Rock-Soost Building in the City of Lancaster, Lancaster Co., Penn. Property, Neighborhood & Family Heritage 1874-2014
ROCK-SOOST BUILDING

305 North Queen Street • Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Property, neighborhood & family heritage

Produced for
William Scott Soost & Sherry Schoenberger Soost
Commissioned by Jack and Joni Soost
For their son and daughter-in-law, November, 2014.

Research, documentation, photography & design by
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Detail, Map of City of Lancaster,
Lancaster County, PA
by Roe & Colby, 1874,
Courtesy, LancasterHistory.org
Cover:
Title from
Roe & Colby, 1874 Atlas—
Photography & Design by
Randolph Harris

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Acknowledgements & Introduction

Historic property at 305 North Queen Street, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

The three-story brick building located at 305 North Queen Street in the City of Lancaster was built between 1872 and 1874 for the Rock Family, whose patriarch, Allen Rock (1835-1893) was a well-known craftsman and dealer in boots and shoes. Yet to be discovered are the names of the architect or builder of this late Victorian Era commercial/residential building, which is executed in the Italianate Style. Additional research may reveal these details.

Information about this Lancaster City property and the families associated with it was obtained from the archives of the County of Lancaster, PA; US Census and tax records; maps, newspapers and the many volumes of residential and business directories of the City and County of Lancaster maintained by LancasterHistory.org and Lancaster Public Library.

Naming an historic building- When substantial improvements are undertaken on a property, it is customary in the documentation of an historic building to link the names of the owners who are undertaking those improvements with the names of the original or early owners or builders. This is the case with the subject property, based on significant changes planned for the property over the coming years by the current owners, Scott and Sherry Soost. Therefore the property can henceforth be referred to appropriately as The Rock-Soost Building. The family photographs reproduced in this publication are shared courtesy of Daniel Gwinn of Lititz, Lancaster County, PA. Mr. Gwinn is related to the Rock family through his third-great-grandmother, Mary Ann Hornberger (maiden name Cooper), a niece of Allen Rock. Mrs. Hornberger (1852-1915) assembled a family photo album that is now in Mr. Gwinn's possession. In this album she collected photographs of her family and other relatives.
Once a colonial town...

"The town of Lancaster was founded in the early 1730s and developed into a regional center serving the surrounding agricultural community. Located at the intersection of major roadways, Lancaster was an important settlement on the primary route of westward expansion through Pennsylvania. By the mid-1700s, Lancaster was one of the largest inland towns in America." The character of the city was then defined by a small but refined core of public buildings and elegant town houses, the architecture of which was mostly based on English and later early American styles, surrounded by neighborhoods of small scale Germanic houses. Of the 709 primary dwellings recorded in the 1798 direct tax for Lancaster City, 72% were one story houses, principally of log or frame construction.

...later an industrial city

"The city's physical growth in its first one hundred and thirty years was relatively modest. In the sixty years following 1880, the City of Lancaster more than tripled in size. This growth was largely a result of the city's industrial and manufacturing expansion during that period. The city which we appreciate today, and the distinctive character that the city has become known for, should be recognized and respected as a product of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century industrial America."

From Preserving Community Character: City of Lancaster, Pennsylvania by David B. Schneider, for Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County (Pa.), in collaboration with John Milner Associates. Published by City of Lancaster, Department of Housing and Community Development, 1992.

The City of Lancaster National Historic District was included in the National Register of Historic Places in June 2000, encompassing some 12,000 contributing buildings and sites covering 4 square miles, making one of the largest such districts in the United States.
The present three-bay, 3 story, attached brick building was constructed on a portion of Lot 545 in the Hamilton Plan of Lots, the original town plan of the City of Lancaster. The parcel — 19’ X 92’ — is located on the east side if North Queen Street; southern boundary about 35 feet north of Walnut Street. The property is located three blocks north from Penn Square, the heart of the Historic City of Lancaster.

Hamilton’s town plan is a traditional grid pattern of mostly straight streets aligned to magnetic North. Typical building lots are rectangular and measure about 1/4 acre. This standard measurement would become the pattern of building and development for most of the present day City of Lancaster.

