

# GERMANTOWN CRIER

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HISTORIC  
GERMANTOWN  
*Freedom's Backyard*

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JOHN S. TROWER AND HIS CATERING BUSINESS

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BLACK WRITERS MUSEUM

*Beautiful architecture is a gift, not only to its occupants,  
but also to the whole community. Such is this Germantown gem.*



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Volume 71  
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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Historic Germantown tells the stories of American liberty and the everyday people who fought for it, reflecting a neighborhood of independence seekers and community builders. Historic Germantown is where one of Philadelphia's Revolutionary War battles was fought, where the first-ever American protest against slavery was written, and where one of the few remaining houses on the Underground Railroad still stands. Historic Germantown's mission is underpinned by the idea that the organization is ultimately only as strong as the community in which it resides, and that a vibrant organization can help contribute to the vitality of the old German Township.

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This portrait photograph of John S. Trower  
was published in 1911 with his obituary.  
Germantown Historical Society.

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## In Celebration of John S. Trower, His Legacy, and Achievements



This portrait photograph of John S. Trower was published in 1911 with his obituary. Germantown Historical Society.

*Editor's note: With the nomination of African-American caterer John S. Trower's former headquarters at 5706 Germantown Avenue to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and installation of a Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission marker at his former headquarters this fall to commemorate the location's significance to our history, this is a most appropriate time to reflect upon Trower's achievements, not just in Germantown or in the City of Philadelphia, but nationally. It is in honor of John S. Trower's legacy and accomplishments that we dedicate this issue of the Germantown Crier in his memory, to ensure that Trower remains very much alive in the spirit of Germantown. We hope that by doing so, his legacy and accomplishments will be known to future generations, so that those generations will learn from and be inspired by them.*

*The following was originally published in the spring 1984 Germantown Crier's "Germantown Past" article, and summarizes some of the content which will be included in the this spring's issue. The following article has been edited for content.*

**A**mong the Black entrepreneurs (Dean, Byrd, and Trower) who achieved substantial success in Germantown before World War II, only the largest, the Trower firm, carried its success

into the second generation. Educational opportunities were scarce, though children of respected Black families were admitted in limited numbers into otherwise all-white public elementary schools, and



into the new Germantown High School without a quota from its inception. Traditions of stability and financial security were only just developing among Southern Black immigrants no more than a generation or two out of slavery. Their most respected professions— schoolteaching and the ministry— often did not lead to wealth, and middle-level jobs (i.e. in the postal and other Federal services, police, nursing, etc.) were only open on a limited basis.

In two areas, however; in barbering and hairdressing, and personal care and catering, whites seem to have tolerated and even encouraged Black business independence before World War I. W. E. B. Du Bois remarked on the “guild of the caterers” which was transformed by an “evolution shrewdly, persistently, and tastefully directed from the Negro cook and waiter into the public caterer and restaurateur.” He only gave passing mention to Germantown, and among his leading Black caterers of Philadelphia— Bogle, Augustin, Prosser, Dorsey, Jones, and Minton— Trower is not even mentioned.

Nevertheless, by his death in 1911, John S. Trower, born on his father’s Virginia farm and having started out for himself as an oyster-opener, was reckoned as the Nation’s wealthiest Black resident. He had come to Germantown to work in a taproom; taprooms served lunch, and Trower supplied food to the taprooms. He sold pies at railroad stations and by around 1870, he was in business for himself here. In 1887 he bought for \$12,500 the building at 5706 Germantown Avenue which had belonged to the Germantown Saving Fund Society; in 1889 he was named caterer to the Cramp Shipyards, providing “banquets and luncheons at launchings and supplying vessels with food for trial trips.” He catered fashionable affairs on dry land as well. He invested wisely in real estate in Germantown— as will be dis-

cussed in this issue of the Crier— and in Ocean City, where the family had a summer home. In Germantown, they lived on East School House Lane.

But, as Booker T. Washington noted in his 1907 *Negro in Business* and discussed in this issue of the Crier, Trower did not forget his own people. He guaranteed mortgages and loans to members of his own church, the First African Baptist Church, at Christian and 16th streets; he financed the Colored Baptist Church in Ocean City and Zion African Baptist Church in Germantown. He organized and was an officer of a building and loan association enabling African-American families to buy homes, and he bought 110 acres for an industrial farm for African-American boys near Downingtown. At his death, his estate was valued at ‘\$150,000 and upwards.’

At his death, his sons were minors; as they grew into the business after World War I, they turned the Germantown business into a white supper club— the restaurant had always served whites exclusively— and at the end of 1925, they closed it down. However, “Young Jack,” as John S. Trower, Jr., was called, eventually returned to catering downtown, acquired the business of a deceased competitor, and became one of the celebrated society caterers of the area. Some Germantown Blacks came to specialize in the various aspects of his far-flung operations. The Trower real estate holdings in Germantown were extensive, as began to appear after “Young Jack’s” death about 1950. For example, when Penney’s and the Germantown Savings Bank began to develop the parking lot on the north side of Maplewood Avenue near Greene Street, the property at 143 West Maplewood Avenue was bought from the Trower estate. Much other residential property in Germantown also belonged to the Trowers.

# The Estate of John S. Trower (1849-1911), Caterer and Restaurateur of Germantown

*By Oscar Beisert*



The front elevation of the John S. Trower Building at 5706 Germantown Avenue, as it appeared in 2020.

Oscar Beisert photograph.

When John S. Trower purchased the former banking house of the Savings Fund Society of Germantown and Its Vicinity (Savings Fund Society) at 5706 Germantown Avenue in 1887 for \$12,500, the handsome, six-foot tall businessman was on his way to being one of the most successful Black men of the age.<sup>1</sup> A caterer, businessman, philanthropist, real estate investor, and restaurateur, Trower was a Philadelphian who achieved local, statewide, and national significance in American history. At time of his death in 1911, he was referred to as “the Wealthiest Negro in the Country [United States].”<sup>2</sup>

Known today as the “Crab House” two doors down from Vernon Park, the John S. Trower Building represents the incredible legacy of a Black businessman of the late Victorian era in Philadelphia. In the 1860s Trower left his home in rural Virginia with a small savings. By way of Baltimore, he eventually arrived at Philadelphia, where he settled in Germantown, opening a restaurant on Cheltenham Avenue opposite the Germantown Depot.<sup>3</sup> Yielding good profits at his first venue, Trower moved his business to 5706 Germantown Avenue.<sup>4</sup> It was here that he became known as one of the wealthiest Black men in the United States.

1 Deed: The Saving Fund Society of Germantown and Its Vicinity to John S. Trower, of the City of Philadelphia, caterer, for \$12,500, 28 September 1887, PDBk G.G.P, No. 281, p.506. Source: City Archives of Philadelphia, hereafter, “1887 deed.”

2 “Wealthiest Negro in Country Dead,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, 4 April 1911, p.1.

3 Booker T. Washington, *The Negro In Business* (Hertel, Jenkins & Co, 1907), pp.48–53, hereafter, “Washington.”

4 1887 deed.

In a period where racial inequality and socioeconomic inequities limited access to success and wealth for all minority communities, especially people of color, the food service industry, which included catering and restaurant businesses, was one profession that was open to Blacks, representing a significant aspect of American cultural, economic, political, and social development and heritage. Trower, himself, described the context of his profession as it related to the African American community at-large:

Catering was once all ours. We were America's acknowledged cooks, butlers, waiters, and caterers. But a few years ago, white men were unknown in many of these kinds of work. Colored men once controlled this work in Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Chicago and the great Northern cities. As a result of this control the wealthiest colored citizens were caterers. Some of these men branched out and became managers and owners of hotels of more or less magnitude.<sup>5</sup>

Emanating from his financial success, Trower invested significantly in his own community. Among the most important of his accomplishments and philanthropies, he co-founded the Downingtown Industrial and Agricultural School at Downingtown, Pennsylvania "for the Moral and Industrial Improvement of Colored Youth of Philadelphia..."<sup>6</sup> A generous patron of all manner of charitable causes,

his financial contributions to the First African Baptist Church of Philadelphia led to the construction of that congregation's surviving historic edifice at 1600–06 Christian Street.<sup>7</sup> This was just one of many African Baptist charities and congregations that he regularly supported. Trower also founded and was an officer in one of the earliest associations enabling African Americans to purchase homes, including The Cherry Building and Loan Association.<sup>8</sup> In the same vein, he was a founding officer of the Reliable Mutual Aid and Industrial Society for African Americans; the National Negro Business League, and a number of other similar entities of the day.<sup>9</sup>

It is critical to emphasize the public perception of Trower at the time of his death in 1911, lauded as the "wealthiest Negro in the United States," one of many phrases that no doubt presented the fact that he was among the wealthiest Black men in America at the time of his demise.<sup>10</sup> His death was reported in major publications that remain prominent to date, including the *Baltimore Sun*, *The New York Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and *The Washington Post*. Contextually, Trower's wealth equated to that of a moderately wealthy white American, but not the wealthiest men of the day. Nevertheless, his career and successes must be examined through the lens of a social construct that embodied total and widespread racism, a system that usually closed most if not all doors to people of color. This was the world that Trower negotiated to achieve financial independence, respect, and success.<sup>11</sup>

5 "Extracts from Addresses," *Report of the Second Annual Convention of the National Negro Business League at Chicago Illinois*. (Chicago: R.S. Abbott Publishing Company, 1901), p.24.

6 Charles H. Brooks, *Official History of the First African Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pa.* (Philadelphia: 1922), p.52, hereafter, "Brooks."

7 Oscar Beisert, *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: The First African Baptist Church 1600–06 Christian Street*. (Philadelphia: 7 April 2015), p.35.

8 Juliet E.K. Walker, *The History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship* (Macmillan Library Reference USA, 1998), p.179.

9 *The Philadelphia Colored Directory: A Handbook of the Religious, Social, Political, Professional, Business and Other Activities of the Negroes of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia Colored Directory Company, 1907), p.106.

10 "Wealthiest Negro Is Dead, John Trower Worth \$1,500,000 Dies At Philadelphia," *Harrisburg Daily Independent*, 4 April 1911, p.1.

11 While the sum total of John S. Trower's wealth may be comparable to upper middle-class whites within the larger context of American fortunes, one must examine Trower through the lens of a global social contract that thrived on racial inequality. This racist system was well-established and vast with fortifications in the form of cultural, economic, legal, and societal barriers geared to keep Black people in an inferior position. This resulted in a commonly demoralized, dehumanized, and marginalized community of Black Americans throughout the nation's history.



