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**Anna Justina Magee: A woman of determination and vision**

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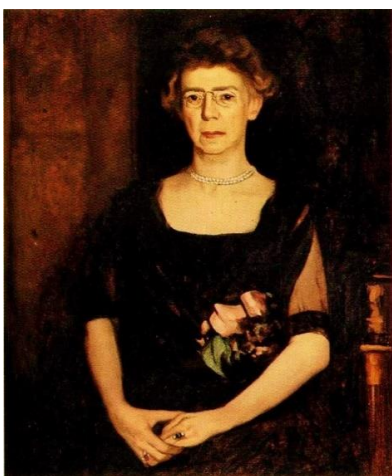
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**ABSTRACT**

This article tells the story of Anna J. Magee (AJM), the founder of the Magee Rehabilitation Hospital in Philadelphia, one of the country's premier medical rehabilitation institutions. AJM's life was shaped by her family, her times, and her city. The daughter of one of the founders of the Pennsylvania Railroad, she emerged in the late 19th century as an independent woman of elite Philadelphian society, demonstrating a special devotion to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church at 10<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets and, inspired by her personal physician, a determination to serve the rehabilitative needs of physically disabled patients, regardless of their ability to pay. As the last surviving member of her family, AJM's contributions have been largely overlooked, but her vision to recognize this societal need resulted in a legacy that endures to this day.

## Introduction

Anna Justina Magee (AJM) was a Philadelphian (1843–1923) dedicated to improving the lives of individuals needing rehabilitative care (Fig. 1). Remnants of her life and her era can be found throughout Philadelphia, but in order to appreciate her determination and pay tribute to her work, her family, her church, and her personal physician, we must immerse ourselves in the story of her times, with its customs and challenges.



**Fig. 1:** Portrait of Anna Justina Magee by Hugh Henry Breckenridge, oil on canvas, 1917.

Courtesy of Thomas Jefferson University Archives. This portrait is currently in the lobby of the Magee Rehabilitation Hospital on permanent loan from Jefferson Medical College and Hospital.

The latter part of the 1800s saw elite women embracing a modern concept of women who, independent of men, pursued recognition as intelligent individuals and champions of community service. Many of these women, especially in Philadelphia and including Anna Magee, traced their roots to the colonial period. Using unique and creative approaches and the means available

to them, they established women's organizations in genealogy, the arts, and physical exercise, and they explored activities, such as celebrating the 100-year anniversary of George Washington's inauguration (1889), and they kept records of this involvement in society. This contrasts sharply to earlier periods (1830–1860) when such involvement was mostly denied to women and only inferences can be made since very little information about women was recorded.

The Magee women included Caroline Axford Kneass Magee, mother, and her four daughters, Fannie, Caroline, Eliza, and Anna. Daughter Caroline, who was born a year before Eliza, died at age 25 in June of 1861. In addition to being influenced by this death, the lives of the three surviving Magee sisters—Fannie, Eliza, and Anna—were also likely influenced by the prelude to the Civil War (1861–1865) and what followed. The war changed life for all members of the upper class in Philadelphia, but it had a particularly profound impact on the Magee family. The 30 years following the war saw a significant increase in their family wealth through industrialization, especially in Philadelphia, and the emergence of the Pennsylvania Railroad. These were the golden Gilded Age years for Philadelphia, and they paved the way for the social activism and political reforms of the Progressive era, when the Magee women responded most visibly. Each of these historic periods had features that would impact the values and activities of the Magee family.

