



# Quaker Hill Quill

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## Wilmington Friends School in the 19th Century: Isaac Johnson's Unfinished School History, Part II

by Terence Maguire

### "Give Names of Such Teachers as Thou Canst Recall..."

The responses to Johnson's queries give us names of quite a few teachers in early-to mid-19th C. century Friends School. Miriam Worrell, mother of later Friends School Principal Emma Worrell, recalls Margaret McCamon as "the intelligent, able, and most efficient teacher of both boys and girls," from 1814 "until 1827 or 28." She taught girls the "3 Rs," geography, grammar, US history, and history of England. "The best maps, globes, charts, and books that were then published were in use in the school." (MLW, Ie.) The tone of the school, according to Miriam, was energetic but strict, without "corporal punishment except sometimes in the boys' section. ...A high moral tone prevailed; deception of any kind was as much frowned upon by the pupils as by the teacher, and anyone attempting to evade the rules by dishonesty lost caste with her fellow pupils."



**Albert W. Smith, principal of the boys' school at Friends and later School Committee member.**  
(Courtesy Delaware Historical Society)

One response to Johnson's queries reminds us how unchanging are the ways of children. Johnson recounted a story from Sarah Poole Bancroft, wife of industrialist Joseph Bancroft and mother of William P. Bancroft: "...she and a younger sister were brought to school from their home at Brandywine [Village] on horseback by their man, the little sister riding in front and she clinging behind the caretaker; but on one occasion when the roads were deep with mud (all unpaved country roads then) another schoolmate insisted on climbing up behind her, got to giggling as school girls will, and slipped off, pulling her friend with her into the deep mud."

In the 1820's-1830's, Deborah Ferris, Sarah

Bringhurst, Ellwood Garrett, and Clement Smyth have similar recollections of program: reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, mathematics, geography. Respondents consistently noted geography from 1816 through the 1840's. Garrett recalled "separate state maps, on large stiff cards." Deborah Ferris recalled Pike's Arithmetic in 1822. The standard for grammar and spelling in the early 19th C. was a work by John Comley. A smattering of languages were taught: "some little Latin, by some teacher," Garrett vaguely recalled.

Ferris and S. Bringhurst looked back on a school day for the students from 8:00 a.m.--5:00 p.m., with a two-hour break for lunch. For those missing homework, lunch was delayed 15 minutes but positive reinforcement existed as well: on Fifth Day (mid-week Meeting Day), those with lessons done were rewarded with a 4:00 pm dismissal. Vacations for the year, however, were "usually two weeks, never three." (DB, V)

### Friends School in the 1840-1850's

Several respondents recall the teaching of Jesse and Maria Kendall, though not fondly. Anne Bartram began schooling under them, and recalled stern Jesse marching around the room, ensuring attention with a strap for naughty hands ("which I one time had the benefit of one stroke"--AMB, V.) Not all her memories were unpleasant; fifty years later, she could still picture herself with "my brother Edw. Marshall and Rod and Frank Gibbons...as they used to draw me to school on the sled, a fat little bundle of dictatorialism I was, for I can remember, if they didn't do as I ordered, I rolled off." (AMB, V).

Albert W. Smith (1841-45) and Wm. Robert Stratton (1846-52) taught the boys' school in the 1840's. J.R. Bringhurst (1839-46) was better able to recall what

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## Isaac Johnson's Unfinished History of Wilmington Friends School

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happened outside the classroom in those days. Meadow land prevailed beyond Washington St. There was a "clear stream," Shipley's Run, in which the boys went wading. For "Stratton's boys" kite-flying was quite popular. Apparently a big game was to cut someone's kite string, inevitably followed by retaliation. "Foot ball" (the two-word variety) was also played. Who would have guessed in the 1840's that the rough-and-tumble Bringhurst would eventually have a business of fine china and glassware? (Wilmington Directory, 1862).

Albert W. Smith was himself a respondent in 1894. He was the son of Samuel Smith, who ran a much-respected boarding school in Wilmington from 1829-39. Albert remained and taught the boys at Friends from 1841-45. His program (for \$5.00/quarter) was largely the same as his predecessors' with the exception that both Latin and French were available, for \$3.00 extra. His boys' school was generally 30-35 strong, and they enjoyed a full four weeks of vacation during the year. Many years later, after having been president the of Wilmington Savings Fund, Smith was a member of the School Committee from 1889-1913. His involvement with Friends School lasted 72 years.

