

Philadelphia

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PHILADELPHIA

RALPH H. BROWN

LOCATION AND EARLY GROWTH OF PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia's site, one hundred miles from Delaware Bay, at the confluence of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers was deliberately selected. Before the Quakers left their mother country, William Penn gave written instructions to his commissioners concerning just what geographic features to look for when they should be confronted with the problem of where to locate Philadelphia. These instructions, which are a study in seventeenth century geography, were: "Let the rivers and creeks be sounded on my side of the Delaware River, especially Upland, in order to settle a great Towne, and be sure to make your choice where it is most navigable, high, dry and healthy. That is where the most ships may best ride, of deepest draught of water, if possible to Load or unload, on ye bank or key side, without boating or liting of it. It would do well if the river coming in ye creek be navigable, at least for boats up into ye country, and yt the Scituation be high, at least dry and Sound, and not swampy, which is best determined by diging up two or three Earths and seeing ye bottome. Such a place being found out, for Navigation, healthy Scituation and good Soyle for provision, lay out ten thousand acres contiguous to it in the best manner ye can as the bounds and extent of the Libertyes of said town."

By far the greater number of large cities and towns have developed from small communities which were founded without reference to future growth; Philadelphia, on the contrary, was originally planned as a city. In the manner of the selection of its site, Philadelphia is quite unique among American cities.

That the final choice of the commissioners was based upon the requirements outlined to them is evident. Here the Delaware River is wide and deep, making a most favorable place for a port. Here the Delaware is joined by the Schuylkill, which is navigable for small boats. Fairly good soil is to be found in the vicinity, and over most of the city the land is high and dry. In one respect was their selection unfortunate, but this only for the time being. During the early growth of the city, epidemics of yellow fever (then popularly called Barbadoes distemper) were of common occurrence in the hot, sultry summer days; and at each recurrence large numbers died. But for the last century Philadelphia has been free from these or similar visitations.

The site, being finally selected, the building of "Penn's greene town" immediately began. Ten parallel streets of equal width leading north and south were intersected at right angles by ten similar streets. The four square miles of the city of Philadelphia of Revolutionary times must have looked very much like an enlarged checker-board. This regularity of planning has been adhered to quite closely as the city has expanded, so there is

probably no other American city which retains so many of its early characteristics as does Philadelphia.

As a natural result of its many geographic advantages, the city grew quickly from the very beginning. Not only this, but commerce and manufacturing developed surprisingly early. Altho founded fully fifty years later than Boston and New York, Philadelphia soon came to be the principal city and the first industrial center of the colonies. By 1685 (the city was founded in 1682) 600 houses had been built for its population of 7,000. Counting the Swedes in Passayunk and Chester—who had preceded the Quakers by nearly half a century—the total population on the west bank of the Delaware in 1685 was 9,000. Philadelphia has, from the earliest times, been a city of homes, due in large part to the fact that its growth is limited in only one direction, and land at reasonable rates is available.

As might be expected, the settlement of the city did not follow city lines, but was prompted by commerce. Outlying centers of population began to develop. Having no unified control, these conflicting townships interfered with the maintaining of public order and riots were of common occurrence. In 1854 the Legislature passed a bill which made Philadelphia City coextensive with Philadelphia County by welding the twenty-eight jurisdictions into one municipality. The area of the city was thereby increased from four to two hundred thirty-two miles and its population was increased by about 4,000.

REASONS FOR EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The early geographic advantages of a city deserve fully as much comment as those which foster its later growth. Especially is this true of Philadelphia, for in spite of changing geographic conditions there remain evidence of factors which, while they laid the foundation for the future city, are today either inoperative or of less significance than formerly.

The early commerce of Philadelphia is frequently overlooked in economic discussions of that city. As a point of export and import it overshadowed other eastern ports until the first part of the nineteenth century, when, as a result of the War of 1812, foreign trade along our whole coast suffered great reversals. Later, the value of the Great Lakes as a waterway was enhanced by the construction of the Erie Canal, and most of the products of the West began to go to New York thru the Mohawk Valley. Philadelphia never regained its former relative position in foreign trade, but its extensive early commerce was a great factor in the economic life of the city.

