



Built in 1786

THE HILL-PHYSICK-KEITH HOUSE
321 SOUTH FOURTH STREET
Philadelphia, Pa.

OPEN DAILY 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

SUNDAYS 1 to 4 P.M.

CLOSED MONDAYS

TELEPHONE — WA 5-7866

ADMISSION — \$2, CHILDREN — 50¢

Henry Hill built his large square house on part of the site of the former Alms House, on South Fourth Street, only five years after the last shots had been fired in the American Revolution and three years before the Federal government of the United States had begun to function as a political entity.

After Hill's death in 1790, his three story house was purchased by Miss Abigail Physick, who gave it to her brother, Dr. Philip Syng Physick, sometimes called the "father of American surgery", and probably the country's most distinguished surgeon in the era before the introduction of modern anesthesia.

Physick graduated from the University of Pennsylvania (established by Benjamin Franklin in 1751) in 1785. The promising young doctor sought additional training in London. Following an outstanding performance and demonstration of his commendable talents, he was graduated with the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1792.

On his return to Philadelphia, Dr. Physick became one of the courageous physicians who cared for the victims of the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, thereby contracting the disease himself. The following year he was elected to the staff of the Pennsylvania Hospital. His role as a teacher expanded in scope and importance, and within a few years, his lectures on anatomy and medicine at the University led to his being named to the first chair of surgery established in the United States. From Dr. Physick's personally recorded theories and observances evolved new medical techniques and procedures and increasingly effective instruments. These did much to establish American surgery as being more daring, more skillful and often more successful than that practiced elsewhere.

Perhaps the best known of Dr. Physick's many patients was John Marshall, then Chief Justice of the United States. The 76 year old legal sage traveled from Washington to Philadelphia to consult the noted Philadelphia surgeon. The Chief Justice was suffering from "the stone". Dr. Physick prescribed immediate surgery. So successful was this remedy that four years later Marshall, now suffering from a liver disease, again came to Philadelphia to consult his physician. This time however, not even Physick's skill was sufficient, and Marshall died in this city on July 6, 1835. It was while tolling for his funeral procession that the Liberty Bell cracked.

Dr. Physick died in 1837, leaving his spacious 22 room house to his daughter, Sarah, wife of another well-known physician, Jacob Randolph, from whom it passed in 1873 to her grandson, Philip Physick Randolph. In this way the mansion was handed down through various branches of the family to Mrs. Charles Penrose Keith, the former Elizabeth Harvey Wister. After many decades of neglect, the Hill-Physick-Keith House, as it is now known, was given in 1965, by the Annenberg Foundation, to the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks. The gift of the house also included a substantial grant for its restoration, which was subsequently carried out under the direction of George B. Roberts. An unusually large and attractive 19th century city garden, using plant material then known in the Philadelphia area, outlines three sides of the house. The garden was designed by Dr. George B. Tatum, and the planting made possible by the Otto Haas Community Funds.

321 South Fourth Street stands today as a worthy memorial to the "Father of American Surgery". We are quite delighted to welcome you as a guest at Dr. Physick's House.