There was some co-education. Bartram recalled, and the statements of school mistresses Edith Newlin (1852-7) and Ann Fothergill (1858-63) confirm, that the teachers of each gender would occasionally utilize each other's strengths in co-education. Stratton, T. Clarkson Taylor (1852-57), and Thomas Griffith (1857-63) all gave joint mathematics lessons to older boys and girls, while Sarah Ann Tyson, Newlin, and Fothergill gave grammar lessons to both sexes. This showed no commitment to coeducation but rather "Sarah Ann was no mathematician, used Pike's arithmetic but could not master all of it..." (AMB, I.d.)

Two references to Smith's successor, William Robert Stratton, paint an unpleasant picture. While Bartram and others conceded he was an effective mathematics teacher, Pusey Bye (1853-63) wrote that Stratton was "more fond of his pipe than of maintaining discipline." JR Bringhurst wrote enigmatically that Stratton "taught until second month 1852 when he ran away dying in Washington in 1863." February is a curious month to leave. His departure was a blow, as indicated by Bringhurst's comment that T. Clarkson Taylor succeeded him "in spring 1852 with but 8 to 12 scholars." (JRB, I.c.)

### The Taylor/Newlin Years

With T. Clarkson Taylor, however, Friends' School had secured a teacher of great ability and magnetic personality. He taught from 1852-57, a relatively brief period, but longer than most masters up to this period. Bringhurst, who studied under him, recalled that "Taylor was at first discouraged by the small attendance but the following fall term opened more auspiciously and the school almost immediately became more successful." (JRB, I. c.) Emma Worrell remembers him "creating a

much greater interest in education, and building up a larger boys' school than had ever been known before." So much was the school enlarged that several respondents recall as assistants his wife Elizabeth, brother

Jonathan, Jesse Brown, and Sarah Newlin, sister of girls' principal Edith.



**T. Clarkson Taylor, popular boys' school teacher, 1852-57.**

Edith Newlin, in the meantime, was having equal success with the girls' school. A number of persons echo the sentiments of Ann Fothergill that she and Taylor had a "very flourishing school." (AF, IV.) Emma Worrell described Newlin's upstairs girls' school as the place "where not only all the girls of Friends society but

almost all the girls of Wilmington and the country about received their education." (EW, I.d.) The cost soared: \$16.00/semester!

Both Newlin and Taylor placed a much greater emphasis on math and science. In addition to grammar, English literature, rhetoric, history, and arithmetic, students took algebra, geometry, physiology, "Natural Philosophy," and chemistry. Drawing was taught by Edith's sister Sarah; French by a Madame Osanne and later by Edith herself. In her response, Newlin itemized educational materials that she supplied at her own expense: dictionaries, an American Encyclopedia, a set of Physiological and Astronomical charts, other references, a pair of Globes (terrestrial and celestial).

Bartram remembered Taylor's math lessons and lectures as being real improvements over those of earlier teachers. Newlin stated, "Clarkson Taylor gave a pretty full course of lectures, illustrations and experiments, on Natural Philosophy and Chemistry; and to these lectures given in his own room, I always took my scholars." (EN, p. 6).

Christmas provided a vacation only because the children agreed to a mass absence. Newlin had "to open school as usual, and remained at my post until it became apparent that a longer stay was useless." (EN, pp. 8-9) No holidays were planned, except when Quarterly Meeting was held in Wilmington.

At times Newlin took the girls for long rambles, "half day for a walking expedition...up the Brandywine." Sometimes they went as far as Richardson's mill up Newport Rd. or in the other direction to Shellpot Creek. They gathered botanical specimens along the way. In the winter, when the ice was firm, she took the girls sledding and ice-skating. "On these occasions great was the excitement among the young people on starting with sleds and skates; and great was the relief of the teacher



when all were safely on the homeward way." (EN, pp. 9-10)

While Taylor was apparently a stimulating teacher, Pusey Bye recalled a time when the school almost lost him. "... there occurred what might have been a very serious accident by an explosion of the Compound Oxyo Hydrogen Gas Holders by which the guiding rods were driven through the ceiling and the floor above...in their ascent narrowly missing the heads of Clarkson Taylor and his assistant, making a loud report which brought the boys quickly in from the playground to see what had happened, of course it is unnecessary to say that the machine and the room were much wrecked." (PB, p. 2.)

