by Stony Brook and the Clarke property, enclosing what is today Princeton Battlefield Park. It continued far to the south, ending at the Delaware & Raritan Canal. It thence passed along the canal for “ten chains and forty-five links,” or almost 900 feet, turning north again to end where

it began.¹² . It would seem that as Charles gave the literary name *Drumthwacket* to his property, Job took a more patriotic stance and named his *Mercer Manor*, in honor of the Revolutionary hero. It is so-called in all the official Indentures and Deeds I have studied.¹³ By 1895 the land was in the hands of a real estate agent named Goetchius, and on February 12 of that year this man conveyed the property to a couple named Lombard, Benjamin Jr. and Rose.¹⁴ The land and its appurtenances were under a mortgage with Peter K. Post, sr. for \$10,000 at 5% interest. ¹⁵ In 1900 (Feb. 21), the Lombards made an exception to the acreage and sold a strip of land fourteen feet wide to the Mercer County Traction Co. [Fig. 7].¹⁶ Nor did they stay much longer in Princeton for, on October 25, 1901, they sold the entire parcel for \$30,000 (with the mortgage now reduced to \$8,000) to another agent named George Berschig, listed as coming from Trenton.¹⁷ Mr. Berschig seems to have been a “big time” speculator for, in less than two months, on December 21, 1901, he had re-sold the property to a very interesting gentleman from Chicago who changed the character of the farm and the meaning of the word “Manor.”¹⁸ .



Fig. 7 Mercer County Traction Co.
TrolleyCar



Fig. 8 Harry Bryan Owsley

The gentleman from Chicago was Mr. Harry Bryan Owsley (1856 – 1922; Fig. 8). Born in Springfield, the capital of Illinois, to a well-to-do-family; he was one of a set of twins.¹⁹ He grew up in Springfield, then attended Centre College in Danville, KY, and later moved with his father and mother to Chicago where he joined several exclusive private clubs. ²⁰ There he and his brother opened a business called the St Nicholas Manufactory Toy Company, which produced large-scale toys. The business was immensely successful, with Harry contributing several patents, including for roller-skate wheels, bicycle wheels, and for a new kind of bicycle seat. In 1877, he married a woman from Springfield named Clara Morrison Brown and they had three children, the first of whom was named after his father: Harry Bryan Owsley, Jr. In spite of the success of the business, and perhaps for lack of need, plus somewhat delicate health, Harry gave it up and with wife and children began to travel, moving about both in America and Europe. During World War I, he was a member of the American Legation, they resided in Lausanne, Switzerland. He had literary interests and had a hand in compiling a genealogical history of the Owsley family as it moved from England to the United States and expanded.²¹ He developed a taste for antiques and with much aplomb and foresight began a broad-ranging collection

of both fine and decorative art. All these characteristics become relevant to my story when the family took up residence in Princeton, N.J. This move apparently coincided with Harry Bryan Junior's enrollment as a Special Student in the C. Green School of Science at Princeton University. Harry Jr. is listed in the university catalogue of 1903 as living at an address called Mercer Manor.²²

There is preserved the copy of a deed, dated December 21, 1901, stating that for the sum of \$25,000, to Harry B. Owsley there was conveyed a "certain farm, tract or parcel of land and premises...situated, lying and being in the township of Princeton, in the county of Mercer and State of New Jersey and bounded and described as before.²³ What houses there were on this land and what condition they were in at the time, we can only surmise. When the Lombard family left, the improvements were described as: "Together with all and singular the buildings improvement ways woods waters water courses rights liberties privileges and appurtenances to the same belongings in anywise appertaining." Whatever Harry Owsley found there, the main living quarters were probably relatively simple. But whether spacious or small, livable or not, he began a campaign of what was to become a stellar work of architecture almost immediately.

Between Owsley's purchase of Mercer Manor, Dec. 1901, and sometime after March 20, 1902, when the Society of the Sons of St. George departed their Arch Street meeting house, the portico of St. George's Hall became available for purchase.²⁴ I have not found records of Owsley's transaction, whether he went to Philadelphia or, as with the Princeton property, used an agent as an intermediate. It is suggestive to remember that the original owner of nearby Drumthwacket, Charles Olden, had connections to the original Newkirk building, actually spending a year in Mr. Newkirk's employ, making an *a priori* Newkirk/Princeton relationship. In any case, the operation of dismantling the marble structure must have taken a certain amount of time and money. We may assume that Owsley knew the building or knew members of the Society of St. George and learned about the demolition ahead of time. He must have had an agent to deal with the wrecking company in Philadelphia and to carry out the payment and arrange for delivery. The façade and portico were dismantled stone by stone, and said to have been shipped eastward by the barges on Pennsylvanian canals. (Shipping over water was the most efficient and least expensive mode of transport for heavy freight.) The final part of the trip was on the

Delaware & Raritan Canal, arriving directly at the southern limit of Owsley's property. From there the marbles must have been laboriously carried by mule northward up to the building site on Mercer Road.²⁵



Fig. 9 Mercer Manor
410 Mercer Road

I have found no records of the construction of Owsley's mansion. I do not know whether he remodeled an extant building or started from scratch. What he had built, however, was a handsome structure, returning to the Greek Revival style of the early 19th century, matching the style of the portico and the original Newkirk buildings [Fig. 2].²⁶ The orientation was toward Mercer Road (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10), with a horse-shoe-shaped driveway leading up to the podium and front steps, entering and exiting on the Pike. The width of the portico and stones of the marble façade determined the scale of the central core, with its elegant portal (of inlaid marble and stained glass [Fig. 11]), and four symmetrical rooms on the first floor. Balcony-topped wings extended the width with two windows on each side. The bedrooms were on the second story, with another bedroom added to the third floor, along with three smaller rooms and a storeroom. The three baths and the kitchen with a spiral staircase leading upstairs, and other facilities were in the back of the house built in stucco. Now the word manor took on its modern meaning: it now referred not to the entire tract but to the stately and very aristocratic house, surrounded by ingratiating landscape of trees and meadows.²⁷

It was in the interior that Owsley continued to work his magic. The documentation comes to us second hand, from a pamphlet written by friend/colleague of the next owner of the Manor who gave a grand tour of the house:

“No words or photographs can adequately portray the beauty of the place. The front of the house, with its stone columns and wonderful doorway was from Philadelphia. The Corinthian columns in the hall came from a row of houses built by John Jacob Astor at Broadway and 11th Street, New York. The Italian marble mantel in the drawing room came from the home of A. T. Stewart; the carved wooden mantel(piece) in the library from the dining room of J. P. Morgan, while the chandelier in the dining room was from an old chateau in France. The pipe organ was installed in 1914.”²⁸

I have tried to verify some of the objects in this description. The Italian marble mantel in the drawing room [Fig. 12] refers to the New York home of Alexander Turney Stewart (1803-1876), on the north-west corner of 34th and 5th Avenue, 2nd Empire in style. After he and wife died in 1886, the