Development in 300 block of North Queen Street and the immediate neighborhood is a mix of industrial, commercial and residential properties, most of which were built during the mid- to late 19th and early 20th centuries. This was a period of rapid growth, fueled by intense industrial and manufacturing activities, along with a growing service and retail trade citywide.

A portion of the original Lot No. 545, fronting 19 feet on the east side of North Queen Street, was acquired and developed in 1872-74 by Allen Rock (shown in red). Original town plan on which this map was based was surveyed in 1733 for Andrew Hamilton, prothonotary of the Provincial Supreme Court, Philadelphia, and conveyed to his son James Hamilton in 1735. Map courtesy, Office of the Mayor, City of Lancaster, PA. Standard lots were 64 feet wide and 245 feet deep, "...large enough to accommodate not only the house but also outbuildings and gardens which many residents would place behind their homes." From Conestoga Crossroads, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1730-1790. Jerome H. Woods, Jr., 1979.
Subject property in white oval. Contemporary street numbers not assigned at the time of this map publication. This mid-19th century map indicates that no building had yet been constructed on this portion of the original Hamilton Lot No. 545. Map of the City of Lancaster, PA from Records and Surveys by Moody & Bridgens, 1850, courtesy Lancaster History.org.
Family home & business, circa 1874

Standard size buildings on typical lots in atlases and maps from this period are shown in varying ways: earlier maps often indicate simply a run of structures, all with the same dimensions. More contemporary maps tend to show accurate lot dimensions and building “footprints.”

The well-known Map of the City of Lancaster, PA from Records and Surveys by Moody & Bridgens, 1850 (see page 4) shows no buildings on the subject lot, while a similar atlas, Bridgens Atlas of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1864 shown here, displays a simple block shape, similar to other buildings depicted on the street and in surrounding areas.

The Rock Building & Business

The Lancaster City map by T. J. Kennedy of 1858 (page 7) shows a building on the site. Its shape is basically identical to the majority of others across the City. This appears to have been the mapmaker’s depiction of a typical building — perhaps all single family homes — in a non-specific way.

The Roe & Colby Map of the City of Lancaster, 1874 (also on page 7) provides a building footprint identical to the present building.

This is the first graphic depiction of the Rock Family Building at 305 North Queen Street. This illustration conforms with information in deeds, tax records and city directories.

The 1872 deed of sale for this property* from David M. Hess of Philadelphia to Allen Rock of Lancaster, and property tax records show that the present building was constructed after April of 1872 and before the 1874 map publication. The Deed of 1872 shows a lot of current dimensions but including a one story dwelling, indicating the current building was constructed subsequent to the transaction.
Map of Lancaster City, Pennsylvania, drawn & published by T. J. Kennedy, 1858.
Courtesy LancasterHistory.org

Detail, *Map of the City of Lancaster*, Roe & Colby, 1874. Street addresses and building footprints are consistent with contemporary numbers and dimensions. Courtesy, LancasterHistory.org.

City of Lancaster Grid street pattern aligned with magnetic North. From *Combination Atlas Map of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania* by Everts and Stewart, Philadelphia, PA, 1875.
The earliest reference to Allen Rock as a shoemaker in Lancaster appears in the 1857 Boyd’s *Business Directory of the City of Lancaster*, page 121. Along with 26 other boot and shoemakers operating in the City, Rock is shown as having a shop on “N. Queen Street ab(above) Chestnut.” The same directory does not indicate the location of Rock’s residence at this time, when he was about 22 years old.

This reference may be the source of a 2013 article in *The Lancaster New Era* that mistakenly cites the Rock Building dating to 1858, since North Queen Street above Chestnut is approximately the same location of the subject Rock-Soost Building.

In 1857, North Queen Street was a growing commercial area and seemed to have a concentration of shoe store and shoe maker shops; 10 of the 26 of these businesses were located within the first four blocks of North Queen.

In 1866, Allen Rock resides on Walnut Street near North Queen. His occupation is listed as “boots” in the City Directory for this year.