Perhaps those repairs proved too costly, however, for Friends' School did lose both Taylor and Newlin in 1857, when they left to start another school. The reason was clear: the School Committee of Wilmington Monthly Meeting could not or would not support the improvement of facilities to the level that Taylor and Newlin desired. Ann Fothergill, in a response to Johnson, said the two had confided to her, "that their only reason for leaving was because the Friends would not improve the buildings nor increase the facilities in any way for still better work.... Some of us who followed know something about it, too." (AF, p. 2)

Newlin stated in her letter that they opened the school "as equal proprietors" (EN, p. 5), yet it was called T. Clarkson Taylor Scientific and Commercial Academy, at the corner of Eighth and Wollaston Streets. It was regarded as quite successful during his life, but Taylor died young, in 1871. A privately printed brochure wrote:

*"He was an able and successful teacher, not more by reason of his intellectual ability, than by his geniality, his genuine love for young people, and his quick perceptions of and ready sympathy with their needs.*

*"He never forgot the boy in himself, and he had a boyish gladness that was contagious, which knit him to the hearts of his students."* (p. 15)



Figure V. Teachers Paid by Wilmington Monthly Meeting, 1779-1870—based on...

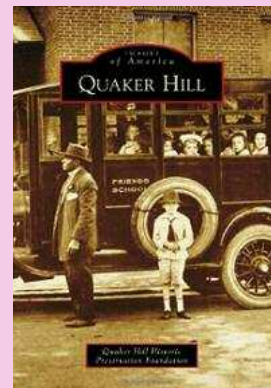
- School Committee records and vouchers found in WFS safe, August, 1997.
- responses to Isaac Johnson's 1894 queries about earlier Friends' history.
- "Accounts of the Treasurer of the Fund for Friends belonging to WMM," FHL, Swarthmore.
- Wilmington City Directories: 1814, 1845, and others.

The year or years following indicate the dates during which these teachers are mentioned by or received payments from the School Committee. Possibly they taught in other years as well, and were simply not reimbursed for teaching "poor children." Some persons are definitely linked to Fourth & West (4&W) schools; others definitely are not. Teachers' known locations are printed after the dates, but many teachers' locations are not yet known. Teachers with asterisks were Quaker or at least were married or buried at Fourth & West Meeting. Others may have been.

Abrahams, John	1779?		Martin, Rebecca *	1809-13	
Allen, James G.	1826-7		Mason, Martha Way *	1809-12	223 Market
Atkinson, Samuel	1836-7	4&W	Maule, Joshua	1805-11	King St
Baldwin, Joseph *	1812		McCamon, Margaret *	1816-26	4&W
Banc, Mary	1822		McKiever, Alexander	1818	4&W
Barr, George	1820		Meredith, Jesse	1798	
Biles, Thomas J.	1824		Moore, Mary *	1819-52	
Bird, Rachel	1816		Morris, Mary R.	1833	
Bonsall Eleanor	1813-5	129 Market	Phillips, Ann	1830-1	
Bonsall, Hannah *	1834		Peirce, Isaac	1825-7	4&W
Bonsall, Ruth	1822-3		Price, Phillip	1824	Westtown
Breaer, Abigail	1839-40		Reynolds, Elizabeth O. *	1824-6	
Brooke, Jas. B.	1846		Richards, Nathaniel *	1808	Shiple/HIGH
Broomall, Jesse	1819-2	4&W	Rumsey, Charles	1811	
Byrnes, Ellen	1829-31		Sheward, Rest *	1811-3	
Carleton, Lydia	1828	4&W	Shiple, Mary *	1819	
Dilworth, Martha	1818-9		Smith, Albert W. *	1841-5	
Dixon, Mary Anna *	1829-39	4&W	Smith, Anna	1839-40	
Embre, Anne	1819-22		Smith, Samuel *	1835-6	West & 3rd
Ford, Samuel *	1794-6, 1816-26		Stratton, William R.	1847-52	4&W
Gause, Jesse	1812-13; 1824-5	4&W	Story, John	1794-5	
Gawthrop, Sarah	1857	4&W	Stapler, Thomas *	1819-22	Stanton
Gillingham, Yeomans	1830		Taylor, T. Clarkson	1852-7	4&W
Gorham, Parnell	1795-7		Thomas, Aquilla	1828-9	4&W
Green, Hannah	1813-17	119 Shipley	Thomas, William	1812-35	6th & W
Griffith, Thomas	1857-63	4&W	Tyson, Mary	1847-57	
Hains, Jesse	1794-5		Tyson, Sarah Ann	1847-	4&W
Harvey, Susanna P. *	1808-12		Wayne, Mary	1799	
Hastings, Sarah	1794-5		Webb, Jane	1814-15	
Hayhurst, Thomas	1830-31	4&W	Webster, John	1787-?	
Heald, Henry *	1827-8	4&W	Wickersham, Caleb P.	1863-4	4&W
Hickman, Hannah	1814-19		Wilkinson, Ann *	1837-52	
Hurnand, Robert	1820-23	4&W	Wilkinson, Mary *	1825-42	
Iddings, James	1795-7		Wilkinson, Nathan *	1833-4	
Jackson, Isaac *	1816		Wilkinson, Rachel *	1817-36	
Jess, Zachariah	1797-8		Williamson, Thomas	1822	Westtown
Kendall, Jesse & Maria	1839-46	4&W	Wilson, Joseph	1808-9	
Kendall, Maria	1839-46	4&W	Worrell, Emma	1865-70	4&W
Kent, Annic	1857-8	4&W	Yarnell, Edith *	1809	
Kirkpatrick, Martha	1823-4		Yarnall, Rachel	1809	
Lewis, Evan *	1809-13	King/Hanover	Yarnall, Israel	1812	
Lewis, Sarah	1826-27		Zane, Joel	1813-7	Front St

