

ART TO ZOO

News for Schools from the Smithsonian Institution, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Washington, D.C. 20560

May 1990

A Ticket to Philly — In 1769: Thinking about Cities, Then and Now

Today, 15 out of 20 Americans live in urban areas. Back in 1769, the figure was more like 1 in 20.

But, though colonial cities held only a small fraction of the population, they played a disproportionately important role in the years that preceded revolution—as centers of commerce, of economic and social tensions, of evolving ideologies, and of political action.

This ART TO ZOO will not go into the sequence of events that occurred as discontent evolved into revolution. What it *will* do is to present Philadelphia in 1769 as a living city, providing all the materials you need to take your students for a “walk” there, so they can experience the sights and sounds and smells of the colonial city, and hear the voices of a few of its inhabitants.

The Lesson Plan described in this issue can serve several teaching ends. It involves the children in extensive map reading. It encourages them to look at their own community in terms of the processes that maintain it . . . and to think about the needs of urban areas in general. And it offers a jumping-off place for a unit on the American Revolution: the issues that led Americans to declare their independence will seem more real to students who have experienced “first hand” conditions in the largest pre-Revolutionary American city.

A Walk Through Philadelphia in 1769

You are standing near the river, at the foot of Vine Street*—more than 200 years before you were born.

Nearby, at West’s shipyard,† a vessel is being built. Hammers pound, saws scrape, voices shout. You smell sawdust, tar, and garbage.

West’s is just one of the dozen or so shipyards strung out along the waterfront at this end of town. More ships are now being built at Philadelphia than anywhere else in the North American colonies—some for out-of-towners, but many for our Philadelphia merchants.

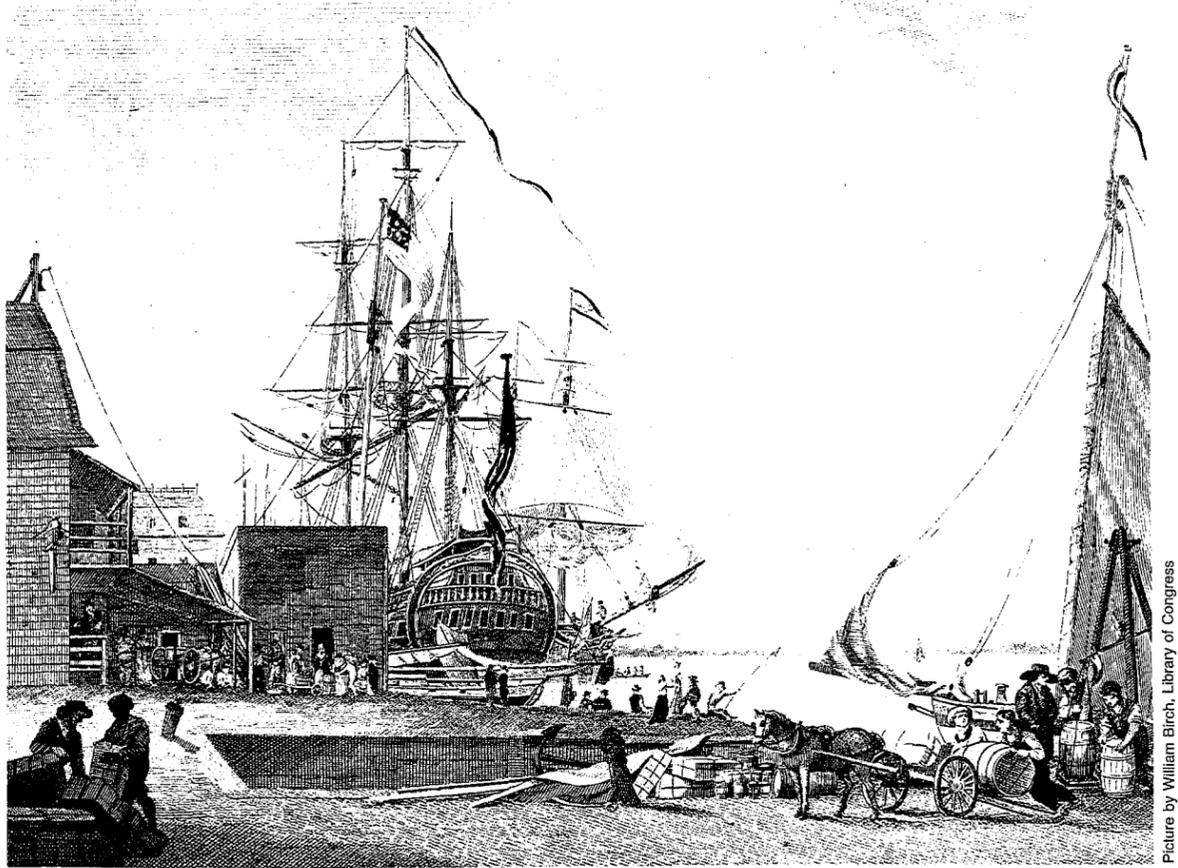
These merchants will use their ships to carry the goods they trade. The ships may wait for weeks as their merchant-owners advertise for cargo. Finally, laden with flour and grain from the rich farmlands to the west, with lumber, meat, skins, furs, and iron, they will sail.

Several hundred ships a year clear the port of Philadelphia. Some will cross the ocean to places like Europe. Far more will trade along the coast, as far north as Canada and as far south as the West Indies.

These ships will bring cargo back to us too: molasses and rum from the West Indies, hardware and woolens from England, linens from Ireland, wines from Portugal, rice from the Carolinas. . . .

All this buying and selling has made Philadelphia the largest city in the North American colonies. Directly or indirectly, sea-going trade provides jobs for many of the city’s people. Walk south along Front Street*. Look around you. Almost everything in this crowded waterfront area has something to do with sea-going commerce.

Here people fit out vessels. They make sails and ropes, masts and anchors. They build barrels to hold cargo. They load and unload ships. Here too the merchants have their warehouses and counting houses. Here they buy and sell. This waterfront area is a wholesale district. People from all over the city come to



Arch Street Ferry, Philadelphia. A view of the waterfront area where your “visit” to late-18th-century Philadelphia begins.

buy in bulk around here. They stock up on groceries, for example—shopkeepers, to resell in their stores; and prosperous families, to get better prices and higher quality than their neighborhood shops offer.

