

ADDRESS: 3401 SOLLY AVE

Name of Resource: Stonyhurst

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity

Nominator: Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate Stonyhurst, one building on a larger parcel at 3401 Solly Avenue, and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that Stonyhurst satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, G, and H. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the property is significant for its association with George A. Castor, a businessman and U.S. Congressman who constructed the 18-bedroom mansion for his residence. Under Criterion C, the nomination contends that the building and its landscape represent the Picturesque style. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that the building is the work of significant Philadelphia architect George T. Pearson. The nomination further contends that the property satisfies Criteria G and H for its relationship to Pennypack Park.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that Stonyhurst, located at 3401 Solly Avenue, satisfies Criteria for Designation A, E, G, and H. The staff contends that the building is an example of the Chateaufesque, not Picturesque, style of architecture. Not enough information is provided about the existing landscape to discern a style of landscape design. Additionally, the staff recommends extending the Period of Significance from 1888 to 1906 to reflect George Castor's ownership. The staff acknowledges that significance may be attributed to the current owners, but no discussion of the significance of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity is included under any Criteria for Designation.



NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 3401 Solly Avenue

Postal code: 19136

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Stonyhurst

Current/Common Name: Motherhouse; Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☐ excellent ☒ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: Residence for Roman Catholic nuns

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from _____ to _____

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1887-1891

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: George T. Pearson

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: _____

Original owner: U.S. Congressman George A. Castor (d. 1906)

Other significant persons: Missionary Servants, Most Blessed Trinity

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☒ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☒ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☒ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☒ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☒ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☐ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization _____ Date _____

Name with Title Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA Email _____

Street Address 1234 S. Sheridan Street Telephone 215-334-6008

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19147-4820

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: December 1, 2021

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: December 17, 2021

Date of Notice Issuance: December 17, 2021

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity

Address: 3401 Solly Avenue

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19136

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: _____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

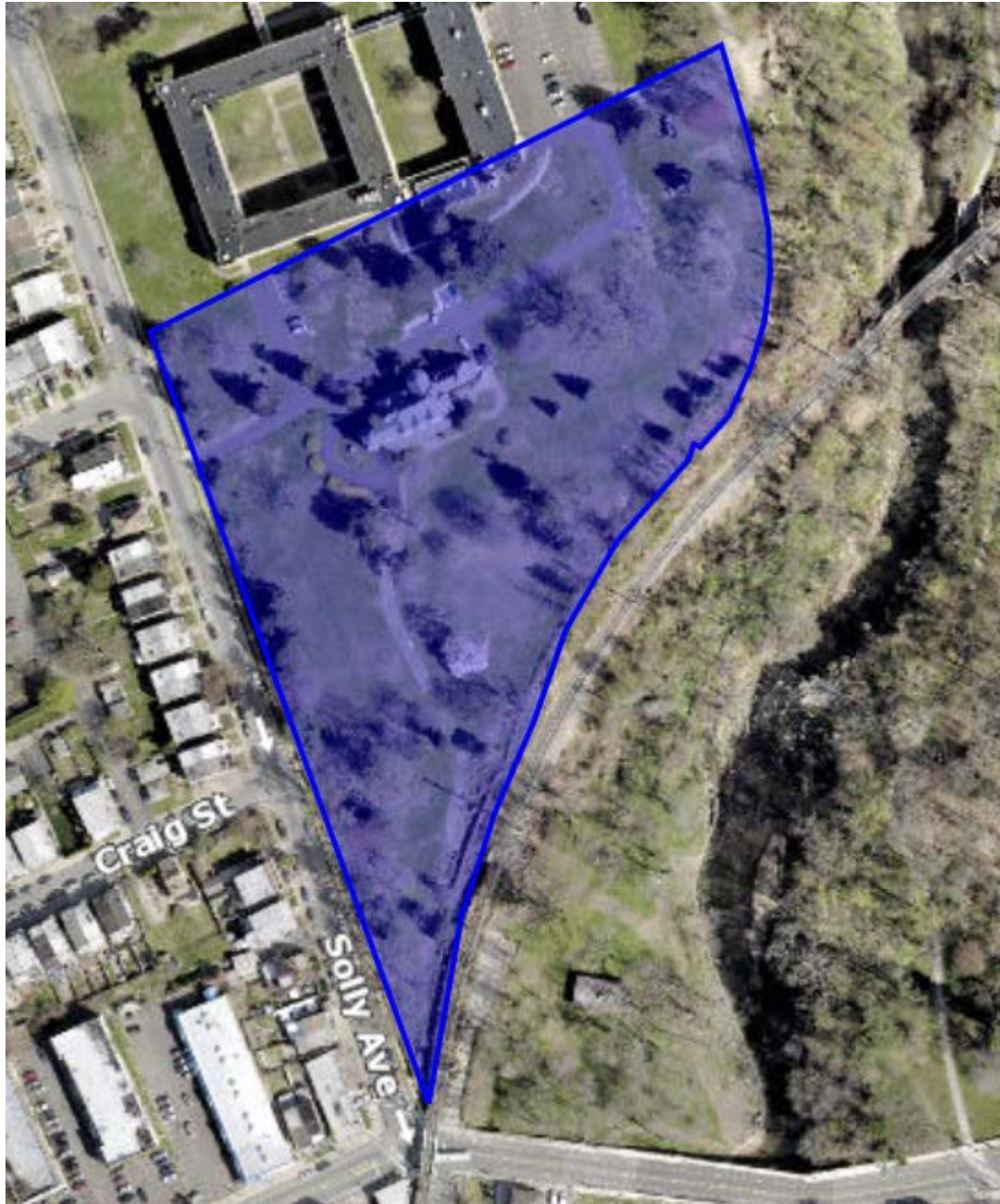
Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (Provided by PHC staff)

This nomination proposes to designate Stonyhurst, one building on a larger parcel of 3401 Solly Avenue that currently includes several buildings. The overall parcel is bounded by Solly Avenue at the west, railroad tracks and Pennypack Creek at the south and east, and Father Judge High School at the north. The building is circled in yellow in the image below.





The nominated boundary reflects the historically deeded parcel that includes the building and the landscape to the south and east that is integral to the property.

Beginning at a point on the northeast side of Solly Street (sixty feet wide) at the distance of thirty two feet eight and five eighths inches northwestward from the northerly side of Frankford Avenue (sixty feet wide) a corner of land of the Connecting Railway (formerly the Frankford and Holmesburg Railroad) thence extending along the said railway the ten following courses and distances to wit north thirteen degrees twenty four minutes forty four seconds east one hundred and ninety nine feet eight inches north forty degrees three minutes forty nine seconds east one foot seven and three fourths inches north twenty one degrees thirty two minutes thirty five seconds east one hundred and six feet seven and one

eight inches north twenty six degrees thirty one minutes thirteen seconds east one hundred and six feet seven and one eighth inches north twenty two degrees fifty six minutes thirty seven seconds east one hundred and two feet four and three quarters inches to a point in the bed of Craig Street (fifty feet wide) north thirty three degrees thirty three minutes fourteen seconds east crossing the said Craig Street one hundred and eight feet two and seven eighths inches north forty three degrees forty nine minutes thirty one seconds east one hundred and seventeen feet and five eighths of an inch north twenty three degrees forty nine seconds east seventeen feet seven and one quarter inches south fifty eight degrees seventeen minutes eleven seconds east six feet seven and one quarter inches and north forty five degrees fifty six minutes forty four seconds east forty five feet six and one half inches thence extending north twenty seven degrees forty nine minutes forty nine seconds east fifty seven feet seven and one quarter inches to a point thence extending north nineteen degrees fourteen minutes twenty nine seconds east forty eight feet six and three quarters inches to a point thence extending north eight degrees twenty seven minutes twenty nine seconds east forty eight feet six and three quarters inches thence extending north thirty one seconds west forty eight feet eight and one half inches to a point thence extending north eight degrees fifty minutes thirty one seconds west forty nine feet and one quarter of an inch to a point thence extending north thirteen degrees four minutes thirty one seconds west forty nine feet six inches to a point thence extending north fifteen degrees twelve minutes thirteen seconds west crossing Leon Street (sixty feet wide) one hundred feet to a point thence extending south sixty six degrees thirty three minutes twenty nine seconds west six hundred and eighty seven feet one and three quarters inches to a point on the northeast side of the said Solly Street and thence extending south seventeen degrees fifty nine minutes thirty one seconds east along the north east side of the Said Solly Street recrossing the said Leon Street and Craig Street eight hundred and fifty eight feet eight inches to the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide

p. 208 (5/9/1887)

THE RECORD AND GUIDE

Mr. Geo. T. Pearson has drawn plans for a house for Mr. Geo. Castor, to be built on the Solly estate at Holmesburg, Twenty-third Ward. The contracts have not been let. It will consist of two stories, built of local stone, surmounted by a red tile roof. A very handsome porch will be built. The house will be finished in hardwood. The hall will be large and very handsome, as well as the stairways. Size of building, 40x115.

Photograph (below) of east side of Stonyhurst, in a recent (winter) scene. It has been the Motherhouse and novitiate for the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity nuns since 1932.



DESCRIPTION:

"Stonyhurst," the nominated building and surrounding grounds is presently in very good condition with the Trinitarian Sisters maintaining the stone, two story and dormers sprawling manor. All sides of this building are different and had been, to some extent, altered from Pearson's original plan. Examples are in the siding which has formed squares where three rounded projections in stone had been on the east side (which some would deem the facade), and where siding fills in spaces where larger windows had been. Awnings are attached to windows on the east side only. All windows had been replaced for modern ones. The roof appears as asphalt. Only the porch on the east has been retained; the original west porch is gone. Extentions to this home on the north are in good condition.

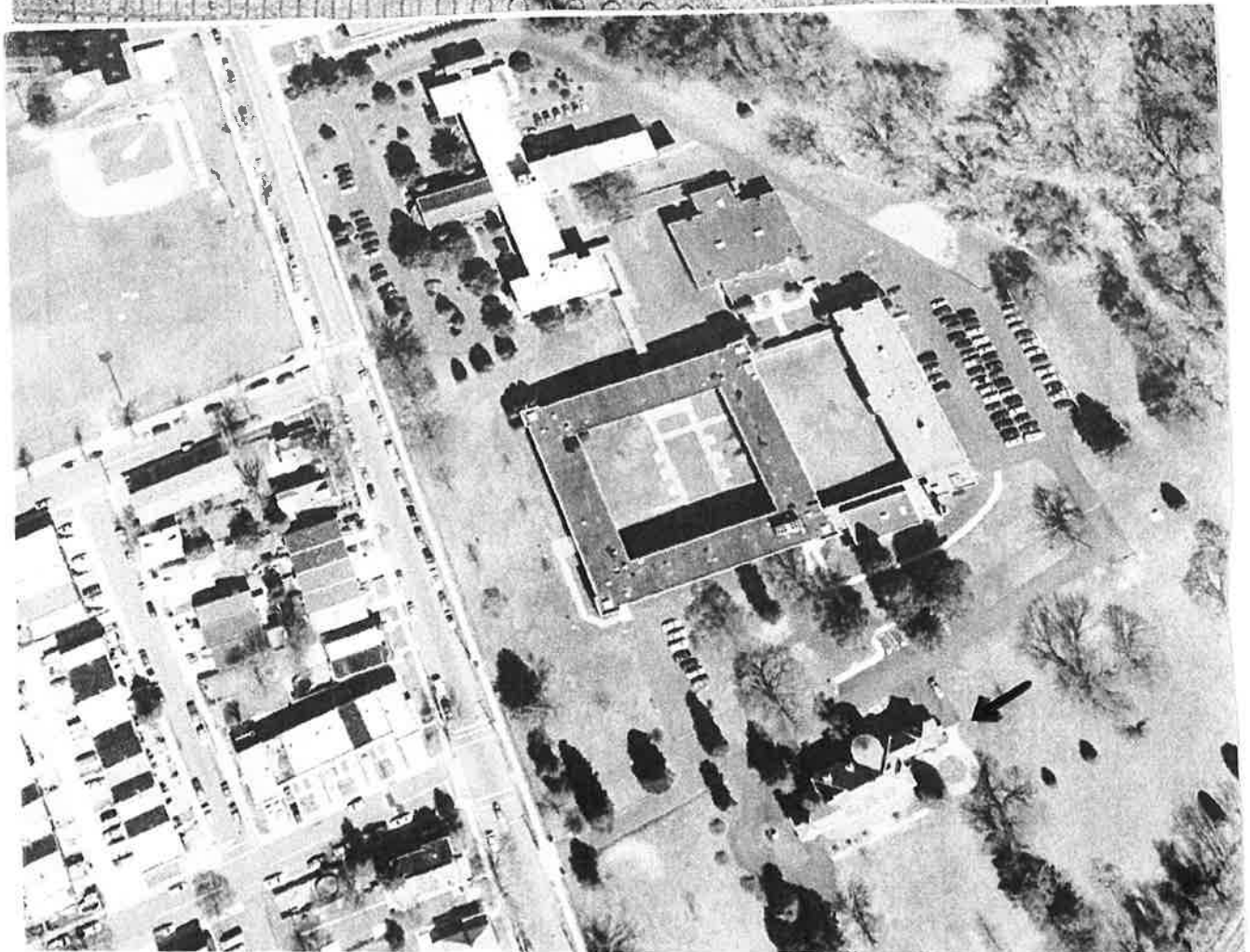
Landscaping is important for this building's styling, as are the winding, paved areas that circumvent the convent. These features are well-tended and seem to have maintained the original plan. Prominent elements are the steep-pitched roofs on the north and south, especially where the archway still exists for vehicular passage (on the south). The large cylindrical "tower" on the west is best seen when entering the property from Solly Avenue; otherwise, it is hidden from view. The hip roofs are best appreciated on the south-to-southwest perspective. (See page 6.) The east porch's posts and rails appear to be original. Noticeable alterations to the building are found on page 8 herein for comparisons.

