

LEMON HILL AND FAIRMOUNT PARK

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Lemon Hill and Fairmount Park by Thomas Cochran & Charles Shearer Keyser

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THOMAS COCHRAN & CHARLES SHEARER KEYSER

LEMON HILL AND FAIRMOUNT PARK



A View of Lemon Hill, the Seat of Henry Pratt, Esq.

LEMON HILL
AND
FAIRMOUNT PARK

THE PAPERS OF

CHARLES S. KEYSER AND THOMAS COCHRAN,

RELATIVE TO

A PUBLIC PARK FOR PHILADELPHIA.

PUBLISHED IN 1856 AND 1872.

REPRINTED IN 1886,

BY HORACE J. SMITH.

PHILADELPHIA,
1886.

PREFACE

The first of the two papers here reprinted was issued from the press in 1856, at a period when, what is now the great Park of Philadelphia, was a succession of dilapidated mansions and fields, in the last stages of decay and neglect. It at once secured, by its enthusiasm and broad prescience of the value of the ground to the City, attention, interest, and the liberal contribution from our citizens which secured part of, and eventuated in the final purchase of the whole tract by the city, and its public dedication. The second appeared in 1872, when a determined effort was being made to obtain adverse legislation under the plea that it was "too large," it was "costing too much," it was "a rich man's park," and it was "inaccessible to the people." Its effect, like the first paper, was instant and decisive; the newspapers which had been filled with communications preparing the way for the curtailment of boundaries, and restriction of the powers of the Park Commissioners, were from that time silent, and the ground in its entirety acquired and preserved. The first was issued in pamphlet form and circulated in a large edition, but is long since out of print. The second appeared in the newspapers only; it was stereotyped as part of the report of the Park Commission for 1873, but the plates were, at the time of going to

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press, unfortunately destroyed, and the report for that year was never issued. The interest which I feel in the preservation of these two papers, and of the names of their respective authors, the former of whom, without a question, gave the most effective expression to, as the latter, in the time of its extreme peril in like manner sustained, the public sentiment through which our great pleasure-ground was created, and continues to exist, has led me to reprint them as legacies of value to those who shall follow us, to whom the future care and preservation of this great common and general pleasure-ground of the whole people shall be committed. By the right of a long personal friendship, I have permission from both these writers for this republication; under the first, published anonymously, the author's name now appears for the first time. How grateful must it be to them to look back on the purposes and prophecies completed by their earnest endeavors, in common with those who felt and worked with them as earnestly and unobtrusively in their day and generation.

HORACE J. SMITH.

Ivy Lodge, Germantown,
Dec., '86.