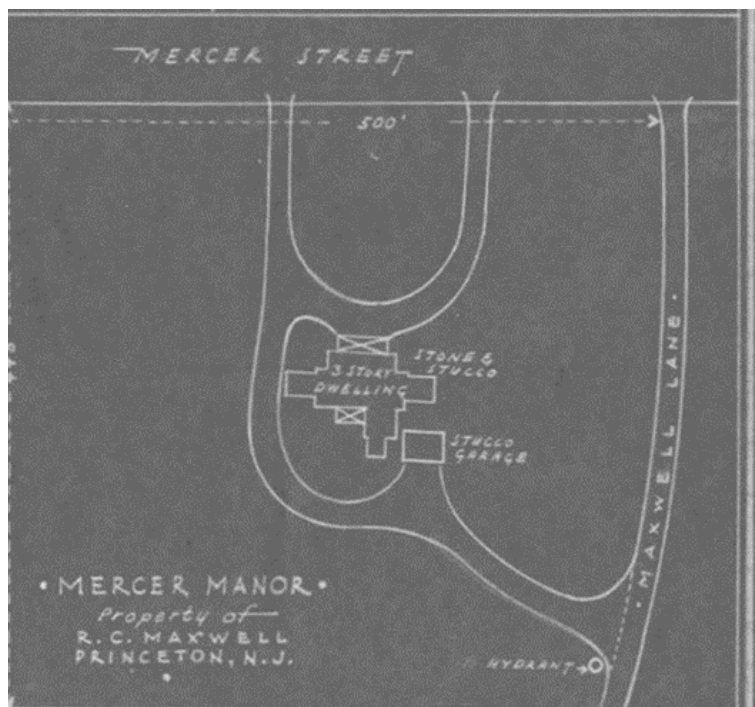


Fig. 10 Generalized Plan of Mercer Manor, detail



Fig. 11 Mercer Manor Doorway

building became the Manhattan Club, and then in 1901 was razed, just in time for Owsley to acquire it. Records I have found concerning the destruction of a Duke house regard not John Jacob's property but that of this mother, the famous Mrs. Astor (1830 – 1908). The contents of this trend-setting abode at 840 Fifth Avenue was put up for auction in April of 1912, with a bulky auction catalogue showing that every decorative element in the house went on sale.²⁹ Here we find "Lot #290: White Tapestry marble, circular pillars with *cuivre doré* Corinthian capitals, and flat pilasters in beautifully veined brown and violet marble." [Fig. 13]³⁰ The white marble pillars, unfortunately, are not illustrated but are described as having copper gilt Corinthian capitals, just the kind of thing that would have interested Harry Bryan

Owsley. The Astor house was razed right after the auction. I have been unable to determine whether “the carved wooden mantel in the library” was from the dining room of J.P. Morgan; and the type of chandeliers in the French dining room is too ubiquitous to identify. The installation of the pipe organ in 1914 shows that Owsley was still buying and still decorating. **31**



Fig. 12 Mercer Manor,
Stewart fireplace

Fig. 13 New York Astor
House, Corinthian pilasters



Harry B. Owsley paid \$25,000 for Mercer Manor in 1901. When he died in the early days of January, 1922, succumbing in the St Anthony Hotel, in San Antonio, Texas,³² it was estimated that his Princeton estate was worth \$500,000, all appurtenances included. Owsley’s will gave Mrs. Owsley control over his entire estate. She was no longer living in Princeton and the land, house and all its content went up for sale. Again, the transaction was handled by an agent, but Mr. Owsley’s twin brother, Heaton, was present and signed the deed; the deal was closed on April 14, 1925.

The new buyer was Robert Chester Maxwell (1873-1955; Fig. 14), a business man of many parts, well-known as one of the largest and most important producers of billboards on the east coast. He was born in St. Charles, MO, orphaned at 11, and sent to Virginia where he was adopted and raised by his uncle, David L. Clark of High Point N.C., a painter and sign painter. In 1894, at the age of 21, he moved to New Jersey and founded the Billboard Company of Trenton, the first step on his road to success. Three years later he married a West Virginia girl, Jessie Myrtle Leonard, with whom he had four children, three boys and a girl.³³ By the time of World War I Maxwell was known enough to be appointed



Fig. 14 Robert Chester Maxwell

Chief, Outdoor Advertising Section of Public Information Division, U.S. Food Administration. In 1919, the Maxwell Company merged with Trenton Poster Advertising Co. and moved to the prestigious address of 25 E. State St., Trenton. In the 1920s Maxwell established the Electric Sign Manufacturing Plant in Atlantic City and gave the gambling center of the east a new and dazzling atmosphere [Fig. 15 and Fig. 16].³⁴



Fig. 15 Billboard advertising the R.C. Maxwell Company

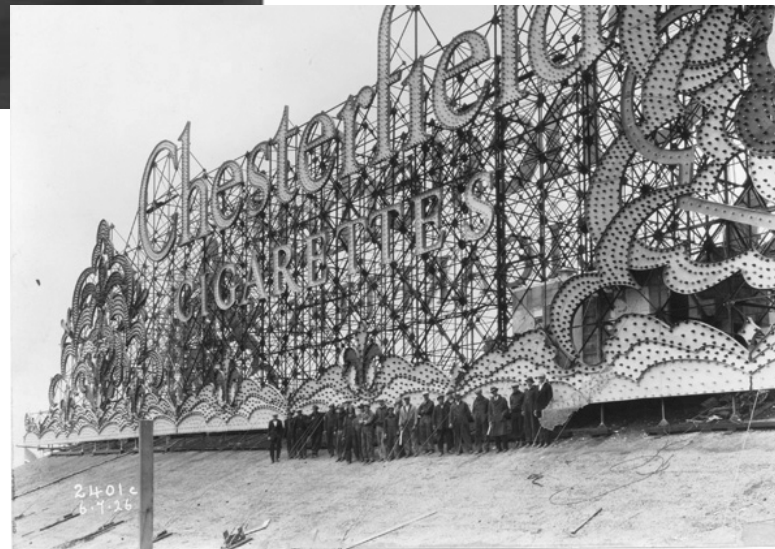


Fig. 16 Chesterfield Electric Billboard

Mr. Maxwell's participation in civic activities became legendary: President of the Trenton Chamber of Commerce; Chairman of Trenton Chapter of the Red Cross; member of the Founders and Patriots Society; member of New Jersey Society, Sons of the Revolution. He was an enthusiastic golfer [Fig. 17]: three times champion of the Trenton Country Club; three times runner-up of NJ State Championship; one of the founders of the Spring Lake Golf and Country Club; made a member of the Congressional Country Club of Washington, DC by President H. Hoover.³⁵

Fig. 17
R.C. Maxwell
on the links



Maxwell was riding high when Mercer Manor became available. Living in Princeton on Mercer Road gave him an up-scale address and a direct route to his office in Trenton. The sale and transfer of the deed took place in the usual manner, this time with an attorney from Chicago, Harry Okin, signing for the widow Owsley who had returned to Illinois. Maxwell agreed to pay \$70,000.00 for the property and all its parts, that is: \$7,000 at signing; \$63,000 on delivery of the deed: \$18,000 in cash, and “a purchase Money Mortgage of \$45,000 at 6%, semi-annually to be drawn for five years.” Maxwell also promised to reduce said mortgage \$5,000 per annum during the first three years, thus reducing it to \$30,000. The Agreement is dated April 14, 1925; Maxwell was to take possession on or before August 1 of the same year.³⁶ The description of the extensive lands of Mercer Manor is still identical to that of the first description of land belonging to Job G. Olden: a long frontage on Mercer Road, passing across the Battlefield to the Stony Brook, around the Hale property and south all the way to the Delaware & Raritan Canal; along the canal for some 900 feet and then north along the land of Princeton University,

returning to the starting point on Mercer Road. The property included three rental houses in the mid-section (southeastern) of the tract, at least one of which was a very large, very active farm.**37**