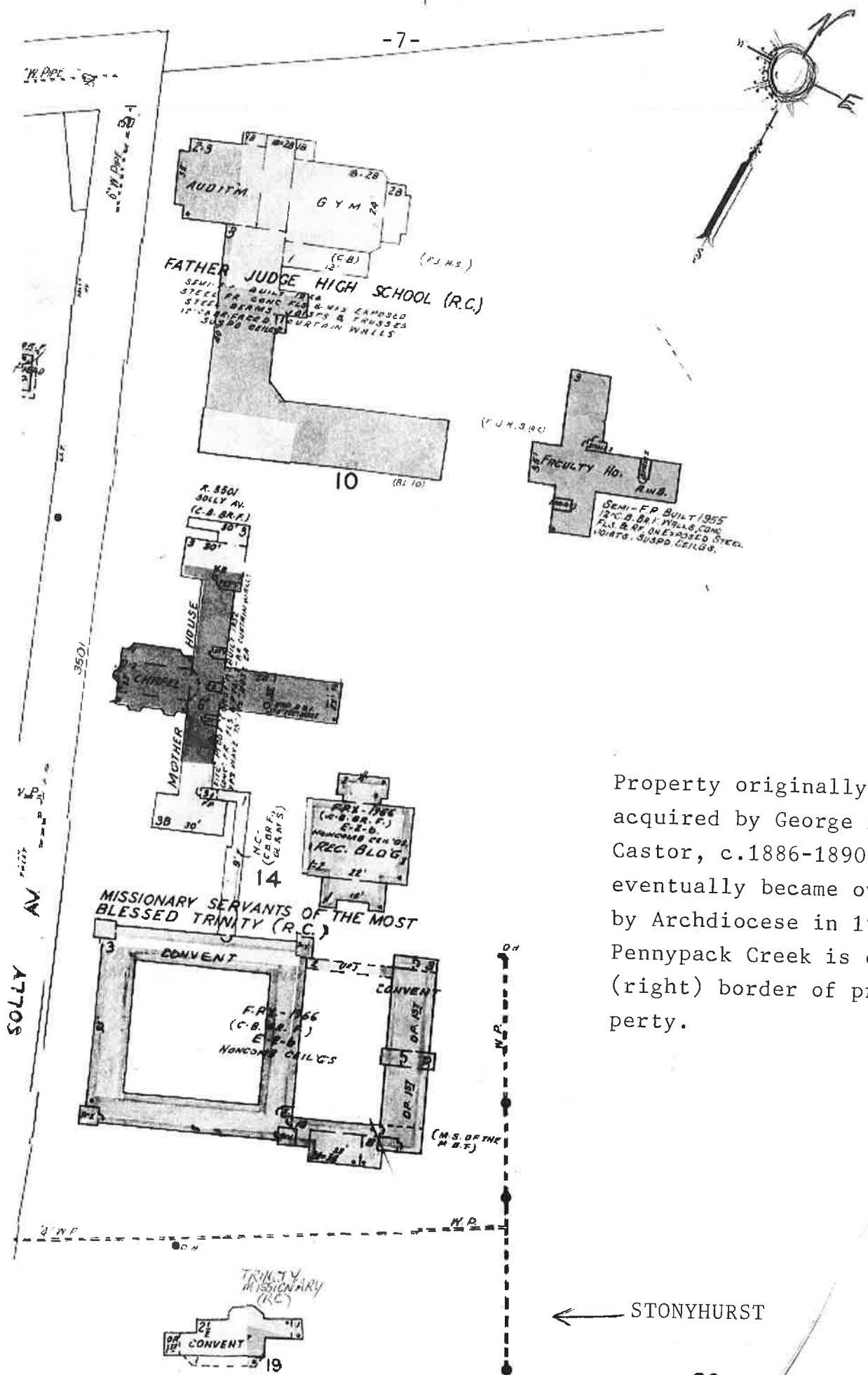
The Builders' Guide of May 9, 1887 stated the building's dimensions of "40X115"; the aerial on page 19 shows the complexity of plan. Trees line the border hiding the railroad tracks and creek.

3501 Solly Avenue



Both images:
GoogleMaps.





Property originally acquired by George A. Castor, c.1886-1890s eventually became owned by Archdiocese in 1931. Pennypack Creek is on (right) border of property.



STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE:

"Stonyhurst" was the elegant residence of U.S. Congressman George A. Castor (1855-1906) who was once a menswear retailer with stores in Center City, New York City and Boston.¹ The nomination was designed by George T. Pearson, AIA before he was commissioned for homes now in the Chestnut Hill Historic District.² Located in Holmesburg bordering Pennypack Creek near the historic 17th century bridge on Frankford Avenue Stonyhurst is in the Picturesque Style and once was decorated with the opulence seen in Gilded Age homes of wealthy Philadelphians.³ In 1932, this 18 bedroom mansion became the Motherhouse of the U.S.-based Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity, a Roman Catholic order of nuns.⁴

Congressman Castor was born in Holmesburg, but his family, beginning with Johann Georg "Gerster" (Castor) had its 18th century origins in Germantown, then in Frankford where descendants founded the First Presbyterian Church.⁵ The vast acreage around Stonyhurst was acquired in the late 1880s to early 1890s; by 1896, George re-deeded the whole tract and his other titles to his wife, Kate.⁶ After George's death in 1906, Kate their children moved to Erie Avenue, but the property appeared to have remained titled to her until the early 1920s. Stonyhurst had been a rented residence for institutional use until about 1931 when Cardinal Dennis J. Dougherty had learned of the entire estate's availability and purchased it for the "Trinitarian" nuns to move there in 1932. The order was founded by Father Thomas A. Judge, CM,⁷ hence, the name of the Catholic boys high school next to the Trinitarians' buildings (which are not contributing) on Solly Avenue.

Stonyhurst's Picturesque Style design and appearance during

¹ House of Representatives "History." See Appendix.

² Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide, May 9, 1887; Garrison, J., Houses of Philadelphia: Chestnut Hill and the Wissahickon Valley, 1880-1930. NY: Acanthus, 2008, pp. 61;77.

³ "The Times," January 20, 1891.

⁴ "The Catholic Standard and Times," Sept.16 and 23, 1932.

⁵ Interview, Bruce Castor, Esq.; Collins, H., Phila.: A Story of Progress. Phila.: Lewis, 1941, vol IV, p. 469.

⁶ "The Arena," Vol.34, #188, June, 1905, p. 18.

⁷ New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vo.VIII. McGraw, 1967.

the Gilded Age places its architect, Pearson with other well-respected architects who were better known in Center City than in Northeast Philadelphia. Webster acknowledged many manor homes in Northeast Philadelphia, most of which are gone, but not "Saint Michel," the country home of international financier Francis A. Drexel from 1870⁸ which seemed to initiate a second phase of the Picturesque Style seen in many unrecognized Northeast Philadelphia mansions. These homes likewise align their architecture with their landscapes.

George Pearson's work is known to this Commission from his designs in many homes within the Chestnut Hill Historic District. He is also associated with the commissions from hat manufacturer John Stetson, now mostly gone in Philadelphia but still in use in Florida. There, in Deland, Stetson's Mansion earned listing on the National Register.

Lastly, the Trinitarian Sisters have been the longest at Stonyhurst as owners and residents, maintaining the huge property and adding more buildings over the decades. The Order's Motherhouse is here, but Stonyhurst is still a residence. The Sisters' reputation as missionaries to bring others into the faith (such as the Chinese who formed Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic church) and to rehabilitate fallen Catholics (as the Italians who would go to Madonna House for help) is based on the social work these tireless nuns did. They also are known through the Catholic Children's Bureau in the Archdiocese.⁹

What a wonderful past is associated with Stonyhurst that would qualify it for listing on the City's Register of Historic Buildings!

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA
November, 2021
(Still during COVID limits.)

⁸ _____
⁹ The nominator submitted this building which was approved in 2019. McCarthy, Rev. Thos., CSV, Guide to the Catholic Sisterhoods in the United States. Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1964, p. 86. (See Appendix.)

STONYHURST

Mr. George A. Castor's New Country Seat
Near Holmesburg.

AN ARCHITECTURAL TRIUMPH

The Art of Interior Decoration in Its Richest
Development—A Mansion of
Baronial Splendor.

Only the old residents, a few real estate men and such chance visitors as have lately visited that important, though comparatively sparsely settled part of the great, growing city embraced in the Twenty-third ward, have any accurate conception of the wonderful changes and signs of improvement that within a year or two have made it look like a different place.

Old Holmesburg, though it remains much the quiet district it was before the consolidation of the city, with many of the well-preserved old mansions in which several generations of the same families have lived and with many of the original characters and types of population largely drawn from English artisan sources still preserved, is nevertheless no longer the Holmesburg of old. It is now passing through the second of its latest transforming tendencies. The first was the erection of manufactories and foundries and other places of employment within its boundaries—tall, grimy structures the best of them, that overshadowed the white and red picturesque old homesteads and gave a motley, mongrel appearance to what had looked like a pretty hamlet. The latest transformation is quite different, being in the direction of the erection of elegant residences of a modern character, with porches, piazzas, handsome architectural outlines and the general character of the handsome suburban homes on the other line of the Pennsylvania Railroad in the direction of Bryn Mawr and Chestnut Hill. This transformation is still going on. Scores of these houses have been erected and more are going up, often looking strangely at variance

a view of the lawn and drive. Scattered through the length of this spacious apartment are many large lounging chairs and divans, no two alike; several very high and deep old-fashioned French settees and numerous tables and stands, containing handsome lamps, vases and bric-a-brac. An odd piece of furniture is the card receiver, standing just inside the vestibule, which is a full-sized monkey in ebony, standing on his hind legs and holding a salver. The immense carpet covering this hall is all in one piece and was made to order in England, as were nearly all the floor coverings in the house.

EXQUISITE APARTMENTS.

The rooms that open from the hall on the left are all en suite, large and most superbly furnished and decorated, no two being alike. The first apartment, which is the drawing room, is a fine example of Louis XV. decoration in white and gold, introducing suggestions of the style of drawing room that prevailed in the handsomest houses toward the close of the colonial period. The mantel is in the corner and shows Corinthian fluted columns and lightly raised carved panels. This room is exquisitely furnished in dove white and gilt and contains among other ornaments, a fine bronze of "The Last of the Mohicans" and on an easel a portrait of Sarah Bernhardt in "Twelfth Night" painted by herself.