Most of those who work in this area live here too. We colonial Philadelphians usually live where we earn our living, often right in the same building. Some of the houses that crowd along Front Street have shops downstairs. They don’t have front yards, but most have gardens in back . . . sometimes with a kitchen in a separate building . . . and a “necessary,” or outhouse. There are no flush toilets. The wastes drop straight down into a cesspool many feet below the ground, sometimes contaminating neighboring wells. The smells you catch, sometimes stronger sometimes weaker, would be worse on a hot day.

But now it’s only the beginning of March, and the weather is pleasant.

You pass two women on a bench in front of a house. One is sewing, the other folding a basket of clothes; they chat as they work. At the corner, a black woman is selling soup. “Pepper pot, smoking hot,” she calls out. She ladles some out to two men in leather kneepants, as a dog watches.

To squeeze as many buildings as possible into crowded areas like this, we Philadelphians have, over the years, cut alleys into many of the original blocks. You are passing one now, Elfret’s Alley. Your map doesn’t give its name, but it is the narrow unmarked street on your right between Race and Arch Streets*.

Continued on page 3

Lesson Plan

Step 1: Cities as Organisms

What is a city?

Your students will probably suggest that it is a place where lots of people live close together.

Point out that although these people live together, they also depend on what is outside the city: a city cannot survive in isolation. (That’s why sieges were used in warfare. Cut off from the outside world, the inhabitants of a besieged city had eventually to break out, give up, or die.)

In fact, one way to think about cities is as giant organisms: an organism (or living creature) has to take in things it needs from its surroundings; use these things to carry out essential internal processes; and let other things out. For example, an animal has to breathe in air; use the oxygen in the air; and breathe out carbon dioxide.

Cities too have to **take in things** from outside; **go through internal processes**; and **let things out**.

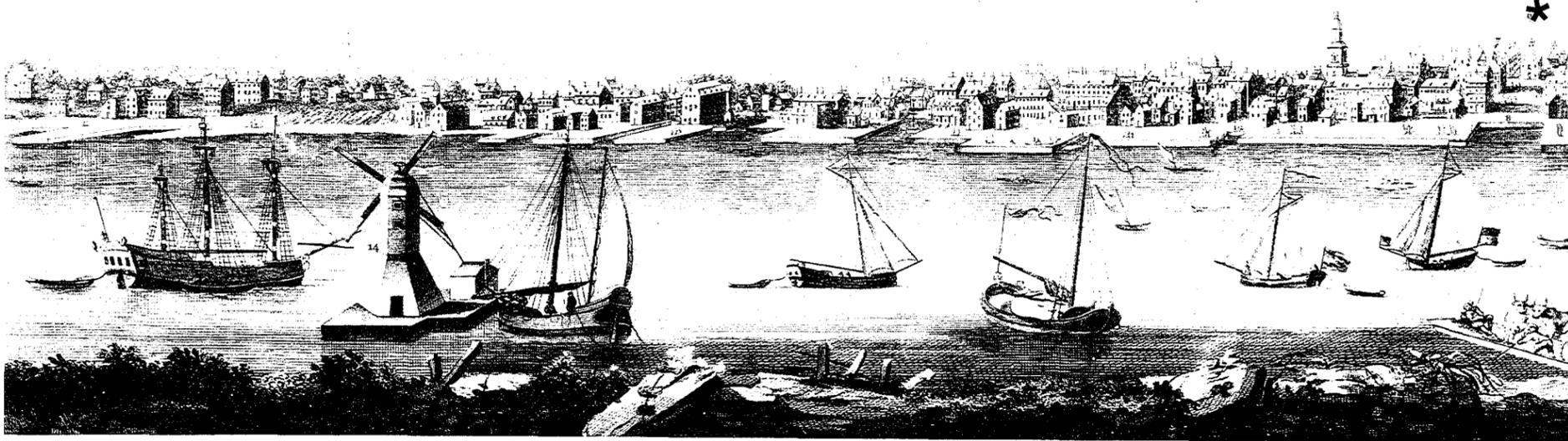
Examples will quickly make this clear: cities have to bring in clean air, food, and water, for instance; have to repair housing and provide protection from fire and disease; and have to let out smoke and garbage.

When the children have grasped the general idea, have them think more systematically about these categories of urban activity. To do so, each child should

Continued on page 2

*The asterisks scattered throughout this “walk” are explained in the Lesson Plan, in the second paragraph of Step 3.

†All places (streets, shops, etc.) named in the text are *real*. They did exist, at the locations described.



Here is the view of Philadelphia you would have had as you approached the city by ship. The spire with a * over it, to the left of the tallest spire, is the Court House on Market Street.

Lesson Plan *continued from page 1*

take three sheets of paper and print headings on them so they look like this:

Intakes		Internal Processes		Outputs	
What?	How?	What?	How?	What?	How?

Tell your students that they are going to use these sheets to list some of the main intakes, internal processes, and outputs that their own community depends on. (Your school does not have to be located in a big city for this activity to be appropriate. Even small communities have these needs. If your school is in a rural area, focus on a nearby town.)

What items should go in the *What?* column? On the chalkboard, write the most essential items that the children come up with and ask the students to also write the items on their own sheets.

These *What?* lists will probably end up looking something like this:

- *Intakes.* Bring in food, water, fuel, building materials, clothing, tools, furniture, people, money, etc.
- *Internal processes.* Build and maintain houses, roads, bridges, etc.; put out fires; care for the sick and poor; protect inhabitants from crime; regulate traffic, etc.
- *Outputs.* Get rid of smoke, pollutants, garbage, sewage; send out goods to sell, information, etc.

Then ask the children, as homework, to fill in the *How?* columns for these lists they have created. Say that there are many possible answers. They may describe *where* an item comes from, for example; *what* carries it in; or *who* arranges the transfer. They might say, "Food comes from all over the United States and from other countries" or "Food is brought in on trains and trucks and planes" or they might give some altogether different answer. The point of this activity is not to complete the roster of answers, but to help your students become more aware of the far-flung network of interdependencies in which their community exists.