### **Antebellum Philadelphia**

James and Caroline Magee were married in 1830, and the family moved five times in its early years. In 1843, the year of Anna's birth, the family moved to 465 Mulberry Street, close to what

is known today as Independence Mall. This home, located across from Christ Church's burial grounds where many colonial patriots were laid to rest, was home to the Magee family for the next 14 years.<sup>1</sup> The significance of this location on Fannie from age 11 to 25 and Anna from age 1 to 15 can only be conjectured in relation to their future historical studies. However, it has been well established that during these years, the personality of a child is formed, and parental/family relationships are significant.<sup>2</sup> While the role of Anna's mother can only be inferred, we have a rare insight to the importance of the Magee/Kneass family relationships in the words of her father, which were recorded during this time:

“Mr. Magee was a poor boy, who served a regular apprenticeship to the saddlery and harness business. When he became of age he was taken by the hand by the late James Ronaldson, his friend and patron. He established a house in New Orleans, in connection with Napoleon Kneass, his brother-in-law, besides the one he is engaged in here under the firm of Magee, Taber & Co., of whom Michael Magee, his brother, is also a partner. They do a large business, almost always having contracts with the general government for some article in their line; is a director of the Western Bank; he married a daughter of the late Christian Kneass, and sister to Horn R. Kneass. He has lately had one of the new line of omnibuses named after him, as a means of handing down to posterity his fame!”<sup>3</sup>

These family reflections, included in “Memoirs and Auto-biography of Some of the Wealthy Citizens of Philadelphia” in 1846, clearly illustrate the importance of Caroline's family, James' brother, and the omnibus (more information and an image of the omnibus<sup>4</sup>). Although the

authors embellished their biographical comments with attempts of humor, the details were regarded by later historians as “evidence [which] does point to the credibility of that document.”<sup>5</sup>

As the only quotation from the patriarch of the Magee family, its information deserves interpretation and recognition. Anna’s father identifies the important role of Napoleon Kneass, as his partner, partner of his brother, James, and brother of his wife (Caroline Axford Kneass). James mentions two additional members of the Kneass family: his wife’s father, Christian, and another brother, Horn, who were prominent members in the business community with historic roots, and were featured in future biographies by Anna<sup>6</sup> and her sister Fannie.<sup>7</sup> The mutual respect for each of their families is further documented by Anna’s genealogical publication, which identifies children of the Kneass family baptized with names of Magee family members.

In 1850, Anna’s maternal grandmother (Sarah Kneass) moved within one block of the Magee home to 384 Mulberry Street. Brothers Horace, born in 1846, and Frank, in 1854, bought the family total to seven (four girls and three boys). As the girls grew into teenagers and young adults, a highly impressionable age for girls who looked to role models, the proximity of their maternal grandmother may have played a role. The influence of the Kneass family is clearly reflected in the recollections of granduncles (including their most famous granduncle, the pioneer, artist, and scientist William Kneass<sup>6,8</sup>), grandparents, and ancestors recorded in future publications by Anna and Fannie.

### **The Civil War and afterward**

Tragedy disrupted the tranquility of the Magee family with the death of Anna’s sister Caroline in June of 1861 shortly after the war between the states, the Civil War, had been declared. James

Magee, now retired, sought solace in his faith. He was elected vestryman at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in 1861, the same year of his daughter's death, and he served in this role until his death. As the war continued, the New Orleans branch of The Magee Company was confiscated by confederate forces. The business was restored in 1866, but James's brother Michael Magee retired and returned to his home in Philadelphia at 1418 Arch Street, which he had built in 1848.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, Caroline Kneass Magee's brother, Napoleon Kneass, took over the Michael Magee company and renamed it The Kneass Company, illustrating the family solidarity. When the war ended in 1865, the personal Magee family grief over the loss of Caroline expanded to include the country-wide grief over the loss of President Abraham Lincoln and the loss of so many lives on the battlefield.<sup>10</sup> However, life must continue after tragedy, and the Magee parents and children had to focus on their future needs, armed with familial loyalty.

The Magee family exhibited a devotion to each other that defied influence from the outside either by marriage (neither Anna nor any of her siblings ever married), war, or illness. This devotion and the pursuit of education was essential to the family's survival and future.