## Trower's Path to Success

Trower was born free or "free born" on October 3, 1849, to Luke Trower (1807–1871) and Ann Maria Reid Collins Trower (1822–1889) on the Eastern Shore in Northampton County, Virginia.<sup>12</sup> The son of Nelson Trower (b.1790) and Mary, Luke Trower was a sailor born in Northampton County, Virginia. Born to Adah Reid (b.1805), Ann M. Trower, also a native of Northampton County and twice married, was often listed as the head of her household in census records.<sup>13</sup>

According to various sources, Trower saved money during his teenage years by "gathering sumac which he sold to the tanneries for use in tanning hides."<sup>14</sup> With his savings, he is said to have eventually presented the deed to the family farm, free of debt, to his mother, though the precise date of this accomplishment seems unclear. At about 21, he left Northampton County for Baltimore, Maryland with \$52 in his pocket—then a fairly substantial sum for a young Black man in the post-Civil War period.<sup>15</sup> In Baltimore, "he began opening oysters," no doubt at one of Baltimore's many oyster houses, residing for a time with Mr. and Mrs. Mack, who are said to have provided him with much personal advice and assistance.<sup>16</sup>

At some point between 1870 and 1873, Trower migrated north to Philadelphia, where he found a position as a waiter in a very wealthy, private house, which stood in the most fashionable part of the Quaker City at the corner of 19th and Walnut Streets on Rittenhouse Square.<sup>17</sup> Soon after his arrival, Trower joined the Cherry Street Baptist Church—lat-

er known as First African Baptist Church.<sup>18</sup> Though continuing to worship in Philadelphia proper, he eventually settled in Germantown. By 1874, he entered into partnership with George W. Brown to form Trower & Brown, caterers, at 136 (present-day 147) East Cheltenham Avenue.<sup>19</sup>

This building was located directly across East Cheltenham Avenue from the Germantown Depot, which was built to serve the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad Company. When Trower settled in Germantown, the neighborhood was one of Philadelphia's premier residential suburbs. His partnership with Brown was short-lived, seeming to have terminated after just one year. According to "The Man on the Corner," published in the *Germantown Independent Gazette*, the termination of that partnership required Trower to either buy out his partner or sell out entirely. Henry B. Bruner wrote "out a check for the money Trower needed and told him to close the deal at once." A near neighbor, Bruner operated a hotel, bar and livery stable at the Fountain Inn on Germantown Avenue at Price Street.<sup>20</sup>

It didn't take long for Trower's establishment to become well-known for a cultured menu, fine cuisine, an elegant presentation, and great service. An 1880 receipt provides insight to his menu, as well as his entrepreneurial progress. "The art of manufacturing fine confectionary" began on East Cheltenham Avenue with "a good degree of success," remembered Trower decades later in an address on "Catering" that he delivered in August 1901 before the Second Annual Convention at Chicago, Illinois of the newly-established National Negro Business League. He also recalled improving not only his food, but his pre-

12 Pennsylvania (State). Death certificates, 1906–1963. Series 11.90 (1,905 cartons). Records of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, RG 11. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

13 Much of this genealogical research was provided to the authors by James Lyons, a descendant of John S. Trower via an in-person meeting in Germantown, emails, telephone interviews, and online via Ancestry.com.

14 *The Life of John S. Trower*, an unpublished manuscript, which was provided by James Lyons, a descendant of John S. Trower.

15 "NEGRO LEAVES \$1,500,000. One of the Wealthiest Colored Men in America is Dead," *The Burlington Free Press*, 6 April 1911, p.2.

16 "John Trower Dead. Wealthy Philadelphia Business Man and Church Leader Passes Away: Left a Great Fortune." *The New York Age*, 6 April 1911, p.3; and *The Evening News*, 10 April 1911, p.6.

17 *The Life of John S. Trower*, an unpublished manuscript, which was provided by James Lyons, a descendant of John S. Trower.

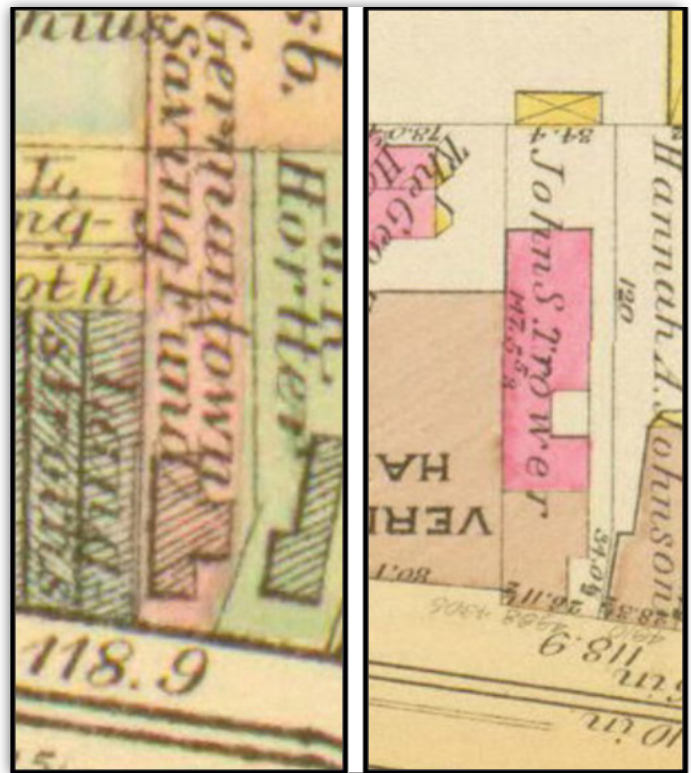
18 Brooks, p.87.

19 *Boyd's Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: Central News Company, 1874).

20 "The Man on the Corner," *Germantown Independent Gazette*, n.d. Source: Germantown Historical Society.



John Trower's restaurant at 147 East Cheltenham Avenue (formerly 136), as it appeared circa 1875. Patricia Irwin, a descendant of John S. Trower.



The property owned by the Germantown Savings Fund Society at 5706 Germantown Avenue is shown at the left, as published in G.M. Hopkins' 1871 *Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown*. At the right, as a larger property owned by John S. Trower, who purchased it in 1887, as published in George W. Bromley's *Atlas of Philadelphia by Wards, Volume 7 22nd Ward*, 1889. Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

sentation, adding "a large stock of Fine China, glass, silver and linen ware and candelabra," required to refine the delivery of his products and services. He also had an "upholstery department; to have linens for parlors and canopies for church weddings; also a full line of decorations and draperies for halls and churches."<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, in order to truly expand, a change of venue was required.

### From Banking House to the John S. Trower Building

Origins of the John S. Trower Building took root on October 29, 1868, when Martha Channon sold

the parcel on which 5706 Germantown Avenue now stands to Thomas C. Garret for \$7,000. Acting as an agent, Garret transferred the property to the Savings Fund Society on November 7, 1868, for the same sum.<sup>22</sup> The building was constructed in the Second Empire style as the financial institution's banking house in 1869, which it occupied for less than two decades.

In an unusual moment of progress for a Black man in Victorian Philadelphia, the Savings Fund Society sold its banking house to Trower in 1887, at which time he made extensive renovations. Before and after photographs exhibit Trower's exquisite taste in presentation, as the ground floor transitioned from

21 "Extracts from Addresses." *Report of the Second Annual Convention of the National Negro Business League at Chicago Illinois*. (Chicago: R.S. Abbott Publishing Company, 1901), p.23. This extract was kindly provided to the authors by Dr. Danya Pilgrim, Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Temple University.

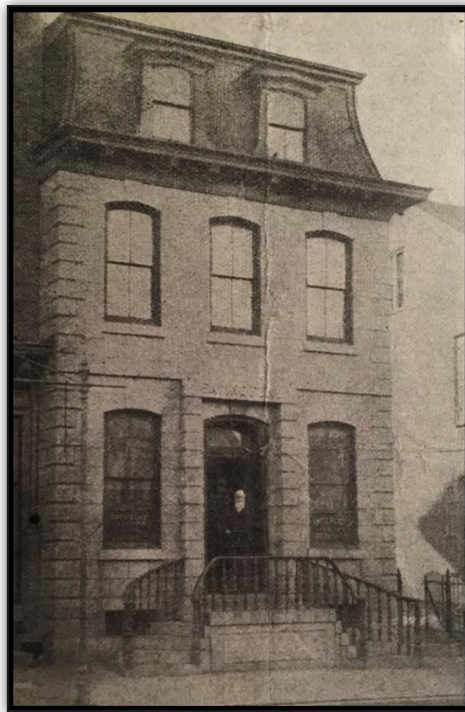
22 Deed: Martha Channon to Thomas C. Garrett, for \$7,000, 29 October 1868, PDBk J.T.O, No. 188, p.252, CAP.; and Deed: Thomas C. Garrett to the Savings Fund Society of Germantown & Its Vicinity, for \$7,000, 7 November 1868, PDBk J.T.O., No. 188, p.271.



a formal, yet somehow unimpressive institutional appearance to one of delicious commercial verve of the 1880s. The original exterior stair and entrance in the central bay was replaced by an almost fanciful oriel window in miniature that projected from the building line for display purposes. The windows that had flanked the central bay were removed and separate pedestrian entrances were installed, each of which were accessible by granite steps. An impressive gaslight was installed near the street just north of the carriage block. The doorways provided egress

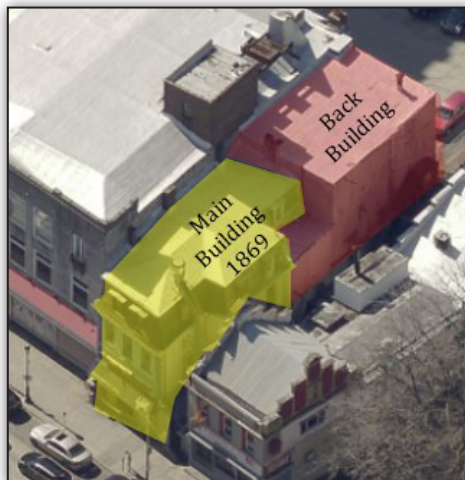
to Trower's business, as well as the upper floors that would serve as his residence for some years. These improvements also included the addition of a back building which included a large, one-story kitchen, as well as a two-story bakery and store house, all of which are described in his 1891 fire insurance policy. While the building was later modernized, the impeccable commercial renovation circa 1887-91 is a testament to the high quality of Trower's business and service.

The building at 5706 Germantown Avenue is shown as it appeared prior to 1887, when John S. Trower bought the building from the Savings Fund Society of Germantown & Its Vicinity. Germantown Historical Society.



This view of the front façade of Trower's building shows it as it appeared in the mid-1890s. Germantown Historical Society.

The John S. Trower Building with the 1869 building and the 1891-1895 back building addition delineated. Pictometry, atlas, City of Philadelphia.