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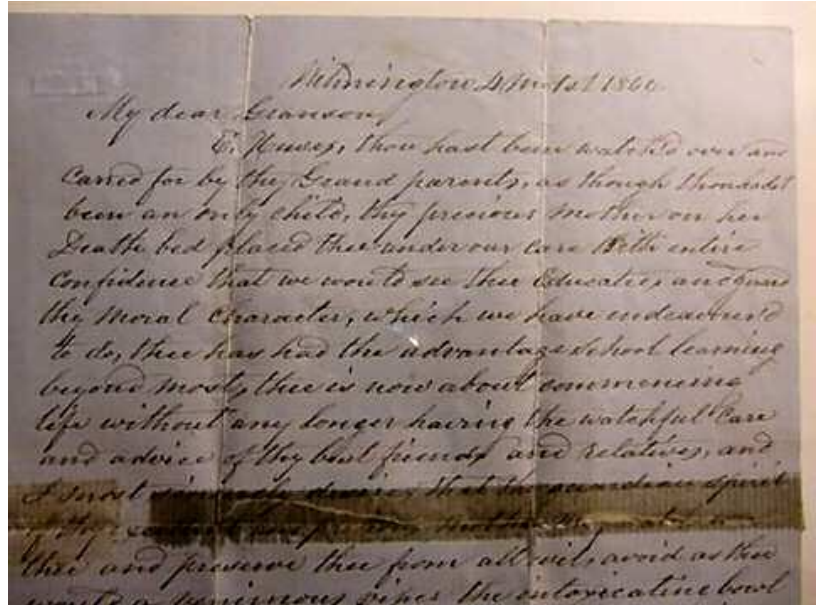
127 pages brimming with pictures and illustrations of Quaker Hill, from its earliest days to the present. Assembled and written by QHHPF, published by Arcadia Publishing. Available from QHHPF [www.quakerhillhistoric.org](http://www.quakerhillhistoric.org)