Anna's three brothers did not serve in the military during the Civil War. James Ronaldson (1839–1914), the eldest, entered Haverford College and graduated in 1859.<sup>11</sup> He studied law for several years and did not enter the family business until later. Horace (1846–1912), the middle son, “entered the University [of Pennsylvania] in 1861 as member of the class of 1865... after graduation, [he] read law in the office of George W. Biddle in Philadelphia, but his family's business activities ... led him in a different professional direction.”<sup>12</sup> Frank Hamilton (1854–1904) was the third son and youngest of the family. He was age 11 at the end of the Civil War,



graduated from Penn in 1878, read law, and later joined his brothers in business on south 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Philadelphia.

The education of the Magee sisters was not documented during these years, however it was likely conducted in the home by tutors. Fannie and Eliza were of college age in the 1850s and Anna by the mid-1860s, but schools of higher learning were extremely limited for upper class Philadelphia women until the Agnes Erwin School was established in 1869. At the time of the Civil War, women were often thought to be incapable of acquiring knowledge like men. This attitude was prevalent in 1866 according to a paper on higher education of women in Pennsylvania: “A woman’s mind, like her place in society, was considered capable of only limited functions. It was generally conceded that women had minds, but of an inferior quality, incapable of the depth, scope, and analytical powers fondly attributed by males to their own.”<sup>13</sup> In contrast, an extensive literature exploring 19<sup>th</sup> century women’s behavior under such terms as “real women” and “cult of women” illustrated a movement toward greater freedom for women, but not until the end of the century.<sup>14</sup> Certainly, Fannie and Anna’s scholarly and impressive publications in genealogical journals related to their historical roots, although not published until later in life, provide evidence that they received a quality education.

While the biographies of the Magee sisters reveal little regarding the women’s involvement in the Philadelphia community following the Civil War, they serve as a major resource on the men in the Magee family during this era.

The Magee brothers and their father played a prominent role in the expansion of the railroads in Philadelphia and adjoining regions. These railroads “tied together the critical ingredients of the industrial economy of the nineteenth century: coal, iron, and steel.”<sup>15</sup>

The patriarch of the Magee family, James, who was referred to as the “Father of the Pennsylvania Railroad (Pa RR)”, must have observed with pride its growth to the largest corporation in the nation over the next 30 years (1846–1878). During this time James would become the director of the Harrisburg Railroad and founder of the Westmoreland Coal Company (WCC). He had become the first president of the WCC, located near Pittsburgh, PA, in 1856 and continued as a member of the Board of Directors until his death in 1878. Since his sons James Ronaldson and Horace would follow in their father’s footsteps, their involvement in the WCC and related iron and railroad companies seemed reasonable. In her biography of the family, Anna Magee documents her brothers’ business interests. Of James Ronaldson, she says: “His business life was centered in his father’s large interests in the coal and iron industries of the State, particularly the Westmoreland Coal Company.”<sup>6(p120)</sup> Of Horace, she says: “His principal energies were devoted to the organization and management of coal, iron and trolley systems. He was the organizer of Jeanette, Pennsylvania, which has grown to a town of more than ten thousand inhabitants: a director of the Kittanning Coal Company, the oldest director in point of service of the Westmoreland Coal Company.”<sup>6(p121)</sup>