The next room is a very elegantly furnished apartment showing many rich hangings, a wealth of bric-a-brac, tapestry covered chairs and many pictures.

THE DINING ROOM.

Next to the great hall the dining room, running in an opposite direction, is perhaps the most notable apartment in the house. In it the idea of an old baronial banquetting room is thoroughly carried out. The walls are hung with tapestries showing large, costumed figures, many of cavaliers, and the wainscoting is of oak. The mantel is very striking, showing heavy half-Ionic columns, and with a recessed portion forming a closet, filled with glass and china. The sideboard, built in the wall, shows some original mirror effects in combination with arches, and is a handsome feature, with its decorative array of elegant silver. The table is high and very long, probably fifty feet, and as no cover large enough could be procured, a table-cloth to match the other decorations of the apartment was made to order, as was

eclipsed. It is here that Mr. Castor introduces his favorite guests to golden slumber. The boudoir is decorated in blue, prettily furnished in walnut and shows many lovely pieces of bric-a-brac. There are in all eighteen bed rooms in the house.

No limitation of expenses was put upon the decorators, and taken altogether the house is, perhaps, as elegantly furnished as any in or near Philadelphia. Mr. Castor pursued the plan of allowing different decorators as well as the architect to use their individual taste, and the result is that the effects are much more varied and original, and in some respects more successful than if one general design had been carried out through the entire house. All in all, the house is an interesting addition to the many new and beautiful abodes adorned by wealth and taste which now environ the Quaker City of homes.

RECENT ENGLISH WEDDINGS.

Fashionable Londoners Marrying as the Old Year Closed.

Much interest was evinced in the marriage at St. Michael's Church, Bournemouth, on December 29, of Miss Maria Stockton-Howell, daughter of Rear Admiral Howell, of the United States navy, to Mr. Ernest Constantine Weston, of London. The bride's parents are wintering at Bournemouth. The bride was attired in white brocade and more dress, trimmed with old point lace, which had formed the wedding veil of her mother. She wore also a tulle veil, with real orange blossoms, and valuable jewelry, with diamonds; her bouquet was composed of lilies of the valley. The bridesmaids wore dresses of white and pink tulle, bonnets to match; they carried bouquets of lilies of the valley and Christmas roses, and wore diamond brooches, the gifts of the bridegroom. The service was conducted by the Rev. F. E. Toyn, vicar of St. Michael's, Bournemouth. The breakfast was served at Montague House. In the afternoon the newly-married couple left Bournemouth for the Riviera.

A large and fashionable congregation met in St. Peter's Church, Eaton Square, London, on December 29, to witness the marriage of Captain Sir W. Cecil H. Darnley, Bart., R.N., with Miss Annie Josephine Moselle Ames, youngest daughter of the late Mr. Henry Metcalf Ames, of London, Northumberland. Sir Charles Jessel acted as best man to the bridegroom, and in attendance on the bride were four bridesmaids and four pages. The bride's dress was of white satin Duchesse, the front embroidered in pearls, and over sprays of orange blossoms she wore a large and beautiful Brussels lace veil, fastened with, among other ornaments, a diamond butterfly, the bridegroom's gift, and a diamond spray, the present of Dowager Lady



STONYHURST.

with the surroundings, while some of the once fine country places, with their noble trees and stately grounds gone to decay with the falling fortunes of their owners, are falling into new hands and beginning to blossom forth into trim lawns, fancy hedges and modern mediæval structures, with stunning chimneys and fashionable parti-cochers,

STONYHURST.

Just at the edge of Holmesburg, where the little Bustleton branch road breaks away from the steel-clad highway to New York and crosses a high trestle over Pennypack creek, there is a high knoll on the left stretching away into higher rising ground and forming a tract of seventy-five acres, that was formerly known as the Solley farm. On this commanding situation, facing the railroad and showing out finely against the sky, as viewed from the passing trains, stands an extensive new residence of gray stone and shingles, long and broken and rambling. This is Stonyhurst, the suburban seat and lately completed residence of George A. Castor, who was for many years prominently engaged in the clothing business in Philadelphia and still has interests in New York and other cities. This place was purchased by Mr. Castor four years ago and the plans, arrangement and construction of the building and improvement of the place have taken nearly all that time. Holmesburg is Mr. Castor's birthplace. It is there that he was born and spent his early life, and the place had so many associations and attractions for him that when he made a fortune in a business that grew rapidly so extensive that branch establishments were required in several cities he determined to build a splendid house in the vicinity where he had spent his youth.

THE INTERIOR.

The building, which was designed by George T. Pearson, is one of his best and contains some of the most original and striking effects he ever produced, especially in the interior. The porch which extends around the house is very wide and commands views in every direction. A company could march abreast around it. Wide walks extend around the house forming the top

the carpet. What gives character more, perhaps, than anything else to the apartment, are the twelve very high backed carved German chairs upholstered in a most effective tapestry, showing striking groups of fruit and its natural foliage. In one of the panels of the side wall is a very large and elaborate picture, "The Story-Teller," and among the other ornaments is a copy of the well known fantastic bronze figure, "The Mandolin Player." There is another beautiful bronze of a graceful girl playing a violincello. All the dining room furniture is claw-footed. Back of this is the pantry, laundry, kitchens and servants' quarters. From this region by an elaborate system the entire house is heated by steam.

THE UPPER FLOORS.

Ascending the grand staircase to the upper floor, leaving the many handsome groups of plants at one side and the pieces of armor on the wall, the visitor is struck with the beauty and color of the large stained-glass window behind the first landing approaching the galleries. It is a very beautiful work, designed by Tiffany, the New York decorator, as are many other features of the house. From this landing the long vista of the hall to the front is very fine, and on evenings when the furniture is wheeled out and the children of the owner and their young friends romp through its length to the merry music of the dance while the fire blazes on the hearth, the sight is gay and oddly picturesque. The upper rooms are almost without exception even more finely decorated and elegantly furnished than those on the lower floor. Every one is different in character, and in several cases different decorators have each designed a room and executed it in every part, selecting the hangings, furniture and even the ornaments, or having them made. The sitting room just at the head of the stairway is in pure colonial style and very quaint. One of its features is a very wide, pressed brick mantel, with many shelves, cute closets inserted here and there and a regular old-fashioned cupboard with diamond plates of glass on top. This room is finished in natural cherry, which makes it very cheerful, but a very odd and stupendous article of furniture that for want

Postcards and advertizements from c.1907, on, maintained Stonyhurst's activity after George Castor's widow, Kate and his children left the home they could not financially keep. Supposedly Stonyhurst

became a residence for destitute workers from the theatre, relocating from the first Edwin Forrest Home for Actors to Stonyhurst--temporarily.

Here, Stonyhurst became a Sanatarium.



Biddle School for Backward Children

Beautiful home environment. Tender care. Best dietary. Defects minimized by perfect method. Montessori Apparatus precedes general education. Individual instruction. Pupils limited. No case hopeless. Booklet. Ten aeres.

Pennsylvania, Holmesburg, "Stoney Hurst" (11 miles from Phila.)

May 1915 Cosmopolitan Mag ad



The former "Stonyhurst"...

(a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City...

and, is associated with the life of a person significant in the past:

U.S. Congressman George A. Castor

George A. Castor was from the family originating with the arrival of John (Johann Georg) George Castor from Basel, Switzerland in 1710. Castor Avenue began from the farm at the homestead, winding into Frankford where John George became "one of the founders of the Frankford Presbyterian Church."¹⁰ There were several notable Castors throughout Philadelphia's history, each creating his own niche, like George A. Castor, who was variably called a "tailor" or "merchant tailor with large establishments in New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia," "millionaire," "politician," "investor" in real estate, then U.S. Congressman, when he passed away.¹¹

George Albert Castor



1855--1906
Member of the
U.S. House of Representatives
from Pennsylvania's 3rd district

While still active, Castor was the subject of a type of expose in "The Arena." The story was about political corruption in Philadelphia, with one example--Castor--in review. The article also concerns Stonyhurst, the nominated property. The reporter found that Castor had purchased "fifty-one lots...which comprise his principal resident estate" (i.e., Stonyhurst) prior to 1896. The lots costs "a trifle less" than market value and they were deeded to Castor's wife, Kate. The purchases included ground across from Solly Avenue where was a quarry.¹²

¹⁰ Collins, op.cit.; Alotta, Robt., Mermaids, Monasteries... Bonus, p. 48. (See Appendix.)

¹¹ City Directories, 1884-1887; U.S. House of Representatives History; "The Philadelphia Inquirer," February 20, 1906.

¹² "The Arena," op.cit. The Deed of January 14, 1887, recorded on January 17, 1887 included "52 acres and 47 perches" from Wm. Alexander Baring Bingham to George A. Castor. (Vol.199, p. 533.) At the time, Castor lived at 3303 Race Street in Holmesburg (Gopsill's) nearby.

An advertizement, c.1880
for a "Clearing Sale"
at George Castor's Center
City store is at right.

Below, a "trade card"
for Castor's store is
one which would have been
handed out to potential
customers.

Castor sold "off the rack"
"Men's Wear" which could
then be custom-fitted.

**730 CHESTNUT STREET.
CASTOR.**

*It is folly to buy Ready Made Clothing
\$3.50 and \$15.00.*

Our regular Clearing Sale for the Fall and
Winter season has commenced.

To close out a large overstock of Woolens
for Men's Wear we have reduced our regu-
lar \$5.00 Pantaloon to \$3.50, and our
celebrated \$20.00 Suits to \$15.00.

The above are *made to order* of all
wool materials and are cut and fitted by our
regular corps of cutters, whom the general
public know cannot be excelled.

This sweeping reduction is made necessa-
ry by a large accumulation of goods, which
must be sold.

This is the best lot of goods we have ever
offered—

Absolutely below Cost.

Call early and examine this elegant line
of goods.

GEO. A. CASTOR & CO.,
730 Chestnut Street.
415 F.122





Baist's Property Atlas of the City and County of Philadelphia, Penna., 1895, Plan 48.



Atlases demonstrate differences in the surveys as well as details: railroad lines crossing the Castor property after George's death for the Holmesburg Granite Co.'s quarry; Kate Castor's ownership of the lands.

"The Arena" article highlighted how Castor managed to obtain taxpayers' money by suing the City for alleged damage caused by City workers who were "revising" the street grades around Stonyhurst. By the time the lawsuit settled, Castor was awarded multiple times the value of Stonyhurst and its grounds. This was in 1899, a few years after Castor had resigned from the menswear retail business, but had continued in local politics.¹³

New York Times Sept 30, 1893

BARGAINS IN FINE CLOTHING.

Men's Suits to Order at Less Than the Cost of the Material.

"It is useless to deny that the recent financial strain and the obstructive tactics of the silver men in the Senate have severely hurt the trade in the finer grades of men's custom-made garments," said Mr. Morley, a member of the firm of George A. Castor & Co., yesterday, in their store in the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

"Consequently," he continued, "if the mountain won't come to Mohammed, he must go to the mountain. We have determined to turn out our splendid stock at cost or less rather than let it stick on our shelves and racks. Every suit we sell now is a permanent advertisement for us. Besides, as we employ several hundred hands in our shops, we desire to keep them steadily at work during the Winter season.

"If any man familiar with cloths of fine texture will step in, look at the materials we offer, and learn the prices we place on them, I think we will be pretty sure to enroll him as a steady customer for the future. Of course, we handle no goods save those of high grade and texture, which will wear well and not grow shiny or shabby. The quality and patterns of the goods speak for themselves."