## Lost Letter from Thomas Garrett to His Grandson Emlen Hewes 1864

by Robert Seeley

Below is a transcribed letter from Thomas Garrett to his grandson Emlen Hewes. This letter was found in the attic of the Hewes family in 2011 and I have shared with DHS in Wilmington, Delaware and The Library Company in Philadelphia. Where you see ....., it is a word I could not read because of the condition of the letter. Sally Garrett Hewes, oldest daughter of Thomas Garrett, knew she was dying and placed her three children, Mary Hewes, Emlen Hewes, and Charles Hewes in the care of her aging parents Thomas and Rachel Garrett before she died on September 3, 1853, at age 34. Sally Garrett Hewes, wife of Edward Hewes who died in 1850, was one of the first women photographers in the United States, and had a business with Samuel Broadbent in West Chester, Pennsylvania and later in Philadelphia, Pa. Sally is buried at Wilmington Friends Meeting, close to her father Thomas Garrett. Emlen was born December 1st of 1845 in Delaware and would die in Philadelphia, August 25th 1907. Emlen is buried at Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery with his wife, Mary Bushnell. In the letter from Thomas to his grandson, Emlen, education was very important to Thomas but also his relationship to God. I am sure Emlen met many people escaping to freedom on the Underground Railroad, including Harriet Tubman. He saw the kindness, gentleness, and love Thomas and Rachel gave people escaping to freedom on the Underground Railroad, the same kindness, gentleness and love he had received. He saw the self-control and patience in Thomas when he was threatened and persecuted by pro-slavery people. Emlen saw the peace and joy in Thomas and Rachel after the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to end slavery. He saw the faithfulness of their mission to end slavery, and their goodness in following the spirit in their daily walk. Thomas and Rachel set an example for Emlen to follow; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, which are the fruits of the spirit. That inner light in the life of his grandfather and step grandmother, I know Emlen would always remember.



Above: Letter from grandfather to grandson.  
Below: Emlen Hewes, grandson of Thomas Garrett.



Wilmington, 4mo. 1st, 1864

My dear Grandson,

**E. Hewes, thou hast been watched over and cared for by thy Grand parents, as though thou hadst been an only child. Thy precious mother on her Death bed placed thee under our care with entire confidence that we would see thee educated and guard thy moral character, which we have endeavored to do.**

**Thee has had the advantage school learning beyond most. Thee is now about commencing life without any longer having the watchful care and advice of thy best friends and relatives, and I most sincerely desire that the guardian spirit of thy..... and preserve thee from all evil, avoid as thee would a venomous viper the intoxicating bowl and every species of gambling. Chose the Society of the pure and good, and when tempted, if emptied, thee should be to swerve from the path of Rectitude. Remember that thy Heavenly Father not only sees thy acts, but knows thy most inward thoughts. Now in thy youth form the resolution to in all things be honest and truthful, and thy guardian spirit will preserve thee. Write often to thy best friend. We shall always be glad to hear from thee, and most sincerely desire thy welfare and prosperity. Most likely thee will never again see thy Grandparents, who have ever loved and cared for thee forever.**

Thos. Garrett







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**Mary Starkweather-White, Executive Editor**  
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**Upcoming Quaker Hill Events**

**Underground Railroad  
Workshops for Children**

The Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation is very pleased to present four Underground Railroad workshops for children at the Wilmington friends Meeting House at 401 North West Street, Wilmington, DE, 19801. They will be offered from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays in January and February in 2015.

The first workshop on January 24, 2015, will feature a story about Wilmington's Underground Railroad Stationmaster Thomas Garrett and a related art project as well as refreshments.

The second workshop on February 7, 2015, will feature the story of Harriet Tubman, an art project and a re-enactment of the Underground Railroad, as well as refreshments.

The third and fourth workshops, on February 14 and 28, 2015, will feature the story of Frederick Douglass and the early struggles for African-American education.

All of the workshops are free and open to the public. For more information, call (302) 299-5600.

**Unlocking the Secrets  
of Your Old Home**

On March 21, 2015, QHHPF and the Delaware Humanities Forum will present "Unlocking the Secrets of Your Old Home" by Mike Dixon. The talk is free and open to the public.

**Underground Railroad Bus Tour**

On April 18, 2015, QHHPF will offer a bus tour about the Underground Railroad in Wilmington and Camden, Delaware! The cost is \$15 per person. Space is limited, so call (302) 299-5600 or write QHHPF, 521 West St., Wilmington, DE 19801 for your tickets now!

**A View From the Hill**

*from the Editor*

Welcome to another issue of *The Quill*, with the second part of Terence Maguire's account of the unfinished history of Wilmington Friends School by Isaac Johnson, a long-lost letter from Thomas Garrett to his grandson, Emlen Hewes, via Robert Seeley, and Mary Starkweather-White's account of the life of Henry Tatnall, gleaned from the recollections of his son, Henry, Jr. We hope you enjoy (let us know what you think!).

