

SPRINGDALE
THE HUFFNAGLE MANSION
and its
COLLECTION

1916

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Springdale, the Huffnagle Home.

BY JOHN A. ANDERSON, LAMBERTVILLE, N. J.*

A little more than 200 years ago Robert Heath took up in Solebury township, Bucks county, Pennsylvania, two contiguous tracts of land comprising 1,000 acres, extending from the Delaware river at New Hope about 2 miles along the course of the stream which has its rise in the noted Great Spring farther west, and said to be, according to Professor Othniel Marsh of Yale College, the outlet of a large subterranean lake under Centreville, near Doylestown. The Huffnagle property, known as Springdale, containing 200 acres, is located on this stream, about 1 mile west of New Hope, and about the middle of the Heath tract.

The members of the Huffnagle family who came from Philadelphia and became residents of Springdale, at different times, were John Huffnagle and Sarah Eliza, his wife, and four sons, William K., Alfred, Charles and George Washington.

William Maris, who came to New Hope about 1812 and built a number of residences and factories, built the original Springdale mansion and sold it to William K. Huffnagle, who was the first of the family to reside there. William was a civil engineer engaged extensively in various enterprises. He served as principal engineer for the railroads and canals of the eastern division of Pennsylvania and, in that capacity, supervised the construction of the Delaware Division canal through New Hope from its head at Easton, in 1829-30. His connection with the public works of the State is commemorated by a marble slab near the Easton terminus of the canal. In 1847 he sold the Springdale property to his brother Charles and removed to Mount Holly, N. J., where he died, April 14, 1854, in his forty-fifth year.

Charles presented the property to his parents, John and Sarah Eliza Huffnagle, who resided there until their death. He made

* Mr. Anderson was in his 88th year when he prepared this paper. He was present at the meeting, spending more than an hour with his friends during the noon intermission, but owing to the dampness of the room in which the meeting was held, he thought best not to attend the sessions. He was born at Flemington, N. J., June 6, 1829, and died at Lambertville, N. J., March 18, 1917. As a boy he lived with his parents at Doylestown, where he was educated.

his home at Springdale, when in this country and, after his death, his brother George W. Huffnagle occupied the mansion. Alfred, the younger son, farmed the place for his father for many years and was universally esteemed. In later years he became the chief druggist in the Satterlee U. S. A. General Hospital, after a few years training as a druggist in Philadelphia. Later he became superintendent for the Vulcanite Paving Company, of Philadelphia, laying the pavements in Philadelphia along principal streets and public buildings, Fairmount Park, Washington Avenue, and also in Washington, D. C. He died at an advanced age.

John Huffnagle, Sr., the father, was a well-known merchant in Philadelphia and kept a large wholesale store at Fifth and Market streets where Netter has his liquor store in the original building. He was an importer of German goods to a great extent. He had a residence at the site now occupied by the Reading terminal, where he owned a plot of ground and a house. There was a spring at the southwest corner of the lawn that gave great trouble to the builders, before it was probably turned into the sewer, at the time of the erection of the railroad station there. There was a paling fence in front of the lawn, facing High, now Market street. John Huffnagle, Sr., married the daughter of Colonel Franks of Philadelphia, who fought throughout the entire American Revolution and was an intimate friend of General Washington. They were staunch Presbyterians and members of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. The Colonel and his wife, who was the daughter of Col. Davison of the Continental army, were among the main supporters of that church. His daughter was a beautiful woman and an acknowledged belle in the élite society of that day.

Charles Huffnagle was born in Philadelphia March 23, 1808, and died unmarried. He was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and a skilled physician. In 1826 he sailed from Philadelphia to Calcutta as surgeon on the ship "Star." His success in treating cholera among the British troops in Calcutta won high commendation from the authorities there. He became a partner in the banking house of John Palmer and subsequently became associated in the firm of Smith, Huffnagle & Co., bankers, and agents of the East India Company. On September 27, 1847,



SPRINGDALE—THE HUFFNAGLE MANSION.
Near New Hope, Bucks County, Pennsylvania.
View from the west.



• **SPRINGDALE—THE HUFFNAGLE MANSION.**
Front view in winter.
Photographs taken 1916 by John A. Anderson.

he was appointed the first U. S. Consul at Calcutta, by President James K. Polk, and on September 6, 1855, was commissioned U. S. Consul General to British India. He held the latter position until his death at London, England, December 8, 1860, while on his way to resume his duties in Calcutta after an absence of three years in the United States on account of ill health. He was succeeded as Consul General by Dr. Samuel Lilly, of Lambertville, N. J., who was commissioned January 7, 1861.