The Maxwells were very proud of their new home and it did not take long before this pride became public. Mrs. Jessie Maxwell took her friend and fellow Daughter of the American Revolution, Inez Stansfield, through the house describing all the artifacts Owsley left, and identifying their source. This precious description supplied Mrs. Stansfield with material which she inserted into her historical article (later pamphlet), published in February 1926, less than six months after the Maxwells moved in.**38** The family integrated into Princeton society and within a few years, in 1929, they announced the engagement of their daughter, Lucy Shaw Maxwell, to Princeton man Richard Erwin Kleinhans, PU'28, son of Mrs. Charles Kleinhans of Newark.**39**

This state of well-being changed after the Stock Market Crash. Sometime during the worst of the Depression, between 1930 and 1936, to make matters worse, Jessie Leonard Maxwell must have died quite suddenly.**40** I say this because Mr. Maxwell expressed the desire to vacate Mercer Manor in the spring of 1936. By then his children were mature and it is possible that he was virtually alone in the house. He put out an elaborate advertisement stating that the mansion and its grounds "May Now Be Leased," short term or long, even up to two years, with option to buy.**41** By year's end, however, he had changed his mind: on the 9th of January, 1937, he married a woman who had been his long-time secretary: Marie E. Ringkamp (1897-1959), the daughter of a German family living in Trenton. Their wedding took place in the rectory of the then Holy Angels Parish in Hamilton, NJ.**42** The couple remained in Mercer Manor and, even though Maxwell was now about sixty-six years old, they started a new family: David Clark Maxwell was born on December 2, 1937 (Fig. 27).

Meanwhile, during these same years, on the eastern edge of his estate, a new neighbor had taken shape in the form of a revolutionary institution of higher learning devoted to pure research: This was the Institute for Advanced Study; Louis Bamberger and Mrs. Felix Fuld Foundation. As the fulfillment of an idea, dreamed of by Abraham Flexner (1866-1959, Director 1930-1939, Fig. 18), the

Fig. 18 Abraham Flexner



Institute (IAS) had been inaugurated in 1930. The story of the Bamberger gift of five million dollars and the use to which it was to be put has been told many times.⁴³ The points to keep in mind are: 1) The Bamberger wealth was suddenly increased when, in the months before the 1929 crash, Mr. Bamberger (1855-1944; Fig. 19) sold the company to Macy's. Very soon after, Mr. Bamberger and his sister, Mrs. Caroline Fuld (1864-1944), sought a philanthropic place for their surplus of funds; they had in mind some sort of medical facility to be located, as Mr. Bamberger said, in New Jersey as a way of "dignifying Newark." 2) In this operation, the Bamberger interests were protected and safeguarded, and always remained so, by two professional men who were also close friends: Samuel D. Leidesdorf (1881-1968; financial adviser; auditor of the Bamberger Company; head of a large CPA company; Fig. 20), and Herbert H. Maass (Mr. Bamberger's attorney; president of a prominent New York law firm; Fig. 21). As 'The Founder' (i.e. Mr. Bamberger) was gently weened away from his original objective into the notion of an ideal educational entity the two advisors remained a vigilant braking mechanism, attempting to keep the gifted funds in what they knew to be the appropriate and legal channels. 3) It became clear, after six years of nomadic life in borrowed spaces on Princeton University campus, that a physical home would be necessary to bring this innovative institution into operative permanence. With reassurances



Fig. 19 Louis Bamberger



Fig. 20 Samuel Leidesdorf



Fig. 21 Herbert Maass

from Leidesdorf, Flexner and particularly Oswald Veblen, (1880-1960, mathematician, first faculty appointment, and member of the Board of Trustees; Fig. 22), Mr. Bamberger cautiously acquiesced; he increased the already generous monetary donation and agreed to the Institute having its own campus near the well-equipped, library-rich Princeton University. These decisions meant the acquisition of land, much of it between the western borders of the University and various parts of Mercer Manor.⁴⁴

The Institute had already contacted Maxwell in late winter of 1936 through the Walter B. Howe Real Estate Company, suggesting that he might “endow some twenty or thirty acres surrounding Stony Brook to the Institute.” Professor Veblen a month or so later made the same request. Maxwell responded that he “would be unable to do this, not for lack of interest in your great undertaking but because I am financially unable to do so.”⁴⁵ He went on to say that Howe had started a negotiation with him “for the purchase of certain acreage” in the name of the Institute and that he was writing to inquire if this point was, in fact, true. As far as I know, there was no response to this query.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Maxwell responded courteously in the following year (1937) when the Institute asked to connect to his existing six-inch water main on Battle Road.⁴⁷ The Institute continued its development, and was officially founded on May 22, 1939.⁴⁸



Fig. 22 Oswald Veblen

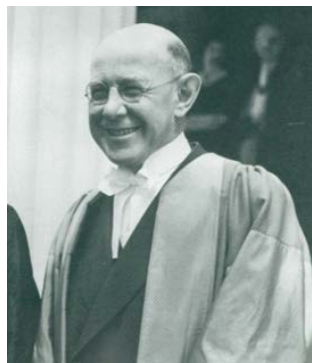


Fig. 23 Frank Aydelotte



Fig. 24 Robert Oppenheimer

1940 was a synchronous year in the relationship between Robert C. Maxwell and the Institute for Advanced Study now headed by Frank Aydelotte (1880-1956, Director, 1939-1947; Fig. 23). It seems that both parties were considering questions of real estate at the same time, one to reduce and the other to enlarge. The motivations behind such plans on either side were very different: Mr. Maxwell was now thinking of sectioning off some of the original vast property of historic Mercer Manor, taxed more heavily every year, and selling it to the highest bidder. On Aug. 22, of that year, he claimed to have an outside offer with the mention of possible subdivision, and used it as a way of re-opening discussions with the Institute.⁴⁹ Because the Institute had decided it needed still more land designated for private faculty housing, some preliminary negotiations took place but without much energy. On May 4, 1941, Maxwell's second son, Harry B., was shot to death in a hold-up in Manhattan; in a letter of condolence from the Institute written by Prof. Aydelotte, the capture of the assassin is mentioned.⁵⁰ This sad event slowed but did not stop the bargaining and once started, it was carried on but without much focus. It continued until the spring of 1945 when Maxwell decided exactly what of his property he wished to keep and what he was willing to sell. With this decision, finally, the name of my street, which had intrigued me for so long, came into play.

By the end of June (more than a month after VE Day, May 8) Mr. Maxwell provided a plan of the current property he had decided to retain. The “Manor House,” and all the grounds fronting on Mercer Rd. would be the northern limit of his lot, a rectangle 1,500’ wide and 440’ deep (that is, to the south west), comprising approximately five and half acres [Fig. 24]. This lot included what he always knew was, and had been for more than two hundred years, part of the battlefield area on the south side of Mercer Rd. He then offered to sell to the Institute all the land south of a southeast-southwest line parallel to Mercer Rd. below the water main. This huge parcel stretched west to the Clarke/Hale property and Stony Brook, and would include the three rental houses and some farm buildings, farm land, meadow and woods extending southward the long distance to the Delaware & Raritan Canal: precisely 129.998 acres.⁵¹ There is no evidence to indicate that the area occupied by the rental houses, currently the site of IAS new construction, was ever known as “Maxwell’s Field,” and to refer to it with that name is not only anachronistic, it is spurious.