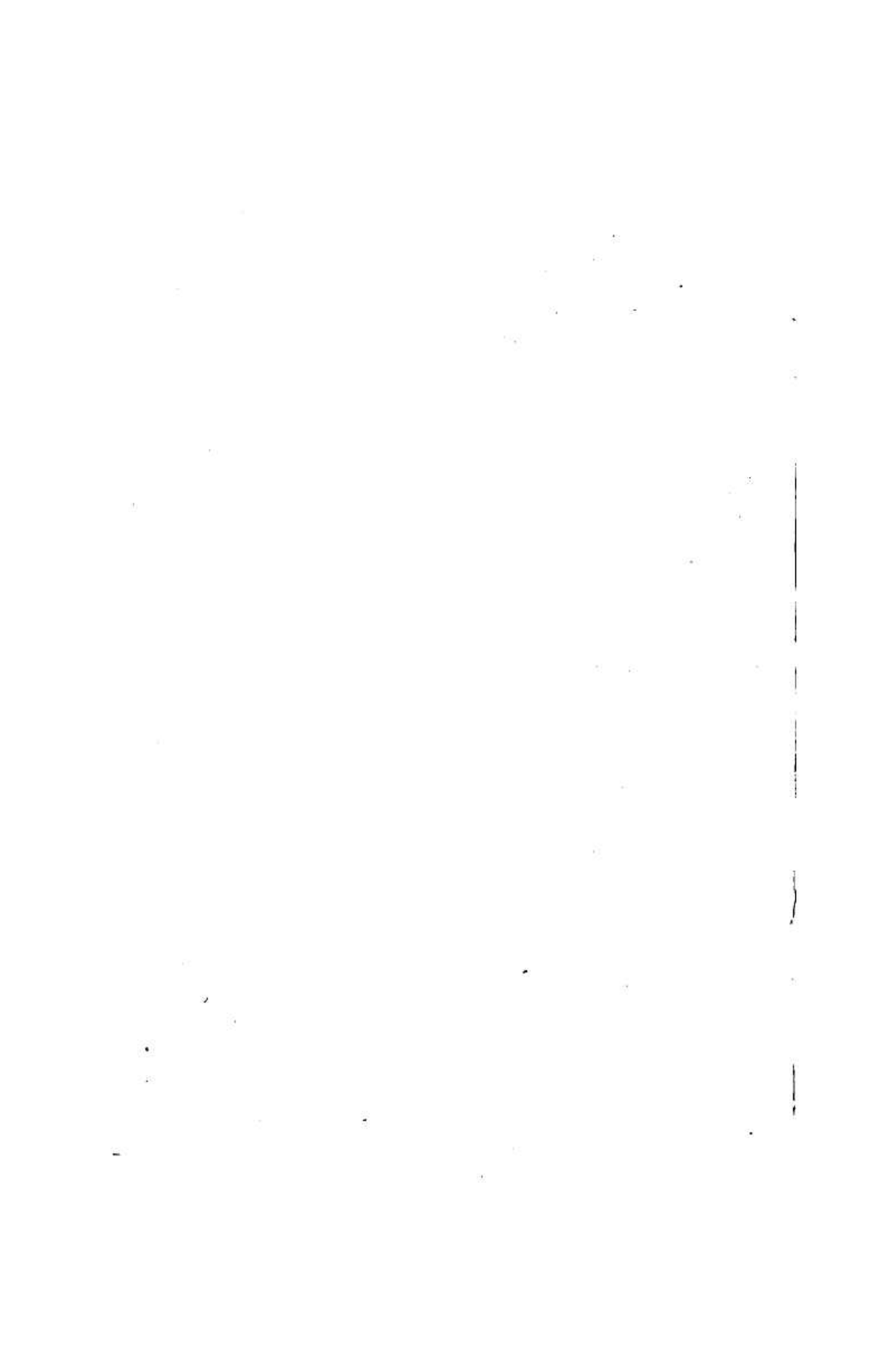
LEMON HILL

IN ITS CONNECTION WITH THE

EFFORTS OF OUR CITIZENS AND COUNCILS

TO OBTAIN A

PUBLIC PARK.



LEMON HILL

This once beautiful piece of ground now lying in ruins, is, in its past associations, too well known to us all to require any particular description. It lies a short distance to the north and westward of the dam at Fairmount, and at present contains about forty-five acres of undulating ground.¹

The Reading Railroad bounds its eastern slope; the Schuylkill its western; a small strip of ground, the property of Eli K. Price and John M. Ogden, separates it from Fairmount; a larger piece of ground, known as Sedgley Park, the property of Ferdinand J. Dreer, intervenes between it and the Spring Garden Water Works above, and forms its northern boundary.

During and after the Revolution, it was the country-seat of Robert Morris,² and passed, in the year 1799, as a consequence of his financial ruin, into the possession of the late Mr. Pratt, and under Mr. Pratt's care it retained that elegance and luxury which, up to a period comparatively recent, rendered it, as "Pratt's Garden," the pride and pleasure of our citizens.

While in his hands, it rose greatly in value, and early in the year 1836, he sold the estate, then containing 42 acres and 93 perches of ground, to Isaac S. Loyd, for the sum of two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.

¹ See Graff's map, 13,515, O. 4, Phil'a Lib.

² From 1770 to 1799.