The Springdale dwelling, as originally constructed by William Maris, is rectangular in form with a frontage of about 48 feet and with a smaller rear extension. The octagonal entrance hall extends partly beyond the line of the front. The stone walls are covered with plaster tinted a delicate pink. A conservatory was formerly attached to the eastern end of the house. During the time of the consul's sojourn there it was filled with exotic plants and flowers, but they could not stand the vigorous winters of our climate and were replaced with those native to our clime. At the west end of the original building a large and higher addition and also a library building were made in 1856 by order of Dr. Huffnagle, from plans designed by Samuel Sloan, an architect of Philadelphia. The additions made room for the reception of 2,000 volumes of ancient and modern books and a very large collection of rare and valuable curios from India, China, Japan, Egypt, and other countries. Part of this collection was shown in London in 1851 where Dr. Huffnagle received bronze medals for the best exhibit of art and industry of British India. The additions made to the building gave it the present dimensions of 100 feet front by 94 feet in depth.

Dr. Huffnagle's collection was thrown open to the public on Tuesday of each week, when the rooms were crowded with visitors. The following extracts from a paper printed shortly after his death give a graphic description of his home and this valuable collection.

"We, in common with hundreds in this county, have enjoyed the hospitalities of the large hearted gentleman who presided over this pleasant retreat where refinement and taste so largely abounded. Springdale, the late Consul's Villa, is constructed somewhat in the pointed style, of large and symmetrical proportions. The dwelling is approached along a carriage drive which enters the lawn beneath an arch surmounted by an eagle and

decorated with the Crest of the family.* Within the enclosure, and opposite the hall door, stands a beautiful fountain. On entering the mansion one is amazed and delighted at the brilliant scene so unexpectedly meeting one's gaze. The drawing-room and library were to me full of interest; an oriental atmosphere appears to pervade the latter, heightened in effect by luxurious divans covered with the skins of Bengal tigers; by the skulls of lions, elephants and other tropical animals and, above all, by an air voluptuous languour filling every recess of the superb apartment and resting over every object visible there, whether it be the weapons of Eastern warfare, the idolatrous evidence of a barbarous race, the disinterred mummies, the gorgeous gold and silver decoration of Asiatic magnificence, or the time honored armor of the days of crusades and chivalry. To the drawing-room adjoining this gem of libraries, it is impossible to do justice and I must confine my account to a brief retical of its curiosities both of nature and of art. A statue of Bonaparte, by Canova, a vase of exquisite workmanship carved from the horn of a rhinoceros, an extensive collection of beautiful paintings, numerous East Indian trinkets of great value and various other objects of artistic skill, combined with birds of brilliant plumage and insects of gayest coloring, to render this splendid reception room an endearing testimony to the taste and munificence of the Consul General. The presence of graceful and accomplished ladies contributed a further charm to the attractions of Springdale and served to impress its recollections ineffacably upon the memory."

This account enables one to picture, to some extent, the beauty of this once elegant home. The writer of this paper, who was present on one of these occasions, can bear testimony to the sense of humor of the doctor who used to exhibit a portrait which apparently represented an Indian Nabob in native costume, when presently the admiring visitor would discover that it was a picture of the doctor himself.

Among the animals imported by Dr. Huffnagle were a drove of fifteen of the humped sacred cattle of India, an Arabian horse valued at \$10,000 (this was offered to the doctor when the animal arrived in Boston, but was refused), Syrian goats having long drooping ears and long silky hair, Arabian sheep with hair like a dog and black and white heads, swine from China with black skin and hair, Shetland ponies, Esquimaux and Newfoundland dogs, etc. The sacred cattle did not increase in this climate save

* The family Crest, above referred to, is described as follows by the Rev. John Huffnagle M. D.:

"Eagle over—on top—horse shoe, two horse shoe nails crossed as in the letter X, the latter placed on and in front of keystone of arch (Hoof-nail-eagle—Huffnagle)."

celebrated maker Davrainville, "playing the most select and modern overtures, waltzes, quadrilles and operatic pieces," a Broadwood & Son's semi-grand piano, "lately imported at a cost of Co.'s Rs. 1,200;" "a mechanical clock made to special order by James McCable, and but recently received," "marble busts of the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon," "a beautiful model of the Paris Column of July, 1830, purchased in Paris for 700 francs," a collection of bronzes, porcelain and Bohemian glassware, drawing-room and other lamps, mahogany winged Admirals, an American sofa, grand piano forte by Clementi & Co., London, mahogany dinner waggons, an American trotting cart, silver mounted harness, and finally a "fashionable and easy running chariot, built by Dykes & Co., on mail coach axles, elliptic springs, painted dark green, lined with superfine claret color cloth and trimmed to correspond, dickey, lamps and poles all in excellent order."

I have never understood this catalogue, and the sale which it indicates was held nine years before the death of Dr. Huffnagle. It may have been that he became temporarily involved in financial difficulties. In any event, it seems certain that many of the articles listed in the catalogue were not sold, and afterwards reached the mansion at Springdale.