Included in the sale to the Institute was a triangle of woods and meadow on the west side of Maxwell’s private lot, a strip 220’ x 440’ x 20’ wide, providing the Institute with a farm access drive from Mercer Road to its property to the south of Mercer Manor. The bargaining went as follows: Maxwell asked \$100,000.00; the IAS countered with an offer of \$65,000.00. Maxwell responded with a new price of \$87,000.00 and the IAS offered \$80,000.00. A few weeks after VJ day [Aug. 15], on September 11, 1945, Maxwell accepted the offer.⁵²

It turns out that in all the discussions, my street, Maxwell Lane, was of primary concern to both parties. Mr. Maxwell held that access to his property was a major factor in his sense of propriety. At the beginning of the bargaining, he stipulated the following: “(My) tenants must have service from

Fig. 25a, C.S. Sincerbeaux, Civil Engineer
Maxwell Property to be conveyed to IAS
Nov. 10, 1945

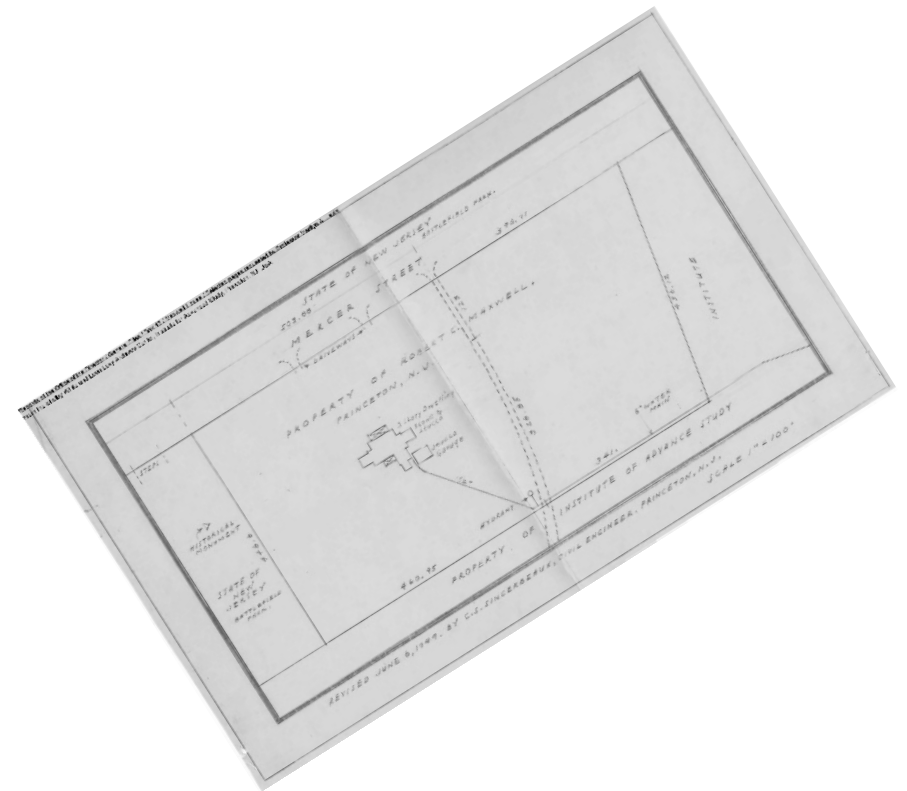
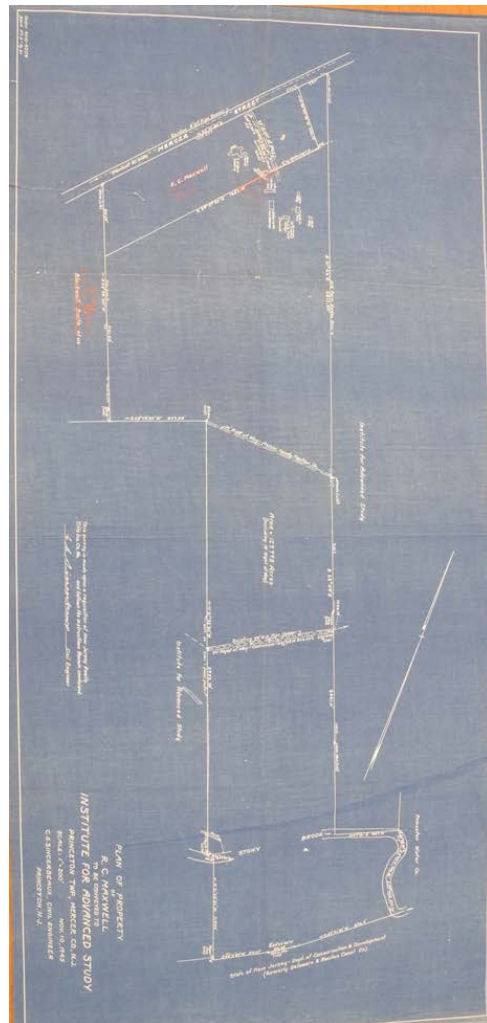


Fig. 25b, Sincerbeaux, Maxwell Private Property

Revised, June 6, 1949

Mercer Street through my farm lane, known as *Maxwell's Lane*. I will, for a consideration of \$1.00, give you (the Institute) use of said lane for a period of time not beyond September the 1st, 1946; my attorney to draw up a separate paper by which you agree that the status of that portion of the land that I retain and which you do not buy is now, and shall continue to be R. C. Maxwell's private lane."53

This arrangement did not satisfy the Institute. In a conversation with Mr. Maxwell on September 17, Prof. Aydelotte asked for "perpetual right-of-way along what is called Maxwell's Lane, which runs from Mercer Street across his land to the (rental) houses." Mr. Maxwell agreed almost immediately (actually the same day), but with restrictions. His goal was to prevent the lane from becoming a public thoroughfare. He states: "That "*Maxwell's Private Lane*, as indicated by dotted lines on the blueprint (not found; Fig. 25a and Fig. b are from the following months) by which an agreement will give perpetual use of same to the Institute, is at present 10 to 14 feet in breadth and shall only be increased in breadth at the consent of Maxwell. The cost of the maintenance of this lane, curving as it does and being about 450 in length, is to be shared equally by both parties."54 And so it was agreed. The apostrophe "s" was dropped. But to this day, the lane retains his name and remains a private street belonging to the Institute, closed to all traffic one day a year to maintain its status.

Thus I have arrived at my original goal of discovering the origins and significance of the name of the street on which I have lived for over forty years. And so I could end my story here. I will, however, continue the history of Mercer Manor for a bit more to sketch out the final resting place of the most salient architectural feature of the manor house itself.

A month after the sale was final, by December of 1945, Maxwell's tenants were moving out. The Morrells had departed the large frame house and a Member (as visiting scholars the IAS are called) of the Institute and his family had moved in for their stay. In his usual semi-formal manner, Maxwell writes that he and his wife intend to call on them.55

With no warning, on Sunday night, June 16, 1946, tragedy once more befell R. C. Maxwell. No one was the house when a raging fire broke out in the back of Mercer Manor. The police night watch saw it at 11 o'clock and called the Fire Department. Along with the firemen came, it was said, 100 university students to assisted in putting out the blaze. The fire stopped for good only after it had flared up for the second time. Most of the damage was in the stucco service area in the back, but the fire swept up the spiral staircase and the interior and all its fine works of art were destroyed.⁵⁶ The marble portico and façade cladding again remained intact. Maxwell, in thanking Aydelotte for his letter of sympathy, explained that he, Mrs. Maxwell and their son David were traveling in Virginia when they got the news. They had returned and after making an inspection had high hopes in restoring the house within six months. He even assumed a jocular air in inviting Aydelotte to a game of golf when he returned to Princeton.⁵⁷

