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## REPAIRING THE MYTH AND THE REALITY OF PHILADELPHIA'S PUBLIC SQUARES, 1800-1850

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Figure 1. William Penn and Thomas Holme. *Portraiture of the City of Philadelphia* . . . An early nineteenth-century reproduction of Penn's innovative city plan of 1683, circa 1812. (The Library Company of Philadelphia)

The notion persists that by the time Philadelphia achieved political and economic prominence in the mid-eighteenth century, it was a “wholesome grid of streets and squares.” City maps perpetuated this myth when in fact the immediate needs of the new colony had precluded methodical building. From the start Philadelphians struggled to balance the demands of private entrepreneurship and public works within changing systems of land allocation and governance. Most important, William Penn never obtained a legal warrant to confirm that city government had jurisdiction over the squares. As settlement expanded, with no authority charged with their improvement, the squares became vague, marginalized spaces vulnerable to abuse. By the first decades of the nineteenth century, when the city finally responded to residents’ concerns about public health and the preservation of Penn’s legacy, Philadelphians faced the challenge of repairing landscapes that had never really existed. When at long last, Philadelphia’s city councils did take a direct hand in the systematic improvement of Penn’s squares, the city assumed a pioneering but still underappreciated role in the history of public park development in the United States.

When William Penn published his city plan, called *A Portraiture of the city of Philadelphia*, in 1683, he wanted to assure prospective settlers and investors that the new colony of Pennsylvania would be anchored by a healthy and well-designed commercial center.<sup>1</sup> The plan presented a tidy two-mile square grid of streets oriented around five public squares, four of which were to be landscaped, as stated in a commentary penned by Surveyor-General Thomas Holme, as a system of interlinked parks. Penn believed that well-ordered public spaces, in addition to firm laws and responsible government, would ensure virtuous behavior, for it was through their judicious comportment in public that conscientious Christians set a proper example. Just as the order and regularity presented by the city’s streets might promote social discipline, so too the landscaped squares would provide public counterparts to the salubrious spaces of the private garden.<sup>2</sup>

The notion persists that by the time Philadelphia achieved political and economic prominence in the mid-eighteenth century, it was a “wholesome grid of streets and squares.”<sup>3</sup> City maps perpetuated this myth when in fact the immediate needs of the new colony had precluded methodical building. From the start Philadelphians struggled to balance the demands of private entrepreneurship and public works within changing systems of land allocation and governance. Throughout this period the city was in constant flux, the center always shifting as the eastern sections of the street grid were developed. The public squares in particular were compromised because William Penn never obtained a legal warrant to confirm that city government had jurisdiction over the squares.<sup>4</sup> As

settlement expanded, with no authority charged with their improvement, the squares became vague, marginalized spaces vulnerable to abuse.

During the eighteenth century, Philadelphia was widely admired as a model Enlightenment city. The city's seminal place in the creation of the United States of America enhanced this reputation. However, visitors also complained about the dearth of attractive public green spaces. The Marquis de Chastellux, visiting in 1780, noted that though the city offered all of "the most useful establishments," such as hospitals, workhouses, and prisons, "it is so deficient in what might be serve for the enjoyment of life, that there is not a single public walk."<sup>5</sup> Accustomed to the convivial spaces of Paris, Chastellux regarded the absence of public promenades as indicative of a kind of parochial repression that mitigated the city's future as a cosmopolitan center. German visitor Johann Schoepf, who arrived in 1783, concurred: "It is a pity that when the town was laid off, there was such a total neglect to provide open squares, which lend an especial beauty to great squares, and grassed after the manner of the English, or set with shrubbery, are very pleasing to the eye."<sup>6</sup>

By the 1820s however, city government finally had begun to rehabilitate the squares by removing inappropriate intrusions and landscaping the spaces much as Penn might have intended. In this essay, I shall chronicle the damage done to Penn's squares over the

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course of the eighteenth century and how Philadelphians had to "repair" not only the physical condition of these spaces but also their symbolic role within Penn's plan. Three factors conjoined to motivate this process. First, public health concerns, heightened by yellow fever epidemics during the 1790s, prompted a reevaluation of the value of managed green spaces within the city. Second, bruised by the decline in political status suffered when both state and federal governments left the city by 1800, civic boosters used the rehabilitation of the squares to affirm Penn's plan and to promote Philadelphia as a modern well-designed and green city.<sup>7</sup> And third, as the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence approached, the public squares acquired historical significance, signaled in 1825 when they were renamed for national heroes: Washington (southeast), Franklin (northeast), Rittenhouse (southwest), Logan (northwest), and Penn (center). At the same time the restoration and renaming of the State House and its adjacent garden "Independence Square" enhanced the importance of the squares by allusively inserting this space into Penn's plan.<sup>8</sup>

### The Moorfields Model

The *Portraiture* depicted a rectilinear grid of streets subdivided into four quadrants, defined by the intersection of Broad Street, running north-south, and High (now Market) Street, running east-west, both one hundred feet wide. The intersection of Broad and High Streets opened out into a central square at the corners of which Penn planned to build "houses for public affairs, as a meeting house, assembly or state House, market house, school-house, and several other buildings for public concerns." Four additional eight-acre squares were described, one in each of the surrounding quadrants, the east and west pairs

linked by north-south streets. Holme left the center square blank, but drew trees around each of the other four squares because these were to be laid out “for the like uses, as the Moor-fields in London.”<sup>9</sup>

This plan updated traditional town planning models to reflect newer theories of healthful and fashionable urban living. The grid of streets was an ancient form particularly well suited to military and commercial settlements where ease and efficiency of movement was important. Access to or from either river to the central market was direct and blocks could be laid out quickly and efficiently; in theory the street grid might be extended as the population increased. Holme had lived in Ireland and likely adapted the plan from the standard castral grid around a central parade square used at British colonial outposts such as Londonderry and Limerick.<sup>10</sup> Penn too had lived in Ireland and was familiar with the military model. During the 1670s, he had served as a trustee for the colony of West Jersey and so would have known Richard Noble’s axial plan for the new town of Burlington, though this did not include public squares.<sup>11</sup>

In concept, the four squares were not derived from London’s residential squares, which were fairly new in the 1680s. Nor is there direct evidence that Penn saw any of the rebuilding plans devised by Christopher Wren, Robert Hooke, or other planners after the Great Fire in 1666 that featured sizeable public squares, though he did copy post-Fire guidelines such as wider streets and the use of fire-resistant building materials such as brick instead of wood. Fifteen years separated these proposals and Penn’s acquisition of Pennsylvania. In that time, though significant building reforms were instituted, the basic shape of London actually changed very little. Because of pressures to resume business as soon as possible after the Fire as well as financial constraints, and fear among court and city officials of public repercussions if large-scale expropriations and resettlement were attempted, much of the city was rebuilt on existing lots along old streets.<sup>12</sup>

Penn’s model for the public squares was the Moorfields, an area owned by the City of London located just north of the city walls that was laid out with walks “in the fashion of a cross,” benches and more than three hundred trees as early as the 1610s. An early pamphlet describing the “pleasant walkes of Moor-fields,” praised the new “garden of this City . . . [a] pleasurable place of sweet ayres for Cittizens to walk in.” The author reports that fences were set up around the fields and strict rules instituted to prevent abuse: visitors who damaged trees or urinated in public could be sentenced to serve time in stocks set up near the entrance. Moorfields proved so popular that the city later financed its expansion and further improvement.<sup>13</sup> Mention of Moorfields communicated to Penn’s fellow dissenters that the public squares would be preserved and protected by the civil government as public parks for healthful recreation, quite unlike the monumental plazas envisioned by Evelyn and Wren, the grand architectural set-pieces created for aristocratic patrons such as at Covent Garden, or even the commons of colonial New England towns.<sup>14</sup>

However, Moorfields was a self-contained set of spaces with no direct visual or spatial connection to the nearby City of London or its immediate surroundings. By comparison, Philadelphia’s squares were interconnected within the street grid much like the tidy rectilinear parterres and walkways of a formal garden. Each square defined a neighborhood yet

was related in form and scale to the whole by a street connecting each pair, east and west, laid out symmetrically along Broad Street. Even as the city was built up, these connecting streets could provide a perspective to the adjoining square. And the squares were linked to spaces beyond the city, for Philadelphia had no walls or palisade—the pacific intentions of its founder left the town exposed to the surrounding country, with long avenues running from river to river forming the north boundary, at which the northernmost squares were sited, and the south, from which one street led to the center of the southern squares.<sup>15</sup> As the surrounding wilderness was cleared, farms and estates encircling the city would extend the greenery of the squares.

