

BOOK LORE

By ROBERT WILLIAMS

John Fenwick founded Salem, New Jersey, in the year 1675, and he also founded a twin settlement on the banks of the Cohansey, sixteen miles from the first, and named it Cohan-zick, from the Indian name of the stream. Its settlers changed the name to Greenwich after the one in England; and these two towns, founded seven years before Philadelphia was, were the first "permanent English-speaking settlements on the Delaware River." Salem is the county seat of Salem County, while Greenwich is a tranquil and lovely little spot in Cumberland County, known as the Williamsburg of New Jersey. But Greenwich stands as it did in 1675, with little change. And while Williamsburg is a miracle of accurate reconstruction, Greenwich, N. J. has "known change and the hand of time but little" since its founding. The passage of time has moved so gently that one can still walk along its two-mile long "Greate Streete," and realize how the village looked in 1749 when Cohansey Creek was a bustling shipping port and England's flag flew over its roof-tops. Ancient sycamores and maples stand as of yore, and the houses built by those early settlers still stand, many of them absolutely unchanged.

To visit Greenwich, N. J., is to breathe in the nostalgic aroma of the romantic past!

An Author In Love With The Jersey Scene

Joseph S. Sickler, a native son of Greenwich, and later a resident of Salem, N. J., and the author of such valuable historical volumes as "The History of Salem County," and "The Old Houses Of Salem County", both published by Sunbeam Pub. Co., Salem, N. J., has written a charming book entitled "Tea Burning Town", just published by Abelard Press, Inc., N. Y., combining historic lore with a wealth of unusual and beautiful photographs, the artwork of Charles Cordrey.

The title "Tea Burning Town" goes back to Colonial times prior to the Signing of the Declaration of Independence, when such a "tea party", on rather similar lines to the more famous Boston Tea Party, put Southern New Jersey on the patriotic map, though through the years the New Jersey event has been submerged and quite lost sight of.

Philip Vickers Fithian

Philip Vickers Fithian is a name to conjure with in Greenwich. His name ranks high in the field of American letters of that era. His Journal, not printed till the year 1900, was "chiefly responsible for the accuracy of the Williamsburg, Va.,

restoration." As a tutor in Westmorland County, Virginia, after graduating from Princeton in 1772, he had kept this journal with scrupulous accuracy. In this he had noted "not only the social activities and the Virginian mode of living, but such details as the number of window panes in a sash, the size, the thickness of the walls, the pattern of the brick work, all of which served as a concise guide for the restoration architects and builders."

The Annapolis Tea Party

After the Boston Tea Party in 1773, the people of Annapolis, Maryland, on October 18, 1774, forced a ship owner to burn his vessel, the Peggy Stewart, containing among English imported goods several chests of tea. Fithian, visiting there the next week, heard the details. Within two months plans for a similar tea party were being arranged for at Greenwich, N. J. An English sea captain, knowing of the other tea parties, decided to store his tea at the home of a loyalist named Bowen. But the ruse was spotted and an indignation meeting was determined upon being held on Friday, December 23rd, 1774, at the county court house in Bridgeton, N. J. But the night before this, a group of men convened at the home of Fithian soon to emerge dressed and painted up like feathered Indians. Carrying torches, they hurried to the market square where the chests of imported tea were deposited from the Bowen home. The torches were applied to this treasure-trove, and soon the market place was ablaze with burning tea and their containers. Painted Indians pranced about the conflagration on Thursday, December 22nd, 1774, and patriotism was the order of the day!

Grand Jury action was demanded by the tea merchants and civil action for trespass was also sought against the perpetrators. But to no avail.

A monument was erected to those doughty patriots in the year 1908. Fithian's name is there for all to see. For although he wrote the following in his Journal, it is believed that he did so with tongue in cheek. In spite of his apparent innocence as to these events, Fithian is looked upon as being one of the principals in the Greenwich Tea Party! His notation reads: "Fryday~23. Last Night the Tea was, by a number of persons in disguise taken out of the House and consumed with Fire. Violent and different are the Words about this Uncommon Manouever, among the Inhabitants—Some rave, some curse, and condemn. Some try to reason; many are glad that

the tea is destroyed, but almost all disapprove the Manner of Destruction."

But Greenwich had won its patriotic place in the sun. **Life And Character**

Fithian was well known as a Presbyterian minister, and he was married in Princeton by the President of the College who next year would become a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, John Witherspoon, D.D. June 14, 1776, Fithian entered the American army as a chaplain, and in July, six days after the Signing of the Declaration of Independence, he started his war diary, in which his accounts of the operations around Manhattan and "of the disastrous American defeat in the Battle of Long Island have been much used by later historians."

"Terrified under fire", Fithian lost all sense of fear when he beheld Gen. George Washington calmly standing on the parapet at Fort Washington in Upper Manhattan, "with British bullets whizzing all around him."

No bullet laid Fithian low. But dread dysentery struck him down—and he died October 8th, in the year 1776.

Mr. Sickler sums up his character in the following thoughtful analysis: "Fithian was as ardent an American patriot as ever lived; he truly sacrificed home and love for country; he organized an act of rebellious violence against tyranny, which time has softened into mellow patriotism. And he was also the personification of Greenwich, the town which gave him birth."

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Agrees Road Signs Could Be Improved

Editor of The Call

Dear Sir:

That was a mighty fine edi-