Even during the time of the complicated dealings with the Institute and the terrible shock of the fire, Maxwell was arranging for further devolvement of his property. As announced in the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* in a burst of post-war patriotic enthusiasm, the then Governor of New Jersey (Walter Edge) and the University were campaigning for a permanent memorial on the site of the 1777 Battle of Princeton.⁵⁸ This move was made possible by donations of the previously privately owned land we have been describing. One portion, on the north side of Mercer Road, was donated by Mrs. Ronald Hudson, the former Miss Agnes Pyne, granddaughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. M. Taylor Pyne, Princeton's great benefactors, from whom she had inherited the Drumthwacket property. And the other large portion was donated by Robert Chester Maxwell, who deeded the property, in his usual tax-eliminating fashion, for \$1.00 to the State Department of Conservation.⁵⁹ The Princeton Battlefield State Park was dedicated on October 20, 1946.⁶⁰

In spite of his act of public generosity, highly prized by the local citizens, Maxwell's personal discontent became public. In the summer of 1947, he was sued by his oldest son, Chester S. Maxwell in US District Court, Camden, NJ, seeking reinstatement, after time in the army during WWII, to his position as manager of the Atlantic City office of the outdoor advertising company. Although the law was on his side, Chester had been denied reinstatement for gross mismanagement, drunkenness, and threats of

physical harm. R.C. senior was adamant in his accusations, coming close to putting his son's ingratitude into the public record.⁶¹ The judge favored the father and threw the case out of court. In due course, nevertheless, the two again found peace together.

In the decade following these events, there was little or no interaction between Mercer Manor and the Institute for Advanced Study. Mr. Maxwell, his wife and their youngest son David, divided their time between Princeton and their house in Palm Springs, Florida, with more time spent in the former than in the latter. But the emptiness of the Manor was noted in a 1952 front-page article in the *Princeton Herald*, that included not only a well-researched history of the building but also stories of ghostly pranks carried out by Princeton University students on the premises when the family was not in town.⁶² Toward the middle of the decade Mr. Maxwell fell ill and after a long period of suffering, died on March 8, 1955 (Fig. 26). In his will, he left what remained of Mercer Manor to his wife Marie, and the property on the east side of Maxwell Lane to his daughter Lucy.⁶³

Fig. 26 After unnamed Trenton newspaper - obituary



Fig. 27 David C. Maxwell



Once Mr. Maxwell was gone, real estate speculators began to descend. Robert Oppenheimer, now the Director of the Institute, writes a letter to Leidesdorf (still the lawyer to the Bamberger Estate), describing the property in glowing terms, with the clear purpose of encouraging more acquisition. **64** At this point, daughter Lucy expressed impatience saying she and Mrs. Maxwell were constantly being annoyed by would-be buyers, and that they had absolutely no interest in selling anything. **65** However, Mrs. Maxwell suddenly had a change of heart and after a brief bargaining session, the Institute bought the rest of the Mercer Manor property, always with the purpose of providing housing for the faculty. The purchase of the final tract was completed in May of 1956. A few months later, because of the poor condition of the house and its toney design, completely inappropriate for academic families, the building was demolished. Once again, saved from the demolition ball, because of its innate beauty, was the marble portico and entire façade (Fig. 27, and Fig. 28).

For almost two years the Institute looked for a fitting home for this historic ensemble. Considered were the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC, and most appropriate, the City of Philadelphia Planning Commission. **66** In the end, the preservation cause was taken up by the New Jersey Society of Architects, led by very concerned citizens, Sherley W. Morgan, F.A.I.A., long-time professor at the School of Architecture, Princeton University and Martin L. Beck, A.I.A. of the same department. They and a number of colleagues got permission from the State Department of Conservation, if they could raise enough money to cover the costs, to re-erect the portico on the north side of Mercer Rd, to serve as a kind of pro-pylon entrance way to the area, an ideal grave site of thirty-six fallen soldiers from both sides of the Battle of Princeton. The trustees of the Institute agreed to pay for the demolition and transportation of the disassembled marble blocks (Fig. 29). **67** Although there was the usual amount of local controversy, the mission of re-erection was accomplished (Fig. 30) and the inauguration ceremony was held on November 11, 1959. **68**



Fig. 28 Newkirk Marble Façade and Portico, 1956



Fig. 29 Angle view of fig. 28



Fig. 30 The Portico dismantled by Alec Johnstone, mason, Matthews Construction Co. (North Carolina).



Fig. 31 Princeton Battlefield State Park, Portico from behind, looking southwest

We now know that our house at 56 Maxwell Lane was one of first, if not the first faculty dwelling built (1958) on the newly acquired land. It was commissioned privately by Prof. Hassler Whitney, School of Mathematics, from Philetus Holt III, A.I.A., Princeton, NJ. We were the third owners, and we restored it to its original form.⁶⁹ It is now 2016; eight townhouses and seven single-family homes are in construction immediately southwest of our house. The street was originally called Stonehouse Drive, remembering the biggest of the three rental houses that used to be there. Recently, part of it was renamed Gödel Lane for the mathematician Kurt Gödel (1906-1978), famous for his incompleteness theorems. Trucks, trailers, cement mixers and so on are lumbering up and down Maxwell Lane. One wonders what Messers Owsley and Maxwell would have said.

POSTSCRIPT

I began this “story” as a kind of space-time memoir, a scholarly account of a large tract of land that, over a period of three hundred years, passed through the hands of a number of remarkable individuals and institutions. Now that I can see it as a whole, I realize the story also has a deeper meaning. Aside from its very particular historic level---locale of the decisive battle of the American Revolution, actually a matter of coincidence---it tells a very specific American tale. In this country of endless spaces and endless opportunity, ownership moved over time from royal assumptions and gestures (the English king and the Dutch prince), to communal sharing and support (the Quaker village), to legal definition and ownership (generations of Oldens), to gracious habitation (Mr. Owsley’s embellished estate). From aesthetic evaluation and comfort (Maxwell’s family home), it passed to historical remembrance (Princeton Battlefield State Park) and sustainable academic sponsorship (dwellings for Institute for Advanced Study research scholars). In the final acclamation, this piece of land reveals a profile of the American ideal---broad, diverse, and optimistic---always a good subject for a story.

MAL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many of the documents referred to in this study are in the Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center of the Institute for Advanced Study. Their collocation (unless otherwise indicated) is: Office of the Director/General Files/Box 43/Maxwell, Robert. In the notes that follow these documents will be referred as "SWLLAC/Maxwell." I express my heartfelt thanks to Erica Mosner, Archival Assistant, IAS, for her unfailing and inspirational assistance. Many other references come from the Duke University Libraries, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, John W. Hartman Center Digital Collections; see <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/ea/Company/R.%20C.%20Maxwell?page=1>, for an array of examples of Maxwell billboards. Materials drawn from the Archive of R.C. Maxwell Company Outdoor Advertising, Collection, Oversize Materials, Clippings 1873-1999, Box 22; will be referred to as the "DURL." I also thank the Duke archivists for their good-spirited help. Mr. David Clark Maxwell donated the Maxwell archive to Duke University between 1999 and 2002. I visited Mr. Maxwell in his home in August, 2016; he very kindly shared with me information and memories of his family.

NOTES

- 1.** The song is dated 1969. Irving had long since realized that the act of tapping the head of someone with a "silver hammer to make sure that he was dead," repeated the ritual in the Catholic church of confirming the death of a pope. "After the pope drew his last breath, a doctor was called forth to pronounce the death. The Cardinal-Camerlengo of the Church would come forward. All others would drop back behind him while he removed from a small red leather bag a small silver mallet engraved with the arms of the deceased. Three times the Camerlengo would gently tap the forehead of the deceased pope as if to say, "Get up!" With each tap, he would call out, in the pope's native tongue, the name given to him at baptism, the name his mother whispered to him as a child. Assured of death, the Camerlengo would announce, "The Pope is dead." James C. Noonan, Jr. *The Church Visible: The Ceremonial Life and Protocol of the Roman Catholic Church*, New York: Viking, 1996, pp.24-28.
- 2** Jhennifer A. Amundson, ed., *Thomas U. Walter: the Lectures on Architecture, 1841-53*, Philadelphia: Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 2006. According to the Philadelphia *Almanac*, 1857 (on line), the mason's shop was at 360 Market St., Philadelphia, with branches on Chestnut and Walnut.
- 3** The function of the Society, a branch of the English foundation, established in Philadelphia on Saint George's Day, April 23, 1772, was to provide "advice and assistance of Englishmen in distress." See J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*, Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884, vol. 2, p. 1467.