Encourage the kids to answer flexibly and to feel free to ask adults at home for help. Emphasize that some answers will be easy to figure out, some hard, and some perhaps impossible.

In class the next day, give the children a chance to compare and discuss their answers. There will be a lot of variety. There may also be questions that no one, including you, can answer without further research. These can just be left blank (unless you want the children to do follow-up research later).

Step 2: The Time-Travelers Get Ready

Tell the children that they are now going to be time-tourists. They are going to travel into the past and visit a city there, to see how it compares with their own community.

Just as careful tourists prepare ahead for a trip, so will your students. First, they need to become familiar with the overall layout of their destination. Give each child a copy of the map that appears on the back of the Pull-Out Page.

Tell them to ignore the two rectangles in the map's upper left corner; these are just inserts showing a larger geographical area.

Then write the following questions on the chalkboard (answers are given here in parentheses, for your convenience; you will, of course, want to write only the questions):

1. What city is this? (Philadelphia)
2. Is this city, as it appears on the map, part of the United States? (No, it is in the *province* of Pennsylvania. Explain that this was part of the British Empire at the time.)
3. What date was the map made? (In 1762. But tell the children that the map will not be brand new when they make their visit: they will be seeing the city in 1769.)
4. What streets are at the edges of the built-up area? Name one at the left, one at the right, and one at the top. The river marks the bottom boundary. (The answers will depend on individual judgment, but will be somewhere near South Street at the left, Vine Street at the right, and Seventh Street at the top.)
5. What river is the city located on? (The Delaware. When you go over these answers with the children, show them a map of the whole region and point out how the Delaware opens right out into the Atlantic Ocean. This is important, because Philadelphia's role as a port was essential.)
6. What part of town is most built up? (The waterfront and adjoining area.)
7. Judging from the map, what do you think was a very important part of the city's economic life? (Shipping, as indicated by the vessels in the water and the many docks and wharves clustered along the waterfront.)

Ask your students to use information from the map to answer these questions. They should do this work in class.

After the children have worked individually on the questions, have them compare and discuss their answers.

Point out that this map is not turned the way our maps usually are, with the north at the top. Have the children find the compass points (below the ship that is the farthest to the right). Point out the fleur-de-lis that indicates which way is north. Have the children write an N in front of it, and add an S, W, and E for the other cardinal points. If they wish, the children can turn their maps so the north is at the top.

Finally, draw attention to the scale of the map. The length that represents 2,000 feet on the map is shown in its lower left corner. In class, have the children figure out how long a mile is on the map. (Remind them that a mile is 5,280 feet.) What are the approximate dimensions (north-south and east-west) of Philadelphia at the time the map was made?

And how long would it take to walk across this city? Guide the children in figuring this out. Have each child bring a ruler and take the class out into the playground. Ask the children to measure the distance that they cover in 25 steps. Have them repeat this three times, and find their average.

The rest of this activity can be done as homework. Have the kids each pace out their 25 steps again, but now they should time themselves. Again, they should repeat the walk three times, to establish an average. (Tell them to be sure to do this where they do not have to go into the street!)

Have them use their personal average to figure out how long it would take to walk 100 feet . . . 1,000 feet . . . the length and breadth of colonial Philadelphia as it was defined in Question 4).

In class the next day, give the kids a chance to compare and discuss their answers. Then encourage them to discuss factors that might change this timing in the real world. For example: Will they get tired as they walk farther? Are the streets in colonial Philadelphia paved? Are they muddy? Are they littered with garbage? Is there much traffic? Are there many other walkers? Is there a sidewalk? And so on.

The children will be in a better position to answer these questions after their "visit."

Step 3: The Time-Trip

Remind the kids of the lists they made in Step 1 of their own community's intakes, internal processes, and outputs. Tell them that after they come back from their "walk" in 18th-century Philadelphia, they are going to make the same kind of lists for the colonial city . . . so as they "walk" around in the past, they should be watching for information about how 18th-century Philadelphians met these needs. Have the kids read with a red marker in hand, so they can underline relevant facts as they come across them.

They will also need their markers for another purpose. Whenever they come to an asterisk (*) in their reading, they should stop, find where they are on the map, and draw in the path they have taken since the previous asterisk . . . so after they leave they can look back and see exactly where they "walked." You may also want to have them mark in a few of the sights they see.

Then pass out copies of "A Walk Through Philadelphia in 1769" (beginning on page 1 of this ART TO ZOO), and give the kids a chance to read it for themselves. They will probably have questions as they read. They should also read the Pull-Out Page, which is part of their visit. It introduces them to a few residents of the colonial city.

Finally, have the children make lists similar to the ones they made in Step 1, but now for colonial Philadelphia. Because bits of answers are embedded throughout the reading, the children should work in small groups in class. This way they can pool their observations.

Step 4: Now It's Their Turn!