Castor George A. (George A. Castor & Co.), h
West 41st Street
Castor George A. & Co. (George A. Castor & John
A. Morley), tailors, 732 Chestnut
Castor George A. & Co. (George A. Castor & John
A. Morley), tailors, 732 Chestnut

George A. (George A. Castor), n 393 Race
George A. & Co. (George A. Castor & John
A. Morley), tailors, 732 Chestnut (ming)

(Gopsill's:1884 and 1887)

Philadelphia politics nurtured Castor in Holmesburg where he would be "a member of the Republican City Committee for fifteen years," then run for "Congressman-at-large" in 1892. What his occupation was from about 1893 (see left) to his election to Congress in 1904 was unrecorded.¹⁴ Castor served barely two years in Congress, but left Stonyhurst in Kate's name when he died.

Stonyhurst has been Castor's contribution to Holmesburg and to the City of Philadelphia. Apart from its lavish interior--with a Tiffany window still at the north side--Stonyhurst's architecture should be added to the buildings which are significant for the style, time and architect in their origins. Stonyhurst exemplifies the second phase of the "Picturesque Style," the post-Civil War to 1890s period.

¹³Article in attached "Appendix."

¹⁴House of Representatives' "History." Generally accurate, there may be an error to the "1875" year of Castor's retirement from the retail business.

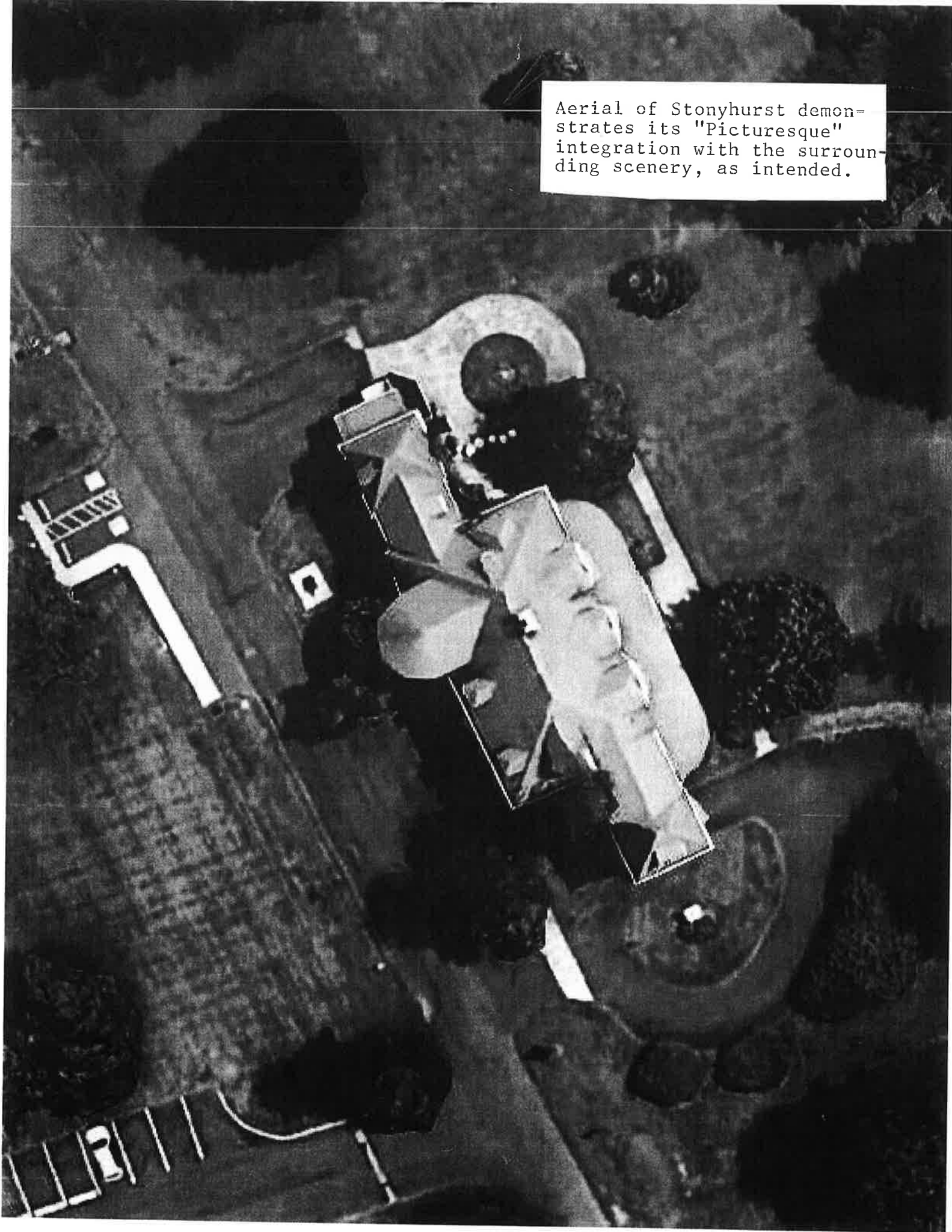
In fairness to George, the recorded price of the "fifty-one" lots (which in the deed were "fifty-two acres and 47 perches") was "13,600.00" and not "The Arena's" published price of "less than \$12,000 for the entire purchase."¹⁵ Castor bought the properties from a Mr. William Alexander Baring Bingham from Gloucester, England, according to the Deed from January 14, 1887. The G.M. Hopkins Atlas from 1876 named "H. Bissinger" and "George B. Soley" (or "Solly") as the owners of these plots at that time. Again, "The Arena's" reporting did not show the short-term ownership of the Bissinger tract, or why "Soley" or his heirs did not continue to hold onto their grounds. What may have seemed as a reason to diminish the value of the property could have been the proximity of the Pennsylvania Railroad and its bridge over the banks of the Pennypack Creek into the grounds. The noise, the visual of the train (a freight train, not passenger) and its crossing onto the property added to a price considerate of these impediments.

What "The Arena" noted, but had not pursued is that part of the Castor's acquisition was the future "Homesburg Granite Company" where the distinctive Holmesburg building stone was quarried.¹⁶ In subsequent City Directory listings and City Atlases, the name of the property has "Kate Castor" alongside of the business' name. None of the Castors have been found to be involved in this business which had its sales office in Center City. "The Holmesburg Granite Company" competed with several other Philadelphia quarries such as the ones in Mount Airy, on the Wissahickon, Haddington and perhaps other sites in the suburban counties, such as Trenton which furnished the stone in the early 1890s for St. Dominic's new church and Holmesburg Prison. Thus, dating the quarry on Solley Avenue would be in about "1896," with ownership to the Castors.

¹⁵ "The Arena," p. 18. See Appendix.

¹⁶ There was no listing for 1896, but in Gopsill's City Directory of 1897, the company's address was "1210 Fidelity Mutual Life Bldg. 112 N. Broad."

Aerial of Stonyhurst demon-
strates its "Picturesque"
integration with the surroun-
ding scenery, as intended.



The former Stonyhurst...

- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style:

"THE PICTURESQUE"

Stonyhurst lacks symmetry, the rigidity of classical elements and is somewhat attached to its landscape to enhance its appearance. These characteristics do not diminish the Pearson design, but exemplify how architecture in the 19th century had sometimes tried less dependence upon traditional designs and conventional thought to plan large residences: The design of Stonyhurst was intended to project independence of the past for a "picturesque" sight.

Art historian Fleming's Dictionary of Architecture (1966) had set forth the "Picturesque" as "In the late c18 it was defined in a long controversy between Payne Knight and Uvedale Price as an aesthetic quality...characterized...by interesting asymmetrical dispositions of forms and variety of texture..."¹⁷ Price had published An Essay on the Picturesque (1794-98) and Essay on the Picturesque (1810) which identified the qualities or characteristics of the Picturesque.¹⁸ Then, Meeks' own essay had reviewed several theorists on art and architecture, including Price, and arrived at "five principal categories" for "Picturesque Eclecticism" where Gothic or Italian villa or a "Baroque" are within the design. Meeks noted the categories as:

- 1) roughness, or a natural appearance;
- 2) movement, i.e., "the convexity and concavity" of forms;
- 3) irregularity, as in asymmetry, or "variations of form";
- 4) variety in 'surface and material' or "masses and parts"; and,
- 5) intricacy "that the forms and their relationships are complex."¹⁹

There also were three phases of the Picturesque, to which Stony-

¹⁷ Fleming, John; Honour, Hugh & Pevsner, Nikolaus, The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture. Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1966, p. 243.

¹⁸ Lauder, Sir T.D., (Ed.), On the Picturesque, Edinburgh, 1842, quoted in Meeks' Essay for The Art Bulletin (1950).

¹⁹ Meeks, C.L.V., "Picturesque Eclecticism," Vol.32, #3, Sept., 1950. The Art Bulletin, published by Taylor & Co., NY, pp. 227-228.

hurst met the criteria for the post-Civil War period, or within the Gilded Age. Meeks distinguished the architectural elements of this period with emphasis on size: "greater scale and greater intricacy;" "pointed" windows, not "round-headed" ones; the "broken silhouette" (adapted from Price); and "some form of tower." A general "English" effect is remarkable: Meeks' sources were mainly from England,²⁰ with the exception of Heinrich Woelfflin, an art historian whose published work dated from 1932--²¹a late retrospective review of what Price had established by the late 1790s. Price recognized a distinctive "Picturesque" style emerging in England and the architecture was often married to the setting to allow "movement," one of the style's five qualities.²²

The Picturesque was to reject classicism's sleek lines and surfaces, its singular color, symmetry and aura of calm to favor architectural "excitement." Meeks noted an apt statement from Price where "Men grow weary of uniform perfection" to justify why a Picturesque design demanded a "varied silhouette" with chimneys jutting up, as with the towers and gables--all of which are seen in every side of Stonyhurst. Moreover, Stonyhurst's design does combine French Baroque-style roofs with the types of cylindrical towers in English castles in a play with the triangular and the circular grouped together. Stonyhurst's design was meant to be viewed on all sides, not from the facade; Meeks wrote "One of the tests of the presence of the picturesque is the degree to which frontality has been eliminated...to have the building seen in the round and from many points of view."²⁴

These explanations of the Picturesque signify the style's distinction during the 19th century when typically the "Victorian"

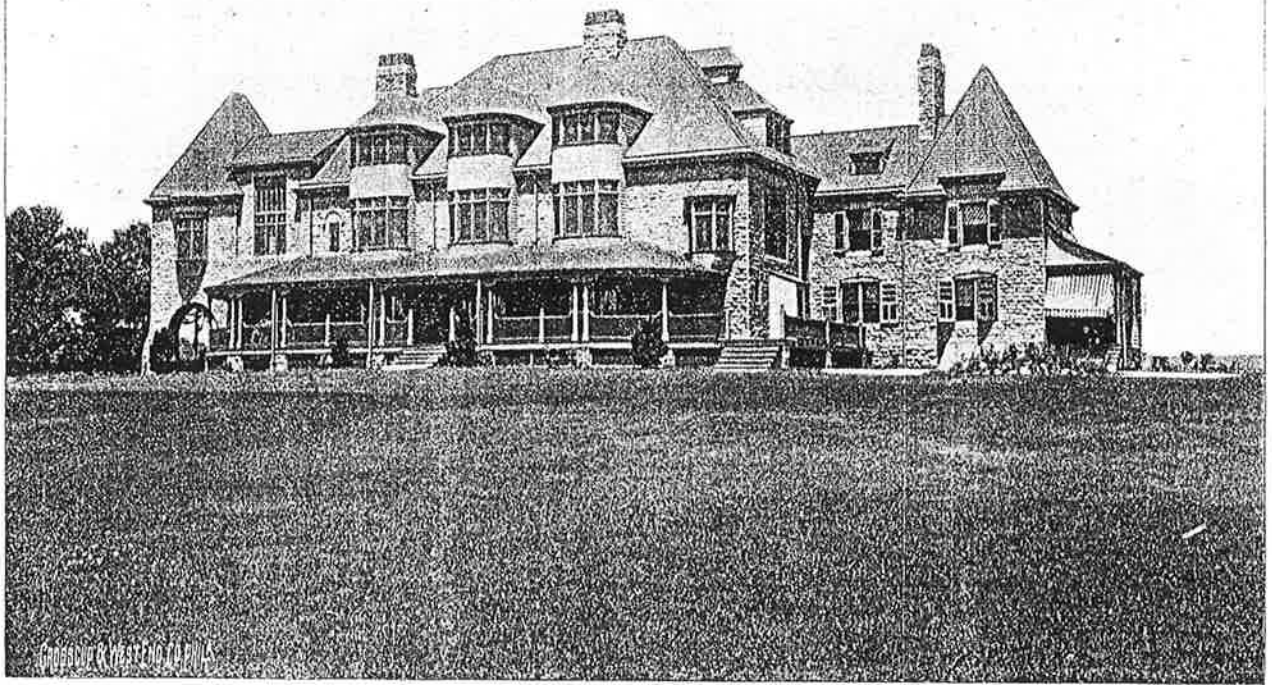
²⁰ Ibid., p. 233.