### **Penn's Squares in the Eighteenth Century**

The Pennsylvania Assembly and subsequent state governments complied with Philadelphia's 1701 city charter and opened principal streets according to the plan. But because Penn never provided a formal warrant officially assigning the five squares to the city, these could neither be commandeered by the proprietary nor sold, creating predictable disputes over jurisdiction and use.<sup>16</sup> The city did gain jurisdiction over the southeast square in 1707 from the Commissioners of Property (appointed by Penn) but then designated part of the area for use as a potters' field.<sup>17</sup> Though the mayor and Corporation had the authority "to enclose, fence, plant, build on, or by any ways or means whatsoever that will improve the aforesaid piece of ground," they made no such changes, and within a short time other sections of the square were in use as pasture and a cattle market. Free and enslaved Africans were permitted to bury their dead in another section and gathered there on holidays and fair days, "to the number of one thousand," to bring offerings of food and rum and dance "after the manner of their several nations on Africa, and speaking and singing in their native dialects."<sup>18</sup>

In 1741, Governor Thomas Penn assumed control of the northeast square by leasing a section to the German Reform Church for a burying ground. In 1762 the city protested the governor's actions by hiring publishers Matthew Clarkson and Mary Biddle to issue a new map of the city with "the Publick Squares laid down in the original Plan of the City, . . . so described that the Claim of the Inhabitants of the said City may not be prejudiced."<sup>19</sup> To reinforce the point that Philadelphians were trying to respect Penn's plan, the mapmakers included a vignette of the "Portraiture" and drew trees in both the northeast and southeast squares, each of which is clearly labeled: "Publick Square According to Holme's Plan."

The Clarkson-Biddle map reveals how commerce had undermined the *Portraiture*. As trade increased and the city's population burgeoned, instead of growing to the west, settlement expanded to the north and south along the Delaware. Residents also cut short streets and alleyways into the city blocks, further disrupting the regularity of the plan.<sup>20</sup> When the map was printed, the eastern squares were still on the outskirts of the center city, though the southeast square is somewhat less isolated because of the presence of the State House and other institutional buildings that clustered near Chestnut Street. There is no sign of the western or central squares because forest still covered much of the western

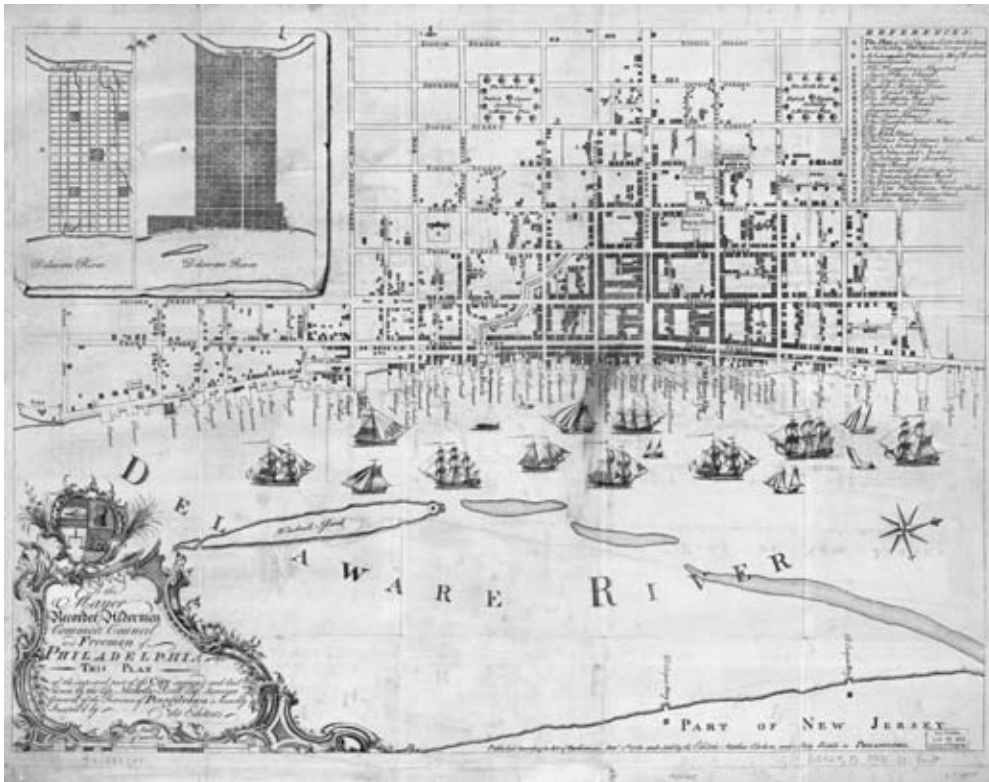


Figure 2. Matthew Clarkson and Mary Biddle, . . . *Plan of the improved part of the city* . . . Dedicated to the mayor and city councils, this map was based on surveys made by surveyor Nicholas Scull earlier in the century, 1762. (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division)

district. One elderly resident recalled seeing only “lofty forests and swamps” as he walked from Gloria Dei (Old Swede’s) Church at the Delaware to Ninth and South Streets as late as 1726. By the 1750s the forest edge was at Eighth Street and Market Street with only a narrow road leading to the scattered settlements along the Schuylkill.<sup>21</sup> The insecure status of the squares is reflected in a second vignette that depicts a 1733 map attributed to Surveyor-General Benjamin Eastbourne in which the five spaces are erased altogether.<sup>22</sup>

Despite this cartographic protest, the eastern squares continued to be used for burials. In 1777, what had come to be called the “Strangers’ Burial Ground” at the south-east square was expanded to accommodate the bodies of Revolutionary soldiers who had died of smallpox and camp fever. John Adams reported, “that upwards of two thousand soldiers had been buried there, . . . disease has destroyed ten men for us where the sword of the enemy has killed one!”<sup>23</sup> Members of the African community later made efforts to protect their section of the square. In 1782, a delegation representing “the Black People of the City and Suburbs,” petitioned for permission to fence it in and in 1790, the Free African Society applied to lease the burial ground for a cemetery but were unsuccessful.<sup>24</sup> The German Reform congregation continued to bury their dead in the northeast square.

## The State-House Yard

Philadelphia's slow and dispersed pattern of growth most dramatically undermined the form and purpose of the center square. A meetinghouse was built there in the 1690s but was abandoned because it was deemed too far away. By the 1730s, the area was an unfenced "commons" used for recreation and civic festivals. From midcentury, a gallows stood just to the south. Contributing to the desultory development of the center square area was the fact that another space had been co-opted as the site for "buildings for public concerns" in 1732 when the Provincial Assembly voted to build a new State House at Sixth and Chestnut Streets. Designed by Andrew Hamilton to resemble a substantial country house, when completed in 1744 this dignified Georgian building came to symbolize both the authority of the British tradition and the growing self-determination of the English-speaking American colonies. The State-House yard was the principal gathering place in the city: polls were erected there during elections, and most famously, John Nixon read the Declaration of Independence there on July 8, 1776.<sup>25</sup>

The State-House yard also was the site of the first landscaped public park within the built area of the city. As early as 1735 the Provincial Assembly had ordered that the area south of the State House be "enclosed and remain a public green and walk forever."<sup>26</sup> Substantial landscaping did not occur, however, until 1784 when merchant Samuel Vaughan, a member of the American Philosophical Society and close friend of Benjamin Franklin, volunteered to make improvements. Vaughan recognized the symbolic potential of the space and planned an arboretum of specimen trees and shrubs gathered from each of the thirteen colonies so as to create a garden of "unity" within the State House precincts.<sup>27</sup> When the space proved too small, Vaughan instead planted one hundred elm saplings in double rows lining the principal gravel walk, as well as holly bushes, and set up benches to create "a place of general resort as a delightful promenade . . . something in itself altogether unprecedented, in a public way, in the former simpler habits of our citizens."<sup>28</sup>

Improvements at the State House may have prompted more than 180 Philadelphians to sign a petition in 1792 demanding that the city remove pools of stagnant water, "excrement and . . . filth" that covered the eastern squares. Not only did these decrepit spaces breed disease and devalue adjacent real estate, the petitioners contended, they maligned the memory of the Founder, and embarrassed the new nation. The city could correct this by laying out attractive walks and planting trees that would encourage exercise and "conduce to the health of the city, by the increased salu[bri]ty of the air; for it is an established fact that trees and vegetation have this happy effect." The petition was read in council and sent to a committee for further investigation. But no further action was taken, perhaps because several of the committee members were voted out of office soon thereafter.<sup>29</sup>