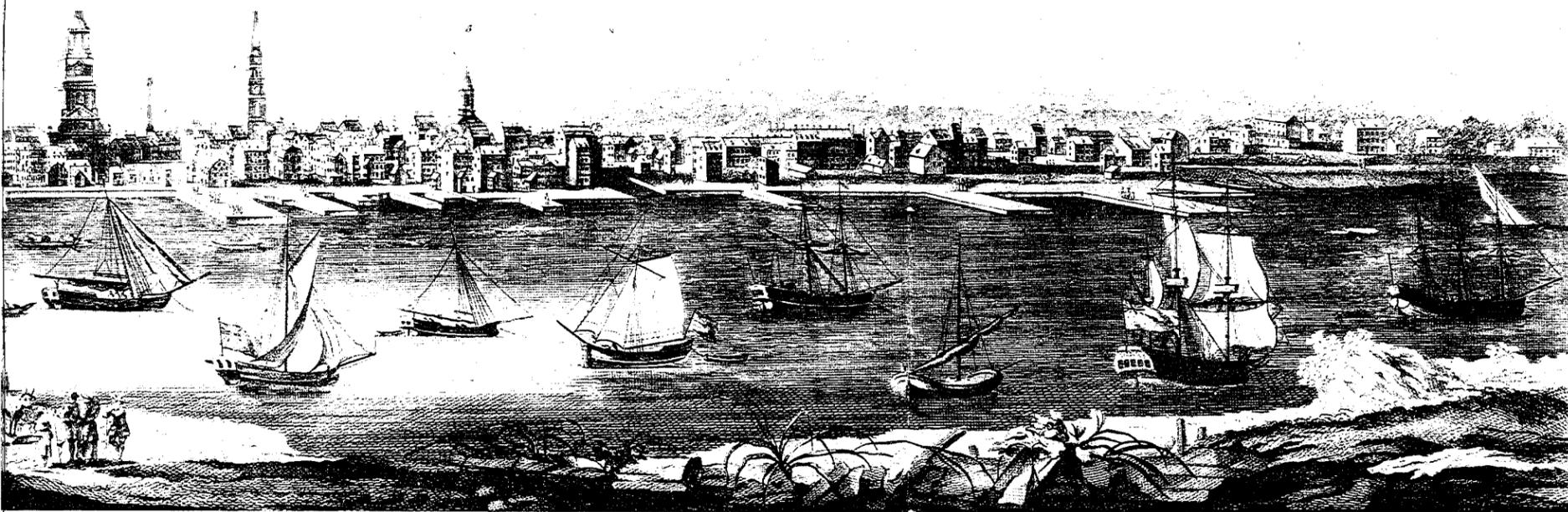
As a concluding activity, have your students carry out the following writing assignment: Imagine that two colonial Philadelphians are taking a time trip to *your* community. Write a short play giving, in dialogue form, their conversation as they see the sights. Think of what they are used to and try to imagine what their reactions might be. What surprises them? What are they confused by? What do they like? What do they hate? How do they rate different aspects of your community compared with life back home?

Your dialogue will be more fun to write (and to read) if you create two people with different personalities—and different opinions about what they encounter.



Second Street, looking north from Market Street. The spire is Christ Church, which is the tallest one in the panorama above.

This picture, as well as the other scenes by William Birch, was made about 30 years after your "visit." People's clothes have changed and there are some new buildings, but the overall look of the city is close to what it was when you "were there."



(Picture by George Heap, Library of Congress)



In this picture, you are standing at the end of the High Street Market, looking west. Perhaps it's early in the morning and the market is just opening . . . it's certainly not busy! Notice the covered wagons, which were common for transporting goods into the city. The building with the sign is probably a tavern.

Walking Tour *continued from page 1*

Go in and take a look.

It is darker and smellier in this more enclosed area than on the wider street. But the small rowhouses in here are neat brick with white trim. A red-headed boy is throwing a ball against the wall of one, where he lives with his mother, a dressmaker. Her shop is on the ground floor and their home is upstairs. This is a common arrangement all over Philadelphia. Most of the artisans who rent houses on Elfreth's Alley divide them up this way.

Come back out to Front Street and continue south in the same direction you were going before. At the corner of Front and Market*, you come to the Old London Coffeehouse, a well-known spot. It is one of Philadelphia's many inns and taverns. But it is a particularly busy one and is special because many of the city's merchants use it as a meeting place, coming here regularly around noon to hear captains' reports, find out about the latest prices and sailings, and work out deals. Travelers arrange for their passage on board ship here. Clubs meet in the rooms upstairs. Captains pick up their mail. Auctions are held.

Besides all this, the Old London does what all the inns and taverns in colonial Philadelphia do—provides a comfortable place where men can gather for a drink, a pipe, and a chat. All over the city, men get together

in this way. They talk to their friends and strangers, find out what's going on, hear different points of view, and argue about what should be done.

Step in and take a look at the Old London. Downstairs is a large room where a coffee urn is set up. Several people are sitting around drinking, talking, and reading British and American newspapers they have borrowed from a rack.

Look upstairs too. On the second floor there is a large hall with the King's portrait, and several smaller meeting rooms.

The same man who owns the Old London, Mr. William Bradford, also owns the printing shop next door, at the Sign of the Bible. In fact, some of the men in the coffee room at the Old London were probably reading the newspaper that William Bradford puts out here, the *Pennsylvania Journal*. In recent times, this paper has been strongly urging us to build up our colonial industries and cut down on imports from England.

As you continue down Front Street, notice how much the stores look like houses. You can identify some shops, though, by the signs they have hanging out over the sidewalk: at the sign of the Crown and Tassel, you can arrange to have upholstery done; at the sign of the Lime Tree, you can buy fruit, including limes for our popular punch; and at the sign of Swift's Head, you can purchase books.

Buildings here in Philadelphia are small, not more than two or three stories high—except for churches and a few public structures like the State House and the new Bettering House (where many of the poor are now taken care of). The buildings are small partly because businesses are small. Many of us Philadelphians, even successful merchants, work on our own, perhaps with the help of relatives or an apprentice.

Turn right at Norris Alley and cut through the block. You come out into Second, a busy shopping street. What a commotion! As you walk north along Second*, hooves clatter, wheels rumble and squeak, porters jostle you, a carter shouts at a man on horseback blocking his way. . . .

To help protect walkers from vehicles, posts have been put up every few feet along the edge of the sidewalk. Speed limits have been set too. Even so, Philadelphia traffic can be dangerous. And watch where you walk! Your 20th-century streets may be polluted with car exhaust, but ours are polluted with horse droppings . . . and sometimes with garbage too, especially the smaller streets. A few years ago, the street commissioners hired men to come around once a week with horses and carts to collect the city's garbage. This has helped, but service is uneven, and the population is growing so fast that it's hard to keep up. Even though it's illegal to do so, people still often sweep their garbage into the street. In summer es-

pecially, the stench can be overwhelming on some streets. And our newspapers warn that these bad smells can cause disease.

But Second Street is fairly clean, at least today. All around you, people are going about their business: a fat man in a striped vest; some children playing marbles in a doorway; a black boy about 10 years old with a bundle under his arm; a maidservant carrying pies in a basket, on her way to the bakeshop to have them cooked.