On 6 March 1870 Lancaster County Sheriff Frederick Myers sold to David M. Hess of Philadelphia* the seized land and buildings of Pennsylvania education pioneer and former City Mayor, Thomas Henry Burrowes. *(For more information about Burrowes, see page 23.)*

*Deed Book Y– Vol. 9– Page 398

Burrowes’ properties are described by the Sheriff’s deed as follows:

1) A lot of ground 64 feet - 4.5 inches along N. Queen St. and extending in depth along Walnut Street 245 feet to a 14-foot wide alley, on which is a two-story brick dwelling house with a two-story brick back building attached, stable, hydrants and other improvements thereon, adjoining ( to the north) property next described:

2) Also a lot of ground fronting 50 feet on North Queen and extending 245 feet more or less...to a 14 foot alley on which are erected four one story houses, from the estate of the Thomas Burrowes which went unsold due to want of buyers...”

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The scheduled sale date was 15 January 1870, but with no buyers bidding, a new public sale was conducted and David H. Hess was high bidder at $5,900 for these two parcels. This transaction is instructive in understanding the association of the Allen Rock Family, his shoe business in this area of the City and his ownership of a portion of Lot 1.

Burrowes (November 16, 1805 – February 25, 1871) was the fourth president of Pennsylvania State University, then referred to as the Agricultural College of Pennsylvania, serving there from 1868 until his death 1871. He is believed to have been ill for a long period before passing, so it seems logical that he might have lost his properties in a public sale.

Lot 2—with frontage of 50 feet along the east side of North Queen Street—holds four one-story houses. With evidence in the 1857 Directory of Rock’s shoe store on North Queen just above Walnut Street, and absent additional information, one can conclude that the young shoemaker, Allen Rock, may have worked and possibly lived as a tenant in one of these modest Burrowes-owned properties.

Rock and family are later shown as owning a home on the south side of Walnut Street, between North Queen and Duke Streets, while his shop was in the first block of North Queen.

See 1873-74 City Directory below, showing a new business location. The following year — 1875-76 — shows Rock's home and business for the first time at 305 North Queen Street, reflecting changes from the previous year.

City 6th Ward property tax records support these sources: Rock owns four properties in 1872; he is shown as a shoemaker earning $100 a year and owns three properties, each situated on lots designated at "1/4," meaning they measure approximately one-quarter of the standard building lots in the City of 64' 4.5" fronting the street and extending 245 to an alley.

These Rock-owned properties are located at Nos. 20, 142-144 East Walnut Street and were valued at $880, $660 and $660, respectively. The family residence is the higher valued property at No. 20 and the others -- most likely a duplex rental.

In tax records for 1873, showing changes in ownership that occurred the previous year, Rock now owns four properties, including 305 North Queen Street. The Queen Street property is valued at $833, just slightly under the value of his home, which remains at $880 for tax purposes.

Records for 1874 indicate a drastic change in two ways: a re-assessment boosted all values for tax purposes, but the property at 305 North Queen shows the greatest increase: to $6000 - indicating that construction of the present building was either underway or nearly complete.
he building's date of construction, construction materials and stylistic features of its distinctive façade reflect Italianate influences from the Late Victorian period.

The first floor commercial level of this combination commercial and residential building is located on the left (southern) two thirds of the building's 19 foot span along the east side of North Queen Street.

This dominant first floor building feature includes a central doorway recessed some 8 feet from the front elevation. Traditional display windows of clean panel glass frame each side of the entry. A leaded glass transom of simple design rests atop the display windows and the entry. The transom is divided into two parts. The transoms and the display windows are framed by wooden pilasters with ornamental features, set on stone plinths.

An identical pilaster and plinth frames the double paneled entry door which is topped by a semi-circular transom. There is a two-step rise from the sidewalk to the door, behind which is a vestibule and another double hung door. Behind the interior door a hallway leads to a staircase that extends up to the second and third floors.

This door entry is given the street address of 305 1/5 North Queen Street in several listings of Lancaster City directories from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

A bracketed wooden cornice surmounts the two first floor entries, transoms and display windows.

Above the first floor level, the building's red brick is set in stretcher bond and has been sandblasted. The remaining masonry elements appear to be original to the mid-1870s construction.
period and are in good condition: cut stone sills, each with simple brick ornamental brackets underneath, give a foundation to a bank of three windows on each of the second and third floors.