The petition reflected growing concerns about public health and the awareness of a connection between the spread of disease and the city's water supply. A year later, a yellow fever epidemic of unprecedented virulence struck the city. After another epidemic struck in 1797, the city established a public water system by adopting architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe's proposal that fresh water be pumped into the city from the Schuylkill.<sup>30</sup> The city

took this opportunity to exert authority over the center square by selecting it for the new pumping station and reservoir and to prevent the state legislature, which held jurisdiction over streets, from subdividing the square as Broad Street was opened and Market Street extended. As city council member Thomas Cope recorded, he and his colleagues deployed a powerful image to promote the proposal:

We had procured Holmes's [*sic*] plan of the City, in which the draftsman had placed a public building at the confluence of the street in the very spot contemplated for the Engine House. By this & other means, every difficulty was made to vanish & the Council, with the exception of a single individual, adopted the report.<sup>31</sup>

### The Revival and Decline of Centre Square

Innovative technology provided the unexpected means for reconstituting the physical and symbolic integrity of the center square. The distribution of Schuylkill water into the city acted like a transfusion, renewing the physical and psychological health of a city traumatized by disease. By erecting a public works facility at the square, the city neatly finessed the persistent neglect and disorder that had dogged the centerpiece of Penn's plan. Benjamin Henry Latrobe's elegant neoclassical pump house energized Philadelphia's symbolic center as the source of progressive utility and municipal benevolence. The committee in charge of the waterworks planted poplar trees to create "shady walks already [to] afford a healthy retreat" and commissioned sculptor William Rush to design a fountain for the square.<sup>32</sup> The setting, historian Andrew Schocket observes, enabled Philadelphians to imagine that new technologies "could be harnessed in beautiful, bucolic, artistic ways that belied the changes in their city and society that they may have found more disturbing."<sup>33</sup>

But the symbolic and practical value of public works could be fleeting. From the beginning, Latrobe's water distribution system was a technical and logistical challenge. Frequent alterations had to be made to the steam-driven pumps. The reservoirs contained only a half hour's supply and the steam engines, as well as the wood distribution pipes, required weekly repairs that had to be made at night.<sup>34</sup> As the system of mains expanded and service improved, the increasing number of subscribers exacerbated these problems. Operating expenses surpassed estimates and recurrences of yellow fever intensified calls for upgrades. By 1811, the city was looking to relocate the waterworks to a larger, more efficient, and more reliable facility.

And a more easily regulated location. Notwithstanding genteel plantings and Rush's fountain, Centre Square never entirely lost its unruly character because it lay at the outskirts of what might be called Philadelphia's "entertainment district." The Lombardy Garden, at Fifteenth and Market, offered fireworks displays and "delicious turtle soup." Pantomimes were staged at the Tivoli, or Columbian Garden, on the north side of Market near Thirteenth Street. The largest public garden at this time was Vauxhall that occupied the block bounded by Broad, Juniper, Sansom, and Walnut Streets, two blocks south and east of the square. In 1811, proprietor C. J. Delacroix staged a thirteen-act fireworks display to celebrate the Fourth of July in an open area west of the center square. Later a





Figure 3. William Birch, *The Water Works in Centre Square, Philadelphia*. This was the penultimate view in Birch's celebrated *The City of Philadelphia*, the first album of city views published in the United States, 1800. Engraving. (The Library Company of Philadelphia)

new proprietor, John Scotti, added a music hall and promenades lined with decorative shrubs and trees.<sup>35</sup>

While the standard of these performances was relatively high, audience behavior was not always restrained. Disaster struck Vauxhall in September of 1819 when one Monsieur Michel was engaged to make a balloon ascent. Those who could afford the dollar admission entered the garden to observe the balloon inflation while a larger crowd—perhaps as many as thirty thousand—gathered in the surrounding streets. When the inflation process took too long, the crowds, fueled by liquor, grew impatient. A rock was thrown that tore the balloon and rumors circulated that guards had beaten a boy trying to sneak in. Crowds then broke through the fences and “went deliberately to work, breaking the lamps, summer houses, windows of the temple etc.” and setting fires. Within fifteen minutes Vauxhall lay in ruins.<sup>36</sup>

By this date, the real and symbolic integrity of the square had faded because the city had decided to build a new waterworks facility at Fairmount, north and west of the city limits on the Schuylkill. In 1815, Latrobe's pump house was taken offline and boarded up. The next year, after a deranged man attacked Rush's fountain, “Civis” complained in a long

letter to *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, that the square was a site of moral as well as physical corruption. Sunday excursions were no longer pleasant when respectable citizens might be “annoyed by rude and profane noises, or by the disgusting spectacle of human bodies lying on the ground, in a state of torpid stupefaction.” “Civis” called upon the city to demolish the pump house and remove “that ugly darksome wood, the haunt of profligacy and the covert of danger and blood.” A proposal was advanced that the American Philosophical Society rent the pump house for use as an astronomical observatory, but as the Society debated this offer, the building stood empty and shuttered.<sup>37</sup>

Self-appointed guardians of the public morals called for stricter policing. In 1823, mayor Robert Wharton issued a proclamation condemning “scenes of debauchery, gambling, and drunkenness, with many other acts of excess and riots which annually take place on the 4th of July, in and about the booths, tents and other unlawful restaurants on the public streets and grounds of the city” and banned booths and tents at Centre Square.<sup>38</sup> Efforts to find some adaptive reuse for the pump house were revived in the mid-1820s and William Rush developed a plan for “improving and ornamenting the square.”<sup>39</sup> When the American Philosophical Society declined the offer of an observatory, councils entertained a proposal to turn the building into a public library. However this was tabled and in late 1826, the city demolished the pump house and cut down the poplars. In 1829, Centre Square vanished when the state ordered that Market and Broad Streets be cut directly through the square to create four smaller spaces at the city center.<sup>40</sup>

## Rehabilitating the Outer Squares

Though short-lived, the celebrity of the Centre Square waterworks did energize a campaign to develop the other four squares as they were originally intended. In his 1811 guidebook, *The Picture of Philadelphia*, physician James Mease celebrated advances in public services such as stricter health laws, expanded street cleaning, the organization of the city’s volunteer fire companies, as well as the waterworks system. Most important, Mease could report that deaths from yellow fever and other diseases were declining steadily and he claimed that mortality rates in Philadelphia were “considerably” less than those of New York.<sup>41</sup>

Still, upon some subjects, Mease admitted, “he has forbore to speak, because he found that in considering them, he could not be moderate.” Chief among these was the appalling condition of Penn’s squares, “the prostitution of which, in the thickly settled parts of the city, and the neglect to enclose and plant the rest, in order to prepare for the comfort and health of a population, rapidly increasing, loudly call for reprehension.” The neglect of the squares reflected badly on Philadelphia’s image. More important, this neglect suggested contempt for William Penn’s pioneering vision. “European nations will hear with astonishment,” Mease lamented, “that out of the five squares, expressly set apart, by the benevolent founder of the city, for the purpose of public walks, and the salutary recreation of future generations, not one has been exclusively appropriated to its destined object!”<sup>42</sup>

Mease’s lament was really a rallying cry for by this time rehabilitation efforts were underway. In 1801, the city had sued the German Reformed Church to suspend burials in

the northeast square, though the suit was dropped when the congregation agreed to surrender title to any sections not yet in use. In 1802, when citizens petitioned that a portion of the southeast square be fenced and trees planted, a joint committee of city councils advised that “public walks in a city” were desirable and seconded this request. But the city could not fund extensive improvements and continued to use the square as a pasture and dump.<sup>43</sup>

Complicating these efforts was the rising conflict between city councils and the state legislature regarding jurisdiction over streets and other public spaces.<sup>44</sup> In 1805, the legislature passed a law empowering the Court of Quarter Sessions to open streets and in theory to determine the fate of the squares, prompting councils to petition that the squares (including the State-House yard) be exempted. The petition is noteworthy because it specifically addresses the importance of the squares as *recreational* spaces, where “opportunities are afforded for those manly exercises which give innocent relaxation from laborious occupations, invigorate the constitution and improve the health especially of such as, by the nature of their pursuits in manufactures or the mechanic arts, are compelled to inactivity and sedentary habits of life.” According to the petition, the “extraordinary healthfulness” of Philadelphia’s children that “far surpassed what is usual in other cities,” could be attributed directly to “the wholesome influence of the said open Squares and Yard upon the atmosphere, purifying it and mitigating the effects of extreme heat in the summer season.”<sup>45</sup> But this apparently fell on deaf ears and for more than a decade both councils dealt with the squares on an ad hoc basis.