A coach with a coat of arms painted on the door draws up in front of a milliner's shop. A footman helps two ladies down from the carriage. They are dressed in silk, with huge skirts, and have very tall ornate hairdos decorated with feathers. An old woman stops sweeping and watches them go into the shop.

You walk on, passing the sign of West's Head, where prints are on display . . . and Boerhave's Head, a drugstore . . . and the Golden Fleece's Head, a woolen draper's. At the sign of the Teakettle, Still, and Showboard you peer in and see a coppersmith hammering a bowl into shape. You pass a jeweler's, a knife-maker's, a circulating library, several dry-goods stores, a locksmith's, a brushmaker's, and a shop where sugar and molasses are sold. . . .

At Arch Street, the stores end. Take a left and walk west on Arch for a block, then double back south again on Third Street*.

This whole area at the center of town is heavily built up. All kinds of people, rich and poor, live and work here. Artisans who don't need a lot of space and want to be close to customers cluster around here in especially large numbers—tinsmiths and silversmiths, hatters, tailors, and shoemakers. . . .

If you had time to walk on to the outskirts of town, you would find it less densely packed with people than around here. Rents there are cheaper. Businesses that need more space, or that are considered public nuisances—tanneries, for example, because of their smell—tend to locate out there.

At the corner of Third Street and Church Alley* you pass the post office. The mails are much better than they were just a few years ago. There are now three regular deliveries a week between Philadelphia and New York, and one a week to Boston. Letters and newspapers travel so fast that it seems we are getting to know almost as much about what's going on in other colonies as in our own. And there is a lot more traveling between colonies now than there used to be: the roads are better and there are more stagecoaches and boats. Why, you can now get to New York in only three days!

All this talking and traveling has been making people feel more connected to other colonies. Some of us are even starting to think of ourselves not just as Philadelphians, or New Englanders, or New Yorkers . . . but sometimes as Americans.

Continue along Third Street. See that building on the corner, on your right across High Street*? That's the jail. Philadelphia used to be a safe city, but not anymore. There's a lot of crime here, even though our criminal codes are harsher than those of other colonies. Some parts of town are worse than others. Race Street between Third and Front is so bad that it's known as "Helltown."

Of course, many people picked up by the constables or nightwatch are just charged with minor offenses, like disorderly conduct or gambling. They may be fined, publicly whipped, put in the stocks, or jailed. For serious crimes like murder, a person may be hanged.

This is the market you see running along the center of High Street in both directions—these long open stalls on brick pillars, with an arched roof. The market now stretches from Front to Third Street.

You're lucky you came here on a Wednesday; it's one of our two market days a week. People say we

have the best market in the colonies, so you wouldn't want to miss it. We buy our fresh foods here: our meat, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables. They are carted in from farms to the west.

Of course, you have the best choices early in the day. Shoppers start arriving before the sun comes up.

Walk around. Take a look: beets, radishes, carrots, peaches, strawberries—in baskets, piled high. Many of the shoppers are women, some followed by a servant carrying a basket. One woman decides on some green peas; the farmer's wife measures them out and tucks them into the basket.

The vendors don't advertise their wares by calling out, but some offer tastes. A woman selling butter has set out a pyramid of it and stuck a spoon in so shoppers can sample. One passer-by ignores the spoon and uses a coin from his pocket to scrape off a small taste of the butter mountain.

Notice that the street is paved around here. The street commissioners have been surfacing more and more of the city's streets in the last few years. (The occupants of the buildings along the street are responsible for paving the sidewalks.) But there are still quite a few unpaved streets. When you walk along one in dry weather, you raise clouds of dust; on a rainy day, you slog through a sea of filth.

Just think how many improvements this city has been making: paved streets, city garbage collections, new wells, even streetlights at night! All these improvements are recent: 20 years ago, the streets were mud and stones, garbage often piled up 2 or 3 feet above sidewalk level, and at night the city was almost as dark as a forest. Of course the past doesn't just disappear. There are still wooden buildings from our great-grandparents' time among the newer brick ones.

Wooden buildings like these are fire hazards, so it's now against the law to build them. We've become very careful about fire. The city owns four engines, but we depend more on private fire companies like the Hand-in-Hand and the Neptune. These fire companies put out blazes, but also act as social clubs. These days, of course, this means a place to talk politics . . . and to take stands. The Sun fire company, for instance, has come out against eating lamb. Its members say we had better keep our sheep for wool, so we won't have to import it from England.

Visitors from Europe are often impressed to see how developed our city is, less than a hundred years after its founding. We're proud of what we've accomplished here. But the countryside is still not so far away. West of Eighth Street, there are woods and farms. And even in the city itself, people with large enough lots have gardens and orchards behind their houses, and may even keep a cow.

But quick! It's time for you to go home. Your time-trip is about to end. Hurry to where the stagecoach

leaves—from just around the corner, off Market, between Second and Third . . . at the Sign of the Death of the Fox, an inn on Strawberry Alley*. Hurry! Climb on . . . and ride back to the 20th century!

Just a Few Years Later . . .

Not long after your 1769 "visit" came revolution and independence. Did life change much then? In what ways? See for yourself, by visiting *After the Revolution*, at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, in Washington, D.C. This exhibition focuses on what life was like for people from several social groups, in several places—including Philadelphia. The carpenter shown here is just one of the images and objects you can see in this show.

Note, however, that *After the Revolution* will be temporarily closed from July 1990 to January 1991, so come to see it before or after these dates.



The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

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Editor: Betsy Eisendrath (202) 357-2404

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COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM
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ART TO ZOO brings news from the Smithsonian Institution to teachers of grades three through eight. The purpose is to help you use museums, parks, libraries, zoos, and many other resources within your community to open up learning opportunities for your students.

Our reason for producing a publication dedicated to *promoting the use of community resources among students and teachers nationally* stems from a fundamental belief, shared by all of us here at the Smithsonian, in the *power of objects*. Working as we do with a vast collection of national treasures that literally contain the spectrum from "art" to "zoo," we believe that objects (be they works of art, natural history specimens, historical artifacts, or live animals) have a tremendous power to educate. We maintain that it is equally important for students to learn to use objects as research tools as it is for them to learn to use words and numbers—and you can find objects close at hand, by drawing on the resources of your own community.