4 A rather surprising portrayal of St. George in the nude battling a ferocious dragon, astride a dramatically rearing horse; the sculptor remains unknown. See note 6.

5 One of his major works recently received a new edition: Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain and the Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, intro. Lu Ann Homza, 5 vols., London: I. B. Tauris, 2011.

6 Also saved was the 1877 bronze statue of St. George, designed and cast by Elkington & Company, Birmingham, England. The sculpture was moved to the top of the Society's new building on 19th and Arch; and when that building was destroyed in the 1920s, it was given to the Philadelphia Museum of Art where it rested in storage for many years. Finally, in 1976 for the Centennial, it was mounted alongside the West River Drive (previously the path of a major canal, today Martin Luther King Drive, near Black Road), where it remains.

7 The rest of the property remained with the Clarke family, including the house built in 1772, until purchased by Henry E. Hale in 1863. See Olden family papers, 1769-1847, Rare Books: Manuscripts Collection (MSS), Firestone Library, Princeton University; also the Clarke family collection, 1710-1906; Rare Books: Manuscripts Collection (MSS), Firestone Library, Princeton University.

8 Another source claims the land was bought from his uncle Nathaniel Olden: Francis Bazley Lee, *Genealogical and Personal Memorial of Mercer County, New Jersey*, New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1907.

9 The property included a small portion of what became Princeton Battlefield Park on its south border, although of course it is not described in this manner. See discussion below.

10 The novel, by tradition recently read by Olden, was *A Legend of Montrose*, published in 1819, set in Scotland in the 1640s during the civil war. The word itself is Gaelic, meaning "wooded hill."

11 After I wrote this line I discovered that Charles Smith Olden as a youth spent "a considerable time in the business house of Matthew Newkirk of Philadelphia." If this relationship continued he therefore would have known Newkirk's fine house and followed his lead in matters of architectural style. This information appears in *The Trenton Banking Company: A History of the First Century of its Existence*, published by the bank, 1907, p. 96. It is included here because C.S. Olden was for years on the board of the Trenton Banking Co., and ultimately became its President. He also advised Princeton University on treasury matters and became a Life Trustee.

All 183 acres of the Drumthwacket estate was purchased for \$15,000 in 1893 by the Industrialist, banker, and philanthropist, Moses Taylor Pyne, (1855-1921) who enlarged the building to its present size.

12 In all the deeds, the property is repeatedly described as follows:

"All that certain Farm, Tract or Parcel of land (and premises, hereinafter particularly described) situated, lying and being in the township of Princeton, in the county of Mercer and state of New Jersey, (commonly known as Mercer Manor [my emphasis]) and bounded and described as follows, to wit:

Beginning at a post on the south side of the Princeton, Kingston, and Trenton Branch Turnpike Road corner to land now or late of Job G. Olden, and runs thence (1) Along line of the said lands of Job G. Olden, south twenty-two degrees east, passing over a stone about twenty links from said turnpike, forty-two chains and sixty links to a stone corner of Charles S. Olden's land; thence (2) along the line of his land in the same course, thirty-seven chains and fifteen links to the middle of Stony Brook; thence (3) down said brook the several courses thereof to land of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Company; thence (4) along their land, south fifty-one degrees and forty-five minutes west, ten chains and thirty-five links; thence (5) still along the same, south sixty-three degrees fifteen minute west, eight chains and nineteen links to a corner of Henry Hale's land; thence (6) along his land, north twenty-two degrees five minutes west, ten chains and eighty-six links to the middle of said Stony Brook; thence (7) up said brook, at right angles with last course, eighty links; thence (8) still along said Henry Hale's line, north twenty-two degrees and thirty minutes west, forty-four chains and forty-eight links to a stone; thence (9) south sixty-seven degrees west, nine chains and fifty-six links to a stone; thence (10) north twenty-four degrees and twenty minutes west, twenty-four chains and thirty-three links to a stone on the south side of the aforesaid Turnpike; thence (11) north thirty eight degrees and fifty minutes east, twenty-six chains and fifty links along the south line of said Turnpike to the place of beginning. Containing one hundred and forty-three and twenty-eight one-hundredths acres of land, more or less."

Added after 1900: "Excepting there out a strip or tract of land fourteen feet in width which was conveyed by Benjamin Lombard, Jr. and wife to the Mercer County Traction Company by deed dated February Twenty-First, 1900, and recorded in the Mercer County Clerk's office in Liber 236 of deeds, page 69."

13 See previous note.

14 Benjamin Lombard, Jr. was apparently the son of Benjamin Lombard, Sr., a banker in Trenton.

15 Archive of the Mercer County Clerk, Trenton N.J.: Book 198, pp.593ff.

16 Archive of the Mercer County Clerk, Trenton, N. J.: Book 236, pp. 68-71. This strip was for the trolley line to pass through the center section of the property.

17 Archive of the Mercer County Clerk, Trenton, N.J., Book 248, pp. 413-17.

18 Even before the Princeton transfer was settled, a George Berschig is recorded in the Los Angeles Herald, No. 21, 22 October 1901, as selling Lot 3, block. 61, in Alamitos Beach (Long Beach), CA.

In pre-revolutionary days a "manor" was an estate or district leased to tenants, especially one granted by royal charter in a British colony or by the Dutch governors. By the late 18th century, particularly in England, "manor" meant a large country house with lands or the principal house of a landed estate.

19 The other twin was named Heaton, their mother's maiden name. They were born to John E. Owsley (1823-1881, said to be a friend of Abraham Lincoln) and Henrietta Emily Heaton (1833-1914).

20 Among them: Beta Theta Phi Society, Lambda Rho chapter, of the University of Chicago, and the Chicago Camera Club. See several publications in the *Owsley Family Historical Society News Letter*, ed. Ronny O. Bodin, e.g. by Milancie H. Adams, vol. 32, no. 2, June, 2000. See also the Web Site of Randy Pace:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheStAnthonyHotel/posts/989916414366474>.

Harry's father, John E. Owsley, was a prominent real estate operator and very good friend of the 24th mayor of Chicago, Carter H. Harrison III (who was assassinated in 1893). One of Harrison's two wives was related to the Owsleys. Thus the family traveled in the upper political circles of Illinois.

21 Harry Bryan Owsley, *Genealogical Facts of the Owsley Family in England and America*, Chicago, 1890, 164 pp.

22 *Catalogue of Princeton University*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1903, p. 378, "C. Green School of Science, Owsley, Harry Bryan Jr., domicile, Mercer Manor."

23 Archive of the Mercer County Clerk, Trenton, N.J., Book 250, pp. 149ff; repeated in Book 562, p. 90, for sale to R.C. Maxwell.

24 The members of the Society of the Sons of St. George in Philadelphia were allowed to meet in the building after the 1896 sale for more than five years. After they were notified to vacate, their last meeting held there was March 20, 1902.