The decline of Centre Square after 1812 put the future of the other squares at risk because the legislature needed only to point to the years of neglect to validate their erasure. Even within city government, some regarded the squares as available real estate. An advertisement of 1814 announced that the city would entertain proposals to lease the southeast, northeast, and northwest square.<sup>46</sup> In an effort to prevent this, in 1816, councilman John Leaming proposed that the four outer squares be renamed for national heroes—Washington, Franklin, Columbus, and Penn—and that memorials “in marble and bronze” be erected to these heroes (though he did not specify the squares to which each name should be assigned).<sup>47</sup> This proposal was tabled but plans gained momentum. In 1816, councils denied a request from the German Reformed Church for a ninety-nine year lease extension. By 1817, the southeast square had acquired the name Washington, at least informally; real estate advertisements noted that this square “has lately been improved.”<sup>48</sup>

Thanks likely to lobbying by Philadelphia’s representatives, in 1821 the legislature drafted a bill to rescind oversight of street openings to the Court of Quarter Sessions. When this bill seemed in danger of failing, the city councils forwarded yet another remonstrance to Harrisburg. Again they invoked Penn’s original intention for the squares “to which alone they have always been deemed applicable,” and their value as recreational spaces, now made even more important by the “daily” increase in population:

The public squares are regarded not only as among the greatest ornaments of the city, but when properly improved and planted, as of infinite importance to its general

health, to those persons who by their occupations or want of fortune are deprived of the advantages of a Country residence they afford during the summer months the only healthful places of recreation and of exercise in a pure and salubrious atmosphere. [T]he application of them to this purpose is a matter of common right; a species of common property in which every Citizen has a share, and a deep interest in preserving it unimpaired.<sup>49</sup>

When the bill passed, city councils were obliged to make good on their promises. Three-member standing joint committees were created to oversee improvements, beginning with the northeast and southeast squares and the State-House yard. In May of 1825, councils passed a bill that revised Leaming's 1816 naming proposal. With the exception of Washington, the men now commemorated were more closely identified with Philadelphia: [William] Penn (center), [George] Washington (southeast), [Benjamin] Franklin (northeast), [David] Rittenhouse (southwest), and [James] Logan (northwest). In 1829, ordinances confirmed the authority of the standing committees to coordinate the hiring and oversight of groundskeepers who would undertake landscape improvements with the City Commissioners.<sup>50</sup>

The city had ceased burials in the Strangers' Burying Ground at the southeast square in the late 1790s. Various improvements to drainage were made during the next decade and by 1816, a carpenter shop had been removed, the cattle market relocated and the area leveled with fill. In 1817, gardener Andrew Gillespie executed a landscape plan supplied by artist George Bridport. Gillespie created "a handsome and recreative promenade" with thirty-foot wide diagonal walks interspersed with circular planting areas. Fifty varieties of trees were planted, "a large proportion of which are from distant parts of the Union, [including] *Prunus* . . . introduced by Lewis and Clark from the Rocky Mountains." "Hence instruction with respect to our own productions is placed before the public," the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society reported, "and, at the same time, it is ascertained what trees are best adapted to our immediate climate, salubrity is diffused throughout the neighborhood and to the city generally, and recreation is afforded to the assiduous citizen, where he may view four hundred trees in the midst of a populous and busy city."<sup>51</sup> By 1840, the tree plantings had matured. "[T]he lindens, maples, horse chesnuts [*sic*] & oaks are the finest and the most beautiful trees I ever saw; [I] was particularly struck by one stately horse chesnut [*sic*], now in full flower, and the willow oaks," wrote diarist Sidney George Fisher. "Every year adds to their effect as they are yet young. The quantity of trees in squares & in the streets is a great charm in Phila: & combined with the cleanliness and neatness for which it is remarkable, make it the most agreeable city summer residence in the country."<sup>52</sup>

In 1824, a Citizens' Washington Monument Fund proposed commissioning a memorial to the first president in Washington Square. City councils approved a design submitted by architect William Strickland for a 120-foot-high structure that mimicked the "famous choragic monument of Thrasylus at Athens." But the project failed to attract funding. On the eve of Washington's centennial in 1832, another committee revived the

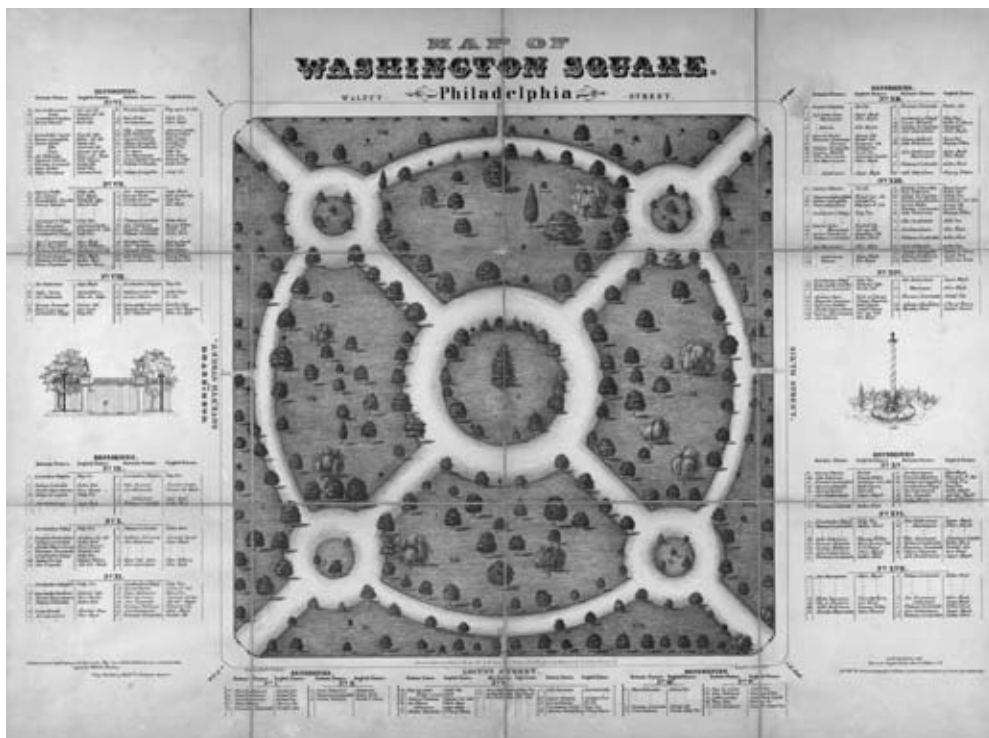


Figure 4. Thomas Sinclair after M. Schmitz. *Map of Washington Square, Philadelphia*. The map includes names of all the trees planted in the newly landscaped square as well as the design for a monument to George Washington that was never realized, 1843. Lithograph. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania)

project. A cornerstone was laid in the square early in 1833, but this committee also was “mortified by the hesitation and indifference with which their requests were met.” Nonetheless, Philadelphians did not abandon the monument plan. Several other proposals were ventured before the monument finally was erected at another location late in the century.<sup>53</sup>

During the same period, the northeast (now Franklin) square also was upgraded. From 1821 to 1825, the mayor approved more than four thousand dollars in improvements. Trees were planted and gravel walks laid out following a plan drawn up by sculptor and city councilman William Rush. When the German Reformed Congregation again resisted requests to vacate the area, councils sued and the case was brought to the state supreme court as *Commonwealth versus Alburger* in 1836. Prosecuting attorney William Meredith successfully argued that a plan—in this case the *Portraiture*—was sufficient to establish the dedication of land for public use, thereby circumventing William Penn’s failure to formally transfer title. The court also nullified Thomas Penn’s 1741 agreement with the congregation. The newly appointed Commissioner of City Property ordered the congregation to remove fences but granted that the city would not “disturb the remains of any of the bodies which have been interred in the Square, but if any of them are desired by their friends to be removed, every facility will be afforded for the purpose.”<sup>54</sup> By the

mid-1830s, the square had been landscaped and planted, and a fountain erected at its center.<sup>55</sup>

The city's persistently slow pace of growth would delay improvement of the western squares. As late as the 1790s the area around the southwest square was "open commons, clothed with short grass for cows and swine . . . Roads traversed the commons at the convenience of the traveler, and brick kilns and their ponds were the chief enclosures or settlements that you saw."<sup>56</sup> In 1807 residents living west of Broad Street petitioned the state to secede and be exempted from taxes because the city had failed to provide adequate services. "Our situation is now deplorable. Our streets are worked into a mere quicksand; our foot walks are destroyed, so that communication with the market seems almost impossible; and we are insulted by the calls of the tax-gatherer for moneys from which we derive no benefit." The petition was denied. Conditions remained poor for several decades, despite the increase in the volume of shipping on the Schuylkill and commercial development in the district because city councils repeatedly insisted that the population was not yet large enough to warrant major expenditures from a limited municipal budget.<sup>57</sup>