²¹ Woelfflin, H., Principles of Art History. NY: 1932 was cited.

²² Meeks attributed the "movement" quality to several late 18th century architects, like Robert Adam, then Reynolds, Price, Wyatt and Soane. Sprawling grounds around the building are required for this.

²³ Meeks, op.cit., p. 228.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 233.



STONYHURST, RESIDENCE OF GEORGE A. CASTOR.

Above is Stonyhurst in 1893 (from Hotchkin's book) and "The Catholic Standard and Times'" September, 1932 photo of the competing west side to what is above. West side comparison is below. The Pearson design from 1887 adheres to the Picturesque Style's "elimination of frontality quality" explained by art historian C.L. V. Meeks. (1950).



New Mother Missionary Cenacle of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity, Holmesburg

or a "19th century Gothic" would suffice--with no qualifications. Those simplified terms also do not consider why the Picturesque developed when it did. England and the new United States republic experienced a philosophical awakening, more freedom of thought, then the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and capitalism by the early 19th century. Architectural design reflected these events in social, cultural and economic developments. Subsequently, the 19th century has a myriad of styles which are characteristically identifiable, or eclectic which is permissible in the Picturesque.

Art historians are certain of the differences between the Picturesque and the style arising from Andrew Jackson Downing's books on the Cottage Residences (1842), then The Architecture of Country Houses (1850). Art historian Brown's narrative uses the word, "picturesque" for the type of domestic architecture in the books. He also cited Downing's downsized versions of Price's "qualities" of the Picturesque for "romanticized" cottages which bore the whimsy of its designer.²⁵ Locally, Webster labelled the Ryerss Mansion (1859) with the Downing influence and not the Picturesque despite noting the "bold silhouette" and describing it as "a picturesque Italianate villa." (see p.24.) For "Knowlton," also in Northeast Philadelphia, Webster is careful in its characteristics that created its "picturesque silhouette," instead emphasizing that Knowlton is "the only Philadelphia survivor of a small number of country houses designed by Frank Furness..."²⁶ "Knowlton" dates from 1879--nine years after another prominent architect Addison Hutton designed "Saint Michel" for financier Francis A. Drexel in Torresdale (Northeast Philadelphia). Webster's brief mention of Ryerss and Knowlton were expected, but a wider scope of Northeast Philadelphia's mansions

²⁵ Brown, M.(Ed.), American Art. NY:Abrams, 1979, pp.186-187.

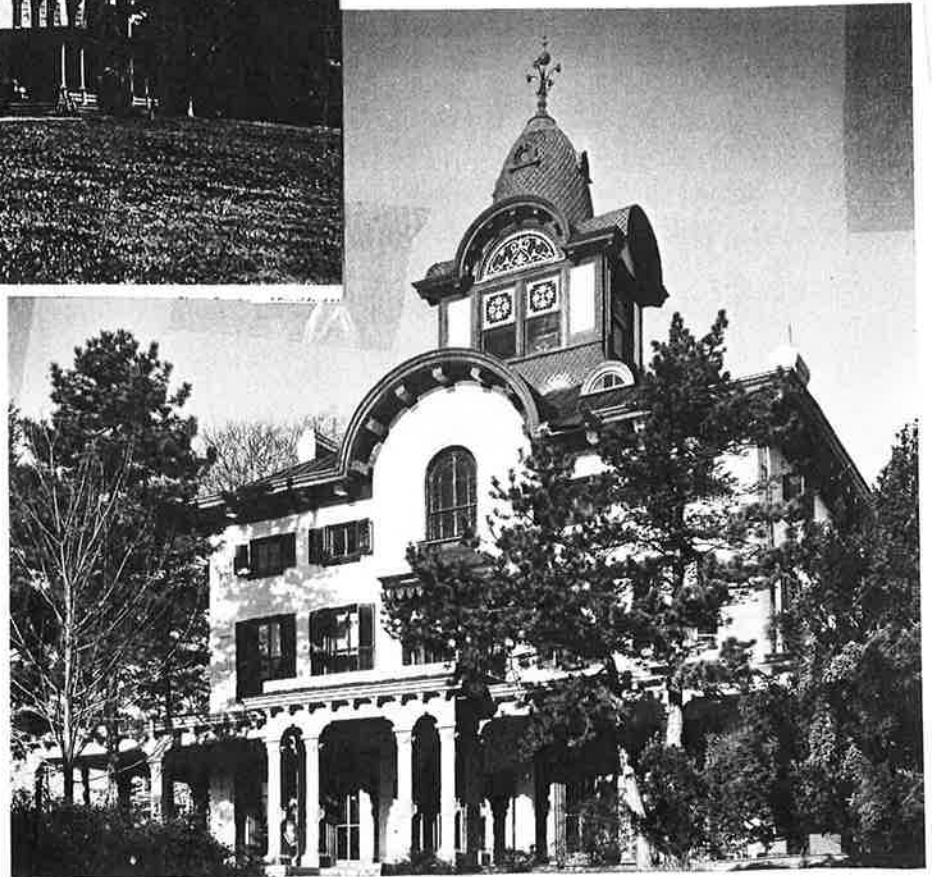
²⁶ Webster, R., Philadelphia Preserved. Phila.: 1976/1981, pp.318-319. Ryerss Mansion is a City-owned property; O'Gorman's monograph on Frank Furness noted Knowlton for Webster's reference. "St. Michel" was PHC-approved in 2019 from nominator's submission.

would show that the architectural styles of the manor estates here were in tandem with the Fairmount Park mansions, and their contemporaries in northwest Philadelphia. Webster noted that many Northeast homes constructed for wealthy patrons had been "abandoned and fell into ruin" to be razed by the "1940s and 1950s."²⁷ (This should not have hampered discussion on them as Webster did of the numerous buildings with "demolished" in their descriptions.) An example of an omission is Robert Cornelius' "Lawndale" manor (1860) seen in the Frankford Historical Society's photo below. Architecturally, it could be compared to Ryerss' "Burholme" of the same approximate phase.

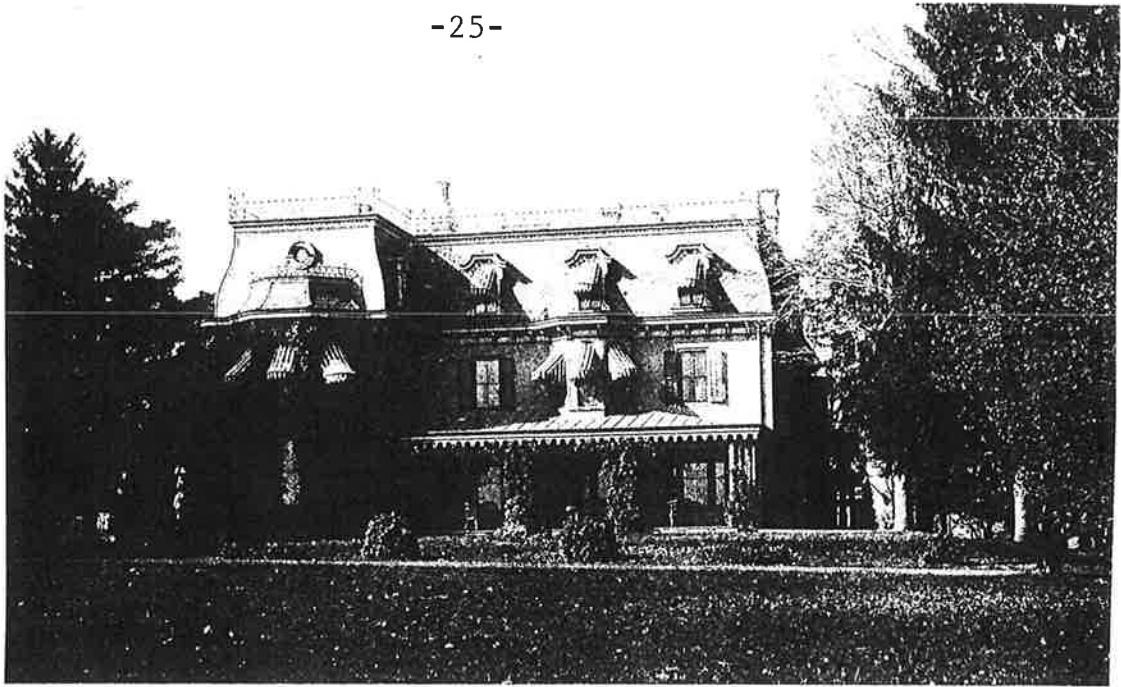


← "Lawndale" (1860)

²⁷Ibid., p. 318.



Burholme. Jack E. Boucher photo, 1973.



ST. MICHEL—The Country-home of the Francis A. Drexel family

Some prominent architects were retained to design the manors of wealthy patrons for Northeast Philadelphia locations. Gilded Age architect Addison Hutton's 1870 "St. Michel" (above) is in Torresdale. Below is Frank Furness' 1879 "Knowlton" in Somerton for banker William Rhawn.

Both buildings have expressive designs in concert with the landscape. They were intended to be seen on all sides, not just on their facades--wherever the facades were. The homes have a tactile appearance in the variations of materials and forms, yet all of the elements work well. These homes present the "qualities" of the Picturesque and the quirkiness expected of such designs.



Webster acknowledges the "qualities" defined by Meeks as characteristics of the Picturesque for Knowlton, but hesitates to use the architectural term. He compared Knowlton to Burholme and first noted that the former is the "next generation of rural retreats" in Northeast Philadelphia. But, Knowlton's appearance has "the bold massing of richly textured exterior elements"²⁸ and has none of the classicism in "earlier country houses."²⁹ Webster ended by calling Knowlton an "architectural aberration," but the same can be said of Pearson's design of Stonyhurst as well. These Northeast Philadelphia manor homes could form a theme in the area's Gilded Age Picturesque architecture to enrich the area's history. Branded by the obvious workingclass environment with the factories and churches to accommodate 19th century lifestyles, Stonyhurst, along with Knowlton, Saint Michel and other unaddressed manors here nonetheless deserve attention--if not to compare to the Northwest Philadelphia homes by the same architects.

Stonyhurst's Picturesque Style is related to its landscape--bordering Pennypack Creek and the wide acreage around the building. Therefore, Stonyhurst...

- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to a....motif; and,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community...

When George Castor purchased the old Solly farm and perhaps other lots to accumulate to "fifty-one lots," the land was for his residence, Stonyhurst.³⁰ The postcard photo on the next page gives the best perspective of Stonyhurst's relationship to where Pennypack Creek's falls are located and where the creek widens.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 319.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "The Arena," op.cit., p. 18. The Deed of January 14, 1887 is more reliable as a source on the quantity of purchases.