It was the existence of water power that gave manufacturing its first grip upon Philadelphia, but this is a geographic factor that has passed almost entirely out of existence. Of its early importance too much cannot be said. At the "fall line" about fifteen creeks develop small falls, and it was along these that the first shops were located. The principal centers for these early manufacturing industries were along the Schuylkill River and the Wis-

sahickon Creek, altho with the building of roads mills became dispersed over a wide area. Germantown, the most favorably situated for the utilization of water power, became the recognized knitting shop of the Colonies. In 1757, 69,000 pairs of stockings were sold from the city, and before the Revolution there were eleven mills on the Wissahickon. Ruined mills and abandoned waterwheels along the creeks near Philadelphia testify to this early industrial development, but when steam came into practical use, more advantageous sites along routes of transportation were sought by the manufacturers.

RELATION OF TRANSPORTATION TO GROWTH

In few states in the union has topography had so great an influence in determining the course of transportation as in Pennsylvania. The railroads seem to follow drainage lines, and in so doing the length of mileage is sometimes materially increased over airline routes, as the rivers are highly meandering. Among the many difficulties that the railroads encounter, is the crossing of the Allegheny Front west of Altoona, which greatly increases cost of transportation. Among the series of ridges that trend north and south in the Ridge and Valley province, there is no natural passage way of any considerable size or continuity to aid communications with the interior. These topographic conditions have had a lasting effect upon the economic life of Philadelphia, for the city is at a distinct disadvantage in comparison with other northeastern ports. The growth of the city probably has been retarded by surrounding physical conditions, for modern cities are dependent upon transportation more than upon anything else.

In 1832 a series of canals and portages, costing \$10,000,000, was built to connect Philadelphia with Pittsburgh, this being the first effort of the people to regain the commercial leadership for Philadelphia. It failed in its original purpose, but did much to encourage commerce within the state. A direct result of this commercial fight was the creation of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which has grown to be one of the great railways of the country. This railroad links Philadelphia with the Middle West.

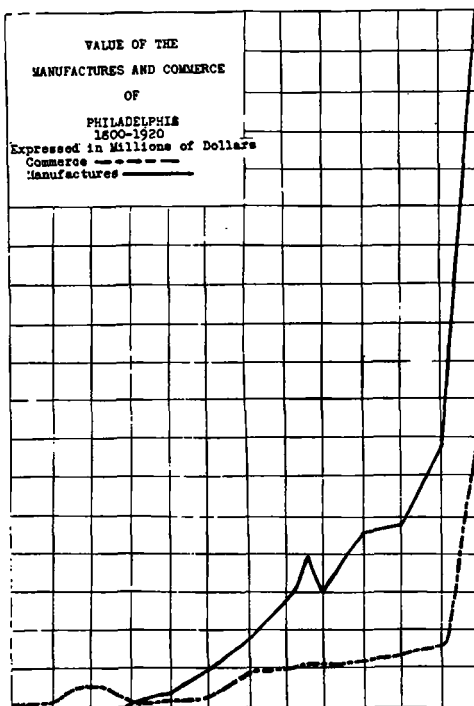
Philadelphia is also served by the Philadelphia and Reading, and by the Baltimore and Ohio railroads. The former is of particular significance as it penetrates the hard coal fields of the state, and, as the haul is not great, coal is comparatively cheap in the city.

The geographic factor most important to Philadelphia is the Delaware River, which might well be considered an arm of the ocean. It is the third port in importance in the country; sixteen miles of the water-front are in actual use, and four more can be developed commercially. As an aid to industries the port is today a vital factor. Many manufacturers have chosen Philadelphia as a site for their factories because of oceanic communications and the resultant cheap transportation. Raw materials are imported and delivered directly to the factories, some of which are situated on the river banks. Quantities of finished products make up the list of goods shipped in the extensive coast-wise trade of Philadelphia.

