THE COLONIAL ORIGIN OF NEWARK ACADEMY
AND OF OTHER CLASSICAL SCHOOLS FROM WHICH
AROSE MANY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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THIS of necessity becomes a tale of many men and many matters. In getting at the colonial tap-root of Newark Academy, we go to a definite date, 1741*—one hundred and ninety-three years ago; but if we be wise we shall dig deeper, to the beginning of the inrush in 1720, of persecuted Scotch-Irish immigrants, to the coming of the five Tennents in 1716, and even deeper still to the era of Francis Makemie.

Starting with Makemie, of Accomac and Somerset, we find ourselves happily at home in our own Delmarva. It is doubtful if a manlier man than Makemie, a native of Ramelton, Donegal, ever lived between the Delaware and Chesapeake bays. Summoned by the arrogant Lord Cornbury to New York, Makemie drove up the old Delaware road, in his coach-and-four, and preached dissent defiantly under his lordship's very nose. Then something quite dramatic happened in Cornbury's Council Chamber.

Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury, grandson of the first Earl of Clarendon, minister under Charles II, was a good-for-nothing sycophant of his cousin Queen Anne. Macaulay speaks of him as a young man "of abilities so slender as to verge on intellectual imbecility." He betrayed his uncle, James II, by leading over three regiments of cavalry to William of Orange, who appointed him Governor of New York in 1701. Queen Anne confirmed

* Alison opened his private academy in 1741; it was accepted as a Synod school in 1744. Projected in 1738, the school was an actuality in 1741.
his commission in 1702.* Intolerant to the last degree, and posing as a sort of viceroy, Cornbury mistook the meaning of America, to which people were flocking in order to be free.

In the Council Chamber of this bigoted lord were Makemie and the Rev. John Hamilton of Maryland, who had been arrested together. Cornbury called Makemie a strolling preacher—"he is a Jack of All Trades; he is a Preacher, a Doctor of Physick, a Merchant, an attorney or Counselor at law, and, which is worst of all, a Disturber of Governments." "How dare you," said he, "to take it upon you to preach to my government without my license? None shall preach in my government without it. The Act of Toleration does not extend to the American Plantations, but only to England."

One's imagination is tickled with this scene—a hoity-toity cousin of the Queen; and the stubborn Makemie, freeman from our Eastern Shore, founder of Presbyterianism in America, who downed his lordship dramatically on every legal point, though thrust into jail for his pains. Out of jail, he drove back home, in his coach-and-four; and did as his conscience dictated, if not as he pleased. Cornbury was not unlike Queen Anne's husband, Prince George of Denmark, "a muddle headed man." Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, said that usually grief takes away the appetite but (on the day of the Prince's death) her majesty Queen Anne's appetite took away her grief.

We shall not deal further with Makemie and his contemporaries—Samuel Davis, a friend of George Keith,

* A queer story is told of Cornbury. In Vol. II of the Memorial History of the City of New York, we find two portraits of him. In one he is attired as a fine lady, with a fan. He got it into his silly head that he should sometimes be dressed as a woman in order to represent Queen Anne. Lord Stanhope, in his History of England, Vol. 1, page 79, mentions this strange matter. The New York Assembly choked Cornbury off by refusing to vote his salary. His creditors put him in jail; and there he remained until the death of his father, the second Earl of Clarendon, when he became a peer. Queen Anne had deposed him. See William L. Stone's Lord Cornbury. See Albany Documents.
who split the early Quakers; John Wilson, who preached on alternate Sundays at New Castle and White Clay as far back as 1708; George McNish, a notability; James Anderson, and George Gillespie, Newark's pioneer preacher, who was at White Clay in 1713 and is said to have originated Head of Christiana Church, where he died January 2, 1760. There were a score of others, some of them preacher-teachers, after the custom of the time—better preachers than teachers.

Three ministers identified with Newark wrote historical papers,* in 1876, telling of this period and later ones—Mackey, Vallandigham and Porter. Professor Mackey tells us of the inpouring of Scotch-Irish immigrants. There were several distinct waves of immigration, all having their origin in the religious persecutions which occurred in Scotland and Ireland. These waves were rolling in as early as 1720. He does not mention New Castle as the place where thousands of these immigrants landed; but it is a fact that shiploads of them—linen weavers and small farmers—first set foot in America at that port, swarming into the hills above Newark.

Thus originated a number of the communities that come into our story—New London, Fagg's Manor, West Nottingham.

We are to remember that Newark is in the very heart of Penn's old wilderness tracts—just at the northern edge of Welsh tract; and only a little ways to the south of London tract, which lay next to Fagg's Manor, named in honor of Sir John Fagg and subsequently divided between Penn's daughter Letitia and her brother William. Some miles to the west of Newark were the "Nottingham Lotts," of widespread acreage, assigned

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*White Clay Creek Church, by Rev. William D. Mackey, of Delaware College.  
*Historical Discourse, Head of Christiana Church, by the Rev. Dr. James Laird Vallandigham.  
*Historical Discourse, delivered at First Presbyterian Church, Newark, July 22, 1826, by Rev. George J. Porter.
by Penn to selected Quaker adherents, as a strategic buffer against the encroachments of the Marylanders. Penn had a political purpose in creating these border tracts, just as he had in inviting such wealthy Maryland Quakers as the Chews and Dickinsons to come into Delaware and settle around Dover. Our founder, Francis Alison, is to reach us by way of the Dickinsons; but just now we wish to stress the inrush of the North of Ireland immigrants who passed up into the hills above Newark—hills like Tokenamon, Toughkenamon, or "Fire-brand hill," as the Indians called it. These newcomers were hungry for three things besides food—land, liberty and education.