Chronic budget shortfalls often forced the city to rely on assistance from private citizens. "What has very much contributed to the great extent of pavements during the last few years, has been, the enterprise, or, if you choose, the calculating spirit of some of our citizens," *The Port-Folio* reported in 1818, "who, in order to procure pavements in front of their property, before the regular period arrived, at which they would be made by the public, have loaned the money to the councils, free of interest, for such a term as would be likely not to make them a public burthen [*sic*] before their regular turn." Privately funded loans financed the paving of several major arteries including Chestnut west of Broad, Race Street as far west as Broad and High (Market) Street west to Schuylkill Sixth (present-day Seventeenth). By this date High (Market) Street was built up as far as Centre Square and partially built up as far as the Schuylkill; Chestnut was built up as far as Twelfth, paved as far as Schuylkill Seventh, and all of the major streets running north and south as far west as 11th as well as most intermediary streets were paved in whole or in part "according to the extent of the improvements."<sup>58</sup>

In 1816, the city had agreed to fence the southwest square when residents supplied a loan of \$800 for three years without interest. Councils also recommended that "those parts not used for particular purposes should be tilled to destroy the weeds with which it is overgrown, and laid down with grass as soon as possible."<sup>59</sup> Two years later residents petitioned the city again to stop dumping and drain the area. Plans to erect a "handsome fence" and plant trees in what was now Rittenhouse Square were pending by 1832. In 1840, a joint committee of councils approved a request by the American Philosophical Society to erect an observatory at the square, "believing that the great objects of the public squares will not be interfered with by the erection of an observatory upon one of them, and that such building might be regarded as a proper monument to the distinguished American whose name has been given to the Southwestern Square." The councilmen's motives were not altogether altruistic, for the society was expected to pay for this new

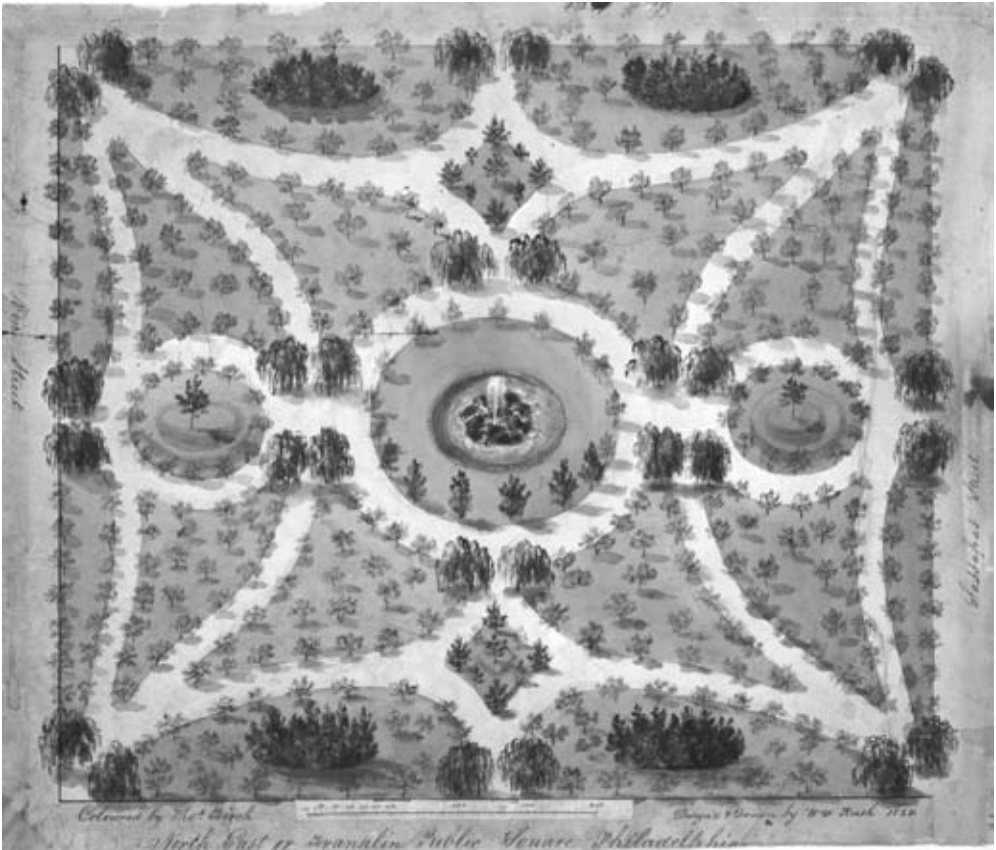


Figure 5. William Rush and Thomas Birch, *North East or Franklin Public Square*. Rush, best known as a sculptor, also was a member of the subcommittee of city councils charged with overseeing improvements to the square, 1825. Watercolor. (The Library Company of Philadelphia)

facility and any other improvements to the site. The society withdrew its request and the bill was repealed in 1842. An iron fence was erected around the square in 1852.<sup>60</sup>

From 1821 until the later 1830s, the northwest or Logan Square was leased as pasture to the Orphans' Society. The last hanging took place there in 1823. In the 1840s, the area was leveled to make way for lawns and tree-lined walks, and a wood fence was erected. Access also was limited to owners of adjacent houses who paid for curbing and paving. An ordinance of 1842 made it an offense to drive or take into Logan, Penn, or Rittenhouse squares any "horse, cow, cart, wagon, carriage or wheelbarrow, except by permission, or place any wood, coal, rubbish, carrion, or offensive matter within either [*sic*] of the squares, or to climb on the trees, fences or gates . . . or to dig up the soil or injure the grass, or to 'run or walk over or lie on the same.'" The rising status of the neighborhood was confirmed in 1852 when the wood palings were replaced with a wrought iron fence.<sup>61</sup>

### The State House and Yard Restored

Paralleling the improvement of Penn's squares was the restoration of the State House and yard. Soon after the state and federal governments vacated the building in 1799 and 1800,



Figure 6. J. T. Bowen, *View of the Fountain in Franklin Square*. Fountains in the squares advertised the city's progressive municipal water supply system, 1838. Lithograph. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania)

artist and impresario Charles Willson Peale stepped forward with a proposal to move his art and natural history collections from Philosophical Hall. He also offered to commission Latrobe to design a museum building for the southern edge of the State House garden. This proposal was rejected but in 1802 the legislature did grant Peale permission to take over the second floor and the east room on the first floor of the State House on the condition that he supervise the building and grounds.<sup>62</sup> Peale's museum would remain there until 1827. He seems to have been less than attentive to the garden, however, which he gave over to his menagerie. Soon the area was "dissolute and tavern frequenters . . . congregated in it to such an extent that the more respectable citizens refused to walk there after the shadows of evening had fallen." Peale apparently assumed that the city would pay for maintenance and in 1804 requested that new benches be installed and the walkways repaired. But such efforts "lost credit; the seats were removed, and loungers were spoken of as trespassers; but the remedy came too late; good company had deserted it, and the tide of fashion did not again set in its favor."<sup>63</sup> By 1815, a fiction writer described the dilapidated garden in stark contrast to the city's progressive improvements. While visiting Philadelphia, the hero of "Clermont Herbert, or Presentiment" expresses his admiration for the waterworks and a new bridge over the Schuylkill but asks his host, "how came you to suffer the State House garden to fall into decline? Surely it is one of the



ornaments of your city.” His host acknowledges that the yard is not what it once was, “it has lost its good name as well as its beauty: it was once a charming place . . . set thick with clumps of shrubs and low trees, but the boys have so destroyed it, that now it pains me to pass the place.”<sup>64</sup>

The decline of the State-House yard mirrored the vulnerability of the State House itself. On at least three occasions city councils had to prevent the legislature from demolishing the building and subdividing the yard for development. By 1812, the city hired Robert Mills to replace the original wings and piazzas with two-story fireproof structures to house the county courts and other departments until a new city hall could be built. The next year, when the legislature advanced another proposal for demolition, councils protested: “The spot which the Bill proposes to cover with private buildings is hallowed . . . by many strong and impressive public Acts . . . which embrace the whole United States and which have given birth to the only free Republic the world has seen.” Councils reminded legislators that the original legislation demarcating the State-House yard had stipulated that this “remain a public green and walk forever” and that by providing air circulation in an open green space, the yard benefited public health.<sup>65</sup>

The legislature raised the threat of demolition and subdivision yet again in 1816 as part of a proposal to finance the new capitol building in Harrisburg by selling off lots in and around the yard. City and county offices could remain in Mills’s new wings, but a street would be opened through the middle of the square. Fortunately, Philadelphia financier Nicholas Biddle was at that time a state senator and added a provision to the legislation that gave the city the option to purchase the property for \$70,000. Editor William Duane condemned the legislature’s questionable priorities specifically by invoking the historical significance of the site. “[I]n Pennsylvania, under the *Gothic mist of ignorance and vice*, by which it is now governed—everything is to be *pulled down*. . . . In the spirit of ancient times, or of that virtue which ought to govern at all times, the building in which the *Declaration of Independence* was deliberated and determined, would obtain veneration the most sensible and endearing, as a monument of that splendid event; but this is not the spirit of the rulers of Pennsylvania now—the *state house must be sold*—for everything now in political affairs is *barter and sale*.” The city levied a poll tax to raise the money and took possession of the State House and yard in 1818.<sup>66</sup>

