



Haverford Township Historical Society



DENNIS KELLY (1779-1864) AND FAMILY

Compiled by Richard D. Kerr

[The following is largely excerpted from Biographical Annals of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, Elwood Roberts (editor), published by T. S. Benham and Company and the Lewis Publishing Company, 1904. Supplemental information comes from "A Sesquicentennial History of Saint Denis Parish" by Joseph P. Barrett, Saint Denis Church, 1975. Additional explanatory notes are in square brackets.]

DENNIS KELLY married **MARY BOYLE** in Ireland, she coming from a highly respected and wealthy family who resided in County Donegal. In 1802 Mr. and Mrs. Kelly emigrated to America. [Barrett states that Dennis Kelly was born in Trubach, County Donegal, Ireland in July 1779, that Mary Boyle was born in Donaghmere in 1783, that they were married in Ireland in 1804, and their date of arrival by sailing ship in Philadelphia as June 18, 1806.] They located at the lower banks of Cobb's Creek, situated in Lower Merion township, Montgomery county, Pennsylvania, a part of which property is now owned by the Ashurst estate. He purchased land there, erected thereon a mill [Cobb's Creek and Kelly's first mill, on the south side of what is now Old Manoa Road, are actually located in Haverford Township, Delaware County], and began the manufacture of cotton goods. Later he purchased land on Cobb's Creek, upon which was standing an old powder mill [the Nitre Hall Powder Works in Haverford Township], which he remodeled and used for manufacturing textile goods. Subsequently he purchased another mill [the Castle Hill Mill], including considerable land, located above Leedom's saw mill on Cobb's Creek, after which he purchased a large tract of land from the Humphrey estate [north of present day Eagle Road in Haverford Township], and erected thereon an additional mill, and finally purchased two more mills which were located at Haddington, Philadelphia county. In addition to these enterprises he had an interest in the Blonden and Goodintent Mills, situated in the city of Philadelphia, all of which were used for the manufacture of cotton and woolen cloths for the trade, and during the progress of the Civil war his mills were kept working steadily in order to supply the demand required by the United States government. His land holdings comprised seven hundred and thirty acres, covering two miles in length by one-half mile in width, which extended from the southern line of Haverford east to and beyond the city line of Philadelphia. He was one of the influential and prominent men in the community, took a keen and zealous interest in local affairs, and the various important improvements of the county were brought about largely through his instrumentality and liberality.

Mr. and Mrs. Kelly were the parents of eight children, namely:

1. **MARGARET KELLY**, born in 1801 [in Ireland]; she became the wife of **CHARLES KELLEY** [note different spelling, although Barrett writes that he was Charles Kelly, the nephew of Dennis Kelly and that Charles and Margaret were buried behind St. Charles Borromeo Church, Oakview, which he had helped to found and donated an acre of land], and their children, all of whom are now deceased, were as follows: **Dennis B. Kelley, Walter Kelley, Sallie Kelley, William Kelley, Edward Kelley, Mary Kelley, and Louise Kelley.**

2. **HANNAH KELLY**, born in 1808 [Barrett says July 24, 1807 "at Radnor, near the college, at John Guyger's place," where the Kelly worked and they lived at that time], died March 7, 1867; she was the wife of **JOHN RUSSELL** [married September 6, 1827 and he died on September 10, 1833 at age 44, per

Barrett], and their children were **Mary Jane Russell**, born September 13, 1828, died March 23, 1859; **Dennis A. Russell**, born January 27, 1830, died July 29, 1830; **John A. Russell**, born January 1, 1832. [per Barrett, after husband John died, Hannah and her children moved in with Dennis and Mary Kelly and she kept house for them. Son John A. "Johnny" Russell died on July 26, 1876.]

3. **DENNIS KELLY** [per Barrett, born in the Kelly Mansion (see below), lived to the age of 3, and was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Philadelphia. Further, Barrett writes that twins, a second Dennis and Elizabeth Xavier, were born in May 1819, and that this Dennis died in Cuba at age 20 on May 19, 1839 and was buried there. Thus, when patriarch Dennis Kelly died in 1864, he had no male heirs and six surviving daughters.]