We now go to the Tennents—William, the father, and his four sons, Gilbert, William, Jr., John and Charles, all born in Ireland and all ministers. Mark well the Tennents, the elder William particularly. He spoke in Latin as readily as in English. Tennent, on his mother's side, was Secretary James Logan's cousin; so Logan gave him or helped him to acquire a tract of land on Neshaminy Creek, nineteen miles north of Philadelphia. Near the Forks of the Neshaminy, William in 1726, started his Log College. Whitefield said of it: "The place is in contempt called a college. It is a log house about twenty feet long and as many broad, and to me it seemed to resemble the schools of the old prophets, for their habitations were mean." A bronze tablet on Nassau Hall, at Princeton shows three dates—1726, that of the founding of the Log College, discontinued twenty years later; 1747, when its supporters united with others in founding the College of New Jersey at Elizabeth Town; and 1896, when the name of the College of New Jersey was changed to Princeton University.

Old William Tennent, a great power, lived and died poor—May 6, 1745. Just a bit now about his sons:

Gilbert, the eldest of the four, born February 5, 1703, was a Log College student; and preached for forty years.
William, Jr., was a pastor at Freehold, N. J., for forty-two years. He had the distinction of going to heaven before he died—which was on March 8, 1777—and, let us hope, after. This spare, erect six footer, with piercing eyes,—a powerful orator—went into a trance and lay as one dead. All thought him dead; and he was about to be buried when some one placed a hand on his shoulder. He came to life and told what he had seen when in heaven. But for the mortal touch, he said he would have remained there through eternity. He himself repeatedly told this story which thousands believed.

Charles Tennent, the youngest of the brothers, became pastor of White Clay Church in 1738; and remained such for two years.

We have now come to what amounts to a great and striking romance of education, affecting the whole country. School grew out of school. Some of these schools, especially in the back country were of logs. The hardy dominies lived in log dwellings, worshipped in log churches and taught in log colleges. Read Old Redstone, and other pioneering books. Dr. Matthew Brown said to Dr. Archibald Alexander: "The Log College at Neshaminy was the germ of Princeton, Jefferson, Hampden-Sidney and Washington College, now Washington and Lee;" "and," adds Alexander, "we need not stop here." (The Log College, by Archibald Alexander.)

Let us get track of some of the worthies who were trained at Tennent's Log College, and follow them—Samuel Blair; John Blair, his younger brother; Samuel Finley, and our curious William Robinson of Delaware. There were other notable Log College graduates, such as William Maclay, first United States Senator from Pennsylvania, author of an illuminating book—The Journal of William Maclay,—on the early politics of the nation; but we shall confine ourselves here to those who had to do with the founding of schools.

First of these was Samuel Blair, born in Ireland, January 14, 1712, whom Samuel Davies, a still greater
man, called "the incomparable Blair." He was well set and comely; and his motto was "speak slow, speak low, be short." He first settled at Shrewsbury, N. J., but removed, in November, 1739, to New Londonderry, in Fagg's Manor, where he founded an academy, conducted after his death by his brother John, the Princeton celebrity. Fagg's Manor trained Samuel Davies, prince of preachers, Alexander Cumming, James Finley, Hugh Henry, John Ross, of Dickinson, and John Caldwell, of Mecklenburg Declaration fame. There was another—Robert Smith, who married Samuel Blair's daughter. This Robert Smith founded Pequea Academy, a stone building, in Lancaster County. His sons, Samuel Stanhope Smith and John Blair Smith, were celebrated educators. Samuel Stanhope became a Princeton president, and John Blair president of Hampden-Sidney and Union College at Schenectady, N. Y.

Be pleased, as we go forward, to note the curious concatenations and equally curious college cousinships. There was first, old William Tennent; born in Ireland in 1678; graduated from the University of Edinburgh, July 11, 1695; admitted to deacons' orders by the Bishop of Down in 1704; ordained priest in 1706; married the daughter of Gilbert Kennedy, a Dundwald parson; turned dissenter; came to America. Samuel Blair learned what he knew of books from this ex-Episcopalian Tennent; the brilliant Smiths carried along the torch of the Blairs; and the same Smiths of Princeton and Schenectady had to do with the genesis of famous Liberty Hall, subsequently Washington and Lee*, as well as old Transylvania and its kindred schools in Tennessee. That in itself is quite a chapter.

