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AN HISTORIC MANSION. HEIRLOOMS IN THE LEWIS HOUSE AT PERTH AMBOY.

Commodore Lewis bought it from Commodore Truxton—Aaron Burr found it a Refuge for a Time—Washington and Jerome Bonaparte Guests There.

(Special Correspondence.) PERTH AMBOY, N. J., June 24.—It is often said—and the remark is, of course, a truism—that we, as a people, have no



THE LEWIS MANSION.

antiquities. There are to be found here and there, however, houses and things that are rapidly developing into antiquities, having the start of a century or two.

Among these I have found few that are more interesting than the old family mansion that Commodore Lewis bought from Commodore Truxton at the beginning of the century.

It is a pleasant country house, facing southeasterly on the shore of Raritan bay, in this sleepy old city of Perth Amboy. The older part of the city is all antique, speaking in American fashion.

That is, it abounds in buildings one, one and a half or two centuries old, but none are more interesting than this, for this has a history. In it Aaron Burr found a hospitable haven of temporary refuge when, after the memorable duel in which he killed Alexander Hamilton and in which Commodore Lewis was his second, he sought safety in flight.

The view he enjoyed is a remarkable one. Some idea of its beauty may be found from a single incident which is still told by the Lewis family. The two commodores, who were relatives by marriage, had talked together about the sale mentioned before Lewis saw the house.

They entered the house at the rear of the hall, and as they entered Lewis caught the view through the front door, which stood open. The moon was shining brightly.

"I don't want to see anything but that," he said. "I will buy the house."

It is a very plain, substantially built frame house, painted yellow, and although it is roomy and comfortable, and is fitted up with some degree of elegance inside, it is still far from pretentious, and it is by no means to be considered stately or even handsome.

The grounds in which it stands are not more than a dozen acres in extent, but they are adorned with fine old trees, and a little to the east of the old house is a more modern one, built to accommodate a younger branch when the family grew too numerous to live comfortably in the old homestead.

A small bluff in front is near the water's edge, and the view takes in Raritan bay, with Staten Island on the right, the Highlands on the left and Sandy Hook directly ahead. In this harbor lay the British fleet when the revolutionary war was raging around New York. General Washington was a guest in the house at the time when the British came to take possession of Perth Amboy, and a party was sent from the fleet to capture him. They came close enough to fire on the house as he was driven away from the rear door in a carriage, and the bullet marks in the stout wooden doors have never been removed, but are pointed out with pride today.

The house is, therefore, one of the authentic "Washington's Headquarters."

Washington and Aaron Burr, however, were not the only distinguished guests who have enjoyed the hospitalities of the famous old mansion. On the day that Napoleon Bonaparte was banished to St. Helena, Prince Jerome Bonaparte, who had come to America to find a home, was a guest in the house.

Perth Amboy was then a stop over station for those who undertook the long journey from New York to Philadelphia, and the Long Ferry tavern, which stood not far away from the Lewis mansion, though it was a comfortable enough inn, and was, according to the chroniclers of the time, "the customary resort of the gentlemen of the town," was by no means a place which people of rank would choose for even a temporary abode.

It therefore happened that the prince, in traveling from New York to Bordertown, where he afterward settled, made a visit to his friend Commodore Lewis.

Of this visit the family retain two memorable relics. One is the jeweled watch, very valuable in its day, which Prince Jerome presented to his host, and the other is a small oil painting on copper, which he presented to his host. This painting is a masterpiece, and is unquestionably of great value, though it has never been appraised, and the name of the artist is unknown. It is only about six inches by ten in size, but the four figures in it, presumably those of Jupiter, Juno, Venus and Cupid,

are admirably drawn, and the coloring, though darkened by age, is wonderfully effective.

Besides this painting there are many others of value hanging on the walls of the two houses, but they are mostly family portraits. Much of the furniture is antique and was in service long before any of the present occupants were born, though two of these reckon four score years each.

Antiquities, however—that is relics of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries—are common in Perth Amboy. One of these is entitled to mention here because it forms a prominent feature in the landward view from the rear door of the house I have described. It is at the other end of an old road—now a grassy lane—leading straight back from the door, and is no less a building than the old government house. This was a palace built for the governor of New Jersey by the board of proprietors, who owned the state. These were twelve gentlemen (afterward twenty-four), who bought the state for £3,400 when it was sold by Sir George Carteret. The Duke of York deeded it originally in 1664 to Sir Edward Berkeley and Sir George Carteret, but the debts of the latter compelled the sale in the time of William Penn's greatest prosperity. He was one of the twelve purchasers.

The board of proprietors established a form of government subject to the British crown, and this palace was the headquarters of this government, which lasted until the war of the Revolution. The last governor to occupy the house was Sir William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin, and by no means the patriot (in an American sense) that his father was. He was an ardent Tory, and was taken prisoner in this house by General Hugh Mercer, when that officer raided Perth Amboy at the head of his flying brigade.

The Americans, however, were soon driven out of the little city by the guns of the British fleet, and the government house was used as the headquarters of the British officers. It is now a home for disabled Presbyterian clergymen. It is very large—larger indeed now than when it was originally built, for it was partially burned after the war and enlarged in rebuilding—and is plain, but imposing and handsome.

THE PAINTING ON COPPER. The two old houses seem likely to stand for many generations to come, and in the peaceful, sleepy little city that is like a country village in its older half, they are notable features, well worth a pilgrimage to see.

DAVID A. CURTIS. Concerning Doublets. BALTIMORE, June 24.—What infinitesimal prices are paid for some classes of delicate skilled labor! There is the making of "doublets," for instance. Very few of the pretty colored stones—rubies, sapphires and emeralds—that you see in jewelry are genuine. Nine out of ten probably are "doublets," which look brilliant and are almost as hard as the real gems, but are simply made up of thin slices of rock crystal cemented on bases of colored glass, by means of Canada balsam, with such nicety that a sharp eye only can detect the joining. Fingering over some handfuls of these imitations in the shop of a dealer who is frank enough to tell the prices they command as sold to retailers, we encounter some mild surprises.

Some, no larger than one-third of a grain of wheat, are "rose cut," and, as well as we can make out, have each twenty-four minute plane surfaces, separately ground and polished by hand. Their price? They sell for nine dollars per gross. Nine dollars for the materials employed, the work of fitting and joining 144 minute bits of crystal to 144 bits of glass, the grinding and polishing of 3,456 facets, the manufacturer's profit, importer's profit and costs of importation and duties!

A little larger size, of all conceivable shapes—squares, triangles, pentagons, stars, crescents, lozenges, arrowheads and many more, all "doublets," having each thirty-two or thirty-six facets, and concave or other differently irregular surfaces—which means 4,608 to 5,184 separately ground and polished faces—are sold for twelve dollars per gross.

The largest size of the "doublets" in common use and imitation diamonds made of "strap"—which is mainly a complex borosilicate of lead and potassium—have sixty-four facets accurately ground and polished and command eighteen dollars per gross. If there were not costs of materials, importation, duties and profits to come out of that, the skilled workman who made those things would get the princely remuneration of a faint shade over 1/100 of a cent for each facet he laboriously ground and polished. But as there are those things to come off, what does he get? and what use is he likely to have for obesity cures?

J. H. C. At the laying of the cornerstone of the Hebrew temple at Tonkinville, S. I., the other day, the principal speech was made by George William Curtis and the next by Erastus Wiman. Coroner Levy, of New York, took a hand in the exercises, and only the exclusively religious ceremonies were by Israelites. It does look as if America were the land of the free and the tolerant.

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