All are double hung, wooden, two over two sash thermo pane replacement windows designed to fit the original openings: the three third floor windows are round topped while the second floor top panes are slightly taller than the three above, and are curved at the top and feature a rigid angle meeting the lower vertical sash frame.

All six windows on the second and third floors are topped by ornamental masonry crowns with prominent decorative keystones at center: teardrop motifs on the third floor keystones and floral designs on the second floor keystones.

Three courses of brick are set as linked corbelled arches above the three third floor windows, giving the appearance of a triple "eyebrow."

Two corbelled brick pilasters -- each about two feet wide (three full brick stretchers across) frame the six windows that dominate this facade.

The entire facade is surmounted by a heavy wooden bracketed cornice painted dark gray and light grey to match the other wooden features on the lower levels.

Italianate style features:
- Low-pitched or flat roof
- Balanced, symmetrical rectangular shape
- Tall appearance, with 2, 3, or 4 stories
- Wide, overhanging eaves with brackets and cornices
- Tall, narrow, double-paned windows with hood moldings
- Heavily molded double doors
- Roman or segmented arches above windows and doors
The following information is from correspondence with Daniel Gwinn of Lititz, Lancaster County, PA, who has conducted extensive research into his family history, including those who were members of the Allen Rock family.

Mr. Gwinn’s third-great-grandmother was the niece of Allen Rock, Mary Ann Hornberger née Cooper born 1852 died 1915 in Lititz, PA.

She assembled a family photo album and collected images of her aunts and uncles, including her uncle Allen Rock (1835-1893) and his wife Mary Shriver Rock (b.1839-1901). Mr. Gwinn believes there was a close family relationship between Allen and his niece since she admired him enough to name one of her own children after him: Allen C. Hornberger (1886-1953).

In addition the Hornberger album includes images of notable Americans such as Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as well as Civil War Union General George B. McClellan.

Mrs. Hornberger is buried with her husband at Millport Cemetery in Warwick Township.

Allen and Mary Rock had two children. Their daughter, Lydia, was born in 1861 and died in 1925. Lydia married the Rev. Daniel Kurtz of Wrightsville, York County, PA.

The Rocks’ son William Darlington Rock was born in 1862 and died in 1941. William married Lillian Bomberger in 1890 and the couple moved to Charlotte, NC to open a Woolworth’s store. William was previously employed by Woolworth’s in Lancaster. He had three children. One of his sons drowned at a church picnic. His daughters had children whose descendants still reside in the Charlotte, NC area.
Allen Rock’s parents were Peter and Mary Graver Rock. Peter died in 1845 when Allen was about 10.

Mrs. Peter Rock remarried Samuel Reemsnyder who died only a few months after they were married. Mary Rock Reemsnyder lived with Allen and his family for a period of time in her widowhood at their home on the upper floors of 305 N. Queen St.

Peter and Mary Rock had 10 children: Obediah, Caroline, Henry (also lived in Lancaster on Lime St. and served in Civil War) Maria, Reuben, Allen, Edward, Miles, Mary Ann, and John.

John died on a military charge at Fort Gilmer outside Richmond, VA while serving in the Union Army. Allen was instrumental in taking care of the matters involved in documenting his brother’s death on battlefield so that his mother would receive a Civil War pension. John Rock’s name is on his mother’s tombstone but his body was never recovered from the battlefield.

Lydia Rock (above) as a young women and as a little girl, posing in the studio of Charles W. Eberman, West King Street, Lancaster. Lydia appears to be about age 6, which would date this photograph to the late 1860s. The photo of Lydia’s mother Mary, shown here on Page 12, appears to have been taken at the same sitting at Eberman’s Studio. Note the same chair in each scene. If this is accurate, Mary would have been approximately 30 years old.

For more information about the Rock Family and their relatives, see NOTES, MISCELLANY & ERRATA on Page 23.

William D. Rock

ROCK-SOOST BUILDING • 305 North Queen Street • Lancaster, Pennsylvania
The family home and business at 305 North Queen Street was occupied in 1880 by Allen Rock, 45; wife Mary A. Rock, 41; daughter Lydia A. Rock, 18; son William D. Rock, 17 and Mary Reemsnyder, 72, who was Allen Rock's widowed mother.