The 1891 layout of the John S. Trower Building, including the new bakery and kitchen. Franklin Fire Insurance Co. of Philadelphia, Perpetual Survey No. 70565, John S. Trower, 31 July 1891. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania





Trower himself described the enlarged capacities in the aforementioned 1901 address:

All done by my own men, with a head or foreman over each department; in the bakery, candy factory, and in the ice-cream factory, a foreman; in the culinary department a chef, and a stable boss to look after the horses and wagons, and a director in the shipping department.<sup>23</sup>

The first-class attention to detail, excellence in service, and superior cuisine exhibited in Trower's private catering commissions and at his restaurant rendered him a consequential businessman and professional. Ultimately, these factors were paramount to enlarging his career, winning him significant contracts with William Cramp and Sons Ship and Engine Building Company. *The New York Age* described Trower's relationship with Cramp:

In 1889 he got the catering work at Cramps' shipyard. He supplied the food on the trial ships of all the warships built at the yard during the years he was connected there, including vessels for the United States, Russia and Japan.<sup>24</sup>

According to Booker T. Washington, those ships included: the *Yorktown*, the *Columbia*, the *Minneapolis*, the *Newark*, the *Brooklyn*, the *Variag*, the *Retvian*, the *Medjidia* (or *Medjidie*), the *Colorado*, and the *Pennsylvania*. This led to additional contracts with the New York Shipbuilding Company in Camden, New Jersey, and the Harlan and Hollingsworth Shipbuilding Company of Wilmington, Delaware. The work included catering "launchings" and "...trial trips of battleships from these yards lasting from 10 days to 2 weeks or more."<sup>25</sup>

Beyond his catering empire, Trower owned stock in several companies, including the International Edu-



This detail from a receipt of John S. Trower to John Wister gives a sense of the menu Trower offered as part of his catering business. Additional information about John S. Trower and his catering business is included in Stacey Swigart's article published in this issue of *The Crier*. The Wister Papers, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

cation Publishing Company; the International Text Book Co.; the Black Diamond Development Co.; the Cheltenham Trust Co.; the First National Bank of Ocean City; the Enterprise Coal Co.; the Commonwealth Publishing Co.; the Philadelphia Caterer's Manufacturing & Supply Co.; the Unagitated Water Freezing Co.; the Westerfield Mining Investment Co.; and the Ice Manufacturing Co. of Germantown.

East of Market Square in Germantown stands a row of Second Empire style houses that represent the small residential section of buildings that comprise East School House Lane. While these houses were built in the 1870s, several eventually came into

23 "Extracts from Addresses," *Report of the Second Annual Convention of the National Negro Business League at Chicago Illinois*. (Chicago: R.S. Abbott Publishing Company, 1901), p.23.

24 "John Trower Dead. Wealthy Philadelphia Business Man and Church Leader Passes Away—Left a Great Fortune." *The New York Age*, 6 April 1911, p.3.

25 Washington, p.51.

the ownership of John S. Trower, and represent a few of the houses that comprised his relatively small but nonetheless impressive real estate holdings in Germantown. At the time of his death, Trower owned the following properties in Germantown: 5706 Germantown Avenue; 171 Manheim Street; 136 East Cheltenham Avenue; 5636 Chew Street (Avenue); 5913 McCallum Street; 143 Maplewood Avenue; 187 Greaves Street; 212–224 West Duval Street; 6332–6342 Ambrose Street; 4948 Baynton Street; 21, 23, 31, 37, 39, 49, and 59 East School House Lane; 5821–23 Baynton Street; and 43–45 West Rittenhouse Street. Trower also owned a summerhouse in Ocean City, New Jersey.<sup>26</sup>

Like many wealthy men of his day, Trower held mortgages, including several lots in Ocean City; two shares of the mortgage of George H. Quarels of 339 West Penn Street; the mortgage of Howard Jones of 5911 Greene Street; the mortgage of Peter W. Deacon of 6116 Lensen Street; and mortgages on behalf of the Downingtown Industrial and Agricultural School.<sup>27</sup>

As a successful entrepreneur and real estate investor, John S. Trower was able to leave behind a legacy

of success in Germantown, both in the Black community and beyond. This legacy is memorialized in the presence of his building at 5706 Germantown Avenue; the continued preservation of this landmark will ensure that Trower's legacy will endure and be an inspiration for generations to come.

#### About the Author

Oscar Beisert is an architectural historian and a preservationist in the Philadelphia region. His local preservation efforts began after he observed the demolition of a rare example of a row of four undesignated Federal style, frame dwellings (c. late 1700s) across from Penn Treaty Park. Since then, he has successfully nominated many properties to the local register and is now serving on Philadelphia Mayor Kenney's Task Force. With a B.A. in Political Science and an M.A. in American Studies—American Architectural History and Decorative Arts, he has more than ten years of experience in historic preservation and Section 106 compliance. Professionally, he works for the Federal government, after working for years as an independent contractor. He is also the founder of the Keeping Society of Philadelphia, and has recently renovated a 1880s carriage repository in Germantown. For his work in Philadelphia, Beisert has received the Board of Directors Award for exceptional contribution to historic preservation, as well as recognition from Save Our Sites and the University City Historical Society.

<sup>26</sup> Washington, pp.47–50.

<sup>27</sup> Ancestry.com. *Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683–1993* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2015.

# John S. Trower and His Legacy as Discussed in Booker T. Washington's *The Negro In Business*

*By Supreme Dow*



Booker T. Washington as he appeared in this 1895 photograph taken by Frances Benjamin Johnston.  
Library of Congress.

As America grapples with the unabated murder of the African American and the subsequent terrorizing of the Black family by systems of the private citizenry, civic, state, and federal government, Black people are faced with the all too familiar reality of still moving forward. The public broadcasting of state-endorsed killings of Black men and women and its looping coverage on local and national news exacerbates the age-old American phenomena of the Euro-American sin of the brutal abuse of the Black body and spirit. Like in the 18th through 20th centuries, still the African American flourishes! The reality of the North Atlantic slave trade, and the implementation of the doctrine of white supremacy, that has been the philosophical

theology of American cultural norm, is a practicality that the Black family has had to endure for over 300 years. While suffering from the pain and trauma caused by these adverse living conditions, Black people have thrived. There are countless men and women of African descent who have risen from the ashes of poverty, under-education, physical and psychological abuse to be beacons of light and bastions of Black beauty and success.

During the post reconstruction era, America was trembling under the throws of Jim Crow, public lynchings, the rise and proliferation of the Ku Klux Klan and a public media assault on Black humanism. While faced with these peculiar circumstances,



the dawn of the 20th century gave birth to African American men and women who shined. John S. Trower was one of these revolutionary activists.

Born in the state of Virginia in 1849, the birthplace of the freedom fighter Nat Turner, Trower, like many of his time, met oppression with ingenuity, discipline and vision. Nestled in Germantown, Philadelphia, PA, Trower founded a catering business and was a vital element in the establishment of African American institutional wealth and prosperity. As a leader in the growth and development of the Black Church, Trower trusted the Black intellect and helped to move America forward by investing in vocational public education for the African American youth, financial bolstering of Black enterprise, and providing economic opportunities through employment and mentorship for his community. Not just impacting the Philadelphia region, Trower's widespread philanthropy was felt and recognized with national attention.

In his 1907 *The Negro in Business*, Booker T. Washington paid tribute to successful Black businessmen of the era, including John S. Trower, in a chapter titled "John S. Trower, A Successful Caterer and Man of Business." In his chapter on Trower, Washington provided the following text:

Among the men who have made fortunes in the catering business, John S. Trower, of Germantown, Philadelphia, is one of the men best known to the members of his own race.

Mr. Trower was born in Northampton County, Virginia, in 1849. His parents, Luke and Anna M. Trower, were among those sturdy Eastern Shore farmers who were known as the farmers of Indiantown. These people of Anglo-Saxon, Indian and Negro blood, were known the country over for their industry, thrift and frugality. No slaves were ever among them; they boasted of their manhood and independence. Nat Turner's insurrection brought to the people of this town many cruelties by the whites. Their independent

spirit forced many of them to leave their homes and settle in the different sections of the North. A considerable number of these Indiantown farmers found refuge in Philadelphia. The names of Stevens, Divins, Press and Trower are among Philadelphia's most successful colored citizens. It was from this stock and out of such early traditions that John S. Trower came.

Young Trower seems early to have made the impression on those about him of a young man of unusual ability and determination. Old friends of the family used to shake their heads prophetically and say; 'There is something great about that boy.' These sayings seem, at any rate, to have had the effect of convincing young Trower that he was fitted for something better than the conditions in which he found himself and of sending him forth at an early age in search of adventure.

But young Trower did not simply wander away. He earned his freedom. From sixteen to twenty one he worked upon the farm, saving all that he could. Although the farmers of Indiantown were proud of the fact that they had never been slaves they do not seem to have escaped the serfdom of debtors. All through his early life young Trower was hobbled with the necessity of raising the debt on the farm. By the time he was twenty-one he had saved enough to lift this burden from his family and he felt free to go in search of a fortune.

With a feeling of pride such as he has experienced from no single success since that time, he presented his mother with the deed of the farm and bade her good-bye. At that time, the tide of immigration had already set in from the Virginia plantations toward the cities and young Trower drifted with it in the direction of Baltimore.

He was fortunate there in gaining admission to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Mack with

whom he made his home during the larger part of the time that he was in this city. Here he received a home and the benefits of paternal counsel and advice which proved of great value to him in his later life.

While he was in Baltimore he obtained work in a restaurant as an oyster-opener and soon began, in spite of the small salary he received there, to accumulate a small capital. Partly because he believed he could better his condition in a Northern city and partly, no doubt, led by mere desire to see more of the world, he determined in 1870 to leave Baltimore and go to Philadelphia.

Mr. Trower decided to settle in Germantown, one of the more wealthy and prosperous quarters of the city, and with the little capital that he had managed to get together, he opened a restaurant. He found a modest place in Chelton [sic] Avenue in the neighborhood of the Philadelphia and Reading depot. This business seems to have prospered from the beginning. Very soon, Mr. Trower was doing, in addition to his restaurant business, a very respectable trade as a caterer.

He managed to win the favor of the fashionable people of Germantown and his increasing trade forced him rapidly into a larger and more lucrative business. Within two blocks of his restaurant stood the old Germantown Savings Fund building. Fortunately for Mr. Trower this building was left vacant at this time, the bank having just completed a new building into which it established itself. There was a demand for a first-class caterer's establishment in Germantown. Mr. Trower had succeeded in winning the good will of some of the wealthy citizens and, with their encouragement, he purchased and refitted the Savings Fund building and made out of it, at a cost of \$25,000, a first-class caterer's establishment. He was now fairly on his feet in a business way and began to make money

rapidly. It was at this time that he made the acquaintance and won the good will of some of the officers of the Cramps Ship Building Company. Soon after this, in 1889, Mr. Trower had his first opportunity to cater for the Cramps. The firm has employed him steadily since that time...

Mr. Trower's place of business is one of the most complete of its kind in the country. On the first floor are his offices, dining-room, delivery department and ice cream plant, which is run by electricity. On the second floor is a reception-room and a dining hall, which seats one hundred and fifty guests, and the baking department. On the third floor are the store room and laundry. In the basement are china closets and storage-rooms. In his office he employs five clerks, all of whom are colored young men and women. The culinary, ice cream, baking, and delivery service departments employ twenty persons. The estimated value of the building that Mr. Trower occupies at the present time is \$75,000. Since purchasing, he has spent \$30,000 for improvements and has added \$20,000 for machinery and equipment. A large element of Mr. Trower's success must be attributed to the fact that he has constantly sought to improve and extend his business. His trade is not limited to Germantown and Philadelphia, but extends throughout the state. On several occasions he has served large orders in the South and West. At the time when the Hon. John Wanamaker, of Philadelphia, was Postmaster General, Mr. Trower served him as caterer in a reception which was at that time one of the most elaborate that had ever been given in Washington.