QHHPF is involved in a number of exciting projects that we hope to be able to tell you about soon.

*j.b.*

# The Hard-Working, Multi-Talented Henry Tatnall

by *Mary Starkweather-White*

was very like the Monitor!

Henry Tatnall worked as a mill clerk, farmer and lumberman, but was most famous for his careers as a musician and, especially, a fine artist, careers unusual for a nineteenth century Quaker. His son, Henry Lea Tatnall, Jr., tells his story in a memoir in the archives of Wilmington Friends School.

Tatnall the elder was born at nearly midnight on December 31, 1829 in the Brandywine Village section of Wilmington at 1805 Market Street. At seventeen he appears to have been expelled from Westtown Friends School for pranks and general mischief. In 1846 he went to work for three years at the Brandywine Flour Mills. His son relates an incident which changed his life:

“Flour dust got into the young man's lungs. The family doctor advised sea trips. The Milling Company's schooners made frequent trips to the West Indies. The boy went on several of these and made full recovery. While at sea the members of the crews off duty gathered about the foremast swapping yarns. One of the crew entertained with jigs and ditties on an old violin. The boy was allowed to handle the instrument and there started the music which later became so considerable a part of his life...”

In some manner word of these doings came to the attention of Friends in the Meeting and so shocked them that they appointed a committee of three to interview friend Henry and to obtain from him a promise to abandon the instrument and make an apology to the Meeting...

A forthright refusal was made by the boy, and after formal report to the Meeting he was deprived of his birthright membership.”

The young man continued to work part-time at the mill. He was always interested in nature, and by studying fish was able to design the model of a stream-lined schooner. The mill owner took an interest and had such a schooner built and found it much better than existing ships. The New York Herald-Tribune science editor commended it. Later, during the Civil War, Tatnall fashioned the model of a war vessel which received the attention of the local paper. Strangely enough, the model

Tatnall stopped working at the mill when he attained the age of 21 in 1850 and married in 1851. With the gift of a farm from his father, he set out to become a farmer, but this did not last. In 1854 he brought his then family of four back to the city and



*A painting by Henry Tatnall (reproduced with permission of Biggs Museum of Art).*

worked in his own lumber businesses: Craig & Tatnall at 11th and Tatnall Streets; Nebeker & Tatnall at the foot of Market Street; and finally, H.L. Tatnall & Co.

In 1855 he started the Bumble Bee Orchestra, which played mostly Italian opera, and was the sole proprietor, manager and treasurer for the Germania Orchestra. Although self-taught, he composed several

polkas and marches which fell into general use. Once a young African-American man approached him for help with a ball. Tatnall gave him \$25 for the purchase of instruments and promised to write a piece for his band. The resulting piece, The Railsplitter's Polka, was taken up in the Civil War and the 7th Brooklyn Regiment was heard to play it in a parade!

But Tatnall did not find his real aim in life until, again self-taught, he became an artist at 43! He came to art through the door of philanthropy by housing several young artists at his home on Jefferson Street and helping them to get established. His son quotes the following story of how on a bet he began a career that led him to become a foremost American landscape artist:

Henry Tatnall, Jr., quoting Genealogy of the Rodman Family, stated:

“Mr. Tatnall's own story of his first painting is a strange one. It was while George Hetzel was in Wilmington. One day while Hetzel was absent Mr. Charles Rudolph bantered Mr. Tatnall to compete with him in the painting of a picture. Mr. Tatnall demurred, saying he knew nothing about painting. His companion, however, persuaded him to try his hand for the best oyster dinner Joe Fulmer could get up.

Two easels with canvasses, paints and brushes

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## Henry Tatnall

*continued from page 6*

were at hand. In the sportive spirit in which the contest was perfected the paintings were started. He avers that he had no knowledge of what happened until he seemed to awake from a dream to find upon his easel a completed picture, a scene on the Delaware River facing Pennsgrove with several small vessels under sail and to become conscious of Mr. Rudolph standing behind him gazing upon the canvas and acknowledging the loss of the bet.”

“All through his life, his son notes, that although he was self-taught, Tatnall had an ardent love of nature, well-balanced and analytical mind, and a rare power of application to turn his enthusiasms into art.



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