Neighborhood notes: this section of Lancaster was occupied mostly by native born residents; those not born in the US tended to be from Germany.
Allen Rock, his wife Mary, his mother Mary Rock Reemsnnyder, Allen and Mary's daughter, Lydia, and her husband Rev. Daniel Kurtz are buried in the same plot at Lancaster Cemetery on Lime Street, Lancaster. Henry Rock is also buried in this cemetery.

William Rock died 10 November, 1941.
*Lancaster County Death Affidavit, Page 610.*

Death of Allen Rock.

A dispatch reached Mrs. Lydia Doster of this place on Monday morning announcing the sad intelligence that her brother-in-law Allen A. Rock had died at the residence of his son Wm. D. Rock, at Richmond, Va., at 11:30 Sunday night. His death was sudden, although it appears he had not been in the best of health. About seven weeks ago he was here paying a visit to his relatives and friends, after which he left to spend the winter in Richmond. Mr. Rock was born somewhere in the eastern part of Warwick township. In early life he learned the shoemaking trade and later set up in business in Lancaster, where he carried on the shoe business for about thirty-five years. Besides a wife, he leaves one son and one daughter. He also leaves two surviving brothers, one sister, viz: E. Rock, of Siegfried's Bridge, Northampton county; Miles Rock, of Washington, D. C., and Mrs. Cooper, of Philadelphia. Mr. Rock's age was 58 years.

*Was a Sister of Mrs. Lydia Doster.*

Mrs. Mary A. Rock, maiden name Shriver, widow of the late Allan Rock, of Lancaster, died at Richmond, Va., on Monday night, after a short illness with erysipelas, aged 60 years. Mrs. Rock spent her winters with her son, Wm. D. Rock, at Richmond and her summers with her daughter, the wife of Rev. Daniel Kurtz, at Wrightsville, York county. She was the mother of the only two children aforementioned. Mrs. Lydia Doster of this borough was a sister. The funeral takes place today (Friday) at 2 P.M. from the residence of Mrs. Frances Fairer, 214 North Duke street, Lancaster.
Buyers, sellers, tenants & dealers:
1893-2014

The Rock family owned the property at 305 North Queen Street for the longest period: 54 years from land acquisition and new construction, circa 1872-1874, and with ownership passing from Rock’s heirs in about 1926.

Following the death of Allen Rock in 1893, his wife Mary inherited his properties. She apparently moved elsewhere since the Lancaster City Directory for 1894-95 shows the occupants as a dentist, Joseph C. Yoder at the shoe store address, and a tenant, Fabian S. Yecker. The 1896 Directory shows dentist Yoder as both a resident and occupying the storeroom.

Yecker remains in the property for about four more years, after which the 1899-1900 business listings show his dental office at 3071/2 North Queen, the adjacent building north. The 305 North Queen storeroom is occupied by another shoemaker, Solomon Buch, while the upper floors appear to be vacant.

About this time, Mary Rock passed away (1901) and her two children inherited the building at 305 North Queen. They continued to lease it to various businesses and residential tenants.

By 1906-07, shoemaker Buch continued his business, while tenants were Henry Geiter and Mrs. Emma Bender. The barber, Edward F. Shrader, was in business on the first floor by 1907-08 and Geiter, a cigar maker, remained as a tenant.
Full interest left the Rock Family about the time of Lydia’s death in 1925. Her heirs sold the property to Lancaster Attorney Clayton J. Hilton.

Hilton was in a real estate partnership with fellow Lancaster Attorney Harold G. Ripple. Hilton and Ripple invested heavily in Lancaster County real estate. They also engaged in new construction, property rehabilitation and real estate management under the name Guaranty Construction Company.

Lancaster County deed records show scores of property transactions during the mid-20th century among these men and their spouses, either individually or in combination with each other, or under their company name.

In fact, Hilton and Ripple, et. al. bought and sold interest in 305 North Queen Street several times over the years.

In a bit of irony and small-town connectedness, it should be noted that Jack and Joni Soost, who commissioned this report, purchased their present home at 134 East Chestnut Street, Lancaster in 2006 from Dr. Paul Ripple and his wife, Caroline Wholsen Ripple. Dr. Ripple is the son of Harold G. Ripple; he shared memories of the many real estate ventures of his father, his partner and their wives.