But there is linked with it another chapter just as

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* Old Providence grammar school, in Virginia, was moved to Mount Pleasant; then, in 1776, to Timber Ridge Meeting House; then to a place near the present site. In 1782, the school was chartered as Liberty Hall. Then it was endowed by Washington and named Washington College. Later it became Washington and Lee.
interesting. One of Robert Smith's pupils at Pequea was Dr. John McMillen, born at Fagg's Manor, November 11, 1752, who became the good genius of Jefferson College, now Washington and Jefferson. Redstone Academy (see Old Redstone by Joseph Smith, 1854,) moved to Canonsburg, Pa., and in 1791-2 was merged with the existing academy there. This "Log Cabin College" turned out many men who figured prominently in the affairs of the nation. In 1802 the Academy was chartered as Jefferson College.

On the way back to the Newark neighborhood, if we were in an automobile touring among these colonial schools, we should stop, when nearly home, at West Nottingham, just over in Cecil County, where the learned Samuel Finley*, of a Scotch-Irish family of seven sons, instituted an academy that won wide celebrity. Finley, small, round-faced, ruddy, was seventeen years at West Nottingham. His work was an incentive to the busy hive of Quakers at the adjoining East Nottingham, which sent hundreds of substantial settlers into Western Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina. The Churchmans, of East Nottingham, had furthered education since the arrival of John, their founder, in 1682. George Churchman started an East Nottingham school of his own, and outlined, for public spirited Quakers in Philadelphia, the scheme of Westtown School, long famous.

In 1761, Dr. Finley was chosen President of the College of New Jersey (Princeton) and his academy was closed; but its successor, at Colora, was instituted by the Rev. Dr. James Magraw, in 1812, and continues today.

At Nottingham Finley turned out many men who became celebrated in widely different spheres of life: Dr. Benjamin Rush, the Signer, and his brother, Judge Jacob Rush; two Governors, Martin, of North Carolina, and Henry, of Maryland; Colonel John Bayard, Speaker of the House of Representatives; the Rev. William M.

*History of Education in Maryland, by Bernard C. Steiner. See, also, History of Education in New Jersey, by David Murray.
Tennent, of Abington, Pa.; Alexander MacWhorter, the patriot clergyman, who served under General Washington, and that extraordinary character, James Waddell.

A word or two as to Waddell: When a boy, James, with his little brothers, was in the woods, hunting rabbits. A rabbit ran into a hollow log. One of the boys seized an axe to cut it out, and, just as he struck, James thrust in his hand to grasp the rabbit. The hand was almost cut in two. His parents bound on the severed part and the wound healed; but, as James was left with a stiff hand, they decided that he could never make his living except as a teacher or preacher. So he went to Nottingham Academy and became the celebrated “Blind Preacher” of William Wirt’s book. He too, made for liberty and progress in our pioneering days.

Equally romantic is another little tale we must hint at, though not tell, in extenso, since it has been given in so many books. We mean the story of William Robinson and Samuel Davies, both of whom came from the vicinity of Newark, and both of whom had to do with the disestablishment of the tithe-exacting Anglican church in Virginia. They were the men, who, in the preliminaries, inspired Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson in the cause of religious liberty.*

Robinson, son of a Quaker doctor, wild in his youth, came to these parts from Carlisle, England; went to Log College; developed zeal for the “New Light” and journeyed southward on horseback, preaching it. He had lost an eye, was as ugly as sin, and only when in the pulpit put forth the fascinations of his honeyed tongue. In Hanover and Louisa Counties, he so carried away his hearers that when he was about to return to New Castle County they offered to pay him a large sum. But he refused it. Then, unknown to him, they stuffed his saddlebags with gold. Till well on his way, he thought the bags held feed for his horse. On his death-bed, he gave this gold to Samuel Davies, with the injunction to train

* See The True Patrick Henry, by George Morgan.
himself and take up the work in Hanover. Davies, a student at Fagg's Manor, did this very thing; and it was upon his surpassing eloquence that Patrick Henry modeled his oratory. Davies it was who, in French and Indian times, spoke of young George Washington as "that heroic youth."

Davies was born one mile northeast of Summit Bridge.* He was probably of the same Welsh stock as Judge David Davis, of the United States Supreme Court—Lincoln's friend--; and as Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy. The forbears of these three famous Davies lived, in Makemie's time, in the vicinity of Iron Hill.

We come now to the New London and Newark group: "Crosia-Dore," in Talbot County, Md., was the home of the Dickson who lived on Chesapeake-side. Walter Dickinson settled there in 1659; his grandson, Samuel, made it his early home; and the celebrated John, Samuel's second son, was born there, November 8, 1732. John's mother was Mary Cadwalader, sister of Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, of Philadelphia. Samuel, in 1715, had bought 1300 acres of land near Dover, later augmented by the Dickson to 3000; and moved there in 1740. Samuel, who was judge of the Kent Court, lost two of his children by smallpox, which caused him to reconsider his project of educating all his sons in England. He thought of Harvard, Yale and William and Mary; but Harvard and Yale were then regarded as training places for New England Congregational clergymen. He kept his sons at home, obtaining tutors for them. He employed William Killen, a youth from Ireland, afterwards Chief Justice of Delaware, who, as private tutor, trained John. Benjamin Franklin suggested another, Francis Alison, who went to Dover and figured notably as a Dickinson tutor; but Dr. Charles J. Stillé, in