Although Mr. Trower's business occupies the greater part of his time, he has always found time for certain other interests. He is a member of the well known Cherry Street Baptist Church, of which Rev. William A. Creditt, D. D., is the pastor. He is a member of the board

of deacons, and of the board of trustees, and superintendent of the Sunday school.

The National Baptist Convention made him recently the National Baptist Superintendent of the World. He is the President of the Sunday School Convention of Pennsylvania, which position he has held for the past nine years. Mr. Trower has contributed largely to the building up of a number of Baptist churches of his city and state. His advice is frequently sought in matters of finance and church policy in the Baptist denomination. He is president of the Cherry Building and Loan Society; treasurer of the Reliable Mutual Aid and Improvement Company, and treasurer of the Reliable Businessmen's Building. He is a member of the board of trustees for the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People, and member of the board of trustees for the Olive Cemetery. As president of the Pennsylvania Sunday School Convention, it was he who suggested the necessity of the establishment of an Industrial and Theological School in the state of Pennsylvania. He purchased a farm in Downingtown, Pa., and held it in trust until the Baptists of the state were enabled, at their last convention, to assume the responsibility of the purchase. Mr. Trower is very active in charitable work where he is performing a service which the ordinary person cannot see and know. In addition to his catering trade he does a lucrative real estate business. He owns considerable property both in Germantown and Ocean City, New Jersey, where he has his summer residence.

Mr. Trower's wife was Miss Matilda Daniels, of Haymarket, Virginia. Mrs. Trower is a very amiable wife and mother and takes an active part in the business as well as rearing a family of six children.

The position that Mr. Trower has obtained in the community in which he lives has made it possible for him to be of great service to other members of his race. He has established



This circa 1907 photograph of the front of the Downingtown Agricultural and Industrial School was published in W. G. Parks et al's *Statement of Scope, Condition, Purposes and Needs of Downingtown Industrial School, 1907-1908*. [Wikimedia Commons](#).

a business in which a number of them find employment and have an opportunity to obtain a business experience and training. His own success and, in many cases, his positive aid and support has given encouragement to a number of young men, and his influence in the community has enabled him to be in many ways a friend of the colored people and a leader of his race.

Washington's chapter on the success of John S. Trower and his catering business bears testimony to the ability of members of the Black community to rise up against seemingly insurmountable obstacles, to flourish and prosper in such a way that they could then give back to their communities, so that generations of Black families would have a better chance of success in the years ahead. John S. Trower did just this, and it is hoped that this and the other articles published in this issue of the Germantown Crier will help ensure that Mr. Trower's legacy will never again be forgotten and that he will serve as an inspiration for generations to come.

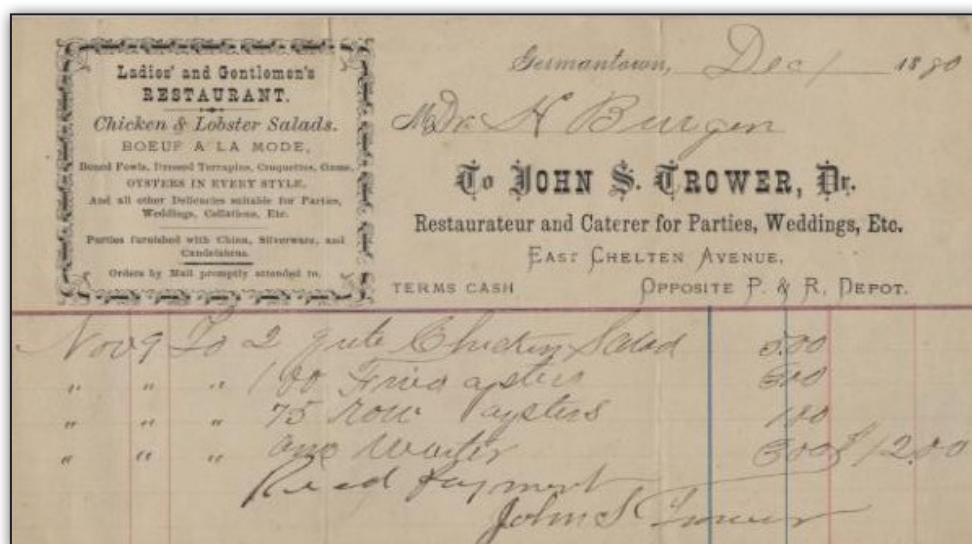
#### About the Author

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# John S. Trower and His Catering Business

By Stacey Swigart



Oysters were quite the staple at many John S. Trower catered events. This business receipt in the collection of the Germantown Historical Society dated December 1, 1880 includes an order for raw oysters and fried oysters, as well as chicken salad. Germantown Historical Society.

In the other articles published in this issue of the Crier, John S. Trower's catering business has been discussed. But what foods were on menus from his catering company? What were the recipes like? A cookbook of recipes does not exist (that we know of!) of menu items served by Trower in his catering business. It is known from newspaper accounts that the menus, food, displays, and exemplary service were very well received by his clientele. His company was based in Germantown, first in a restaurant on Cheltenham Avenue opposite the Germantown Depot of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad company and later at 5706 Germantown Avenue which he purchased in 1887. There he expanded the business into a dining establishment, on-site bakery and ice cream plant, and his large catering operation. He grew the multifaceted enterprise into one of the largest of its kind in the country, with clients not just

in Philadelphia, but throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

One of his early major catering contracts was with William Cramp and Sons Shipbuilding Company in Philadelphia. Many of the world's most renowned war vessels were served by Trower upon their trial trips, among them the *Yorktown*, the *Philadelphia*, the *Vesuvius*, the *New York*, the *Iowa*, the *Columbia*, the *Baltimore*, the *Minneapolis*, the *Newark*, the *Brooklyn*, the *Variag*, the *Retvizan*, the *Mecidiye*, the *Colorado* and the *Pennsylvania*.<sup>28</sup>

A summary published in the February 13, 1896, *The Norfolk Virginian* of an event catered for the Fraternal Organization of Elks held in Norfolk, Virginia mentions not only the menu, but some of the decorations: "A table about fifty feet long occupied the centre of the lodge

28 Booker T. Washington, *The Negro In Business* (Hertel, Jenkins & Co, 1907).

### A Choice Menu Served the Guests in Elks' Hall.

The supper room was served by Caterer John S. Trower, of Philadelphia, the arrangement of the table being in charge of his assistant, Frank Bell, who arrived via the New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk railroad yesterday morning. A table about fifty feet long occupied the centre of the lodge room of the Elks on the third floor of the Academy of Music building. This table was handsomely decorated with pink shaded lamps, candelabra, American Beauty roses, carnations and smilax. It was what is known as a standing feed and plates were provided for 300 persons. The oysters were served in blocks of ice, hand-carved in fanciful designs. The menu was as follows:

Raw Oysters in Ice Carvings,	
Broiled Oysters.	Chicken Croquets.
	Sweet Bread Patties,
	Chicken Salad.
	Rasped Rolls.
Ice Cream.	Fancy Cakes.
	Coffee.

The clock-like movements of the waiters added greatly to the success of the affair, for no one was kept waiting an instant. Over 3,000 oysters were consumed.

Newspapers provided minute details about Trower's catering business, including the foods he made available, as is illustrated by this excerpt from the February 13, 1896, *The Norfolk Virginian*.  
newspapers.com

While the company chatted and were regaled, the Hertzberg orchestra, of Philadelphia, played most captivatingly on the spacious landing overlooking the busy rooms. A wedding dinner was served in the dining room by Caterer John S. Trower, of Germantown. It was sumptuous and delicious. The menu included deviled crabs, chicken croquets and peas, sweet-bread patties, chicken salad, rasped rolls, ice cream and ices, strawberries, cake, bonbons, lemonade and coffee. There was a dainty box of wedding cake for each guest. The bridal party sat down to an elaborately laden table in the pink room upstairs. Here the menu was: Strawberries in baskets, cream of chicken, spring chicken, cross, new peas and potatoes, Roman punch, asparagus salad with French dressing, cheese, crackers, bar-de-luc, ingenious fancy creams, cake, bonbons, coffee and rolls. Trower's achievement was a conspicuously successful one.

This excerpt from the June 6, 1906 *Tyrone Daily Herald*, of Tyrone, Pennsylvania was invaluable in providing information about Trower's flourishing wedding catering business.  
newspapers.com

room... This table was handsomely decorated with pink shaded lamps, candelabra, American Beauty roses, carnations and smallax." It goes on to mention the serving style: "It was what is known as a standing feed and plates were provided for 300 persons."

The menu included:

Raw Oysters in Ice Carvings
Broiled Oysters
Chicken Croquets (sic)
Sweet Bread Patties
Chicken Salad
Rasped Rolls

Ice Cream
Fancy Cakes
Coffee

The article ends with "The clock-like movements of the waiters added greatly to the success of the affair, for no one was kept waiting an instant. Over 3,000 oysters were consumed."

Besides catering for organizations and companies, wedding catering was a large part of the business. From a newspaper review of a wedding reception in Tyrone Pennsylvania, the wedding menu had two parts.<sup>29</sup>

One was for the guests and the other, for the wedding party:

#### GUEST MENU:

Deviled Crabs  
Chicken Croquetts (sic) and Peas  
Sweet-Bread Patties  
Chicken Salad  
Rasped Rolls  
Ice Cream and Ices  
Strawberries  
Cake  
Bonbons  
Lemonade  
Coffee

#### BRIDAL PARTY:

Strawberries in baskets  
Cream of Chicken  
Spring Chicken  
Cress  
New Peas and Potatoes  
Roman Punch  
Asparagus Salad with French Dressing  
Cheese  
Crackers  
Bar-de-luc  
Ingenious Fancy Creams  
Cake  
Bonbons  
Coffee



Geneva E. Edney (nee Smith), as she appeared in her 1925 Germantown High school yearbook photograph. Germantown Historical Society.

#### An Interview with Geneva E. Edney.

In a prior *Germantown Crier* article, a series of interviews of oral histories were conducted with residents of Germantown in 1992. One of these was with a woman named Geneva E. Edney (1905-2002), who was a lifelong resident of Germantown and Mt. Airy. Geneva shared pieces of her life in Germantown including some facts about her father, Robert T. Smith, who worked for John S. Trower. A portion is shared here:

My name is Geneva E. Edney. I was born September 22, 1905 in Germantown on a beautiful small street called West Price Street. My mother's name was Truelove (known as Tressa) Chambers Smith and my father's name was Robert T. Smith. My mother came up from Lynchburg, Virginia. She settled in Germantown and met Dad. He was from Germantown.

*Interviewer: What was your dad doing? How was he working?*

Edney: To start, he worked for John S. Trower at the corner of Cheltenham Avenue and Germantown Avenue. A very outstanding catering service. They only catered to the wealthiest people. They were outstanding in marriage parties or buffet parties. The ordinary or poorer people couldn't afford these services.

