

Powelton Post

Powelton Neighbors

THE HANCOCKS

BY Doug Ewbank

Joseph Lee Hancock (1806-1878) came from an old Quaker family in Salem, N.J. He moved to Philadelphia at an early age and in 1832 married Susan Bacon (1810-1878). They settled in Blockley Township (now West Philadelphia) where he was a farmer. They had five children: Margaret B. (1833-1895), Charles W. (1835-1909), George W. (abt 1837- 1903), Albert (abt 1838-1891), and Mary Ann (1848-1886). Joseph and Susan moved to 405 N 33rd St. about 1860. He then described himself as a retired brick-layer. He listed his wealth at \$4,400 including their house. By 1870, this had increased to \$35,000.

In 1876, Margaret married William Livezey, a Bucks County farmer and widower with two young children. In 1880, they lived in Langhorne Borough where he listed himself as a retired farmer (at age 44). They did not have any children together.

In 1852, Charles started working for Jenks & Ogden, wholesale druggists, at 3rd and Race. He graduated from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy in 1857. He bought a pharmacy at 17th and Locust, then sold it to great advantage two years later. In 1870, he was living at 3427 Spring Garden St. He built up a profitable pharmacy in a rented space. In 1876, he purchased the lot at 3421 Spring Garden and built a drug store with a comfortable residence. In 1905, he retired and moved to Langhorne, PA. He died quietly in 1909 while resting in his berth on a steamer on the homeward trip from Boston, where he and his second wife had been attending the annual meeting of the Sons of Temperance. The store he built continued serving as a pharmacy for decades and the pharmacy signs were only removed from the building very recently.

Mary married Charles A. Dixon. In 1870, they lived at 3503 Hamilton. He was a clerk in a bookstore. By 1880, they had moved to 730 N. 41st St. and he had become a printer. They had two children.

In 1862, George W. married Elizabeth James and they moved to 3202 Hamilton St. He studied engineering at Penn and joined the office of the City Surveyor. He worked for Samuel Smedley whom he succeeded as City Surveyor. He served during the Centennial Exposition and was responsible for building the streets and trolley lines for the Exposition. In 1879, he resigned to set up a real estate firm. He became a preeminent realtor, managing as many as 1,300 houses at a time including the real estate of the Girard Trust. He also made mortgage loans from his offices at 717 Walnut and 40th and Lancaster. In the 1880s they moved to 3216 Baring and later to Lower Merion. They had three sons. Henry James became a lawyer, George B. (University of Pennsylvania, 1887) a civil engineer and Walter West a life insurance salesman.

Albert, a clerk, married Josephine Kimes, a local schoolteacher. Joseph and Catherine Kimes lived at 325 N. 32nd St. with their five daughters. Joseph was a real estate agent. All of the sisters were schoolteachers. Three never married and continued teaching.

The Hancocks were successful businessmen who lived in the neighborhood for more than 50 years.