Following the years 1926-27 and through 2014, there have been some 17 different owners of the 305 North Queen Street.
Note: Lydia Rock Kurtz regained full title to the subject property, according to a deed from Snyder and his wife to Kurtz (Deed Book R.Vol.20, page 138). This transaction included four properties, including the subject, with the same consideration as the Sheriff sale: $1900.

See note below
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Map of the City of Lancaster, 1850, Moody & Bridgens.

Map of the City of Lancaster City, Pennsylvania. Drawn and Published by T.J. Kennedy, 1858. Assisted in the Surveys by J.F. Reigart.

Map of the City of Lancaster, Lancaster Co., Penn., Roe & Colby, 1874.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, City of Lancaster, PA: Sheet 5, 1886; Sheet 5, 1891; Sheet 11, 1897; Sheet 19 - 1912—Penn State University Library.


Thomas H. Burrowes:  
A biographical sketch

Born November 16, 1805 and died February 25, 1871, Burrowes was the fourth president of Pennsylvania State University, serving from 1868 until 1871.

He also served as Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from 1835 until 1839, and served as the ninth Mayor of Lancaster, PA. He was born in Strasburg, Pennsylvania in 1805 to Thomas Bredin Burrowes and Ann Henrietta Smith.

In 1868, Burrowes, an individual with much expertise in educational matters for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was consulted by the Board of Trustees, who were seeking his advice in their search for a new President. The College had been plagued by financial troubles and was in danger of closing its doors. Burrowes suggested that they first and foremost choose a man who held administrative abilities. Burrowes himself was then offered the position of President of the Agricultural College of Pennsylvania (as Penn State was called at the time), but accepted only after the annual salary was raised from $2000 to $3000 per year.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, accessed 12-3-14 by R. J. Harris.

*Editor's notes: Burrowes was a long-time member of Saint James Episcopal Church, Lancaster, the parish to which Jack and Joni Soost Family now belong.

Burrowes owned the property on which the Rock-Soost Building now stands, losing possession through Sheriff Sale in 1870.

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Rock Family—Additional Genealogy

Continued from pages 14 & 15.

Miles Rock and his family are buried in Washington DC at Rock Creek Cemetery. Obediah, Mary Ann Albright, and Caroline are all buried in different cemeteries in Philadelphia.

Caroline Rock married Richard Cooper had children. They divorced in 1860; her brother Allen served as her "voice" in the court documents. She moved to Philadelphia and operated a saloon there in 1880. Mr. Gwinn descends from her daughter, Mary Ann, who married Martin Hornberger (another civil war vet). Caroline outlived all her brothers and sisters. She remarried in Philadelphia and became Caroline Gekler. Her second husband died in a carriage accident. They had no children from this second marriage. She died in 1906.

Also, Allen's brother Miles Rock attended F&M for a short period and graduated from Lehigh University. He was an astronomer and geographer and was noted as having established the boundary between Guatemala and Mexico. He served in the Union Army Signal Corps during the Civil War. Miles regularly contributed news to the Lancaster paper during his service. He mustered out in 1864.

Miles was an associate of the well-known biologist William Darlington of Chester County. He was also a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Miles met him in Chester County when he was in training for the military. Miles graduated from Lancaster High with Susan Clarkson, his future wife. She was the daughter of Gerardus Clarkson of Lancaster. Miles and Susan's son, Alfred Rock, was a graduate of Harvard University and their daughter, Amy, was a graduate of Bryn Mawr College. She was a suffragist, and worked closely with Alice Paul and was Vice President of the World's Woman Party. Her married name was Amy Córdoba Rock Ransome.

Research by Daniel Gwinn, Lititz, PA, edited by Randolph Harris

September 4, 1876, Philadelphia, PA

Post card addressed to "My Son Allen."

Rock's mother, Mary, was visiting her family during the national Bicentennial festivities, noting that "it is only a quarter dollar admission so there are a grate [sic] many that get."

Signed: "With love to all. From your Mother."
ROCK-SOOST BUILDING—305 North Queen Street, Lancaster, PA
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Research, photography & design by Randolph Harris
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