Dad was a driver for Trower. He had another job working for a garage in Chestnut Hill. He also worked for another caterer on Germantown Avenue. At various times he just worked at different places. Working for minimum wages, he kept busy. God bless him.

*Interviewer: How many people worked at Trower when he was there?*

Edney: Quite a few. There was an ice cream maker who was German. He would make the best and richest ice cream. They had an outstanding German baker. He would make rolls-- they were large, not the pocket size ones. I guess no one knew about this recipe



except these German people. Trower's also made some of the most delicious sandwiches and cakes. They were indescribable-- the only thing you could do, you had to taste them. Now after living thirty, forty, fifty years, I can smell them but I still can't describe them. They were made with the purest ingredients-- nothing but the purest of ingredients.

They had many other drivers and they would take the orders and serve folks all over different distances. They would go to Bryn Mawr. They would go to the private schools and colleges and to the private estates.

Interviewer: *Were all the chefs white?*

Edney: They were white, that was what was stressed at the time. They were qualified to do that particular kind of work. They had to have the expertise and outstanding knowledge, practically of perfection.

The Trowers were people of color and John S. Trower was one of the wealthiest Negroes in Germantown at that time. At Mt. Zion Baptist Church there is a huge stain[ed glass] window as you come in to the front of the church over the pulpit. It was donated by John S. Trower.

Interviewer: *Did you know him personally, or his family?*

Edney: Yes, I saw them. There were five sons who worked with their father. It was a huge business. One thing I remember about the Trowers: they did not serve people of color. I remember a daughter. She was quite a singer. I would play for her to sing when she was 8, 9, 10.

I was brought up in a Quaker Sunday School. Mary P. Carter was my Sunday school teacher. At that time Sunday school would open from 7 am to 9 am. By the grace of God I had a beautiful uncle who took me there. Uncle Walter was my father's brother. Miss Carter became interested in me because I could sing

a little and play the piano. We would go to the Home of the Good Shepherd for girls on Chew Street. It is now the property of La Salle College. I was so delighted to go. I would see these children who needed care. To get back to my point, we were treated to ice cream from John S. Trower. This was a great thrill. We would go to visit this home once a week.

Interviewer: *Did Trower train people of color for jobs like cooking?*

Edney: No. That was not to be expected at that time. There was a line--separation not segregation. I don't like to discuss that at this time. We only did things like washing. My grandmother would take in washing for \$1.50 a basket of clothes. There weren't too many jobs. You could be a cook in a private family-- or perhaps a little business if you were lucky. [Trower] never had colored people there [cooking]. The father [Trower] kept an exclusive business. But it declined and it is now a bar. To this day I have antiques given by people my father knew. Some were presents from them or Trower. I returned to my mother and father after Dr. Edney [my husband] died. I was able to give them the proper attention they needed. I sold some of the pieces-- some were cut glass and pure crystal. Dad did his work. He was so proud, a happy person, patient, lovely. They were outstanding models for me.<sup>30</sup>

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Included below are a variety of different recipes from a number of different historical sources with details of how certain dishes that were available as part of Trower's catering business were made in the 19th century up into the early 20th century, based on detailed newspaper accounts of Trower's catered affairs. John S. Trower was a fascinating individual with a very successful business that warrants more research into his life and the impact he has had on Germantown and beyond.

30 *Germantown Crier*. Volume 56, Number 2. Fall 2006.

## MAIN DISHES.

### CHICKEN SALAD.

Boil the chicken tender, cut the meat up into small pieces, or put it through a food grinder. Take one-half as much celery as chicken, 2 cups of hickory or walnut kernels and 4 hardboiled eggs. Then make the following dressing: Take the yolks of 6 eggs, 2 teaspoonfuls of prepared mustard, 4 teaspoonfuls of salt, pepper to taste, 8 tablespoonfuls of sugar. 4 tablespoonfuls of melted butter, 2 cups of sweet cream and 1 cup of vinegar (hot). Boil all together, and when cold pour over the chicken, celery, nuts and eggs, mixing thoroughly. Set in a cool place until ready to serve. (ICB)

### CHICKEN SALAD.

Boil the fowls tender, remove all fat, gristle and skin, mince the meat in small pieces, but do not hash it. To 1 chicken put twice its weight in celery, cut in pieces  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in length, mix thoroughly and set in a cool place. In the meantime prepare a mayonnaise dressing and when ready for the table pour this dressing over the chicken and celery, tossing and mixing thoroughly. Set in a cool place until ready to serve. Garnish with celery tips, hardboiled eggs, cut fine, add a little green parsley. (ICB)

### CHICKEN SALAD.

Boil 1 chicken until tender, chop moderately fine, add the chopped whites of 12 hardboiled eggs, add equal quantities of chopped celery and cabbage; mix all together. Make a dressing as follows and pour over the mixture; Mash the yolks of the 12 hardboiled eggs fine, add 2 tablespoonfuls of butter, 2 tablespoonfuls of sugar. 1 teaspoonful of mustard, pepper and salt to taste.  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of good cider vinegar; mix all thoroughly. If celery cannot be obtained, cucumbers and celery seed may be used. (ICB)

### PHILADELPHIA CHICKEN SALAD.

For one pair of ordinary-sized chickens use one tablespoonful of mustard, if it is very strong, if not, half as much more. Mix it with water; then add the yolk of one raw egg, and pour in oil gradually, mixing it well together until half of the oil that is desired is used. Then mash the yolks of nine eggs, boiled hard, to a smooth pulp with a little vinegar, rejecting the eggs that will not mash and become mealy. Then beat in the yolks of two raw eggs, and continue with the oil, adding vinegar to taste. It must be beaten a long time, when it will become like a thick custard. One large bottle of oil will suffice for two pairs of chickens.

For salad, select tender chickens with plump breasts; or if preferred, the breasts of turkeys. They may be either boiled or roasted. Cut them up in small pieces, and mix in celery, cut very small. The celery must be quite dry when added. Have the dressing made and the chicken prepared some hours before wanted. Sprinkle the chicken with a little vinegar, pepper and salt. When ready to serve, mix the chicken and celery well with the dressing, arrange it in dishes with young lettuce leaves, and spread a thick layer of the dressing on the top. This dressing is intended either for lobster or crabs. (NCB)

### PHILADELPHIA CROQUETTES.

Mince turkey or chicken as fine as possible; season with salt, pepper, the smallest dash of powdered mace, and a little onion, grated. Then make the sauce thus: Take a large, tablespoonful of butter, two tablespoonfuls of flour, half a tumbler of cream and a little salt; mix these smoothly together and boil it, stirring all the time. Then pour the sauce over the mince and mix it thoroughly together. When it is cold and hard, take out a tablespoonful and shape it into a pyramid. Have ready the yolks of eggs beaten light in a plate. Roll your pyramid in the egg and then in bread or cracker crumbs, aiding with your fingers to shape it. Drop your croquette into boiling lard, which must be deep enough in the pan to cover it, and when it is brown, lift it out of the lard with a perforated skimmer and lay it upon a dish spread with soft paper, to absorb superfluous grease. If you wish your croquettes to be very superior in delicacy, used half sweetbread and half turkey or chicken; this makes them soft and creamy. The above quantity of sauce is enough for half a turkey. It is better for inexperienced cooks to use a brush for the egg, touching the outside very lightly with it. Too much egg will form a cake and fall off. Some prefer to mix the egg with the whole of the ingredients. Wire frying baskets are much used for croquettes. (NCB)

### CROQUETTES AUGUSTINE'S RECIPE.<sup>31</sup>

Put into a saucepan 1½ pts of milk or cream, when hot stir into it, ¼ lb. of butter and 2 tablespoonfuls of flour, rubbed together and well mixed with some of the milk, ¼ of an onion chopped fine, boil until it thickens, then stir in the chicken, which has been chopped very fine, and well-seasoned with salt, cayenne, and mace - mix well - cool the mixture, form into shapes, roll in crumbs, and yolk of an egg, and fry. A chicken weighing 5½ lbs. will make 12 croquettes.

9-10 cups finely chopped chicken meat or 6 cups chopped meat plus 2 cups bread crumbs  
 3 cups milk or cream  
 4 oz. butter  
 2 tblsp. butter  
 2 tblsp. Flour  
 4 oz. onion, minced  
 1½ tsp. Salt  
 ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper  
 1 tsp. mace  
 breadcrumbs  
 egg yolk

The directions are fairly clear, so we have not attempted to alter them. If the croquettes are formed by hand on a surface dusted with cracker crumbs, there is no need to dip them in egg and breadcrumbs before frying. This will yield approximately 32 two-ounce croquettes. Fry them three at a time, or the boiling oil will cool too much and the croquettes will become greasy. A word of advice: Augustine's croquettes must be flaky-crisp on the outside and creamy within, or not at all. (TLI)

31 This is an 1890 recipe developed by Peter Augustine, a successful Black caterer in Philadelphia. Augustine purchased the Philadelphia catering business of Robert Bogle, a respected caterer and restaurateur who was the first person of African descent to open a catering company to serve the city's white elite. Peter Augustine expanded the business of Bogle by training wait staff and other crew members in the production of food events by providing china, tablecloths, tables, chairs and other catering paraphernalia to be rented for the events of his clients. This recipe was shared with Historic Germantown via Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion. The Mansion used the recipe in an educational program on John S. Trower.



### **SPRING CHICKEN.**

The young spring chickens are too delicate for roasting, and not mature enough for fricasseeing. They are better either broiled or fried. For broiling, split them down the back, and broil them before the fire in a folding wire broiler, turning them frequently; dust them with a little flour and baste them with butter. When they are cooked through, place them on a hot dish, rub more butter over them and serve them hot. (NCB)

### **DEVILED CRABS.**

To the meat of 12 hard-shelled crabs, add 3 tablespoonfuls of stale bread crumbs,  $\frac{1}{2}$  wineglass of sweet cream, yolks of 3 hard-boiled eggs, chopped, 1 tablespoonful of butter, pepper and salt to taste. Mix all together and put back into the shells, sprinkle with fine bread crumbs, small bits of butter, and bake in a quick oven. (ICB)

### **CREAMED OYSTERS.**

Rinse one pint of oysters in a very little water and drain. Turn them into the oyster liquor, which has been strained and put to heat, and leave till edges curl. Remove and keep hot. Sift together 2 tablespoonfuls of cornstarch and same quantity of flour. Add three tablespoonfuls of butter and brown. Pour in gradually one cup of milk. Cook thoroughly and add oysters,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoonful of salt and a dash of pepper. Cook a moment longer and serve in paste patties. (ICB)

### **FRIED OYSTERS.**

Take 2 eggs, 1 pint of milk, a pinch of salt, beat together, dip the oysters into the batter, roll in rolled crackers, and fry in hot butter until brown. (ICB)

### **SCALLOPED OYSTERS.**

Prepare a quart of fine cracker crumbs; butter a deep pan, put first a layer of the crumbs on the bottom; wet this with some of the oyster liquor; next have a layer of oysters sprinkled with salt, pepper, and a few small bits of butter, then another layer of crumbs and more oyster juice, then the oysters, salt, pepper, and butter, and so on till the pan is full, the top layer to be crumbs. Beat an egg in a cup of milk and pour over all, cover the pan and bake for 40 minutes; when done, serve very hot. (ICB)