Similar concerns motivated city councils to repair the State House garden. In 1819, city councils authorized a \$500 appropriation, stipulating that no changes be made to the site’s general form or plan because “time has given them a character of sanctity which forbids that they should be touched.” A joint subcommittee formed to study conditions at the square recommended that dead and dying trees be replaced, the wall repaired and the “general face of the yard be renewed and improved.”<sup>67</sup>

As historian Charlene Mires has pointed out, these preservation efforts reflected efforts to transform a site of local importance to one of national significance. In preparation for the Marquis de Lafayette’s triumphal tour of the United States in 1824, councils hired architect William Strickland to make extensive interior renovations to the east room, lately renamed the “Hall of Independence.” Lafayette was fêted there after arriving in the

city at the vanguard of a parade that stretched for more than three miles.<sup>68</sup> Henceforth the State House and yard were Philadelphia's official reception spaces as ceremonies echoing the tributes to Lafayette were replayed for visiting dignitaries. Over time the name "Independence Hall" came to be assigned to the entire building. Lafayette's visit ignited popular awareness of and interest in Philadelphia's role in the Revolution. That interest was sharpened in 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration and the year in which both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died. Both were commemorated in ceremonies at the State House. "The older mourners might have remembered that in 1799, when Philadelphians learned of the death of George Washington, they had to proceed from Congress Hall to a memorial service at a nearby church," Mires notes, "Now, in 1826, Philadelphians turned to the State House as a place of memory of the American Revolution and the departed members of the founding generation." The Washington Centennial in 1832 similarly helped push through the improvements to Washington Square, just west of the State House.<sup>69</sup>

Interest mounted in the preservation of the State House building and the recovery of its historic appearance. When Strickland was hired to rebuild the State House steeple in 1828, he discovered that many residents held firm opinions about what that structure should look like. The original tiered wooden steeple had been demolished in 1781 but its appearance was preserved in numerous engravings and Strickland's clients rejected his preliminary designs for a taller structure in brick as too dissimilar. "It is a sacred spot—a sacred building," announced council member Benjamin Tilghman, "I regret that unhallowed hands were ever permitted to touch it, and I regard the rebuilding of the steeple as an entering wedge for restoring the building to the state in which it stood in 1776." His colleague John Lowber was blunt: "If the original features of the building cannot be preserved, I would much rather the whole were demolished."<sup>70</sup> Though he retained the use of brick, Strickland reduced the height of the tower and reconfigured the elevation to more closely echo the original. The steeple was completed by the summer of 1828; a new bell was installed the next year (the old "Liberty Bell" was suspended in the brick tower below the steeple).<sup>71</sup>

With the opening of the steeple, Philadelphians gained a new vantage point from which to survey the city. A reporter for the *Columbian Star and Christian Index*, a local Baptist weekly, described the thrill of the experience. At first he saw only "a confused array of brick walls and dusky roofs," but as he walked around the platform, the city came into focus, from the "dim blue woods of New Jersey," down the Delaware past the Navy yard to the "congregated serenity and loveliness of the quiet country, and the moving splendor" that lay along the western arc. The reporter then shifted his gaze down, first surveying "the brownish yellow walks, verdant grass plots and noble trees" of Washington Square and Chestnut Street then widening his view toward "a rich green meadow" at the Schuylkill. "The banks of this river from the north west to the south west are lovely in the extreme," he remarked, "while the meadows which surround the country seats of the opulent citizens, with the attendant gardens and orchards, form the visible and cunningly blended links which connect town and country."<sup>72</sup> Historical memory sharpened his per-



Figure 7. John Rubens Smith, *State House from Walnut Street*. This sketch, perhaps preparatory for a print, gives some indication of the condition of the trees in the yard by the time the steeple was rebuilt, circa 1829. Pencil drawing. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.)

ception and as he looked down to children playing below, he pondered the recent transformation of nearby Washington Square, “which now smiles with its proud array of loveliness and fashion,” and recalled the founding fathers now departed.<sup>73</sup>

### Greening Philadelphia

When at long last, Philadelphia’s city councils took a direct hand in the systematic improvement of Penn’s squares, the city assumed a pioneering albeit still underappreciated role in the history of public park development in the United States. By 1840, the two eastern squares as well as the State House garden had been rehabilitated as the salubrious urban green spaces envisioned by William Penn, and work was proceeding at the western squares. If we define “public park” as a *purposely landscaped* area owned and managed by a



Figure 8. John Caspar Wild, *Looking West from the State House*. One of the four compass views taken from the State House steeple that were featured in Wild's album *Panorama of Philadelphia*, 1838. Lithograph. (The Library Company of Philadelphia)

municipal authority to which all citizens have free access, then Penn's squares were unique at this time. Boston's Common has been called the country's first public park, but this space actually derived its form and usage from the traditional English commons—it was not owned by the city but was held in trust for residents and could not be subdivided without a public referendum. Cattle still grazed there as late as 1830 and though it was fenced some years later, the Common had not yet been landscaped specifically as a park.<sup>74</sup> New Yorkers could enjoy the views from riverside promenades at the Battery and Castle Garden where, by some estimates, as many as twenty thousand people congregated on summer evenings. But the city paid little attention to maintaining the Battery or nearby Bowling Green. A half a mile north along Broadway, City Hall stood at the center of a ten-acre park, but this was marred by the presence of the city jails. Until these were removed, wrote one visitor, the park would never become “what would naturally be expected of an ornamental ground in [this] central, fashionable and wealthy part of the city.”<sup>75</sup> The two-acre “ward squares” in Savannah were most similar in scale to Philadelphia's but these originally were intended for military purposes and as firebreaks. By 1830, twelve such squares had been landscaped but because they were the centers of the self-contained wards one could argue that they were more inward looking than Philadelphia's squares.<sup>76</sup>

Like the residential squares that had gained popularity in London during the eigh-

teenth century, many other park squares in American cities at this time actually were private or semiprivate spaces created by real estate developers. Charles Bulfinch designed Franklin Place in Boston in 1793; anyone could walk through that square but access to later spaces such as Louisburg Square, created by a private syndicate in the 1820s was restricted. The 1811 Commissioners' Plan of New York set aside just under one hundred and sixty-five acres throughout the city for seventeen new public squares, but by the 1820s only Tompkins Square and Stuyvesant Square were established and little had been done to improve these spaces. Gramercy Park and Saint John's Park were private gated spaces managed by and open only to adjacent property owners. Mount Vernon Place was donated to the city of Baltimore in 1827, though residential development at that site did not begin until the 1840s.<sup>77</sup>

All of these spaces were essentially self-contained. By contrast, as has been noted, William Penn envisioned Philadelphia's public squares as a system of linked green spaces that would unify and enliven the street grid. Ironically, just as the renovated squares began to be integrated with the city as Penn had intended, the city's physical and political landscape was dramatically altered. In 1854, the Consolidation Act united Philadelphia with the two-dozen surrounding communities that comprised Philadelphia county, transforming the compact center city into the nucleus of a one-hundred-and-thirty-square-mile metropolis. The squares were deemed inadequate to provide healthy recreation for a city of over half a million and by 1867 Philadelphians had begun to develop the modern Fairmount Park system along the banks of the Schuylkill River. Calling it a "heart of nature" the founding park commissioners predicted that the river park would form a new center for the expanded metropolis where residents could come together, promoting a sense of collective identity among the city's disparate neighborhoods and increasingly diverse population.<sup>78</sup>

As a result, the primacy of the squares was reduced. The squares were preserved, but each would undergo further changes that were neither coordinated nor always sympathetic. By 1860, Franklin Square was targeted as a potential site for a new city hall.<sup>79</sup> Later the project would move to Penn Square, where the Founder's vision of "houses for public affairs" was realized by John McArthur's massive City Hall, completed in 1901. By the mid-twentieth century, Franklin Square was marooned by encircling highway ramps from a nearby bridge and expressway; not until 2006 was the square rehabilitated as a children's park. Historical associations have protected Washington Square, although both this square and especially the area around Independence Hall would be altered in several campaigns during the twentieth century. Similarly, the growth of an upscale residential district in the city's southwest district ensured the preservation of Rittenhouse Square, although its current layout follows a 1913 design by architect Paul Cret. The most dramatic change occurred in the northwest. In 1881, the Pennsylvania Railroad erected a viaduct from the Schuylkill River to the new Broad Street station that severed the spatial pairing of Logan Square with Rittenhouse Square, further undermining the connectivity of the four spaces. Architect Jacques Gréber's 1917 plan then reconfigured Logan Square into a vehicular roundabout directing traffic out of the center city toward Fairmount Park along the grand

new Benjamin Franklin Parkway.<sup>80</sup> This artery clearly announced that the public squares were no longer the city's principal signifiers of health or virtuous citizenship. Instead, the green spaces that distinguished Penn's novel city plan were reduced to diminutive ornaments within an expanding agglomeration of urban green spaces.