Our idea, then, in producing ART TO ZOO is to share with you—and you with us—methods of working with students and objects that Smithsonian staff members have found successful.



A few colonial Philadelphians talk about their lives in 1769:

• A Carpenter

Well, I'm just a plain fellow, but I've done quite well. With all the construction under way here, I get plenty of work. I have a good wife, five fine children, and a servant. I play billiards twice a week, and on other evenings go to the Horse and Groom, relax, and discuss the latest.

I'm lucky I'm in a building trade, where business is brisk. I know plenty of small shopkeepers who have lost their store or even gone to debtors' prison. When some new act was passed in England, and credit tightened here, the merchants called in their bills and my neighbors couldn't pay.

Is this a time when the wealthy should be aping English aristocrats—gadding about in coaches and building country estates? I don't hold with this. In my parents' time, plain but comfortable was enough.

We'll see what happens. Who knows how our disputes with England may be resolved. All I know is that so far, when my friends have wanted me to take to the streets, I've said no. Next time, I may go ahead.

• A Doctor

I am a doctor, trained in Edinburgh, Scotland. I treat most of my patients in their homes.

Though my medical practice takes up much of my time, I have also written an article on the smallpox and was involved in the founding of the Pennsylvania Hospital, which now does so much to help the sick poor. I perform experiments in electricity and correspond with others in the colonies and abroad who share this interest. I have served on a number of city boards.

I am deeply disturbed by the events of the past few years. I recognize the right of Parliament to set our laws, yet many recent trade policies have been made in England without a clear grasp of our situation here. We colonists are no longer babes, to be pulled around on leading strings.

• An Unemployed Laborer

Maybe I'll get some work next week. I don't know. Of course, you can't work all the time. Sometimes the weather is bad or you get sick. But in the last few years I've worked less than half the time. I helped dig a basement for a house on Fourth Street last month, but that's the only job I've had since fall.

At least food prices have gotten better . . . but I'm afraid they'll go up again. And in just a few months, winter will be here again. That means firewood to buy.

I tell you, it scares me. You see a family on the corner, selling their furniture, and you know that when the money from that is gone, they'll be stealing to eat—that or the workhouse . . . And you think: am I next?

• A Rich Merchant's Wife

Our life is so jolly these days, especially with all the visitors from England. It seems we flit from one entertainment to another—from concert to picnic to Dancing Assembly. I've had to have so many new dresses made.

Our new house on Fifth Street is almost finished. It is three floors high, set on a large lot. We are to have a hothouse, where we shall grow pineapples. Our English visitors often comment on how elegant life here has become.

The newspapers discuss the growing numbers of poor people and how we can best provide for them. I think we should not go too far in offering charity, or we shall find ourselves encouraging idleness.

I am disturbed to see some who should know better kowtowing to the mob. I say, let those whose understanding has been refined make the decisions for our city.

• A Free Black Man

For years I was a slave. I belonged to a wealthy merchant. I worked for him as a gardener. He fed and clothed me decently and allowed me to marry, but I longed for my freedom.

Then one day, I saved his son from a dog that attacked him. In thanks, my master gave me my freedom. My wife and I found rooms on Race Street. I continued hiring myself out as a gardener.

I am happy to have my freedom, but it is not the same freedom that white people enjoy. Blacks here are not supposed to go out in the streets after 9 in the evening. We have no right to trial by jury. And it is forbidden for more than four of us to meet together, because whites are afraid that we free blacks may encourage the slaves to revolt.

There are times when I rage. But most days I go along happily enough. I have regular work. For three years, my son attended a school for Blacks. He learned

to read and write, and then he taught me to. And many in the city have spoken out against slavery. Since last year almost no new slaves have been brought to Philadelphia.

• A Seven-Year-Old Girl

Listen to me too! My name is Deborah and I am seven years old. I learned my letters at Mrs. Baxter's, and now I stay home and help my Mama.

I want to be a sailor like my brother Tom, but my parents say I can't do that. When I'm a little older, though, my Mama says I may help out in the shop. She won't let me yet, because she's afraid I'll break something. But I know I wouldn't.



The family of painter Charles Willson Peale, who moved to Philadelphia in 1777. The family nurse and dog are included.

The artist has painted in a visual pun: the apple peel forms a P for the name Peale.

Charles Willson Peale, New York Historical Society



Algunos filadelfianos hablan sobre sus vidas en 1769:

• Un carpintero

Bueno, yo soy un tipo sencillo, pero me ha ido bastante bien. Con toda la construcción que se está realizando aquí, consigo suficiente trabajo. Tengo una esposa buena, cinco niños excelentes y una criada. Juego billar dos veces a la semana y durante otras noches voy al "Horse y Groom", donde me divierto y discuto los últimos acontecimientos.

Tengo mucha suerte de estar en el ramo de la construcción donde los negocios son activos. Conozco muchos tenderos que han perdido sus tiendas y aún más, han ido a prisión por deudas. Cuando alguna nueva ley o disposición ha sido aprobada en Inglaterra y el crédito se ha hecho difícil aquí, los comerciantes han cobrado sus facturas y mis vecinos no han podido pagar.

¿Es esta la época para que los ricos quieran parecerse a los ingleses aristócratas—vagando por los alrededores en vehículos y construyendo haciendas? Yo no lo acepto. En el tiempo de mis padres era suficiente

con tener cosas sencillas pero confortables.

Veremos que pasa. Quién sabe como se resolverán nuestras diferencias con Inglaterra. Todo lo que yo sé hasta ahora, cuando mis amigos han querido que me lance a la calle, es que he dicho que no. La próxima vez, quizás vaya a la cabeza.

• Un doctor

Soy un doctor educado en Edimburgo, Escocia. Atiendo a la mayoría de mis pacientes en sus casas.