### **SCALLOPED OYSTERS.**

Have the bottom of a baking pan well covered with butter, then cover with a layer of cracker crumbs and wet them with cream put on spoonful by spoonful, add pepper and salt, and stew with small bits of butter; next put in the oysters with a little of their liquid, pepper them, stick bits of butter in among them and cover with dry crumbs until the oysters are entirely hidden; add more small pieces of butter very thickly on top, invert a plate over the oysters and set in oven to bake; when the juice bubbles on top remove the plate and leave on upper grate for 2 or 3 minutes to brown on top. Serve in the bake dish. (ICB)

### **OYSTERS WITH SHERRY.**

Allow six small oysters for each person and pour over two tablespoons sherry wine, mixed with a few grains each of salt and cayenne. Let stand in ice-box for fifteen minutes. Serve in cocktail glasses. (CFSO)

### **OYSTER STEW IN MILK OR CREAM.**

Drain the liquor from 2 quarts of oysters. Mix it with a small teacupful of hot water; add a little salt and pepper; set it over the fire in a granite saucepan; let it boil up once, then put in the oysters and let them come to a boil. When they ruffle, add 2 tablespoonfuls of butter; when melted and well stirred in, add a pint of boiling milk or part milk and cream. Take from the fire and serve with oyster crackers. If a plain stew is liked, add boiling water instead of the milk and more butter. (ICB)

### **TO STEW A HUNDRED OYSTERS.**

Drain them and let cold water run over them through a colander. When washed and drained, put them in a saucepan with a little salt and a large blade of mace. Let them stand in a cool part of the range about fifteen minutes, stirring them occasionally with a wooden spoon. Mix a quarter of a pound of butter and a little flour together, and stir it smoothly into the oysters. Let it simmer long enough to cook the flour; then add a teacupful of cream and some cayenne pepper, and let them remain on the fire until the oysters begin to curl. (NCB)

### **TO BOIL OYSTERS.**

Wash the oysters very clean. Put them in a basket and immerse the basket in a pot of boiling water. As soon as the shells open, remove the basket from the water as quickly as possible, to preserve the juice. Take off the upper shell, and serve them on large dishes, hot, in the lower shell. (NCB)

### **TO BROIL OYSTERS.**

Select the largest and finest oysters. Dry them in a towel and season them with pepper and salt. Lay them inside of a folding broiler, made of wire, close together. Turn the broiler frequently from side to side, to keep the juice from flowing out. Have ready a dish quite hot, and as you place them in it, put little pieces of butter upon them and serve them immediately. (NCB)

### **SWEETBREADS AND VEAL BALLS.**

Take two pounds of a fillet of veal. Chop it fine, with a small piece of onion. Season it with pepper, salt, cloves and mace. When chopped, add bread crumbs, one third the quantity of the meat, and mix all well together, with the yolks of two eggs, beaten light. Roll this into balls the size of a walnut, and fry them a light brown. Then put them into a stewpan with a little gravy, previously made from the shreds and bones left from veal, and which must be well seasoned. Let them stew very slowly for two hours. Have already prepared two or three sweetbreads thus: Boil them slowly till tender, though not enough to fall to pieces; then throw them into cold water. Twenty minutes before it is time to serve them, add the sweetbreads to the balls, and let them stew. Flavor the gravy with tomatoes or mushrooms, according to taste. (NCB)

### **MOLDED SWEETBREADS.**

Parboil a pair of sweetbreads and cut in small cubes. Fold into a chicken forcemeat and turn into a mold, first garnished with slices of truffles cut in fancy shapes. Set in pan of hot water, cover with buttered paper, and bake until firm. Remove from mold and pour around Truffle Sauce. (CFSO)

**CHICKEN FORCEMEAT.**

Finely chop the breast of an uncooked chicken, pound in a mortar, then rub through a sieve. Add gradually the whites of two eggs and work until smooth. Season highly with salt and paprika, and add heavy cream until of right consistency, which can only be determined by cooking a small ball in boiling salted water. When mixture will not keep in shape, more white of egg is needed. If too stiff, add more cream. (CFSO)

**TRUFFLE SAUCE.**

Melt three tablespoons butter, add four tablespoons flour, and pour on gradually, while stirring constantly, three-fourths cup each cream and chicken stock. Bring to the boiling point, season with salt and paprika, and add two tablespoons of chopped truffles. (CFSO)

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**VEGETABLES.**


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**ASPARAGUS WITH WHITE SAUCE.**

Cook 1 bunch of asparagus 1 hour or less, according to age, then drain off all the water, season with pepper and salt. Add a spoonful of butter and a dressing made of 1 tablespoonful of flour and 1 cup of sweet cream. Serve on buttered toast. (ICB)

**GREEN PEAS.**

To 1 quart of green peas shelled, put ½ cup of butter in a stew pan; when very hot, turn in the peas, stir quickly, add boiling water to cook, salt to taste; when ready to serve, add ½ cup of sweet cream. (ICB)

**GREEN PEAS.**

Shell peas and put in cold water for 10 minutes; take out and put in boiling salt water and cook till tender; add a tablespoonful of sugar; take up, drain, put in a hot dish and pour melted butter over them. Season to taste with pepper and salt. Serve at once. (ICB)



## BREADS.

### PARKER HOUSE ROLLS.

Take 1 cup of yeast, 1 tablespoonful of sugar, butter the size of an egg, salt, 1 pint of sweet milk and flour enough for a stiff batter. Put the milk on the stove to scald and put the butter in it. Mix the salt, sugar and yeast into the flour and add the milk, being careful not to put it in too hot. Mix up at night and knead thoroughly then. Knead only lightly in the morning, roll to an inch in thickness, cut out with large cookie cutter, spread with butter and fold one half over the other. Let rise again and bake in a quick oven. These are very fine. (ICB)

### TEA ROLLS.

Take a piece of bread dough, roll out an inch thick, brush over with melted butter and cover thick with sugar and cinnamon; commence at one side and roll up; then cut in pieces an inch thick, lay in a well-buttered pan as biscuits and bake 20 minutes. (ICB)

### FRENCH ROLLS.

One tea-spoon of Salt into a quart of Flour, sift it, beat three Eggs, put one table-spoon of Sugar in them, then pour in the Eggs and a small cup of potato Yeast; make them at eight or nine o'clock in the evening, put them to rise; in the morning, cut out rolls and bake for breakfast. (JWC)

### RASPED ROLLS.

1½ cups scalded milk, teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons butter  
½ tablespoon sugar  
¾ teaspoon salt  
1 yeast cake  
2 tablespoons lukewarm water  
3½ cups flour

Add butter, sugar and salt to milk, and when lukewarm add yeast cake dissolved in water, and three cups flour. Beat five minutes, cover and let rise until mixture has doubled its bulk. Cut down, add remaining flour and beat five minutes. Cover and again let rise. Toss on a slightly floured board and knead thoroughly. Shape in biscuits, then roll from centres, using the hands, forming rolls four inches long and pointed at ends, arrange on a buttered sheet. Cover, let rise, and bake in a hot oven. Cool slightly, remove outside crust with grater, return to oven and bake five minutes. (BCSCB)

## DESSERTS.

### ICE CREAM.

To make 1 gallon, let 1 quart of milk come to a boil, and thicken with cornstarch. Let cool, then add 1 quart of milk, 1 quart of cream, 2 eggs well beaten, and 1 pound of sugar. Flavor to taste. (ICB)

### ICE CREAM.

To 1 quart of milk just coming to a boil add 2 tablespoonfuls of dissolved cornstarch. Let it boil 20 minutes, then strain and put in a freezer. When cool, add 1 quart of cream and 2 teaspoonfuls of flavoring and freeze. (ICB)

**ICE CREAM.**

Take 3 pints of milk, 1 pound of granulated sugar, 3 eggs and 1 quart of cream. Boil milk, sugar and eggs together until the custard thickens and set aside to cool. When cold, flavor with vanilla and lemon mixed. Do not add the flavoring until cream is about half frozen, as it retains its strength better; but if chocolate is used, boil it in the milk. (ICB)

**ICE CREAM.**

Take 6 or 8 eggs, 2 cups of sugar, ½ teaspoonful of any flavoring liked. Beat well together, then add 1 gallon of rich milk and freeze hard. (ICB)

**STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM.**

3 pints thin cream  
2 cups sugar  
2 boxes berries  
Few grains salt

Wash and hull berries, sprinkle with sugar, cover, and let stand two hours. Mash and squeeze through cheese-cloth, then add cream and salt. Freeze, using three parts finely crushed ice to one part rock salt, and mold. Remove from mold to chilled serving dish and garnish with one cup selected strawberries. (CFSO)

**ORANGE ICE.**

Take the juice of 6 oranges, 1 quart of water, 1 tablespoonful of good gelatine, 1 pint of sugar, and the whites of 3 eggs. Soak the gelatine, 1 pint of sugar, and the whites of 3 eggs. Soak the gelatine in ¼ of the water for 5 minutes; boil the remainder of the water and add the gelatine, sugar, and strained juice. Set aside to cool, and when very cold add the whites of the eggs beaten stiff. Turn in freezer and freeze in usual manner. (ICB)

**WATER ICE.**

In making water ice, much is left to the taste of the person making it. Sweeten as many quarts of water as will be required, always remembering that freezing diminishes the strength of sugar; from one-half to a pound of sugar for a quart of water is the usual proportion. Taste the water after the flavoring is added; if not sweet enough, add more sugar. Water required more sugar than cream or milk preparations.

**FOR STRAWBERRY, RASPBERRY AND PINEAPPLE WATER ICE.**

The fruit must be mashed through a coarse sieve and afterwards through a fine one, the pineapple being first grated. Add the juice of the fruit to the sweetened water in the can, stirring it well. Strawberries and raspberries will require at least one quart of the fruit to two of water, or more if desired very rich. It is best always to flavor and sweeten to taste. One large pineapple will flavor about two quarts of water.