* He was born November 3, 1723. He was licensed by the New Castle Presbytery, July 30, 1746; married Sarah Kirkpatrick, October 23, 1746; and ordained evangelist February 19, 1747.
his life of the great John, *Penman of the Revolution*, does not say, specifically, that Alison helped to train him. John, it will be recalled, was for three years in the Temple, London; married Mary Norris, daughter of Speaker Norris; played a prime part in the Revolution, balking only at lending his signature to the Declaration of Independence; and became a Jeffersonian Democrat in the period prior to his death at Wilmington, February 14, 1808, where he rests in a Quaker grave at Fourth and West. His life was attuned to "the deep chord which Hampden smote."

Alison (1705-1779) was born in the parish of Lac, County Donegal; educated at the University of Glasgow; and came to America as a probationer about 1735. Joshua Edwards is authority for the statement that Franklin recommended him as a tutor for Samuel Dickinson's sons. It is in Watson's *Annals of Philadelphia* that we read of his Academy at Thunder Hill. It is from a drawing among the papers of the late Dr. Edgar Fahs Smith that we gain a good idea of his looks.

He had a large oval head, with broad high forehead—everything indicating intellect, from the eyebrows up. From the eyebrows down, we note searching eyes, a straight nose, small mouth, and chin to match—with just a suggestion of a double chin. The whole lower half of his face was that of a man of delicacy of feeling and refinement. His expression was that of a serious minded dominie who questions life as it displays itself in a world needing guidance and betterment. Looking upon his portrait, we can understand why he was not carried away in the controversies of "The Great Awakening," which now arose; and why he clung to the Old Side of orthodoxy and genuine learning, rather than to the New Side of the persuasive revivalist Whitefield and the zealous Tennents. We can understand why Robert Cross of the New Side worried him, and why the aggressive Alexander Creaghhead irritated him. He was not a controversialist, he was too quick tempered; but a great educator. President
Ezra Stiles, of Yale, said of him: "He is the greatest classical scholar in America, especially in Greek—not great in Mathematics, Philosophy or Astronomy; but in Ethics, History and general reading is a great literary character." He was called "the Busby of America," the allusion being to the English Richard Busby, who developed the poet Dryden and the great John Locke. Edward D. Neill said of Alison: "He was inbued with the idea that the school was as necessary to the church as the anvil to the blacksmith."

Such was the man who wanted to found a college in America, who corresponded with numerous educators here and in England and Scotland on the subject and who established the New London (Newark) Academy, long regarded as the best of our colonial classical schools. Why New London? In 1737, the New Castle Presbytery sent Alison thither as the pastor of a congregation which in 1744, erected the largest church in this region—a brick building, with arched doors and windows and an antique, Swedish or hipped roof.\(^*\)

The origin of Alison's academy there may be traced to 1738, when the Presbytery of Lewes, Del., sent a memorial to the Synod of Philadelphia, urging the necessity of committees "to examine students with the view to allowing them a public testimony from the Synod if they prove themselves worthy of such recognition." "As early as 1738," concludes Stephen B. Weeks (in his *History of Public School Education in Delaware, 1917*) "the Presbytery of Lewes laid the foundation for Delaware College."

Since we are dealing with early dates, just a paragraph here in regard to Thunder Hill school, said by Watson to have been kept by Alison "across the Maryland line." One inference has been that this school was somewhere west of Dover. According to Lewis R. Harley,

\(^*\) The Rev. R. P. Dubois's *Historical Discourse at New London, 1845*. For Alison see Webster's and Brigg's Presbyterian histories. See Nevin's *Presbyterian Encyclopedia*. Consult also E. H. Gillett's *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 2 vols., 1864.
in his *Life of Charles Thomson,*" p. 28, that is all wrong. Alison's original school is said to have been opened "in the loft of a spring house which stood on the farm of the late John Whitcraft," at Thunder Hill, two miles southwest of New London. It has been asserted that John Dickinson was for awhile a pupil at Thunder Hill. This would have it that the very first germ of the wonderfully expanded University of Delaware, with its many beautiful buildings, was in Thunder Hill spring house—a picturesque idea, involving pure water, pure butter and pure learning from that Pierian spring of which the great Francis Alison had sipped along with the Muses themselves. A little later, Alison moved his school into the Academy at New London. There they speak of the "old stone building where Alison started," and old residents say that he at first used his own parlor as a school room.

Two standing committees were appointed—one to the northward and one to the southward of Philadelphia; Francis Alison was on the latter.* On November 5, 1738, the Synod approved the committee's recommendation for the erection of a school.