4. **ELIZABETH KELLY**, twin with Dennis. [see note just above]

5. **WILLIAM KELLY**, born in 1810 [born on the Guyger farm, per Barrett], died March 9, 1836, at age 26.

6. **MARY TERESA KELLY**, born February 16, 1811 [in a home the Kellys had moved to by this time, Barrett writes, that by 1885 was "owned by William Leshar of Ardmore [Athensville until 1873], between Lancaster Pike and the old Dutch or Lutheran Church"], died July 28, 1892; she was the wife of **JACOB OTT** [Barrett says "from Lower Merion and a convert from Lutheranism. The ceremony took place in St. Denis Church on October 4, 1832 and Father John Hughes, afterwards Archbishop of New York, officiated. They went to New Orleans and remained there until 1863. . . . Mary died at 12:10 A.M. on January 28, 1892 at her home, which is now located at 224 Cherry Lane, Havertown.] Their children are as follows: **Jacob Ott**, born July 3, 1833, died July 13, 1886; **Mary Ott**, born January 28, 1835, died in 1837; **Sarah E. Ott**, born May 7, 1837, died August 16, 1863; **Dennis Ott**, born October 3, 1839, died in 1840; **Andrew Ott**, born June 29, 1841, died in 1846; **Mary Ann Ott**, born January 29, 1843, died in 1845; **Joseph Ott**, born October 4, 1844, died October 5, 1867; **Jeremiah J. Ott**, born January 1, 1852.

7. **ELIZABETH KELLY**, born May 5, 1819 [according to Barrett, the Kellys, now prospering, moved into "The Mansion," north of present day Manoa Road and east of Cobb's Creek in Lower Merion, between 1811 and 1815], died April 29, 1888; she was the wife of **DR. FREDERICK S. ECKERT** [married June 13, 1845 per Barrett], who died June 20, 1856 [at her home at 739 S. 15th Street in Philadelphia, per Barrett]. They had four children: **Mary Eckert**, **Anna Eckert**, **Bessie Eckert** and **Frederick Eckert**; she was then united in marriage to professor **Peter** [Barrett says **Pierre**] **M. Arnu**; no issue.

8. **SARAH KELLY**, [born in 1815 in the mansion, per Barrett], died September 4, 1873 [buried at St. Denis, per Barrett]; she was the wife of **RODERICK O'CONNOR**, and their children were: **Dennis O'Connor**, deceased; **William O'Connor**, deceased; **Roderick O'Connor**, deceased; **Frederick O'Connor**, deceased; **Charles O'Connor**, **Mary O'Connor**, and **Sarah O'Connor**.

9. **ANNIE M. KELLY**, born May 10, 1824, died November 21, 1896, the wife of **WILLIAM J. MARTIN**. [per Barrett, she was **Ann Margaret Kelly**, the last of the Kellys' children, and born in the Lower Bank-area home of Patrick Boyle, a nephew of Ann's mother Mary Boyle Kelly. **Charles Kelly**, Dennis' partner in D. & C. Kelly, who ran mills in southern Delaware County and from whom Kellyville (now Clifton) got its name, was a nephew of Dennis Kelly. Ann Kelly married Dr. William Martin on April 19, 1852.

Dennis Kelly, father of these children, died July 21, 1864, in his eighty-fifth year, and his wife, Mary (Boyle) Kelly, died May 24, 1861, in her seventy-eighth year. They, their children and grandchildren are buried in the Augustinian St. Denis' Cemetery, the ground for which was donated to the church of St. Denis by Dennis Kelly.

By his will dated June 5, 1863, proved August 3, 1864, will book 11, page 591, letters granted same day to Hannah Russell and Dennis P. Kelly, executors, he gave and devised all his estate unto his six daughters - Margaret, Hannah, Mary, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Ann - during the term of their natural lives, to be equally divided among them share and share alike, and at the death of said daughters, or any of them, share of said daughter or daughters to go and be vested in the children or child of the said daughter or daughters respectively in fee simple, to be equally divided of said children of the said daughters as tenants in common. And he did direct and request his daughter Hannah to take as part of her share of said real estate the Mansion House which he occupied, situated in Lower Merion township.

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