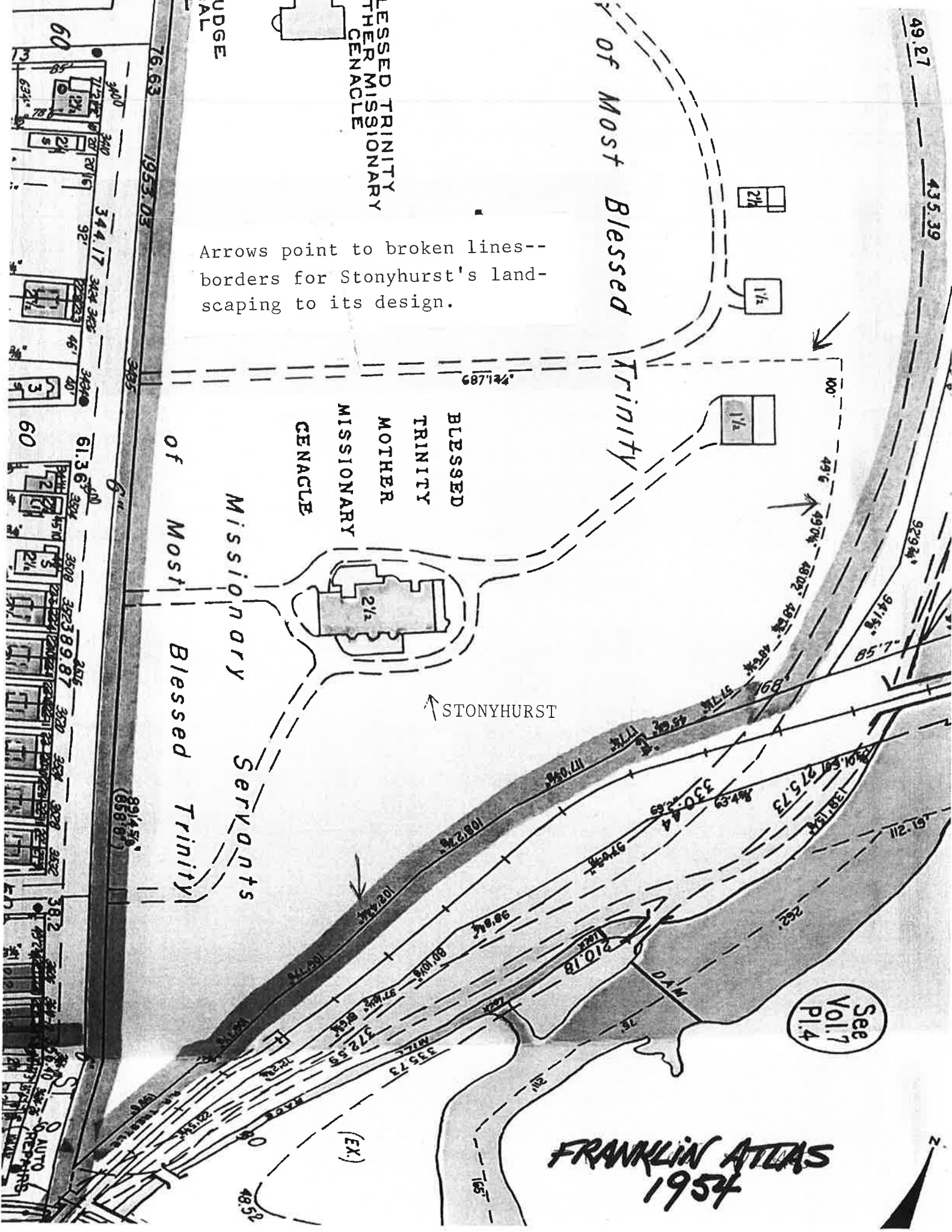


PERSPECTIVE FROM THE BRIDGE

Stonyhurst's relationship to Pennypack Creek is evident from this c.1900 photo taken when the vegetation was sparse for viewing. This part of the creek is the widest--sometimes noted on atlases as the location of the "dam." More importantly, Stonyhurst's axial plan was apparently drawn in consideration of this aspect, benefiting those travelling southward on Frankford Avenue over the historic bridge.

In compliance with the criteria, Stonyhurst's architecture is "distinctive" and it has, since at least c.1890, represented "an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood" before and during Holmesburg's development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The next page suggests which part of the property applies to criteria (g) and (h) because of Stonyhurst's Picturesque Style.



Arrows point to broken lines--
borders for Stonyhurst's land-
scaping to its design.

LESSED TRINITY
MOTHER MISSIONARY
CENACLE

JUDGE
IAL

of Most Blessed Trinity

BLESSED
TRINITY
MOTHER
MISSIONARY
CENACLE

Missionary Servants
of Most Blessed Trinity

STONYHURST

See
Vol. 17
Pl. 4

FRANKLIN ATLAS
1954

The former Stonyhurst...

(e) Is the work of a designer, architect,...whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural...or cultural development of the City.

GEORGE T. PEARSON (1847-1920)

The Historical Commission is very familiar with George Pearson's work in several homes within the Chestnut Hill Historic District as well as in Mount Airy and Germantown. The Tatman biographical account mentioned that Pearson had formal education in "Model School" in his native New Jersey, but by the age of 24 he was in Philadelphia listed as an architect. Pearson then worked for Addison Hutton who had a reputable name in the City,³¹ with commissions from influential bankers for the PSFS Bank, Francis A. Drexel's country house in Torresdale and the Rush family's Library (and tombs). From Hutton, Pearson experienced the rise of custom-designed, sprawling homes which correlated to their settings as well as what Gilded Age wealth's causal effects held upon lifestyle. Tatman also noted that Pearson once was under John McArthur, Jr. who had been a proponent of the "picturesque eclectic" as seen in his design of City Hall which Webster called "One of the finest American examples" of this style.³² McArthur began his work for City Hall supposedly by "1871" while Pearson was in his employ to learn the flexibility of this Picturesque until he left McArthur in 1880.³³

Stonyhurst appears to have launched Pearson's career with the wealthy who craved for unique homes of unusual architecture. How Pearson met Castor was not recorded, but Pearson had been working on several projects in Germantown (where he lived) as well as the Wakefield Presbyterian Church in 1887. Previously, Pearson designed the Mount Airy Presbyterian Church nearby. The Castors were Presbyterian by heritage; there is no existing record of the meeting between

³¹Tatman's revised narrative is on "philadelphiabuildings.org."

³²Webster, op.cit., p. 140.

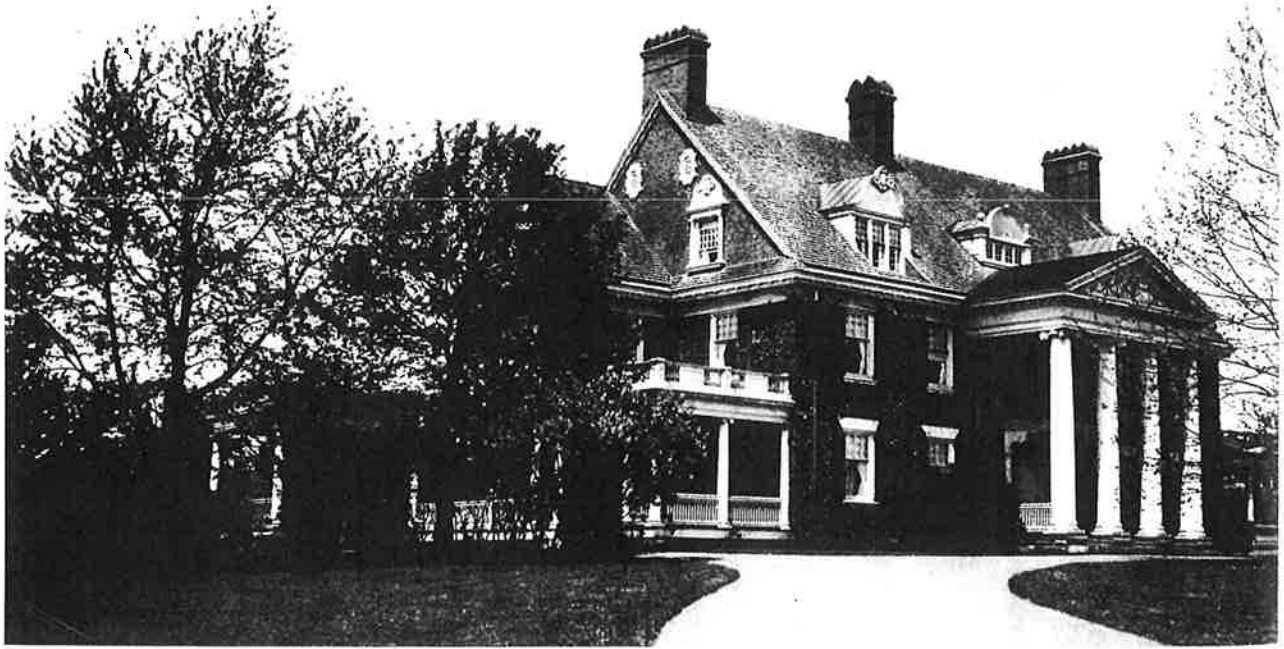
³³Tatman, op.cit.

client and architect. What can be claimed, is that Stonyhurst brought Pearson publicity for its design and location in Holmesburg. Stonyhurst's later publicity after Castor died also reprised Pearson's name and interest in his other projects.

Some examples of Pearson's work in Chestnut Hill and Mount Airy were among mansions by very prominent architects, some on a national level, in Garrison's book from 2008. Below is a Wikipedia image (accompanied by unreliable statements) on Pearson's building which has National Register listing: the summer home of hat manufacturer John Stetson of Philadelphia. The home dates to "1890" from Tatman's research. It also bears some familiar details seen in Stonyhurst which had not finished until 1891.



THE STETSON HOUSE (1890)



Oblique view from the west, early 20th century

Garrison(2008) discussed two of Pearson's designs which are in the Chestnut Hill Historic District: (above) "Homewood/Eastdene"(1894) and (below) "Keewaydin" (1901--). Both were planned after Stonyhurst and both buildings utilize the landscapes to emphasize certain architectural details. Stonyhurst, however, was intended to be viewed from all sides, unlike these properties which want private rear areas for their private use. Hence, the facades are the chief aspect for the viewer.



Early 20th-century view from the corner of Cherokee Street and Moreland Avenue

In his "Suburban Domestic Architecture series," James B. Garrison compiled the majestic homes of Chestnut Hill and the Wissahickon Valley, 1880-1930, and listed George T. Pearson as one of the pivotal architects among nationally-known peers. (Below).

(Source: Garrison, Houses of Philadelphia. NY:Acanthus, 2008.)

PEABODY & STEARNS

The Boston firm of Peabody & Stearns (Robert Swain Peabody [1845-1917] and John G. Stearns Jr. [1848-1917]) designed several large residences on the Main Line and Chestnut Hill, including Krisheim for George and Gertrude Houston Woodward. They rose to prominence with seminal works in the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles. Many of the earliest residences were located in the suburbs or nearby seaside resorts around Boston. Peabody, who graduated from Harvard and later attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts, was the chief designer, while Stearns managed construction-phase services. Their work was highly acclaimed and widely published, leading to larger commercial and institutional projects. They often collaborated with Frederick Law Olmsted and the successor firm of his sons. These joint projects involved large estates, public parks, and institutions. The late 19th-century campus for the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey combined a parklike setting with academic and residential buildings. Their work, which is characterized by imaginative interpretations of historical styles, gradually became more academic as their practice matured.

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GEORGE T. PEARSON

George T. Pearson (1847-1920) designed hundreds of buildings yet has remained largely unknown. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1872 from his native New Jersey, beginning his local career in the office of Addison Hutton. The boom in suburban development and the demand for unique single-family residences enabled him to establish his own practice quickly, beginning with a number of houses in his own neighborhood of Germantown. The architectural press was keen to promote the new suburban house types and published much of his work along with that of his peers. His lack of formal academic training did not inhibit the quality of his design, which was eclectic yet always well detailed and rarely showed the awkwardness of the work of some of his contemporaries. Many of his early buildings were richly ornamented, yet the ornament is always subservient to a strong plan and well-organized massing. In addition to his many residences, he designed churches and the replacement clubhouse for the Philadelphia Cricket Club in St. Martins.