25 Canals no long visible between Philadelphia and Ewing, N.J., where the Delaware & Raritan Canal begins, were created to ship heavy goods between Philadelphia and New York City. The route of the portico marbles was cogently proposed, but without documentation, in the speech given by Martin Beck in 1959, when the portico was dedicated in Princeton Battlefield Park; see below.

26 The architecture of the nineteenth century moved through a multitude of styles: the 1840s and 50s saw, along with Official Classical style, the more romantic Gothic Revival in the English "naturalistic" style, along with a vogue for Queen Ann's brickwork. Toward the end of the century, there was the heavy but stimulating Richardson Romanesque. Cf. Constance M. Greiff, Mary W. Gibbons, and Elizabeth G. C. Menzies, *Princeton Architecture: A Pictorial History of Town and Campus*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967, pp.90, 129-30, and 134.

27 Tenant farming continued as a major activity in the lower (southern) part of the property. See below to this point.

28 We will see that after Owsley's death, Mercer Manor was bought by the Maxwell family. A description of art objects in the house was given by the new owner. See below.

29 *Painting, Furnishings & Architectural Fittings of the Astor Residence, 840 Fifth Avenue, New York. Unrestricted Sale on the Premises by Order of Mr. Vincent Astor*. Under Management of American Art Association. The sale took place on April 21-22, 1912.

30 *Ibid.* pp. 74-75.

-
- 31** He was also still making money. See the *Iron County Register*, Ironton, MO, 1915, where there is recorded a public sale by H. B. Owsley “of fine registered jersey cattle, under the auctioneer Col. D.M. Perry of Columbus, OH, netting \$7,000.”
- 32** Again recorded on Randy Pace’s *Face book* page, above note 20.
- 33** They were Chester, Harry, Robert Jr. and Lucy. It was Jessie who gave the description of the contents of the Owsley house, referred to above in the text, and note 28.
- 34** The Chesterfield billboard (1926, note the crowd below) was mounted at Steeplechase Pier, Pennsylvania Ave. and the Boardwalk, Atlantic City, N.J. It had a 75-second cycle, 13,000 bulbs in 27 colored steps, ending with a burst of gold and white; information and photo, courtesy DURL. David Maxwell informs me (*ad vocem*) that, because of the heat generated, the billboard and the pier burned down.
- 35** Information from Obituary, *Trenton Evening Times*, March 9, 1955, preserved in DURL. See below for his donation of land to the Princeton Battlefield Park.
- 36** In the archive of the Mercer County Clerk, Trenton, N.J., the documents concerned are: Book 561, pp. 150-53, and Book 562, pp. 90-92.
- 37** See below, note 51.
- 38** The description appears in: Inez Stansfield (Registrar General, N. S., D.A. R.), “Mercer Manor and its Historic Setting,” *D.A.R. Magazine*, February, 1926, p. 8; reprinted as a separate pamphlet. The bulk of the article is one of the many accounts of the revolutionary battle and Washington’s victory, including a description and illustration of the eagle-topped pyramid of cannon balls on the lawn of Mercer Manor, said to be the place of General Mercer’s fatal wounding.
- 39** *Prince Alumni Weekly*, March 1, 1929, vol. 29, p. 646. The couple settled in South Norwalk, CT.
- 40** I have been unsuccessful in tracing Jessie’s death certificate.
- 41** A copy of the Advertisement in SWLLAC, Records of the Board of Trustees, Committee Files Box 1: Buildings and Grounds Miscellaneous 1932-1936. I thank Erica Moser for providing me with this document. It should be mentioned that Maxwell had a second home in Palm Beach, Florida.
- 42** Documents concerning this marriage were kindly furnished to me by Father John Chang, pastor of St. Raphael-Holy Angles Parish. The entry is found in the Parish 1934-1988 Marriage Register, p. 6. Maxwell was a practicing Catholic and I assume he would have waited a proper amount of time before remarrying.
- 43** E.g. Abraham Flexner, *I Remember: The Autobiography of Abraham Flexner*, New York, 1940; Beatrice M. Stern, “A History of the Institute for Advanced Study, 1930-1950,” unpublished, typescript completed in 1964; available on line: https://library.ias.edu/files/stern_pt1.pdf. See also Linda Arntzenius, *Images of America: The Institute for Advanced Study*, Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011, with many illustrations.

44 In the same file cited in note 41 is a report to the Board of Trustees (Sept. 23, 1936), confirming the purchase of “a substantial acreage in Princeton Borough and Princeton Township.” The report contained the follow pledge: “that as small a part of our resources as is possible should be invested in or spent on building and grounds and as large a portion as is possible should be reserved for that part which has within a few years already made the Institute distinguished, namely adequate salaries and retiring allowances for men of outstand talent and genius.” In the same file the actual sites purchased are listed and evaluated (but not located) in a document dated Sept. 30, 1936. It shows twelve (12) properties owned by individuals and commercial companies, the largest of which was Olden Farm (\$81,106.68), with three other tracts evaluated at as much as one third the price of the farm (i.e., more than \$20,000 each). The total cost, including taxes and fees, was \$229, 360.87.

45 Maxwell letter to Flexner, May 27, 1936; SWLLAC, Records of the Board of Trustees, Committee Files Box 1: Buildings and Grounds Miscellaneous 1932-1936.

46 Flexner was out of town at the time; *ibid.*, letter from Flexner’s Secretary, June 1, 1936, saying she would forward his letter to the Committee on Buildings and Grounds. Maxwell apparently never received a response and mentioned this fact several times in later correspondence.

47 SWLLAC/Maxwell.

48 On Nov. 2, 1937, Mr. Aydelotte had written to Lewis Mumford (1895-1990), noted historian, sociologist, and architectural critic, seeking advice on choosing an architect for the projected main building. Mumford’s very interesting reply put his friend Frank Lloyd Wright at the top of the list, but pessimistically because Wright was “at his best only with a completely sympathetic and cooperative client.”(SWLLAC, Records of the Office of the Director/General Files/Box 9/Architects). Jens Frederick Larson, who was not on Mumford’s list, was chosen to design Fuld Hall in an inoffensive academic neo-Georgian style. It was Larson who suggested buying Maxwell land in order to change the proposed location of Fuld Hall. He wanted it placed nearer to Mercer Rd., and thereby on higher ground. The idea was discussed but quickly rejected by Flexner to Aydelotte, Sept. 20, 1938; Aydelotte to Maass, Sept 21, 1938; Flexner to Aydelotte, Sept. 23. See Stern, *The History*, p. 396-397, and 446.

49 SWLLAC/Maxwell.

50 See DURL, newspaper article, May 4, 1941, *Daily News*; SWLLAC/Maxwell, May 8, 1941, Aydelotte to Maxwell.

51 SWLLAC/Maxwell: Maxwell to Aydelotte, June 26/28, 1945. The first of three rental houses is listed as: a “farm Stone House” occupied by a Prof Jantz, Princeton University, evaluated as worth \$72,500.00; this house gave the name to a dead-end street to the west of Maxwell Lane. The second building valued at \$80,000.00, was a seven-room frame house with two baths, unground garage; it included other farm buildings and equipment. The occupants were B.H. Morrell, Superintendent of Princeton Hospital, and A.D. Morrell, farmer. The latter, like his Olden predecessors, worked a large portion of the southern and western part of the property (now Princeton Battlefield Park) keeping chickens and growing wheat, corn, and soybeans. The third rental building was a small five-room house with one bath and large basement, occupied by a Dr. Klauck.