## Acknowledgments

The research and writing of this essay was supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Many thanks to Frank Matero, Kenneth Finkel, Shirley Wajda, and the staffs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and The Library Company of Philadelphia. This essay is dedicated to the memory of Carolyn Pitts.

## References

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2. For a detailed analysis of the plan, see Elizabeth Milroy, "For the like Uses, as the Moore-fields': The Politics of Penn's Squares," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (July 2006), <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/pmh/130.3/milroy.html>.
3. Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution: Tavern-going & Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 8.
4. Lawrence Lewis, *An Essay on Original Land Titles in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Kay & Brother, 1880), 137. See also Edward P. Allinson and Boies Penrose, *Philadelphia, 1681–1887: A History of Municipal Development* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1887), 8–29.
5. Marquis de Chastellux, *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781 and 1782*. Translated from the French by an English Gentleman, 2 vols. (London: G.C.J. and J. Robinson, 1787), 1:333 "[E]lle manque tellement de ce qui peut servir à l'agrément de la vie, qu'il n'y a pas même une seule promenade publique." *Voyages de M. le Marquis de Chastellux dans l'Amérique Septentrionale . . .*, 2 vols. (Paris: Chez Prault, 1786), 1:275.
6. Johann David Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation [1783–1784]* (Erlangen 1788) transl. by Alfred J. Morrison (Philadelphia, 1911; repr. edition New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 59.
7. The Pennsylvania state legislature moved to Lancaster in 1799 (it would move permanently to Harrisburg in 1812); a year later, the federal government relocated to Washington. Both departures had been long expected though many Philadelphians continued to oppose the moves until the last moment. Edward M. Riley, "Philadelphia, The Nation's Capital, 1790–1800," *Pennsylvania History* 20 (October 1953): 357–79.
8. Other histories of the squares include J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1840–82 and passim. Recent studies of public space in Philadelphia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries include Susan Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Simon P. Newman, *Parades and Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), and Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).
9. The *Portraiture* was quickly reproduced by publishers in Holland and Germany to reach Quakers and

- other potential settlers on the continent. See Martin P. Snyder, *City of Independence* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 19–21.
10. Anthony N. B. Garvan, "Proprietary Philadelphia as Artifact," in *The Historian and the City*, ed. Oscar Handlin and John Burchard (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1963), 190–94; Sylvia Doughty Fries, "Philadelphia," in *The Urban Idea in Colonial America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977), 97–98.
  11. John W. Repts, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 126–30, 158, 161–63.
  12. Stephen Inwood, *A History of London* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1998), 245–51.
  13. Richard Johnson, *The Pleasant Walkes of Moore-fields* (London: Henry Gosson, 1607), A2, A5. Much of the landscaping was done by merchant and amateur botanist Nicholas Leate, and two gardeners, John Percival and Michael Wilson. See Norman Brett-James, *The Growth of Stuart London* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1935), 454. See also Elizabeth Milroy, "‘For the like Uses, as the Moore-fields’: The Politics of Penn’s Squares," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (July 2006), <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/pmh/130.3/milroy.html>.
  14. Jules Lubbock, *The Tyranny of Taste: The Politics of Architecture and Design in Britain 1550–1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 33.
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  16. Lawrence Lewis, *An Essay on Original Land Titles in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Kay & Brother, 1880), 137. See also Edward P. Allinson and Boies Penrose, *Philadelphia, 1681–1887: A History of Municipal Development* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1887), 8–29.
  17. Lawrence Lewis, *An Essay on Original Land Titles in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Kay & Brother, 1880), 137.
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  19. The map was published in November 1762. See *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 11 November 1762, [3]. For councils’ payment to Clarkson, see *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia. 1704 to 1776* (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1847), 676–77. See also Martin P. Snyder, *City of Independence* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 62–64 and 73–74.
  20. Emma Jones Lapsansky, *Neighborhoods in Transition: William Penn’s Dream and Urban Reality* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), 5.
  21. John Fanning Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: E. L. Carey & A. Hart, 1830), 210.
  22. John Reed was first to accuse Eastbourne of revising Penn’s plan by moving Broad Street and eliminating the squares in his 1774 *Explanation of the Map of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Printed for the Author & Sold by Mr. Nicholas Brooks . . . , 1774; reprint Philadelphia: Charles L. Warner, 1870), [n.p.]. Snyder notes that while the changes are noted as fact in the vignette reproduced by Clarkson and Biddle, there is no firm evidence to support Reed’s attribution. Martin P. Snyder, *City of Independence* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 288. See also Lawrence Lewis, *An Essay on Original Land Titles in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Kay & Brother, 1880), 104–11 and Hannah Benner Roach, "The Planting of Philadelphia, A Seventeenth-Century Real Estate Development," in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 92 (April 1968): 156–57.
  23. Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 13 April 1777 [electronic edition]. *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*, Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams>.
  24. William Douglass, *Annals of the First African Church in the United States of America, now styled The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas* (Philadelphia, 1862), 34–42, and Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 94, 109.

25. Frank M. Etting, *An Historical Account of the Old State House of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1891): 101–3; Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 4–10. For the deed history of the site see Lawrence Lewis, *An Essay on Original Land Titles in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Kay & Brother, 1880), 148–55.
26. In 1760 the remainder of the block was purchased, comprising four acres in total and the Assembly again ordered that the yard be enclosed. In 1770 a section of the block was leveled and enclosed with a seven-foot brick wall and monumental gate opening out onto Walnut Street. “Opinion of W. Rawle and Peter DuPonceau, On the title to the State-House yard . . .” (Philadelphia: n.p., 1816); D. W. Belisle, *History of Independence Hall . . .* (Philadelphia: James Challen & Son, 1859), 69–70.
27. Vaughan expressed his desire to plant representative trees in letters to botanist Humphrey Marshall of 14 May and 28 May 1785. Marshall’s reply does not survive but he no doubt advised Vaughan to reduce the number of plantings since this was far too many for the space available. Series X, Manuscripts, Box 10/4, file “Humphrey Marshall Papers” United States Department of Agriculture History Collection, Special Collections, National Agricultural Library, Washington DC. <http://www.nal.usda.gov/speccoll/collect/history/mars13pg.htm>. In 1790 Vaughan petitioned to hire William Bartram to assist in planting and maintenance. Sarah P. Stetson, “The Philadelphia Sojourn of Samuel Vaughan,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 73 (1949): 465–66.
28. The elms were donated by Colonel George Morgan. See Sarah P. Stetson, “The Philadelphia Sojourn of Samuel Vaughan,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 73 (1949): 465–66. See also J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1795; Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 2–26; and James R. Sullivan, *Historic Grounds Report: Independence National Historic Park*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1959), 1:8–11, quoted in *The Buried Past: An Archaeological History of Philadelphia*, John L. Cotter, Daniel G. Roberts and Michael Parrington, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 106.
29. Signatories included Robert Morris, Mathew Carey. Thomas Lee Shippen, Henry Hill, Edward Burd, Caspar Wistar, and horticulturists William and Moses Bartram. Petitions, Philadelphia General (Box 4a, 4b), Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Minutes of the Common Council, 19 March 1792. This is not a full count because several signatures have been cut out of the document. For council elections, see Philadelphia City Archives, Record Group 120.2.
30. The water system was managed by the semi-independent Watering Committee, comprised of representatives from the Select and Common Councils. See Andrew Schocket, *Founding Corporate Power in Early National Philadelphia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), *passim*.
31. Cope had discovered that when the state dispersed city lots after divestment of the proprietary lands, the tract designated for the center square apparently was subdivided and sold. The error was discovered by John Nicholson, the state controller, who confided to Cope that he simply had relocated the square to the vacant ground west of the old site “without disclosing what he had done to correct it—no part of this ground being then enclosed, nor even the lines of the cross streets marked out.” Cope chose to protect the secret, “It would have been dangerous to make it public.” Eliza Cope Harrison, ed., *Philadelphia Merchant: The Diary of Thomas P. Cope, 1800–1851* (South Bend, Ind.: Gateway Editions, 1978), 208–9. To ensure the legality of their plan, council members also solicited the opinion of William Rawle, the U.S. Attorney for Eastern Pennsylvania. Rawle confirmed that the *Portraiture* documented Penn’s intentions for the public squares and he pointed out that Penn also made explicit mention of the “Centre Square” in the city charter. “Opinion of William Rawle, to the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia, May 28, 1799, As to the right of the city to the Centre (Penn) Square . . .” (Philadelphia: Printed for the Commissioners for the Erection of the Public Buildings, 1882), 2–4.
32. Eliza Cope Harrison, ed., *Philadelphia Merchant: The Diary of Thomas P. Cope, 1800–1851* (South Bend, Ind.: Gateway Editions, 1978), 207.
33. Andrew Schocket, *Founding Corporate Power in Early National Philadelphia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), 114.
34. Joseph B. Jackson, “Water Supply,” in *Encyclopedia of Philadelphia*, 4 vols. (Harrisburg: National Historical Association, 1931–33), 4:1174.