The idea was this: Old William Tennent and hundreds of his followers had fallen in behind George Whitefield, endorsing revivalism. When Franklin, in Philadelphia, went to hear Whitefield, the great Benjamin had in his pockets some copper, silver and gold coins. He said to himself, before the preaching began, that he would drop copper into the collection box. As Whitefield proceeded, Benjamin changed his mind to silver; when he had finished, Benjamin jingled down his gold. Whitefield bewitched a great number of parsons, as well; so that the Old Side-New Side, non-doctrinal split, which lasted seventeen years, came about. The New Side stressed vital piety, rather than intellectual attainment; the Old Side insisted upon having learned men in the

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*Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. VIII, page 45, et. seq.; article on Matthew Wilson, who also figures in Richard Webster's *History of the Presbyterian Church in America*, 1857.
pulpit. The Synod of Philadelphia was Old Side. Alison wanted the parsons to have college degrees, and hoped to develop his school into a high class, degree-granting institution—a university, which was to be in these very parts.

And now a most curious matter: About this time the "War of Jenkins's Ear" broke out.* It set the world agog. We cannot go into it here, save to say that Admiral Edward Vernon and Lawrence Washington were in it at Cartagena, and that it affected the fortunes of Lawrence’s nephew, George. In brief, Captain Fandino of a Spanish guarda-costa, boarded the British brig Rebecca, Jamaica to London, and incidentally cut off one of the ears of the Rebecca’s commander, Captain Robert Jenkins. The outraged Jenkins showed the severed ear to King George II; held it aloft for Parliament to see; and, in the end, brought on war between England and Spain.

Our commissioners who were to go to Great Britain, after funds for the development of Alison’s school, postponed their voyage for safety’s sake; the northern commissioners risked the dangers of a pirate-infested ocean, and got the gold that gave Nassau Hall its start. One of these successful commissioners was our Samuel Davies, of Pencader, afterwards President of Nassau Hall. In London, Davies’ fame as an orator caused King George to go hear him. In the course of the sermon, His Majesty cried out: “That’s good!” Whereupon our Delaware boy said: “When the King of Heaven is present, let the kings of earth be silent!” King George not only took his medicine, but subscribed a big round sum.

Alison’s school “was intended to be simply the fore-runner of a college.” The trustees asked Yale to admit the students, after one year’s residence, to a degree. This

* For the “War of Jenkins’s Ear,” 1739-1742, see chapter VI, Arredondo’s *Historical Proof of Spain’s Title to Georgia*, edited by Prof. Herbert E. Bolton, University of California, 1925.
“set in motion an educational current that gave Delaware a college.”

The Presbyteries of New Castle, Philadelphia, and Donegal met at Great Valley, November 16, 1743, and agreed “to open a school to give free instruction to all in languages, philosophy and divinity . . . the school was to be supported for a time by yearly congregational collections.” Alison, as master, received £20 a year; and selected his usher, who was paid £15. Eleven ministers were trustees. Later, Alison was paid £40; his usher £20. In 1744, “the Philadelphia Synod accepted Mr. Alison’s school as its own, and appointed him rector.”

Alison’s backers, less energetic than those who promoted the interests of the New Side, seem to have been to blame for his failure to reach his great goal. But he himself, a scholastic genius, was lacking in the peculiar push of what we now call a “promoter”; otherwise, the New London (Newark) school would have become a college about ninety years before it did. As Briggs says, in his American Presbyterianism (pp. 305-6): “The Old Side was left in the position of having a synodical academy; which was in all respects inferior to the Log

* Records of the Presbyterian Church, 147, 169, 174, 185, 192, 227. Also Webster’s History, p. 256.

† In 1752 Alison went to Philadelphia as Master of the Grammar School, which in 1755 was made a College—later the University of Pennsylvania. Alison was professor of moral philosophy and vice provost. Nassau Hall made him an M. A. in 1756, and in 1758 the University of Glasgow gave him the D. D. degree. His wife was an Armitage. He freed his slaves. Richard Penn deeded him 1000 acres at the confluence of the Bald Eagle with the West Branch of the Susquehanna. He died November 28, 1779, aged 74. He “left his widow to Providence.”

‡ The principles on which the Synod was to administer academies are laid down in eight rules, p. 420, in the Records of the Presbyterian Church. The rules were approved by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May 15, 1771. We note this entry: “An application from the Trustees of Newark Academy to obtain the countenance and approbation of the Synod for a general collection through their bounds, in behalf of said Academy, were overture and read. The Synod considered the prayer of said petition and cheerfully agree to countenance it; and do recommend it to the charity of the various congregations within their bounds.”
College . . . Alison did not long remain with the synodical academy . . . Soon afterwards the school was removed to Newark, Del., and continued to improve under the instruction of Alexander McDowell and Matthew Wilson."

Let us stick a pin at this turning point in our tale: When Old Side and New Side got together, when the Synods of New York and Philadelphia reunited in 1757, the immediate necessity for the development of New London Academy into a college passed.