Aunque mi práctica de la medicina toma gran parte de mi tiempo, he escrito un artículo sobre la viruela y estuve involucrado en la fundación del hospital de Pennsylvania, el cual ayuda mucho a los enfermos pobres. Realizo experimentos sobre electricidad y mantengo correspondencia con otras personas en las colonias y en el extranjero—que comparten este interés. He servido además, en una serie de directivas y juntas de la ciudad.

Me siento profundamente perturbado por los su-

cesos de los últimos años. Reconozco el derecho del Parlamento de establecer nuestras leyes, pero muchas de las políticas recientes establecidas en Inglaterra, no tienen clara nuestra situación aquí. Nosotros, los colonos, ya no somos bebés a quienes se nos puede llevar de uno a otro lado en andaderas.

• Un trabajador desempleado

Quizás encuentre algún trabajo la próxima semana. No lo sé. Por supuesto que uno no puede trabajar todo el tiempo. Pero en los últimos años he trabajado menos de la mitad del tiempo. Ayudé a excavar un sótano para una casa en la calle Four el último mes, pero es el único trabajo que he tenido desde el otoño.

Al menos los precios de los alimentos han mejorado . . . pero tengo miedo que vuelvan a subir. Y en unos pocos meses, será invierno otra vez. Esto significa que hay que comprar leña.

Yo te digo, esto me asusta. Se ve a una familia vendiendo sus muebles en la esquina y uno sabe que cuando el dinero de la venta se haya terminado, ella robará para comer . . . eso o el correccional. . . . Y pienso: ¿seré yo el próximo?

• La esposa de un comerciante rico

Nuestra vida es tan divertida estos días, especialmente con todos los visitantes que han venido de Inglaterra. Pareciera que volamos de una diversión a otra—de un concierto a un picnic o a un baile. He tenido que hacerme tantos vestidos nuevos.

Nuestra nueva casa en la calle Fifth está casi terminada. Tiene tres pisos y está ubicada en un gran terreno. Vamos a tener un invernadero donde cultivaremos piñas. Nuestros visitantes ingleses a menudo comentan lo elegante que se han vuelto nuestras vidas aquí.

Los periódicos discuten la cantidad creciente de pobres y cómo podríamos hacer para mejorar sus vidas. Yo pienso que no deberíamos ir muy lejos en nuestras ofertas de caridad o nos encontraremos estimulando el ocio.

Me siento perturbada observando como muchos se doblegan ante la multitud. Yo digo, permitan a aquellos que han sido educados establecer las decisiones para nuestra ciudad.

• Un hombre negro libre

Durante años fui un esclavo. Pertenecí a un rico comerciante. Trabajé para él como jardinero. El me alimentó y me vistió decentemente y me permitió casarme, pero yo ansiaba mi libertad.

Entonces, un día, salvé a su hijo de un perro que lo atacó. Para agradecérmelo, mi amo mi dió la libertad. Mi esposa y yo encontramos un lugar para vivir en la calle Race. Yo continué trabajando como jardinero.

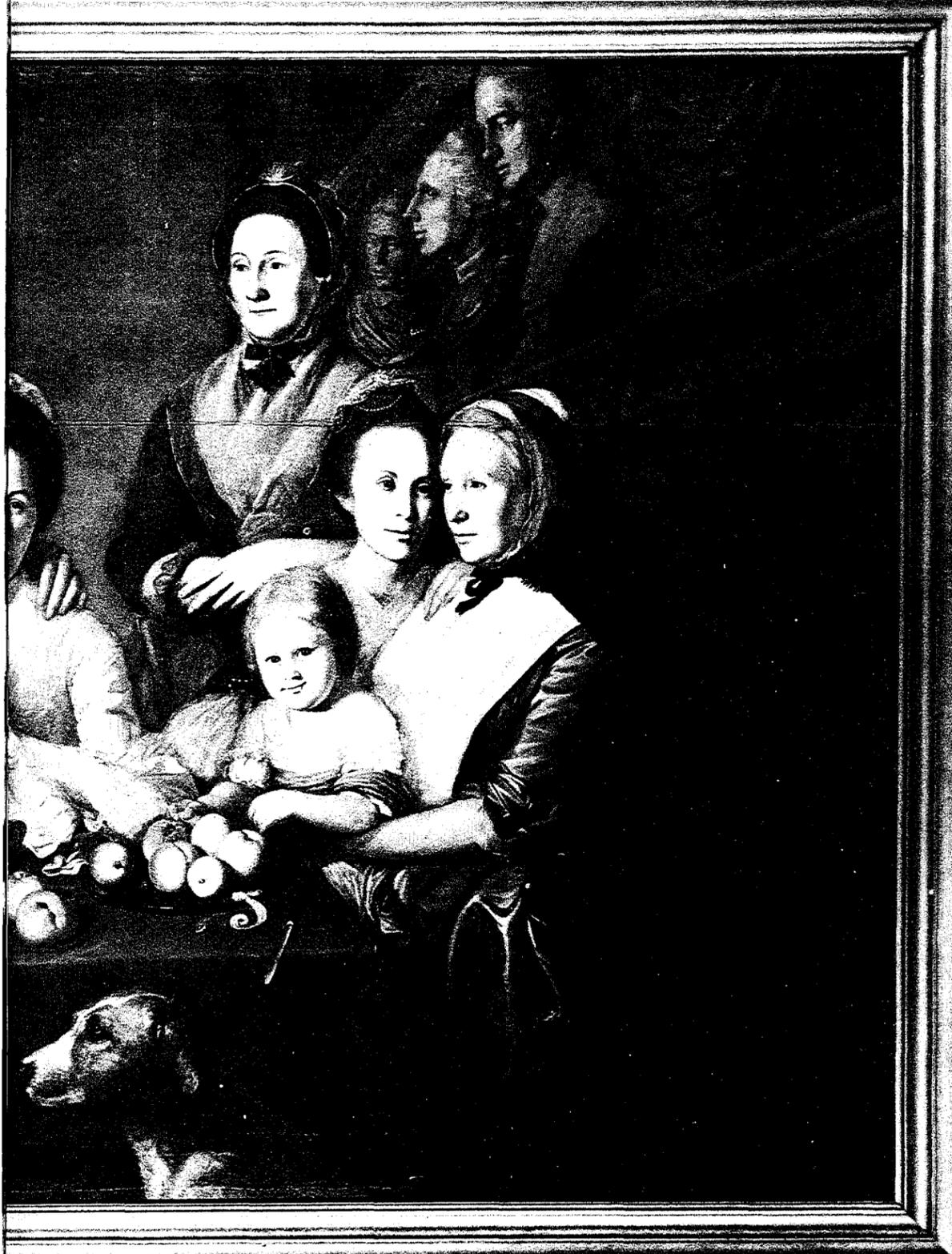
Soy feliz con mi libertad, pero ésta no es la misma libertad de la que disfruta la gente blanca. Se supone que los negros aquí no podemos salir a las calles después de las 9 de la noche. No tenemos derecho a juicios con jurado. Y está prohibido que mas de cuatro de nosotros nos reúnamos, porque los blancos tienen miedo que los negros libres puedan estimular a los esclavos para que se rebelen.