INDUSTRIAL PHILADELPHIA

There is hardly another city in the world more dependent upon manufacturing industries than Philadelphia. The annual per capita production of these industries amounts to practically one thousand dollars. The total number of persons engaged in all industries and occupations is well over seven hundred thousand, ten per cent of whom are employed in the textile mills, and over eight per cent in the iron and steel establishments. Besides this, four thousand people are engaged in the tanneries. The industries are greatly diversified, and those which are most important to the city have resulted from a combination of geographic conditions.

Textiles and allied products, Philadelphia's earliest endeavor and now its most characteristic industry, makes up twenty-five per cent of the total value of manufactured products. The skilled hands of the early settlers soon had the raw materials to work with, for flax and wool were produced in the immediate surroundings. For power the mills depended upon the numerous creeks until the more economical steam came into use. The humid atmosphere of the region was also a factor in the locating of cotton mills there. When domestic supplies of raw materials became insufficient, they could be brought in cheaply from producing regions. Labor has always been at hand; immigrants furnish the main source of labor for the clothing manufacturers, while skilled labor is abundant. Rug-making, an industry in which Philadelphia leads all others, seems to owe its origin to the early Scotch settlers who were skilled in this art.



The early importance, and the later decline of iron and steel manufacturing in Philadelphia, reflect in a striking way the dependence of industries on geographic conditions. During the years when charcoal, and later, anthracite coal, were used as fuel, the city was most favorably situated, and, as a result, was until 1883, the country's principal source of these products. But when anthracite was, in turn, superseded by coke made from bituminous coal, the iron industry began to center in the Pittsburgh region,

for this industry is one which concentrates near the fuel. Even with these adverse conditions, Philadelphia is still one of the great metal products centers, and several large "independents" have located there to profit by the special advantages offered by the location.

One of the reasons why Philadelphia is the country's principal tanning city is that this industry got an early start there, in response to the availability of tanning derived from the nearby hemlock forests, and the hides which were in those early years produced in large quantities in the state. However, less geographic influences must be given to explain the present pre-eminence of the city in this industry.

Sugar refining is an example of those industries which originated and persist today because of the city's position on tide water. About twenty-five per cent of the sugar of the country is refined in this city.

The Delaware River is sometimes referred to as "The American Clyde." In the immense ship-yards of Wilmington, Chester, Camden, and Philadelphia, about one-quarter of the steel ships of the country are constructed, and twenty per cent of these are made on the Philadelphia ways. The proximity of lumber years ago, and of steel today, a comparatively mild climate which permits out-door work a great part of the year, a sheltered harbor not far from the sea-board, and the nearness to coal, explain this great industry.

It is interesting to note that during the World War the government selected Philadelphia as the base for its greatest ship-building activities, and built fifty ways at Hog Island. In them one-quarter of the ships contracted for during the war were constructed.

CLEVELAND

GEORGE E. WOOD

In 1776, General Moses Cleaveland, master surveyor, was commissioned by The Connecticut Land Company to negotiate with Red Jacket, Joseph Brant, Chief Cato, and other Indians of the Western Reserve, to survey "The Fire Lands" set aside by the General Assembly for the sufferers from British invasions, and to select a site for a settlement. He left three log cabins behind him on the right bank of the Cuyahoga ("crooked river"), and predicted that the new generation "might live to see a place as large as Old Windham." After 125 years, the settlement which did not have a post-office in 1800, has a population of 800,000 and boasts that it is the only city in the New World that stands as it was laid out by its founder, and bearing his name. Altho the human factor should not be ignored in arriving at the causes behind this phenomenal growth, yet, many of the more important answers to the question "Why is the Forest City the fifth in the land?" can be answered by a study of geographical factors—some general and some local.