TILDEN, REGISTER & PEPPER

The partners at Tilden, Register & Pepper had impeccable family backgrounds that assured their success in Philadelphia society circles. George Wharton Pepper Jr. (1895-1946) was the son of the famed lawyer and United States senator, while H. Bartol Register (1886-1956) was the son of a well-known Main Line doctor. Marmaduke Tilden Jr. (1883-1957) was born in New York and educated at Harvard and the Ecole de Beaux Arts. He and Register established their practice in 1916, enjoying a successful residential practice until Pepper joined the firm in 1925. With help from Pepper's father, they secured commissions for some significant public and high-rise work that included Deco-inspired skyscrapers on Walnut Street in downtown Philadelphia. Pepper and Register took somewhat different courses following their graduation from the University of Pennsylvania. Register went to France for further study in Paris, while Pepper joined the firm of John T. Windrim, which was well known for work in the public and utilities sectors. Register entered a short-lived partnership during which he designed several residences near his childhood home on the Main Line. The firm of Tilden, Register & Pepper disbanded in 1936 when Register left. The other two partners continued in joint practice until the early 1940s.

HORACE TRUMBAUER

Horace Trumbauer (1868-1938) is one of the more interesting figures in American and Philadelphia architecture history. From a modest family background, and apprenticeship at the age of 14 in the Hewitts' office, he rose to be one of the most prolific architects in the nation, designing museums, government and university buildings, and a series of monumental residences over a period spanning 50 years. His office was the training ground for several generations of Philadelphia architects, and over his long career he received a number of the profession's highest honors. He was precocious and ambitious, attracting the attention of Anthony

In 1910, Gopsill's City Directory had two listings for Kate Castor: "Solly nr Fkd av. Hbg" and "1842 Erie av. Fkd". Below, the map shows Kate's name on the larger tract where Stonyhurst is (arrow), and she owned the quarry where "Holmesburg granite" was mined for the Holmesburg Granite Company. The company operated from that location until the end of the 1930s.

What is also indicated on this map are the courses of railroad tracks through the Stonyhurst grounds, then bifurcates into the quarry.

Apparently there were two mining sites at the quarry for the deposits of granite to increase business two-fold.



Detail, Atlas of the 23rd, 35th, & 41st Wards of the City of Philadelphia, 1910, Plate 19, J. L. Smith

In summary, Stonyhurst had been a wonderful architectural example of a Picturesque Gilded Age manor. The creation of architect George T. Pearson for a successful clothier-turned-politician U.S. Congressman George A. Castor, Stonyhurst's existence has been the responsibility of its owners of nearly 100 years, the Trinitarian Sisters. All of the qualities which the Picturesque Style entails are at Stonyhurst, especially in what Meeks wrote: "...as a building seen in the round and from many points of view..."³⁴ Planned at this site to relate to the Pennypack Creek, Stonyhurst's setting gives the Holmesburg community a visual melody in its "convexity and concavity"³⁵ of the building's forms with the winding paths and driveways roaming about the landscape. Everything is carefully executed for the building to relate to the natural beauty where the Pennypack widens and nothing--except the view of Stonyhurst--disturbs what had always been there.

Stonyhurst's historic value to Holmesburg and to the City is immeasurable and should open more exploration in Northeast Philadelphia's range of manor homes.

For these and other reasons, Stonyhurst merits designation.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA
November, 2021
(Still during COVID limits.)

³⁴Meeks, op.cit., p. 233.

³⁵Meeks cited Robert Adam's Works, 1, 1773.

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City Directories: Boyd's; Gopsill's; Polk's.

GoogleMaps

Map Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia

New Catholic Encyclopedia

Wikipedia

Special thanks to Mr. Frederick Moore of the Northeast Philadelphia Historical Consortium for his research materials.

A P P E N D I X
(10 pages follow)

CASTOR, George Albert

1855–1906

OFFICE
Representative

STATE/TERRITORY
Pennsylvania

PARTY
Republican

CONGRESS(ES)
58th (1903–1905), 59th (1905–1907)

Biography

CASTOR, George Albert, a Representative from Pennsylvania; born in Holmesburg (a part of the city of Philadelphia), Pa., August 6, 1855; attended the public schools; entered a cloth house early in life and subsequently became a merchant tailor with large establishments in New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia; retired from active business pursuits in 1875; unsuccessful candidate for the Republican nomination of Congressman at Large in 1892; member of the Republican city committee for fifteen years; elected as a Republican to the Fifty-eighth Congress to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Henry Burk; reelected to the Fifty-ninth Congress and served from February 16, 1904, until his death in Philadelphia, Pa., February 19, 1906; interment in Emanuel Protestant Episcopal Cemetery, Holmesburg, Pa.

[View Record in the Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress \(http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=C000244\)](http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=C000244)

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[[Top](#)]

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Office of Art & Archives, Office of the Clerk: art@mail.house.gov (<mailto:art@mail.house.gov>), archives@mail.house.gov (<mailto:archives@mail.house.gov>)

Congressman George A. Castor Dies at His Home After an Illness of Few Months. Career in Politics

George A. Castor, who had represented the Third Philadelphia district in Congress for two years, died at his home, on Solly street, Holmesburg, shortly after 11 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

For about four months he had been confined to his home, suffering from an affection of the arteries. Although his friends knew that his condition had been serious, announcement of his death yesterday was unexpected. He suffered a sudden relapse yesterday morning, and his family was hastily summoned to his bedside, where they remained until he died.

Congressman Castor is the third millionaire Philadelphia Congressman to die shortly after his election to the national body. His career closely parallels that of Robert Foederer and Henry Burk, the latter having been Mr. Castor's immediate predecessor as the representative of the Third Congressional district. Like Foederer and Burk, he began life as a poor boy, and after acquiring considerable wealth was stricken in the prime of life and but a few years after being elected to Congress.

Popular in Congress

Although he had been in Congress but a short time, having been elected to the Fifty-eighth Congress on February 16, 1904, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Henry Burk, George A. Castor was one of the most popular members of the Pennsylvania delegation. His jovial nature won hosts of friends wherever he went, and when those who knew him spoke of him as a "hale fellow well met" they meant only the best that that phrase implies. He won the good will of Speaker Cannon and they both became fast friends.

George A. Castor's career is the story of an ambitious young man who won his way to prosperity and popularity. Beginning his business life as a tailor, he accumulated a small fortune, which by dint of careful investments grew until to-day his estate is believed to be worth more than \$1,000,000.

Congressman Castor was born in this

Continued on Second Page—Second Column

OBITUARY of George A. Castor.

Continued From First Page

GEORGE A. CASTOR

city on August 6, 1855, and he spent practically all his life here. He was educated in the public schools and when a young man he opened a tailor shop. He made a specialty of moderately priced custom made clothing and his business rapidly increased in volume. For many years he conducted a large establishment at Eighth and Chestnut streets. He retired from business some years ago and divided his time between looking after his financial interests and political affairs, in which he was greatly interested.

A Leader in Ward Politics

For many years he was the leader of the Thirty-fifth ward and was a member of the Republican City Committee for fifteen years. Although a prominent figure in politics for more than a score of years he refused to be a candidate for any office until 1892. In that year he was a candidate for the Republican nomination for Congressman-at-large, but lost the nomination in convention by only twelve votes.

When Henry Burk died he was nominated by the Republican party as Congressman from the Third District, and he was elected on February 16, 1904, by a plurality of 24,347. He was re-elected to the Fifty-ninth Congress, receiving 39,982 votes to 7,873 for John H. Fow, the Democratic and Independent candidate.

Congressman Castor was an enthusiastic automobilist. He owned several fine touring cars. Several years ago he purchased Camp Kilcare, at Lake Placid in the Adirondacks. It is said to be one of the best equipped lodges in that region. He was one of the leading spirits in the Fellowship Club, and attended the dinners given by that popular organization.

A widow, two daughters and a son survive the Congressman. It was stated last night at his home that the funeral will probably take place on Friday, and that the list of pallbearers will be announced to-morrow.

Mermaids,
Monasteries,
CHEROKEES
and **CUSTER**

the stories behind
Philadelphia
street names

Robert I. Alotta

Bonus Books, Inc.

1990

Carpenter Street

Carpenter Street

See Carpenter Lane.

Castor Avenue

The original Castor Road was cut through the farm of John George Castor (or Gerster), a native of Basel, Switzerland, who came to Philadelphia in 1736. Ten years later, he moved to Germantown. In 1762, he purchased 202 acres in Oxford Township.

Though Castor's road was viewed by the road jury in 1785, it was not until half a century later that the roadway was confirmed, from Oxford Road to Asylum Road (now Adams Avenue). From 1926 to 1929, Castor Avenue grew to its present extent, adding Wyoming Street (from Unity to Adams), N Street (from Erie Avenue to Cayuga Street), and old Erie Avenue (from Delaware Avenue to present-day Erie).

John George Castor's descendants were notable Philadelphians. They included Jacob, an aide to Lafayette during the Revolution; Thomas, the inventor of the double-decker horse carriage; Elwood, also a carriage-maker; and Horace W., a prominent Philadelphia architect of the early twentieth century. Other notable members of the family, to whom past historians have given credit for the name, were General George Castor, who purchased Tacony Farm, near Frankford Arsenal, and → George Albert Castor, a U.S. congressman during the early twentieth century.

Catharine Street

Opened before 1787, the original Catharine Street, extending from the Delaware River to Passyunk Road, was confirmed, at least on paper, by the Court of Quarter Sessions in 1790. In 1807, however, a traveler through the Southwark area noted that "none of the streets below South street running westward [are] laid out beyond 5th street, and Catharine and Queen streets . . . only . . . as far as 2nd street." Nine years later, the road jury

confirmed the street from 15th Street. By mid-nineteenth century, we can assume that Catharine —and a little further, Kansas Street (Schuylkill) was changed to Catharine at its present length, from the Delaware River to Creek Parkway.

Elusive as most first streets are, it is safe to assume that the daughter of Swen Swanson Street was named Southwark area on an early map (see Queen and Christy

Cathedral

See Gravers Lane.

Cayuga Street

See Indian Tribes.

Cecil B. Moore

Cecil B. Moore was a man who died in 1979. He was a flaming cigar in hand and far away. The black community's successful drive to integrate the city would. Longtime president Moore ran for mayor on a ticket in 1967. He received the vote. Later, Moore was elected central North Philadelphia

Support for naming a street surfaced after the East 13th Drive. Radio talk-show host with the goods," gathered

THE ARENA

EDITED BY B. O. FLOWER

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Portrait of Hon. Andrew D. White,	facing 16



GEORGE A. CASTOR.

One of the galaxy of Congressmen who are sent to Washington by the "Organization."

affect the present generation; we are not concerned in men dead for ages but in the Penroses, Durhams, and McNichols of to-day, by whom and in whose interest and "temporal" welfare the ripper bill was passed.

We may well exclaim, almost despairing of the future, "Save us from our friends, we can take care of our enemies!"

There has been a decided and, for the Governor, an unfortunate change in the good opinion held of him by many of those who hitherto believed that, while simple-minded and whimsical, he was a thoroughly sincere man, to whom anything akin to double-facedness must be a stranger. His "ripper" message is deservedly called the act of a vaulting, juggling, maneuvering pretender who, while he plays into the hands of the powerful dispensers of office, tries to save a few shreds of a once proud judicial ermine by silly allegories and by giving us the

shell as he delivers the oyster to the "Organization"!

The statement that the Governor is to be rewarded by a place on the Supreme Court is presumably inaccurate; he would, under the circumstances, hardly want to appear as a candidate for any elective office.

But we must return to our story.

Graft is so much in the Philadelphia atmosphere that even a Congressman caught the contagion, and sought to secure damages through the assessment of a Road Jury for an insignificant revision of street grades, to the extent of nearly ten times the original cost of all his holdings and twice their assessed taxable value at the time the award was made.

It is probable that the revision of the grades, instead of damaging him, increased the value of his land materially, a fact, however, that both owner and jury seem to have overlooked.

The history of this attempt to make the city pay many times the original cost of a landed estate for the improvement of the streets that made it marketable and gave it its chief value, is an interesting one. Prior to May 15, 1896, George A. Castor, then a private citizen, but now a member of Congress from the Third Philadelphia District, bought fifty-one lots in the 35th ward, which comprise his principal resident estate, at an average price of \$225.00 per lot, or a trifle less than \$12,000 for the entire purchase. On May 15th of that year he transferred this property to his attorney, W. Nelson West, for two dollars, and the latter on the same day transferred it to Mrs. Kate Castor, wife of the Congressman, in whose name it now stands. The property is said to contain a stone quarry, which has added greatly to the wealth of the owner, but be this as it may, the growth of population in the vicinity of Holmesburg, where the land is located, increased its value at a rapid rate. Mr. Castor's large stone residence, at the time the street grades were revised, three years later, was assessed at \$25,000, forty-two

acres of farm land at \$12,600, and the separate lots at a sufficient amount to bring the total taxable assessment to \$58,375.