Water ices must be treated exactly as ice cream, the same beating and stirring being required. (NCB)

**TABLE DAINTIES.**

Take 1 quart flour mixed with 2 tablespoonfuls of baking powder, an even teaspoon of salt and 1 cup of butter and lard mixed. Wet with milk and roll out as for biscuit. Take a small egg, mix with brown sugar and spread over dough like jelly roll. Roll and slice about an inch thick. Spread more of the mixture over slices and sprinkle currants over this. Bake in a quick oven. (ICB)

**BUTTERMILK CAKE.**

Take 1 cup of buttermilk, 1 pint of molasses, ½ cup of sugar, 2/3 pint of lard, 2 eggs, 2 scant teaspoonfuls of saleratus, and flour enough to make a batter a little stiffer than common cake batter if it is baked in jelly tins; if baked as drop cakes, mix stiff enough so they will not run. (ICB)

**CHOCOLATE CAKE.**

Take ½ cup of grated chocolate, ½ cup of sweet milk, ½ cup of brown sugar. Cook until smooth and when cool mix with the following: 1 cup of white sugar, ½ cup of butter, ½ cup of milk, 2 eggs, 2 cups of flour, and 1 teaspoonful of soda dissolved in warm water. Put the flour in last. (ICB)

**CLOVE CAKE.**

Take 1 cup of sugar, ½ cup of butter, 1 cup of milk, 2 cups of flour, 1 cup of raisins, 1 egg, 1 teaspoonful of soda and 1 teaspoonful each of cinnamon and cloves. (ICB)

**CINNAMON LAYER CAKE.**

Take 1 cup of sugar, 1/3 cup of butter, the whites of 3 eggs, ½ cup of milk, 1½ cups of flour, and 1½ teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Filling: The yolks of 3 eggs, 1 cup of brown sugar, and 1 teaspoonful of ground cinnamon. Beat until light and foamy, and put between and on top of layers. (ICB)

**COCOANUT POUND CAKE.**

Take 1 pound of sugar, ½ pound of butter, 6 eggs, ¾ of a pound of flour, 1 pound of fresh grated cocoanut, and 2 teaspoonfuls of baking powder. (ICB)

**FRENCH CREAM CAKE.**

Take 1 cup of sugar, 3 eggs beaten together, 1½ cups of flour, 2 teaspoonfuls of baking powder sifted with the flour and 3 tablespoonfuls of water. When baked, split each layer and spread with custard. Custard: Heat 1 pint of milk and when nearly boiling stir in 2 tablespoonfuls cornstarch that have been mixed with cold milk, 1 beaten egg; ¾ cup sugar, and butter size of an egg. Flavor to suit taste. (ICB)

**LEMON CAKE.**

Take 3 cups of flour, 2 cups of sugar, ½ cup of butter, 1 cup of sweet milk, whites of 5 eggs, 2 teaspoonfuls of baking powder, and flavor with essence of lemon. Icing: Take the juice and grated rind of 1 lemon, 1 large cup of pulverized sugar, 1 egg and 1 tablespoonful of butter. Beat well together and then boil for 5 to 10 minutes. (ICB)

**MARSHMALLOW CAKE.**

Take 2 cups of powdered sugar, 1 cup of butter, 1 cup of milk, 3½ cups of flour, whites of 6 eggs and 3 level teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Filling: Take 1½ cups of sugar, 2 eggs, 10 cents' worth of marshmallows and 7 tablespoonfuls of water. Put marshmallows in oven to melt before adding to the other ingredients. (ICB)

**SPICE CAKE.**

Take 2 cups of sugar, 1 cup of lard, 1½ cups of buttermilk, 1 big teaspoonful of soda, 1 teaspoonful of cinnamon, 1 teaspoonful of nutmeg, ½ teaspoonful of ground cloves and 1 cup of raisins. Dissolved the soda in the milk and add 3 cups of flour. This cake should be made several days before using. Keep it well wrapped to prevent drying out. (ICB)



**SPONGE CAKE.**

Take 3 eggs, whites beaten to a stiff froth, then beat the yolks. Put them together and beat again. Add 1 ½ cups of sugar and beat again. Add 1 teaspoonful of baking powder sifted into 1 ½ cups of flour, sift 3 times. Lastly add ½ cup of boiling water, stirring in a little at a time. Flavor with lemon or vanilla. Bake either in sheet or layers. (ICB)

**WHITE CAKE.**

Take the whites of 4 eggs, 2 cups of sugar, ½ cup of butter, 1 cup of sweet milk, 3 cups of flour, and 2 teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Mix well sugar and butter, and the whites well beaten, add milk, then flour with baking powder. Can be used as jelly or solid cake. (ICB)

**BOILED ICING.**

Take 4 tablespoonfuls of sweet milk to ½ cup of granulated sugar. Boil till it threads, beat thoroughly and spread on cake. (ICB)

**ICING FOR CAKE.**

Take the white of 1 egg, 1 cup of sugar, and 1 cup of berries. Whip to a cream. One cup of grated apple may be used instead of the berries. (ICB)

**BEVERAGES.****MAKING COFFEE.**

No person can make a cup of good coffee out of an inferior grade of the berry. The best is a mixture of ½ Mocha and Java, half and half, ground together. The coffeepot must be rinsed clean, and a cup of ground coffee put in it, then add either 6 or 8 cups of water that has been freshly boiled. Then set where it is as near the boiling point as possible without actually boiling. It should remain on the stove, steeping, for 20 minutes, and an hour will not hurt it. The secret of making good coffee is not allowing it to boil. Use no so-called extract of coffee, which is nothing but burned sugar and does nothing but color the decoction. To make café au lait, take half as much strong coffee as may be needed and pour in the pot as much more rich, sweet milk. Let this just come to the boil and serve. (ICB)

**COFFEE.**

1 cup coffee  
1 cup cold water  
1 egg  
6 cups boiling water

Scald coffee-pot. Wash egg, break, and beat slightly. Dilute with one-half the cold water, add crushed shell, and mix with coffee. Turn into coffee-pot, pour on boiling water, and stir thoroughly. Place on front of range, and boil three minutes. If not boiled, coffee is cloudy; if boiled too long, too much tannic acid is developed. The spout of pot should be covered or stuffed with soft paper to prevent escape of fragrant aroma. Stir and pour some in a cup to be sure that spout is free from grounds. Return to coffee-pot and repeat. Add remaining cold water, which perfects clearing. Cold water, being heavier than hot water, sinks to the bottom, carrying grounds with it. Place on back of range for ten minutes, where coffee will not boil. Serve at once with cut sugar and cream. (CFSO)

**LEMONADE.**

Take 2 lemons, 4 tablespoonfuls of sugar, and 2 quarts of water. If you have no lemon squeezer, slice the lemons in round slices, put the sugar on and press out the juice with a potato masher. (ICB)

**LEMONADE.**

For 1 quart of lemonade take 2 lemons. Wash the lemon, slice fine into a pitcher, add 2 large tablespoonfuls of sugar, stirring in with the lemon well before putting in the water. Fill up with cold water to make 1 quart. (ICB)

**LEMONADE SYRUP.**

Take 2 pounds of granulated sugar, 1 ounce of citric acid, and 1½ pints of boiling water. Stir until thoroughly dissolved. Add sixty drops of oil of lemon. Bottle. For a drink put about 3 tablespoonfuls in a tumbler and fill up with fresh water. This is cheaper than lemons and a very good substitute. (ICB)

**ROMAN PUNCH.**

2 cups lemonade  
Juice of 2 oranges  
8 ounces of Champagne  
8 ounces of rum  
2 large white eggs  
A few drops of lemon juice  
2 cups confectioners' sugar

Stir together the lemonade, orange juice, Champagne, and rum in a punch bowl. Chill. When ready to serve, make the meringue: whip the egg whites and lemon juice in a medium bowl until they hold soft peaks, then gradually beat in the confectioners' sugar. Pile into a serving bowl. Fill punch cups with ice, ladle over the punch, and top each with a dollop of meringue. Serve with cocktail stirrers. (NYT)

**About the Author:**

Stacey Swigart has worked for Historic Germantown in a variety of part-time capacities for the last several years, currently on communications and special projects. Her full-time job is working for Drexel University on the evaluation of the former Philadelphia History Museum collection and its future public access. She has worked in history and children's museums in the region conducting research, curating objects, developing exhibits/educational programs and more. A love of history started early - including collecting historic recipes - a result of spending time with her Grandma who let her help make cakes, pies and Pennsylvania Dutch Rivals from her personal edition of an Inglenook CookBook. Stacey inherited her Grandma's cookbook, appropriately titled 'Granddaughter's Inglenook Cookbook' that was actively used and written in, making it a prized possession on her cookbook shelf!

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## In Memoriam: Eugene Glenn Stackhouse, A Man for All Seasons

*By Dianne Tzouras*



Eugene Glenn Stackhouse, as he appeared in a photograph taken in association with his Germantown Historical Society Hall of Fame award he received in 2007.

Dianne Tzouras.

*Eugene Glenn Stackhouse*  
*A Man for All Seasons*  
*July 12, 1939 - December 12, 2020*

Eugene Glenn Stackhouse, a man for all seasons, was surrounded by loved ones as he peacefully passed away in his Germantown home at age 81 on December 12, 2020, after 52 years of marriage to Dianne Tzouras. Although he struggled with

progressive metabolic encephalopathy for several years, he maintained a zest for life, a remarkable disposition, and a unique sense of humor that brought joy and laughter to all. Whatever he did, he did with quiet greatness, enthusiasm and excellence.



Born to Eugene Stackhouse and Martha Janette Simonson Stackhouse on July 12, 1939, at St. Mary's Hospital in Philadelphia, he was baptized at Cumberland Street Methodist Church on October 15, 1939, and attended St. Philip's M.E. Church. Known as Glenn by family and as Professor by his corner gang in Kensington, he read at his mother's knee and developed a lifelong love of learning. He received his early education at Sheridan Elementary School (6th grade valedictorian), Stetson Junior High (where he "learned how to fight"), Central High School (1953-'55) and Frankford High School (1955-'57).

Known as Eugene in the U.S Army (1958-'61), he guarded the free world during the Cold War in Wildflecken, West Germany, where he lunched with Elvis Presley and enjoyed leave throughout Germany, France, Italy and Spain. When offered a military promotion to serve in Vietnam ("too hot"), he chose an honorable discharge and returned to study Biology at Temple University (B.A., 1965) and briefly at Ohio State University. Employed in Philadelphia in virology research at the Wistar Institute and later (1969-'02) as an editor of *Biological Abstracts*, *Biosis*, where he met Dianne, he lived and breathed biology. In his basement lab as a teen, he raised live animals. For a while he was a midwife to pregnant sows. He cared for up to 17 fish tanks at once, trading fish at Martin's Aquarium. His constant companion wherever he lived was his favorite animal, the domestic cat. Gene used ladybugs, praying mantises, and tadpoles in an organic garden to control pests, and he replaced barren grass with vegetable and herb beds, bushes and trees. Recognized by the National Wildlife Federation, his yard allows birds to feed and breed, and he was commended for its botanical diversity by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. His respect for nature extended to game hunting for food, not trophies.

Gene was a gentleman of amazing ability. A superb chef, he grilled Groben's fish, spit roasted a whole lamb at a neighbor's wedding, celebrated multi-course Ben Franklin Birthday dinners, and made Greek-style shrimp on TV-12. He taught him-

self to ride at 32 and biked over 100,000 miles to work for the next 30 years. He and Dianne hiked through the Wissahickon on day trips, spotting deer and other fauna. He developed beautiful photos in a closet darkroom and later on a printer. On his own time after work, he became an artisan cabinetmaker, using fine joinery and 13 coats of varnish to create furniture for home and for sale.