We should like it better if Alexander McDowell were warmer under our touch—more palpitating. But he worked hard, lived usefully and got into no scrapes. In Virginia he was an evangelist; in our tri-State region he was a very active preacher-teacher. Alison took to him for the solidity of his character and because he was well schooled in the classics. He preached at White Clay, Rock (or Elk) and Nottingham. He succeeded Alison in the headship at New London; but in 1754 "declined to have the whole burden of the school." Matthew Wilson became his usher at £20 a year, teaching the languages. McDowell, "from a sense of the public good," continued to teach the other branches.* He moved the academy across the Maryland line to Elk—not Elkton—because he lived there, and because that picturesque spot seemed as con-

* According to William Henry Egle's Notes and Queries, Vol. for 1899, pp. 107-8, Captain John McDowell, from Ulster, was one of Benjamin Borden's surveyors in laying out the "Borden tract" in Berkeley County, Virginia. He lived in Rockbridge County. Captain John was killed by the Indians, and Borden married his widow. At Lexington, there is a monument to the McDowells. Captain John left three sons—Samuel, grandfather of Gen. Irvin McDowell, of Bull Run fame; our Alexander of Academy fame; and John, a doctor, friend of Gen. Washington, and with him in many Revolutionary battles. John married Martha Johnston, of New London X-roads, leaving descendants in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and the West. Alexander was schooled at Glasgow, Scotland, and prepared for the ministry at the University of Edinburgh. Egle says: "He was principal of the classical Academy, afterwards Delaware College at Newark, Del." He married Alice Craighead and had one son, Thomas, who died an infant. Alexander died January 13, 1782. Alice and their son were buried in Stone graveyard near Lewisville.
venient a place for a school as New London. George Johnston, in his *History of Cecil County*, pp. 283-5, telling of "New Munster tract," in the extreme northeast corner of Cecil, reminds us that Rock Church, near Lewisville, Pa., was built in 1720 by the same Alexander and others who had built Head of Christiana Church in 1708. He adds: "McDowell had charge of the Old Side branch which continued to worship in the old church at the Stone graveyard near Lewisville. During his pastorate he taught the classical school which had been founded at New London some years before, but which was removed to his residence, about a mile southwest of Lewisville in 1752. This school was removed to Newark, Del., in 1767, and was chartered by the Penns two years afterward.* It was the germ from which Delaware College sprang." Porter, in his pamphlet, says that McDowell removed Alison's New London Academy "first to Elk River, now the Rock Church, for a period of fifteen years, and, then, in 1767, to Newark, Del." Briggs, Webster, Wickesham, Powell, Nevin and other authoritative writers tell the same tale. J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, in their *History of Chester County*, say that Alison's academy was removed by McDowell "to Newark, Del., on which was founded Delaware College." In *Sketches of Virginia*, William Henry Foote makes a similar statement; so does Nevin, adding: "This school became justly celebrated." In telling of New London Academy,† Wickersham writes: "It was eventually moved to Newark, Del., and became the foundation of Delaware College." In fine, that is the consensus and conclusion of all writers on the subject of the origin of Delaware College.

* Newark Academy was chartered, in 1769, by Thomas and Richard Penn, Proprietors of Pennsylvania and the Three Lower Counties. Newark was chartered by George II in 1758.

† The present academy at New London was organized in 1823. One of its principals was Professor Edward D. Porter, later of Delaware College.
That excellent historian Edward D. Neill unfortunately confused "Elk" and "Elk River" with Elkton—an error that has been repeated in our day. Neill's article appeared in the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (Vol. VIII, p. 47). In it, Neill quotes from a newspaper of 1770 which describes Newark as "a suitable and healthy village, not too rich or luxurious where real learning might be obtained." Lyman T. Powell, in his scholarly paper on Newark Academy, thus quotes from a Newark boy's composition:

"Newark has for the last fifty years been increasing at both ends, and, should this increase continue, owing to the rotundity of the earth, the two ends will, in the course of a few thousand years, meet. Thus it will form a belt around the world—a town 25,000 miles in length, which like a woman's tongue, will have no end."

Some of Alison's New London pupils taught under McDowell at Newark. Matthew Wilson, born in East Nottingham, Chester County, January 15, 1731, was one of McDowell's ablest aids. Like McDowell, Wilson was preacher, teacher and doctor. He taught languages. So great a patriot was he that he had the word "Liberty" inscribed on his cocked hat. His son, born during the Stamp Act discussion, was given "Patriot" as his middle name. This son, James Patriot Wilson, became Chancellor of Delaware; and his grandson, James P. Wilson, President of Delaware College. Those three Wilsons, father, son and grandson, played a most useful and honorable part in our history. Matthew was long a minister at Lewes, Del. He died March 31, 1790.

No less active in behalf of Newark Academy was the Rev. Dr. John Ewing, afterwards Provost of the University of Pennsylvania. In 1773 Dr. Ewing and Dr. Hugh Williamson, another of our celebrities, were sent to England and Scotland in search of funds. Ewing had quite a bout with Dr. Samuel Johnson, that grand old hero of letters and likewise crusty old Tory, who was down on us over here because we seemed to him to be not
merely "rebels" but "scoundrels." The wonderful old worthy, who thought us so unworthy, tried to browbeat Ewing.

"What do you know in America?" he grumbled—"you never read; you have no books there."

"Pardon me," spoke up Ewing, "we have read The Rambler"—which took the wind out of Dr. Johnson's sails.