The revised ordinance affected but three streets, and the main improvement involved simply the lowering of one driveway five or six feet, and the elevating of another a similar amount. The earth removed from the land that was above the street lines had to be carted but a short distance to fill up that which was below the grade, and at most, probably cost a very insignificant sum. An accommodating Road Jury, however, after taking a year to consider Congressman Castor's claim for damages, reported that his land had been injured to the extent of \$104,745.50, or double the amount of its assessed value! It required an appeal to the courts on the part of the Law Department of the City, and a vigorous contest before a jury of twelve men, to get this dishonest award reduced to \$65,000, which was still several thousand dollars above the assessed taxable valuation of the entire property! Congressman Castor poses as an official public servant, who is unselfishly devoting his life to the service of his country. It is apparent, however, that he has permitted the taxpayers of Philadelphia to provide him a liberal sum which he is at liberty to use if he chooses, for campaign expenses.

A marvelous and unexplained growth in the cost of garbage removal constitutes another item of municipal expenditures in which the evidence of graft is too apparent to be seriously disputed. It is a well known fact that methods of utilizing city garbage, by which the salable products more than cover the cost of collection and manufacture, have been devised, and are in operation in several of the large cities. This practical method of making one hand wash the other has not reached poor, boss-ridden Philadelphia. In proportion as the garbage has grown more valuable, the cost of collecting has increased as the following table will show.



Photo. by Gutekunst, Phila.

ROBERT DORNAN,

A PROMINENT MANUFACTURER AND HIGHLY-RESPECTED CITIZEN,

Who, under oath, charges that the United Gas Improvement Company, through its president, Thomas Dolan, secured the lease of the Philadelphia Gas Works by the corrupt use of money. These charges are denied by Mr. Dolan.

The table covers a six-year period from 1900 to 1905 inclusive, and shows the contract-price paid by the city for the collection of its garbage each year:

Year.	Cost.	Year.	Cost.
1900.....	\$398,500	1903.....	\$516,700
1901.....	440,923	1904.....	536,700
1902.....	488,920	1905.....	560,000

The award for 1905 was given in the face of an offer made in the previous October, by a company represented by the late John D. Pessano, which would have paid the city a material revenue for the garbage, instead of exacting from the taxpayers nearly \$600,000 for its collection, the total difference between the two offers, in the city's favor, amounting to \$718,000. This offer was referred by the Mayor to Councils, and pigeonholed by that delectable body in favor of the old method of advertising for a yearly



MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY (M.S.B.T.)

History: Founded to meet the present missionary needs of the Church, this American community developed from a lay apostolate movement begun in 1909 by Father Thomas A. Judge, C.M. By 1912 some of the Associates were living a community life with private vows. From this group grew the religious congregation which was canonically erected by Rome in 1932, and raised to a pontifical status in 1958.

Purpose: The sisters have continued the development of the lay apostolate movement by which they endeavor to increase their own missionary effectiveness and also prepare lay people to assume their unique place in the ranks of the Church's missionaries. From two hundred mission centers in twenty-three dioceses in the United States and also Latin America, over five

hundred sisters extend their services to the needy and abandoned. The sisters and lay-associates work out from these centers, visiting the homes in the areas of each in an effort to strengthen Christian family life through missionary case-work. They provide religious instruction to shut-ins, retarded, deaf, blind, and conduct mission schools, clinics, a hospital, and other social services.

Spiritual Life: The religious exercises include Holy Mass, one-half hour of meditation, periods of adoration, spiritual reading, and other community prayers and devotions.

Training Program: The one-year postulancy is followed by the canonical novitiate year, and the two-year Sister-Formation program, in which a basic liberal arts college curriculum is taken. This is supplemented by initial courses in specific missionary principles and techniques.

Qualifications:

- * Age: 16 to 30.
- * Completion of high school.
- * Entrance date: August 5.

Habit: The sisters wear a black tailored dress and a white collar with a pin bearing the community emblem.

Write to: Missionary Cenacle
 → 3501 Solly Street
 Philadelphia 36, Pennsylvania

OUR LADY OF (O.L.)

History: The Most Blessed Trinity, founded by Sister J. McVinney, O.L., founded the congregation. After forty years, these sisters received approval on January 1, 1958. The community has been in the State of Rhode

Purpose: The community was founded to work under the guidance of the bishop of the apostolate might arise. The sisters are engaged in home visits and work among the poor. They operate two day centers at home for working women, catechism in seven centers and work with mothers and with children who must be placed in foster homes. They also care for delinquent girls.

Spiritual Life: The religious exercises include Holy Mass, the rosary in English, the rosary and devotions.

Training Program: The sisters receive their formation. Here they are also the novitiate, daily novices closer to Christ their spiritual formation degrees.

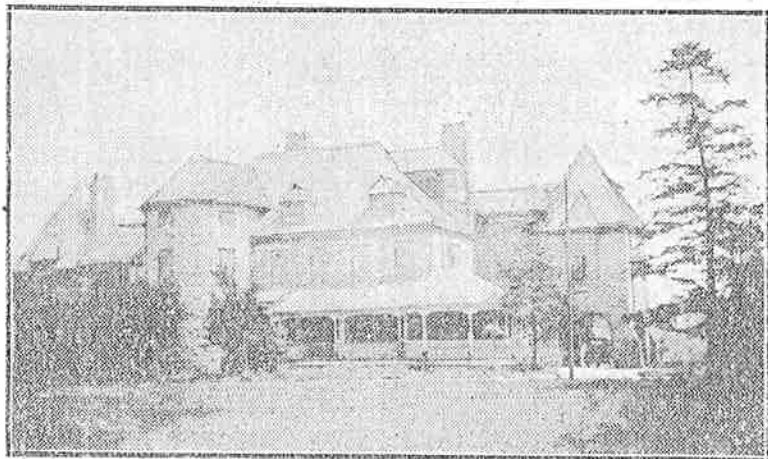
Qualifications:

- * Age: 17 to 30
- * At least a high school education

Habit: The sisters wear a black cape, black veil, and

Write to:

30 C. S. & D. Sept. 16-1932



New Mother Missionary Cenacle of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity, Holmesburg

TRINITARIAN NUNS' MOTHERHOUSE TO BE BLESSED ON SUNDAY

Cardinal Will Officiate at Ceremony in New Home Acquired by Mother Missionary Cenacle at 3501 Solly Street

Holmesburg Property Becomes Central House of Order Since Destruction of Headquarters in Alabama

The formal opening and dedication of the new motherhouse of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity will be held on Sunday, September 18. Mass will be celebrated by His Eminence, at 8 o'clock. Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament will be given on the grounds at 4 P. M. by the Right Rev. Monsignor John J. Bonner, D. D.

The Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity who came to this diocese from the South in May, 1931, have acquired the former Castor estate at Frankford avenue and Solly street, Holmesburg, to be used as their motherhouse and novitiate.

This American Community of Missionary Sisters was founded in Alabama sixteen years ago. The object of their work is the preservation of the Faith in the most abandoned fields in the United States and Puerto Rico. In and out of the homes of the poor, visiting the sick in the city, or out in desolate country districts instructing children in their religion, taking census in crowded tenements these Sisters are to be found busy in their work of charity.

Alabama House Burned

Mother Cenacle of Trinity Nuns Blessed by Cardinal

New Headquarters Will Also Serve as Motherhouse and Novitiate of Order Recently From Southland

Special Work of Religion and Charity Performed by Community for Sick, Poor and Children

After struggles, privations and hardships, not the least of which was the destruction by fire of their motherhouse in the southland, the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity had the joy of assisting at the dedication of their new Mother Missionary Cenacle at Holmesburg last Sunday.

The building, which will be a

Alabama House Burned

Not long before they came to Philadelphia their motherhouse in Alabama burned to the ground leaving them destitute, and homeless. It became necessary for them to look elsewhere to re-establish their motherhouse. Cardinal Dougherty extended to them the hospitality of the diocese and they established themselves temporarily at 5200 Wynnefield avenue, until a more permanent place could be secured. The purpose of these Sisters is well known to the people of Philadelphia through their work at the Catholic Children's Bureau.

The Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity
cordially invite you
Blessed Trinity Motherhouse
Frankford Avenue
Holmesburg
Sunday, September
nineteen hundred

Mass celebrated by His Eminence
Archbishop of Philadelphia
Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament
Right Reverend John J. Bonner

Solly Ave
1913 1/2
6th & Canal (Mines)

C. S. & D. Sept. 23-1932

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C. D. & J. Sept. 23-1932

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The building, which will be a novitiate as well as a motherhouse, was formerly the Castor mansion and is situated on a large tract of ground at Frankford avenue and Solly street. It has been improved and renovated, a chapel has been added, and the necessary alterations for a suitable community house made.

Cardinal Blesses Building

His Eminence, the Most Rev. Archbishop, blessed the building on Sunday at 8 o'clock and celebrated Mass in the chapel. He was assisted by the Rev. Dr. Francis J. Furey and the Rev. Theophane Mulroy, M. S. SS. T., of Washington, D. C. After the Holy Sacrifice had been offered, His Eminence addressed the Sisters, congratulating them upon the acquisition of the property.

A large number of visiting Sisters and the laity assisted at the Mass. The house was then open to the public and during the day hundreds of people from the city and Frankford inspected the building.

Sermon and Benediction

In the afternoon an inspiring sermon was delivered by the founder of the congregation, the Rev. Thomas A. Judge, C. M., M. S. SS. T. Solemn Benediction was given outdoors at an altar erected on the porch. Autumnal flowers and palms made a glowing decoration for the temporary altar. The Right Rev. Monsignor John J. Bonner, D. D., diocesan superintendent of schools, was the celebrant. The Rev. Joseph L. N. Wolfe, S. T. L., was deacon and the Rev. John J. McMenamin was sub-deacon. Brother James, M. S. SS. T., was censor bearer.

This American Community of Missionary Sisters was founded in Alabama sixteen years ago.

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C. D. & J.

Sept. 23-1932

Text of Address by His Eminence at the Dedication

Your Reverend Mother, in view of this special occasion, has just asked me to say a few words; and what should I say except that it has given me the greatest pleasure, my dear Sisters, to find you in possession of so beautiful a property? Your prayers that God might guide you to make a good choice of a Motherhouse have manifestly been heard. I am astonished at the appropriateness of the location, the large and beautiful building and the spacious grounds.

God is giving you, even here below, some reward for the sacrifices you have made, are making and are to make. He has guided your bark into a safe and beautiful haven.

Now that your Congregation has received the approval of our Holy Father, it will doubtless continue to progress, to spread and bear fruit; as it has up to the present. I beg your Rev. Founder here present, your Mother General and each of you to receive my congratulations.

Your prayers, your work, your self-sacrifice should make of this spot

children had it not been that God in mercy has raised up so many Sisters, which devote themselves to various needs; some to education, some to the care of orphans, of some to hospital work and others to social work, which constitutes the main field and your principal contribution to Religion. You are the latest flowering of the Church in this country. You have been providently raised up to deal with problems arising from the dangers of modern times, particularly the safe-guarding care of children and young women beset with temptations and lured by love of pleasure.

New Base of Supplies

After making known to you your practical experience the needs of the Southland, God has brought you to this section of our country that you may make it your base of supplies in vocations and material help. On the principle that an army can not succeed unless it keeps in contact with its base of supplies, your Sisters have been led by the Holy Spirit of God to locate in the northeastern section of the United States, in which Catholicity is strong, means plentiful and vocations more numerous.

It only remains for me, my dear Sisters, to repeat what I have told you on other occasions, that it will be a pleasure for me to co-operate with you and to do my utmost to help you. Your Congregation has been