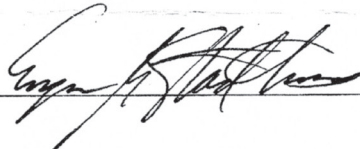
Gene collected and read hundreds of books, new and antique. When his grandmother Elizabeth died, he, only 16, zealously preserved his late grandfather Frank's book collection of 19th century classics, encyclopedias and bibles. Intrigued by how the surname was spelled "Stackhous" in a bible, his research eventually led him to the discovery that his family had emigrated from Giggleswick, Yorkshire, England to Bucks County, PA in 1683. This set him on course to become a pre-computer era professional genealogist. Besides writing numerous treatises on Simonson, his mother's side, he penned two books on his father's side: *Stackhouse, The Pedigree of the Grandchildren of Frank Lovett Stackhouse and Elizabeth Lentz Stackhouse of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania* (1983), and *Stackhouse, An Original Pennsylvania Family*, (1988). His interest in genealogy led him to do worldwide consulting and to volunteer in the archives and on the boards of the Frankford G.A.R. Civil War Museum and Library, the Laurel Hill and Hood cemeteries, and the Germantown Historical Society. In 2007, as president of the Society, he became an honoree of the GHS Hall of Fame.

As a patriot, Gene loved Philadelphia history. Stirred by the Civil War Monument at Germantown Market Square, he undertook the gargantuan task of researching stories of local Civil War soldiers and civilians. He authored *Germantown in the Civil War* (2010) and donated voluminous related materials to the Society and to the G.A.R. Moreover, he spent many Saturdays as a tour guide at the Hood Cemetery in Germantown. In his last decades, he was deep into writing a book on Germantown Cemeteries and those resting there.

I, Eugene G. Stackhouse, being of sound mind and body, do not wish to be kept alive indefinitely by artificial means. Under no circumstances should my fate be put in the hands of pinhead partisan politicians who couldn't pass ninth-grade biology if their lives depended on it or lawyers/doctors/hospitals interested in simply running up the bills. If a reasonable amount of time passes and I fail to ask for at least one of the following:

BEER  
Lobster  
Bourbon  
The remote control  
A bowl of Ice Cream  
Chocolate  
Glass of Merlot  
Wild Turkey

It should be presumed that I won't ever get any better. When such a determination is reached, I hereby instruct my appointed person and attending physicians to pull the plug, reel in the tubes and call it a day. At this point, it is time to call the New Orleans Jazz Funeral Band to come do their thing at my funeral, and ask all of my friends to raise their glasses to toast the good times we have had.

Signature:  Date: 29 July 08

NOTE: I also hear that in Ireland they have a Nursing Home with a Pub. The patients are happier and they have a lot more visitors. Some of them don't even need embalming when their time comes. If anyone knows the name of this happy place PLEASE pass it on!

Gene Stackhouse's 2008 "living will." This document is an excellent example of his wry sense of humor, so very much an integral part of Gene's personality and cherished by those who knew him. Dianne Tzouras.

Besides being a scholar, Gene impacted innumerable lives as a community leader, mentor, and parent of the heart. Gene became an honorary Puerto Rican when Dianne taught in the Spring Garden Area. Seeing his big fuzzy grey beard, a child once called him Santa, to which Gene replied, "Didn't you know that Santa summers in Germantown?" When he defended himself against a holdup man in his front yard, his neighbors gave him a sheriff's badge. After attending a Police Athletic League banquet with his tenant's son, Gene sponsored him for football and then faithfully served the Mt. Airy Bantams as team parent, assistant athletic director, and board member for over eight years. This activity introduced Dianne and Gene to the Mills children, whom they helped to raise alongside their Grandmother Rose and Aunt Regina. Realizing the importance of a good education, they sent two Mills brothers to The Church Farm School in Exton and one brother to New Freedom Theatre. Three men entered college and two went on to Graduate studies. The daughter of a Mills brother will earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Dianne believes that their marriage was founded on love, patience and faith in God. When they met, Gene advised "Let not the sun go down on your anger" (Ephesians 4:26), and they both lived by these words. Their arguments ended in laughter, with a

sense that their love was greater than the nonsense of proving a point. Gene and Dianne were married twice: civilly on December 10, 1970 by the justice of the peace in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, and sacramentally on April 27, 1991 by two priests at Dianne's childhood parish, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, in Detroit, Michigan.

Eugene was predeceased by his brother Warren Geoffrey Stackhouse, nephew Luke Andrew Burgess, brother-in-law Thomas Burgess, and son of the heart Kevin Mills. He is survived by his wife Dianne, sister Alice Janette Stackhouse Burgess, niece Erica Lynn (David) Lozano, great niece Gabriela Lozano, sister-in-law Angel Athena Tzouras (Scott) Linzell, children of the heart Jamar Rahiem Mills, Bryant Mills, Daryl Mills, Franky Mills and Nydja Johnson, and granddaughter of the heart Ajanae Mills. He is also survived by many cousins and friends. Burial took place on December 16, 2020 in the green section of West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania.

Eugene Glenn Stackhouse, humanitarian, historian, husband and friend, will be missed but not forgotten. A man for all seasons, his spirit lives on in the minds and hearts of those he touched through his words and actions. A celebration of Eugene's life is planned for the spring of 2021.



# Black Writers Museum

*By Supreme Dow*



Vernon House, 5800 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144 [www.blackwritersmuseum.com](http://www.blackwritersmuseum.com) 267.297.3078

The Black Writers Museum (BWM) is a non-profit cultural arts and history museum that features exhibits of classic and contemporary Black literature and its authors. Founded in 2010 in Germantown, the BWM has a mission of “providing a venue and forum for the public to celebrate, explore and experience the wonders of writing and reading through the exhibition and study of Black literature.” A primary goal of the BWM is to inspire another generation of “freedom writers,” public speakers and literary giants that will tell the story of history, as seen through their eyes and expressed in their vernacular.

Housed in the historic Vernon House, built circa 1796 and located in the beautiful Vernon Park, the BWM offers visitors a unique experience showcasing exhibits and artifacts of Black literature that present a rich history of America’s renowned literary composers. Notable collections, including first edition and autographed books, rare documents

and newspapers, journals, periodicals, magazines, manuscripts, audio and video recordings, paintings and wood carvings, engenders a diverse and dynamic visitor experience. As an educational institution, the BWM provides an archives and library open to the public and utilized by local students, researchers and inquisitive tourists.

As America is faced with the ever-present quandary of urban public education, the Black Writers Museum presents the literary arts as a strategy to teach, inspire and transform the academic and cultural experience of youth. In an effort to bolster a firm scholastic base for youth, the BWM has specific goals:

- To help students grasp literary concepts and principles and to utilize these skills to increase their overall academic accomplishments
- To help students grasp the importance, impact, and significance of Black Literature, its au-



A sample of publications in the collections of the Black Writers Museum.

Black Writers Museum.

thors, and its relevance to the progression of American culture; and

- To help students understand the purpose and power of writing and reading and how it expands one's scope and perspective in life

The BWM provides specific programming and activities addressing these goals as a means of enriching the lives of our young.

Providing a plethora of community-based activities, the signature event of the BWM is the annual *People's Poetry and Jazz Festival* held on the third Saturday of August. Featuring a collection of live jazz, spoken word and African dance and drumming, and a robust vendor marketplace, this event draws an audience from throughout the Philadelphia region. Included in our community service offerings are:

- Educational tours, workshops and seminars
- Traveling exhibits

- Writing workshops
- Community discussion forums
- Hosting of local and national literary composers, and
- Book signings

As a member of the Historic Germantown consortium of historic sites and museums and a program partner of the Urban Affairs Coalition, the general collection of the BWM has grown to over 10,000 items that cover the wide-ranging and significant African American aesthetic and experience. Serving as a repository of historic documents, local and national supporters donate and contribute to the diverse collection that keeps the Black Writers Museum as a significant historical preservation institution partnering with an array of long-standing historical institutions located in Germantown.

For more information about the Black Writers Museum, visit our website at [www.blackwriters-museum.com](http://www.blackwriters-museum.com).

# Join Historic Germantown

**You are an important part of Historic Germantown!**  
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*[www.joyhillcemetery.org](http://www.joyhillcemetery.org)*



**THANK YOU** to all the wonderful  
volunteers who help in the library and  
with our programs throughout the year!

We couldn't do it all without you and we  
are grateful for the support you provide  
to us.



**HISTORIC  
GERMANTOWN**  
*Freedom's Backyard*

[freedombackyard.com](http://freedombackyard.com)



THE FABRIC OF THE COMMUNITY  
SINCE 1970

**5401 Germantown Ave.**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19144**  
**[www.gaffneyfabrics.com](http://www.gaffneyfabrics.com)**  
**(215) 849-8180**



# Business & Organization Membership Program

Historic Germantown is pleased to announce the launch of its Business & Organization Membership Program! We are proud to support our local businesses and non-profits which are a vital part of preserving the rich cultural history of our neighborhood. Welcome to our inaugural members!

For more information on the Program and its benefits, please go to  
<https://freedombackyard.com/business-organization-membership-program>

Attic Brewing Company  
Bargain Thrift Center  
Cane & Rush  
Epic Essentials  
Gaffney Fabrics, Inc.  
Germantown Espresso Bar  
Germantown Friends School  
Harper & Paul Law Office  
Iconic Barbershop  
Kinesics Dance Studio  
Kurtz Construction Company  
L.E.W Residential and  
Commercial Services  
Lisa, Inc.

Loafin' Tree LLC  
Mission Incorporated  
Morgan Cheshire Esquire LLC  
Nyuki's Catering  
Paper Trail Bike Cafe  
Perfectly Flawless Boutique  
Philly Office Retail LLC  
Sally Blagg  
Shanks Cleaning Service  
Shannon Sims Photography  
The Frosted Fox  
Uncle Bobbies  
Young American Cider, LLC



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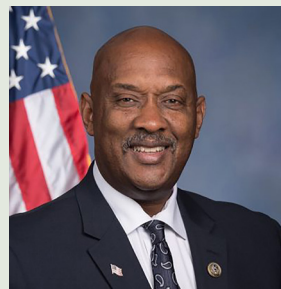
# Congratulations to Our 2021 Hall of Fame Nominees!



**Moe Brooker**  
Philadelphia-bred and internationally known artist, winner of multiple awards, and inspirational teacher for more than 40 years, represented in galleries throughout North America and abroad.



**Erica Armstrong Dunbar**  
Historian and author, distinguished Rutgers University professor and winner of the 2018 Frederick Douglass Book Prize for *Never Caught*, the story of Ona Judge, George Washington's slave who successfully escaped.



**Dwight Evans**  
U.S. congressman representing the 3rd District of Pennsylvania, 1st African American chairman of the PA House Appropriations Committee in Harrisburg, and a community leader dedicated to improving the lives of Philadelphia families.

A great tradition continues this year with the 2021 Historic Germantown Hall of Fame. This virtual event will take place at 5:30 p.m. on August 17, 2021. To attend the event, please visit <https://freedombackyard.com/hall-of-fame/>. Thank you, and we hope you will join us!



**HISTORIC  
GERMANTOWN**  
*Freedom's Backyard*

Revolutionary Germantown Festival



Saturday, October 2, 2021

[revolutionarygermantown.org](http://revolutionarygermantown.org)



Historic Germantown  
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