The money-seekers were successful, collecting some six or seven thousand dollars. Dr. Williamson* also went to the West Indies and raised additional funds. When they returned in 1775, a suitable building was erected; but next year the school was broken in upon by the Revolutionary War. That same year, 1776, Morgan Edwards gave the Academy a lot of land on Main street—7 acres and 50 perches; sold in 1777 for £250, 10 sh. to Alexander McBeath, who built the Elliott, or Caulk house, next to Purnell Hall.

Early in September, 1777, the American General John Sullivan was in Newark with a thousand of his men. When the British Army under General Sir William Howe, just prior to the Battle of Brandywine, September 11, passed up from the Elk River on its way to Philadelphia, it marched through the town.† Tradition has it that the redcoats were shot at from the Academy, which in turn was made a target for the King's cannon balls. The Platt house nearby long carried bullet marks.

* Hugh Williamson was born December 5, 1735, in West Nottingham, Chester County. He was professor of mathematics in Philadelphia College in 1760. He was in the Continental Congress from North Carolina, and a member of the Constitutional Convention from that State. He advocated the adoption of the Constitutional Convention in North Carolina. He served in the First and Second United States Congresses. He died May 22, 1819.

† Here is a passage from the Diary of Captain John Montressor: "Sept. 8, 1777, Moved before daylight. Remarkable borealis. At a quarter past 7 this A. M. marching through Newark; weather very cold. Encamped this day at Nibla's house, which is from Aiken's tavern to Couch's Mill round Iron Hill by way of Newark, and so into the road from Newport to Lancaster in the way of New Garden." See Newark Past and Present, Records of Newark Academy.
Governor Thomas McKean, in a letter to General Washington, dated Newark, Del., October 8, 1777, announced that the fund belonging to the Trustees of Newark Academy had been captured at Wilmington. The Academy minutes prior to the Revolution were lost; the new minute book dates from January 5, 1783. The story goes that the Academy was closed during the Revolution, but Powell found reason for believing that it was open, except for the period when the building was used as a factory in which shoes were made for American soldiers. (See Scharf’s *History of Delaware*, Vol. II, 944-5.)

According to the Academy minutes, 1783-1789, the school was reopened in 1783 with William Thompson as principal. He was rector from that year until August 29, 1794; and Mr. Johnston until October, 1796, after which the Academy was closed for two years. The Rev. John Waugh was principal in 1799; and the Rev. Francis Hindman from May 18, 1807 until September 19, 1811. On October 19 of that year, the well-remembered Rev. Dr. Andrew Kerr Russell* took charge and served twenty-two years, until the spring of 1834. *Powell*, p. 81, gives a list of the principals of the Academy.

During Dr. Russell’s administration, numerous appeals were made to the General Assembly of Delaware to convert Newark Academy into Newark College. “Nothing important was done until January 15, 1818, when an act was passed to enable the Trustees of Newark Academy to raise $50,000 by lottery for the purpose of erecting and establishing a College in Newark” (*Laws of Delaware*, V. 278). “In 1821, the college was granted the proceeds of taxes on certain stage lines and steam-boats plying between Philadelphia and points in Delaware” (*Laws of Delaware*, VI. 61, 265). February 11,

*Andrew K. Russell was born at Warrior Run, Northumberland County, Penna., and was valedictorian at Dickinson College in 1806, and later Professor of Languages in Washington College, Penna. He became pastor at Head of Christiana, April 8, 1812. Under him Newark Academy was in a flourishing condition. He died February 6, 1839.
1835, an act was passed allowing $100,000 to be raised—$50,000 to the college (Laws, VIII, 392). In 1821 an act was passed “to establish a college at the village of Newark.” Charter granted to Newark College, February 5, 1833; trustees named; building erected (Laws, VIII, 283-286).

“In 1834,” says Powell, (p. 78) “Newark Academy was merged into Newark College (Delaware College after 1843); and, January 15, 1847, the Trustees of this Academy by a deed conveyed the building and grounds to the Trustees of the College.”

On May 4, 1869, the Trustees of Delaware College deeded back to the Trustees of Newark Academy the property conveyed to them in 1847. The old Trustees—Willard Hall and William T. Read—elected as the new Trustees: John W. Evans, Rathmel Wilson, James H. Ray, George G. Kerr, Walter E. Turner, William Reynolds, Edward R. Wilson, David J. Murphy, George G. Evans and Charles W. Blandy. This was done under an act of the General Assembly passed at Dover, January 17, 1835.

Professor Edward D. Porter became principal of the reorganized Academy. In 1873 Miss Hannah Chamberlain was made principal; and girls were admitted. The Rev. J. L. Polk succeeded her in 1877, serving until 1885; and Dr. Albert N. Raub succeeded him, serving until 1890, when L. Irving Handy was chosen.

Naturally we make a great deal of the distinguished graduates of Newark Academy, which trained some 5000 boys—Reads, Rodneys, Claytons, Spruances, Harringtons, Higgenses, Graysons, Purnells, Wootens, Grays and Whiteleys.

During their quarter of a century preceding the Revolution, Alison and his successors taught a notable number of the Founders of the Republic and a considerable number who backed up Washington in the field. We mention especially, under the latter head, Dr. John Cochran, surgeon-general in the Continental Army; and
Major Robert Kirkwood, hero of the Southern campaigns, who perished under Wayne in Ohio. The list is a long one, indeed, including George Duffield, chaplain of Congress; and the distinguished David Ramsey, historian of the Revolution.