Here is an envelope containing a number of time stained cards which tell us something of the social life of Dr. Huffnagle and his family. These are invitations to balls and teas, addressed to members of the Franks family when they resided in what is now known as the "Washington House," in Germantown, and are of a period of considerably over 100 years ago. The most interesting are those which relate to the Doctor. This is his visiting card which reads, "Charles Huffnagle, Consul General of the United States for British India, and Consulate General of the United States Calcutta," done in old copper-plate engraving. Here are cards showing his social life in India. This one is an invitation from the Governor General and reads, "The Governor General requests the honor of Mr. C. Huffnagle's Company at a Scientific party on Friday, 17th inst., at 9 o'clock, S. E. D. Showees, A. D. C., Government House, July 7th, 1840." This card reads, "RAMNARIAN DUTT presents his respectful compliments to Charles Huffnagle, Esqr., and requests the favor of his

company at a theatrical entertainment at his residence, on Monday the 17th inst., at 8½ o'clock P. M., Calcutta, Wellington Street, 11th Novr., 1856." Another reads, "DOORGA CHURN DUTT presents his respectful compliments to C. Huffnagle, Esqr., and requests the favour of his company to a Nautch at his house on Saturday, the 11th instant, at ½ past 8 o'clock P. M., Calcutta, Wellington Square, 8th Nov., 1848." These last two invitations, I take it, are from Indian Princes or Rajahs.

This is the Bengal Almanac for 1855. It is in the nature of a semi-official publication, and outside of the usual astronomical information, contains much relating to the civil life of India—the Bengali festivals, Mohammedan and Hindoo holidays, data as to the native governments, and the Rajahs, the names of the Governors General and Commanders-in-Chief in India, Judges of the Courts and sittings of the Courts, order of precedence in processions, data as to native weights and measures, etc. The almanac was evidently a companion of Dr. Huffnagle on one of his celebrated hunting trips, for it contains a diary of a trip he made during the year 1855, which occupied most of the months of March and April. Excluding small game, the animals bagged by him are given as follows: 25 tigers, 5 rhinoceros, 17 boars and 4 buffaloes, all of which were shot from the back of his favorite elephant "Howdah." There is also a record of one buffalo having been shot from horseback.

Of the many Huffnagle papers, this is the only autograph letter I possess of Dr. Huffnagle. It was written in 1836, and is addressed to Captain H. S. Brown, commander of the American ship "Star." It is rather a coincidence that this letter should have been brought to light at this time when our attention is being called to Huffnagle history, and in a rather remarkable way. My friend, Mr. Harrold E. Gillingham, of Philadelphia, only a few days ago, in examining an old desk, containing secret drawers, in an antique shop in Philadelphia, discovered this letter, and it is through his courtesy in presenting the same to me that I am able to show it to you, along with other Huffnagleiana.

While Mr. Anderson told you Dr. Huffnagle died in London in 1860, he did not mention the fact, which may not be generally known, that his body was brought back to America, and was interred within a few rods of the place where we are meeting to-

day. I have here a memorandum made by one of his family which shows that his body was buried in a cement vault, along with his mother, Sarah E. Huffnagle, and there were also buried near them at Springdale, John Huffnagle, his father, and Charlotte Huffnagle, an aunt, who died at the age of 90 years. No stone or tablet now marks their final resting place, which I believe was their wish, and the location of their interment is known to few persons other than members of the family.

Mr. Anderson has alluded very briefly in his paper to the live stock imported to this country from British India, by Dr. Huffnagle, with a view of improving our local breed. Here is the original sale bill, from which we learn more of the particulars. The stock, at the time of the sale, consisted of the following:

The Thoroughbred Arabian Horse "Bedouin." This horse was shipped by Dr. Huffnagle at Calcutta on board the American ship "Galconda" and arrived in good condition at Boston after a stormy passage of 165 days. The certificate of purchase describes this animal as follows: "Sold to Charles Huffnagle, Esq., American Consul of British India, at Calcutta, a grey Arab colt, of the highest caste of the Kylan breed. He was bred by one of the Bedouin tribe of Amaza; from thence he was brought by land to Bagdad; from thence he was sent by an Arab schooner to Bassorah; from thence he was sent by another schooner down the Persian Gulf to Bombay; and from Bombay he was brought by one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's Steamers, to the well-known Arab dealer, Shiek Ibrahim, at Calcutta."

The India Jumna-Paharee Bull (Maha-Rajah), imported from Northwestern Hindostan, 1,600 miles from Calcutta. "He is of a slate color, upwards of 15 hands high, has a large hump over the shoulders, a very pendulous dewlap passing down in heavy folds between the fore legs, has an eye like a gazelle, and a skin almost as fine as silk."

The Jumna Paharee Cow "is of a white color and has a hump and dewlap similar to the Bull, and is of the same height."

Two Full-Blood Heifers "are of a beautiful silver-grey, and are animals of the Pure Jumna Paharee breed; they were dropped in this country, and are 16 months old."

Twenty-five or thirty crosses between the Indian bull and American imported cows; ten Palestine and Arabian sheep; five