35. Harold Eberlein and Cortlandt Van Dyke Hubbard, "The American 'Vauxhall,'" *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 68 (April 1944): 167–68.
36. Niles' Weekly Register, 11 September 1819; quoted in Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760–1835* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 231.
37. "Civis," "To the Select and Common Councils . . ." *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, 26 (August 1816), <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.wesleyan.edu>.
38. Poulson's American Daily Advertiser quoted in J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1844.
39. Minutes of the Select Council, 16 June 1821–30 September 1830, pp. 314, 340, 409. Philadelphia City Archives, Record Group 120.3. See Susan Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 42.
40. The library proposal was presented at the Select Council meeting of 9 November 1826. For the citizens' petition and demolition ordinance, see 26 October 1826 and 23 November 1826, Minutes of the Select Council, Philadelphia City Archives, Record Group 120.3. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 1:616, 3:1843–44.
41. James Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia, Giving an Account of Its Origin, Increase and Improvements in Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, Commerce and Revenue . . .* (Philadelphia: B. & T. Kite, 1811), 39–40, 51–53.
42. James Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia, Giving an Account of Its Origin, Increase and Improvements in Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, Commerce and Revenue . . .* (Philadelphia: B. & T. Kite, 1811), xi, xii.
43. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 1:510.
44. In 1803, councils went so far as to petition the legislature to return the capital to Philadelphia in an effort to bolster the budget for capital projects. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 1:515.
45. In 1804, while the legislation was pending councils had created a joint committee to "consider and devise a plan whereby said squares will be made to answer best the original purpose for which they were granted" and determine whether interments should be more strictly regulated. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Petitions, Philadelphia General (Box 4a, 4b). Minutes of the Common Council, 19 November 1804 and 20 February 1805, Philadelphia City Archives, Record Group 120.2.
46. "City Property to Let," *Democratic Press* 18 (April 1814): [1].
47. Select and Common Council minutes from this period are missing. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1845.
48. The city advertised for proposals to fence the northeast square in February. See *American Daily Advertiser*, 19 February 1816. Scharf and Westcott quote councils as having ordered that "those parts [of the southeast square] not used for particular purposes, should be tilled to destroy the weeds with which it is overgrown, and laid down with grass as soon as possible." J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1845.
49. Minutes of the Select Council, 27 December 1821, Philadelphia City Archives, Record Group 120.3.
50. Minutes of the Select Council, 1821–30, Philadelphia City Archives, Record group 120.3.
51. Gillespie and Bridport may have developed the design as early as 1817. *Report of the Committee appointed by the Horticultural Society of Pennsylvania for Visiting the Nurseries and Gardens in the Vicinity of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Wm. F. Geddes, 1831), 15.
52. 6 May 1840. Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., *A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher 1834–1871* (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), 101.
53. "Washington Monument," *National Gazette and Literary Register* (5 October 1824): [1]; and "[Committee]," *National Daily Intelligencer* (Washington) (15 June 1825): [3]. The Society of the Cincinnati had proposed building a monument ten years earlier at the State House but this project was suspended. The history of these and subsequent monument projects was chronicled in a legal brief

- submitted by the Society in 1893 regarding the site of the monument project under construction at that time. See “Appeal of the Society of the Cincinnati,” in *Weekly Notes of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania* 23, no. 12 (26 May 1893): 249–56; “Proceedings of Councils,” *Hazard’s Register of Pennsylvania* 4, no. 18 (31 October 1829), 285. See also Register 11, no. 10 (9 March 1833), 154; J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1884), 1:551, 615, 635 and 3:1845–46.
54. *Commonwealth vs Alburger*, 1 Wharton, 469 (1834). See R. L. Ashhurst, “William Morris Meredith,” in *Addresses Delivered March 13, 1902, And Papers Prepared or Republished to Commemorate the Centennial Celebration of the Law Association of Philadelphia Pennsylvania, 1802–1902* (Philadelphia: The Association, 1906), 295–97. For improvement appropriations, Select Council Minutes, 1821–30, Philadelphia City Archives, Record Group 120.3. See also J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1846–48 and John Milner Associates, Inc., *An Archaeological Sensitivity Study of Franklin Square . . .*, by Douglas C. McVarish, Rebecca Yamin and Daniel G. Roberts (2005).
  55. The *Saturday Courier*, quoted in Nicholas B. Wainwright, *Philadelphia in the Romantic Age of Lithography* (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1958), 233.
  56. John Fanning Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: E. L. Carey & A. Hart, 1830), 423.
  57. Quoted in J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 1:527.
  58. “Improvement of Philadelphia,” *The Port-Folio* 5 (May 1818), 39.
  59. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1849–50.
  60. *Hazard’s Register of Pennsylvania* 9 (23 June 1832), 393; J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1849–50.
  61. “[Logan Square],” *North American* (5 November 1852): [2]. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1848–49.
  62. Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1980), 152–53, 162.
  63. D. W. Belisle, *History of Independence Hall . . .* (Philadelphia: James Challen & Son, 1859), 72. A letter from Peale was discussed at meetings of the Select Council on 28 March and 9 May 1804. See Minutes of the Select Council, Philadelphia City Archives, Record Group 120.3.
  64. “Clermont Herbert, or Presentiment,” *The Intellectual Register; or Ladies’ Tea Tray* 2, no. 10 (22 July 1815): 561; American Periodical Series Online, <http://www.proquest.com/>.
  65. Minutes of the Philadelphia Select Council, 10 March 1813, Philadelphia City Archives. See also Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 65.
  66. *Aurora*, 10 February, 1816, quoted in Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 65–67. Lawrence Lewis, *An Essay on Original Land Titles in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Kay & Brother, 1880), 155.
  67. 13 May 1819, Minutes of the Common Council, Philadelphia City Archives, Record Group 120.2.
  68. “Lafayette. Reception of Lafayette at Philadelphia,” *Boston Commercial Gazette* (4 October 1824): 2. Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 67–73.
  69. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 3:1845; *Hazard’s Register of Pennsylvania* 12, no. 2 (13 July 1833): 8. See also Susan Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 31; and Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 73.
  70. *Register of Pennsylvania* 1 (8 March 1828): 152–54. Tilghman and Lowber are quoted in Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 75.

71. Charlene Mires, *Independence Hall in American Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 75.
72. "A View of Philadelphia from the State House Steeple," in *Columbian Star and Christian Index* 1, no. 1 (4 July 1829): 2, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed May 24, 2010).
73. "A View of Philadelphia from the State House Steeple," in *Columbian Star and Christian Index* 1, no. 1 (4 July 1829): 2, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed May 24, 2010).
74. On several occasions Bostonians brought suit to prevent the city from approving the construction of even temporary structures on the Common. See "Appendix A," in *The Public Rights in Boston Common: Being the Report of a Committee of Citizens* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1877), 4. In 1839, the city authorized a group of horticulturists led by Horace Gray to plant a botanical garden on a marshland west of the Common; this was not officially designated the Public Garden until 1859.
75. The second jail was called Bridewell. The Editor. "ART. CXLIII. Public Grounds, and Pleasure Gardens in the City of New-York," *New York Farmer* (July 1 1830): 162, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed November 8, 2010).
76. Turpin C. Bannister, "Oglethorpe's Sources for the Savannah Plan," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 20 (May 1961): 50.
77. Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 18–19. See also individual New York parks at <http://www.nycgovparks.org>.
78. *Third Annual Report of the Commissioners of Fairmount Park* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1871), 5.
79. "Franklin Square," *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (18 October 1860). [http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ez proxy.wesleyan.edu](http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ez.proxy.wesleyan.edu).
80. Recent histories of the squares and the parkway include Bobbye Burke et al. *Historic Rittenhouse. A Philadelphia Neighborhood* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); David Brownlee, *Building the City Beautiful: the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1989); Nancy Heinzen, *The Perfect Square: A History of Rittenhouse Square* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009).