There is great appeal in another graduate of the Academy—Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress. He was born at Gortede, County Derry, in the first week in November, 1729—son of Thomas Thomson, who, being a hard-pressed widower, sailed for America, ten years later, with his six children. When near the Capes of Delaware, Thomas died, and his body was cast into the ocean. The orphans were landed at New Castle. Some of them were bound out. Charles, a stripling, heard that he was to be bound to a New Castle blacksmith. So he put his scant belongings in his kerkchief; tied the bundle to a stick; and, with his stick on his shoulder, trudged towards Newark.

Now for the romance of it: A lady in a coach overtook Charles on the road, and was struck with the forlornness of the manly-looking lad. She made him tell her his story. Her heart was touched. She asked him what he most desired to be. He said he wanted an education most of all. So she took him to Alison’s Academy and paid for his schooling.* She did the like by Alexander, brother of Charles. It is a pity her name is lost to us, though no doubt the Recording Angel noted it long ago.

Charles Thomson knew colonial Newark like a book. He lived awhile in the family of John Chambers, up the White Clay, about one hundred yards from the Delaware-Pennsylvania line—a tract occupied by the Chambers for two hundred years. Not to dwell too long upon Charles Thomson, it is enough to add that he went to Philadelphia; taught there; became known to the Indians in the interior of Pennsylvania as “the man who tells the truth,” in contrast with others who tried to get the better of

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them in treaty-making councils; translated the Septuagint from the Greek; married the heiress of Harriton; and was chosen secretary of the Continental Congress, which he served with absolute fidelity and rare sagacity for seven years. Those who are familiar with the inside story of the Continental Congress—the temptations, intrigues and pitfalls of that parlous period—understand what a great patriot and great statesman Charles Thomson was. At the end he burned his private papers, lest they compromise those who had said or done questionable things. He died August 16, 1824, lacking five years of a hundred.

Three of the graduates were Signers of the Declaration of Independence—McKean, Read and Smith. We are justified, surely in making much of them.

Thomas McKean was born in Chester County, March 19, 1739. He was but nine years old when placed in Alison's care. He was in the Delaware Assembly from 1762 for eleven years. He was made Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. He was a Delaware delegate to the Continental Congress, 1774-1776, and from 1778 to 1783. He was a Signer of the Declaration of Independence and of the Articles of Confederation. He was Judge of Common Pleas in Delaware, and a Colonel in the Associaters. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of Delaware, and Governor of Pennsylvania from 1799 to 1808. He was the only man who served through all the sessions of the Continental Congress, and was President of that body. This remarkable man, long-nosed, long-faced, acutely intelligent, Jeffersonian in feeling and in practice, died in Philadelphia, June 24, 1817.

George Read, born in Cecil County in 1733, whence he moved with his father's family to New Castle, was with Alison until seventeen, when he studied law. At 19 he began to practice at New Castle. Though entitled, as the eldest son to two shares of his father's estate, he relinquished his privilege on the ground that his father had favored him educationally. He was made Attorney Gen-
eral of the three Lower Counties in 1763; and held that office till chosen as delegate to the Continental Congress in 1775. He signed the Declaration of Independence. He was President of the Convention which formed the first Constitution of Delaware. He was a member of the Federal Constitutional Convention and signed the Constitution of the United States. He was the first United States Senator from Delaware, 1789-1793. From 1793 till his death in 1798, he was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware.

Colonel James Smith reflected great honor on the Academy. He was born in Ireland in 1713 and came to America when a boy of twelve. After graduating, he studied law at Lancaster; became a successful iron-master; raised Revolutionary troops of which he was Colonel; served in the Continental Congress, 1776-78; signed the Declaration of Independence; was in the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1780; married Eleanor Amor, of New Castle; practiced law for sixty years, living at York and died there July 11, 1806, in his 93rd year.

He was surveyor, as well as lawyer. He was social, jocular, droll—noted for his raciness, a classical humorist. In telling how a cow thrust her head into the doorway of his office and mooed, he swore that she "roared like a Numidian lion." His rich vein of humor and quick Irish wit lasted him throughout his life. We dwell upon this phase of his solid character in order to realize and revitalize him.

Sully painted Rush's portrait; Stuart, McKean's; Pine, Read's; but there is no Longacre engraving of Smith in Sanderson's work on the Signers. There is, however, a line-portrait of Smith in Benson J. Lossing's *Signers.*

There is one more Academy graduate to be dealt with—James McHenry who went to school at Newark;

studied medicine; served as aide-de-camp under Washington and Lafayette; was a Maryland delegate to the Continental Congress, 1783-86; and was a member of the Federal Constitutional Convention and signed that instrument. Washington appointed him Secretary of War in 1796, and he continued in office till 1801. He opposed Adams' policy and, with Timothy Pickering, left the Cabinet. Fort McHenry, so celebrated in song and story, was named in honor of this Newark Academy boy.