Algunas veces me da rabia. Pero la mayoría de los días vivo suficientemente feliz. Tengo un trabajo normal. Durante tres años, mi hijo asistió a una escuela para negros. Aprendió a leer y escribir y luego me enseñó. Muchos en la ciudad han hablado en contra de la esclavitud. Desde el último año no se ha traído ningún nuevo esclavo a Philadelphia.

• Una niña de siete años

¡Oigánme a mí también! Mi nombre es Deborah y tengo siete años. Aprendí las letras con la señora Baxter y ahora me quedo en la casa y ayudo a mi mamá.

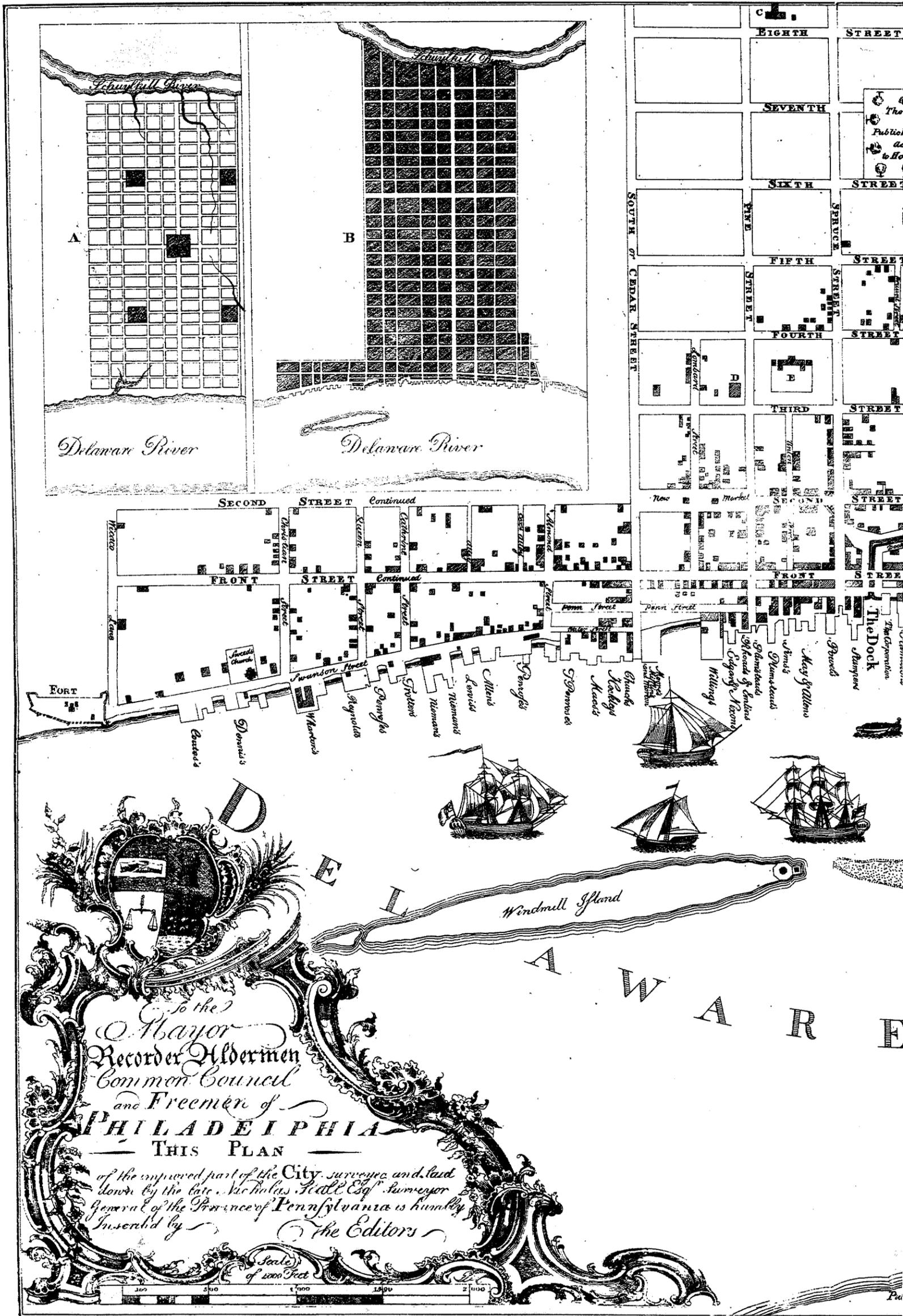
Yo quiero ser un marinero como mi hermano Tom, pero mis papás dicen que no puedo serlo. Cuando sea un poco mayor sin embargo, mi mamá dice que la puedo ayudar en la tienda. Ella todavía no me lo permite porque tiene miedo que rompa algo. Pero yo sé que no lo haría.



La familia del pintor Charles Willson Peale, quien se mudó a Philadelphia en 1777. La enfermera de la familia y el perro están incluidos.

El artista pintó un juego visual: la cáscara de la manzana (en inglés, "apple peel") forma la P del apellido Peale.

Charles Willson Peale, la Sociedad Histórica de New York.



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