-
- 52** SWLLAC/Maxwell. The official “Indenture,” was drawn up and signed on November 11, 1945; please see a copy of this document at the URL: <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/38216891/1945IndentureMercerManor.pdf>
- 53** SWLLAC/Maxwell: Sept. 11, 1945, from Maxwell to Aydelotte. Maxwell had offered to sell another triangle of wooded land on the east side of “Maxwell’s Lane,” fronting on Mercer, 230’ x 440’x 75’, which the IAS did not buy at this time. It was later, in 1955, inherited by Maxwell’s daughter Lucy, and then bought by the Institute for faculty housing. Ultimately this parcel was divided into three lots, the southern-most of which is currently owned by my husband and me.
- 54** SWLLAC/Maxwell: Memorandum Preliminary to an Agreement of Sale; Sept. 17, 1945; delivered by Maxwell to Aydelotte, and copies shown to Maass and Leidesdorf.
- 55** SWLLAC/Maxwell: from Maxwell to Aydelotte, Dec. 3, 1945.
- 56** According to an article in the Princeton Herald, vol. 29, no. 81, Aug. 20, 1952, pp. 2-4, Maxwell had added to the house art collection: “a fine copy of Raphael’s *Madonna della Sedia*, and a copy of an elaborate frame said to have been designed by Raphael.” Maxwell had been careful to place a private fire hydrant some 100 yards behind the house at his new property line. The proximity of his hydrant had saved the day since the next closest hydrant was “thousands of yards” northwest on Mercer at the level of Lovers Lane. Being Sunday, all the servants were out. (SWLLAC/Maxwell: Unidentified Newspaper report, two days later).
- 57** SWLLAC/Maxwell: Maxwell letter to Aydelotte, July 3, 1946. Maxwell says he is currently staying with his son Bobby (R.C. Maxwell, Jr.) in Spring Lake, and plans to spend the months during restoration in his house in Palm Beach, Florida. He refers to the Institute family now living in the “Morrell” house who were very kind after the fire in caring for their dog “Toby.” By Oct. 17, 1946, Maxwell writes to Aydelotte that the house is “better than ever in efficiency and economy” and will be ready for occupancy by a new tenant or owner by the spring. (Maxwell, in fact, did not sell the house but continued to live there until his death.)
- 58** Much earlier, beginning in 1887, there had been a long campaign to raise a tangible, physical Princeton *Battle Monument*. In 1907 the decision was made to give the commission to Frederick MacMonnies (1863-1937), an American sculptor living in Paris. After some delays owing to World War I, the monument was set up at the juncture of Stockton Street and Bayard Lane, and dedicated in 1922 by President Warren G. Harding. See A. Marquand, C. Gauss, and H. van Dyke, *The Princeton Battle Monument: the history of the monument, a record of the ceremonies attending its unveiling, and an account of the battle of Princeton*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1922 On Line: <https://archive.org/stream/princetonbattlem00prin#page/122/mode/2up>
As the monument’s “in-town” location had been chosen for the “people of Princeton,” interest in 1945-46 centered on a memorial at the site of the battle itself. Mr. Aydelotte, in A Memorandum for Mr. Maass, Sept. 7, 1945, [marked as “not

sent”: SWLLAC/Maxwell] refers to a conversation with the Vice President of Princeton University, Mr. George A. Brakeley, about a Princeton Battlefield Park, in which the then Governor Walter E. Edge (1944-47) was very much interested. Aydelotte was emphasizing to Maass the benefits this new development would augment the educational value of the property the Institute was acquiring.

59 During the discussions of the possible locations for the MacMonnies monument, one place was the so-called ridge at the northwest corner of what was then Harry B. Owsley’s property and remained so when ownership went to Maxwell. The offer of a 100’ or 150’ square plot in 1907, included permission from the former Clarke/now Hale property owner of universal access for the public (indicating the ridge was set back from Mercer Road). With due politeness, the committee turned the offer down; information from the Marquand et al. book referred to in the previous note.

60 The Institute was asked also to contribute about 30 acres of the prime land it had just purchased (from Mr. Maxwell), apparently under an expected *quid pro quo* for the State having declared the IAS, along with both Princeton and Rutgers Universities, exempt from New Jersey inheritance taxes. The Institute Board of Trustees forcefully dissented to this request, stating that “it had no authority to alienate any of the Institute’s property for a purpose so foreign to the Founders’ purposes.” When the Governor (now Alfred Driscoll) threatened to review the whole tax issue, first Director Oppenheimer and then Mr. Maass followed up with several personal meetings with the governor in Trenton. The result was that the IAS leased a “few low-lying acres” to the State for 99 years with the reservation that the land would revert to the IAS if the primary purpose of the Park were to change. The papers were thus drawn up in the spring of 1952. See Stern, *The History*, pp. 695-698. The site became a National Historical Monument in 1962.

61 DURL: Newspaper clippings.

62 Wednesday, August 20, vol. 22, no. 8, 1952, pp. 1-2, illustrated. According to David Maxwell (*ad vocem*) stories of student “ghosts” in sheets playing pranks in the house were untrue.

63 The year his father died (1955) David was 16, attending Malvern Prep outside Philadelphia. Later in life, he became the main-stay of the family as the president of the Maxwell Company. Between 1996 and 2005 he gifted the huge Maxwell archival collection to the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Duke University. In 1999-2000 he sold the R. C. Maxwell Outdoor Advertising Company to the Interstate Outdoor Advertising Co., which now has several branches throughout the country, with headquarters in Cherry Hill, N.J. I thank Kathy Bell, Esq., Legal Assistant, Interstate Outdoor Advertising, for her good offices in putting me in touch with the Maxwell family. On August 3, 2016, I met and interviewed David Maxwell in his home in Holland, PA. His recollections of living in Mercer Manor were very clear and helpful, and he was enthusiastic about my project. David Maxwell died on September 12, 2016..

64 SWLLAC/ Maxwell: Sept. 27, 1955.

65 This information was conveyed to Minot C. Morgan, General Manager, IAS, by Cornelia Weller, real estate agent. SWLLAC/Maxwell: Oct. 17, 1955.

66 SWLLAC/Maxwell: July 31, 1958, letter to Mr. Leidesdorf from Minot C. Morgan.

67 The demolition and transportation price was ca. \$9,000 (*ibid.*). Unhappily, in this operation the marble cladding of the façade and the elaborate inlaid doorway were lost. Only the forward part of the portico proper now stands. See Figs. 28-30.

68 SWLLAC/Maxwell: There were three points of view expressed. 1) Members of the local Historical Society found it anachronistic to use a nineteenth-century piece of architecture as a memorial to an eighteenth-century battle. 2) Jean Labatut, the then Dean of the School of Architecture, Princeton University, felt the portico should, by rights, remain where it had been a functional architectural member, on the south side of Mercer Road. 3) The members of “The Princeton Portico Fund, Inc.,” led by Sherley W. Morgan, F.A.I.A., President, and Martin L. Beck A.I.A, Secretary-Treasurer, with three other architects and two donors, who succeeded in raising the funds necessary for rebuilding the portico, pronounced it “the visual expression of the Princeton Battlefield Park, and of the sacrifices of the ‘Unknown Soldiers of the Revolution,’ who are buried in the circle of lofty pines to which it forms the entrance.”

I cannot omit the fact that, in recent years, the portico has suffered the erosions of pollution, climate change and neglect, and is in need of a careful, professional restoration and cleaning.

69 The departed faculty member who had found it “too modern” had hidden the factory-blue steel H-beams that support the entire length of the structure, in heavy wooden “boxes,” in effect lowering the ceiling in the living room. We also removed from the wall of one room the large slate blackboard, a major piece of equipment for mathematicians, and used it as our dining table.