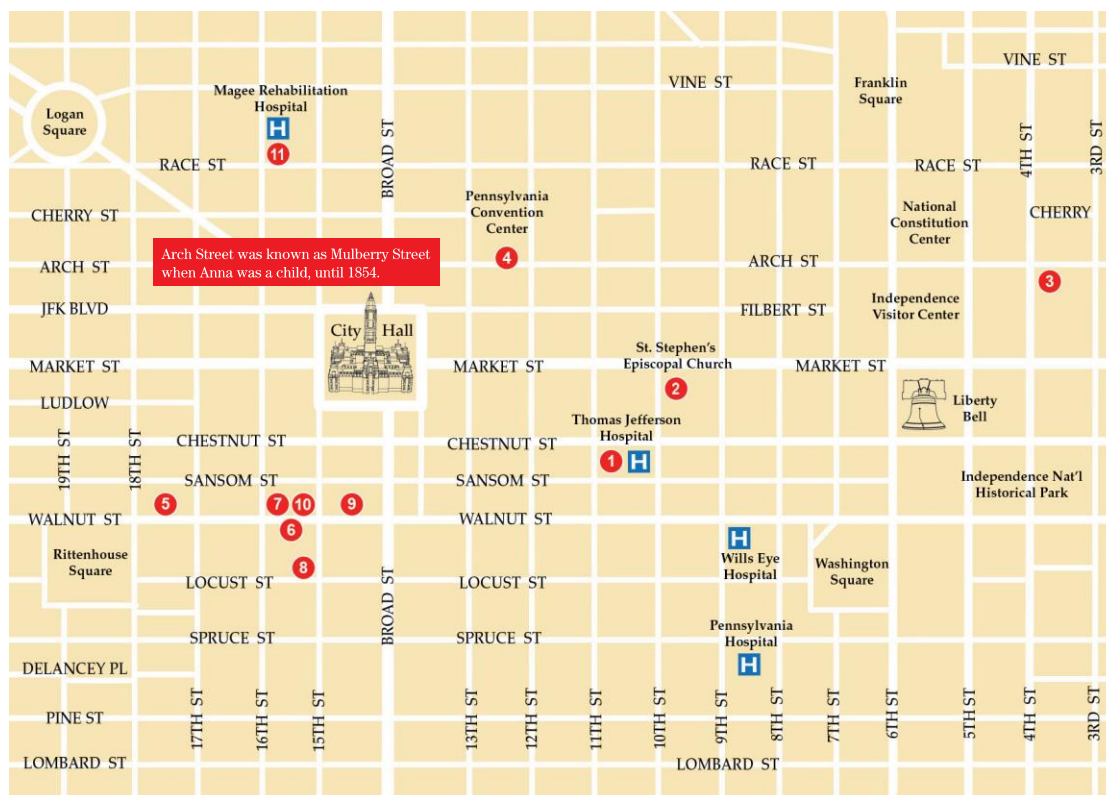
Anna also portrays her maternal uncle, Napoleon Bonaparte Kneass, in laudatory language during these years. In addition to the detailed description of his role in her paternal uncle’s (Michael Magee) saddlery business, she goes into detail regarding his children, providing further

clues to the relationship between the two families. One of Napoleon's children, named James Magee after her father, died at age three in New Orleans in 1849.<sup>6(p126)</sup> In the following year, Napoleon returned to Philadelphia from New Orleans to be near his recently widowed mother, Sarah Kneass, who had just moved within a block of the James Magee family home, further illustrating the close family ties.

Anna documents a son, Napoleon Bonaparte Kneass, Jr., born the same year as her birth in 1843, making him a first cousin and of the same age. Although unfortunately blinded at age 7, he survived and conquered his disability. This must have impressed Anna and perhaps influenced her attitude toward physical disability because she lauds his achievements for the blind, including inventions as well as publications, stating: "He nevertheless became eminent for his inventions, printing, and authorship in connection with the blind. In 1867 he established Kneass Philadelphia Magazine for the Blind, and for several years issued from his press more than was issued from the combined presses for the blind in the country."<sup>6(p126)</sup> The magazine was printed using a special raised-print system devised by Napoleon Kneass and was followed soon after by Kneass's Music Journal for the Blind.<sup>16</sup>

While Anna makes no reference to her home during these years, a search of records in Philadelphia Street Directories (1830–1889) revealed that in 1858 the family moved from 465 Mulberry Street to 1219 Arch Street (Fig. 2). The surviving six children and their mother and father moved there together, and they remained there after James died in 1878, for a total of 31 years. Caroline Axford Magee, the matriarch of this tight knit family, died in 1886, marking the end of the Magee children's parental oversight.

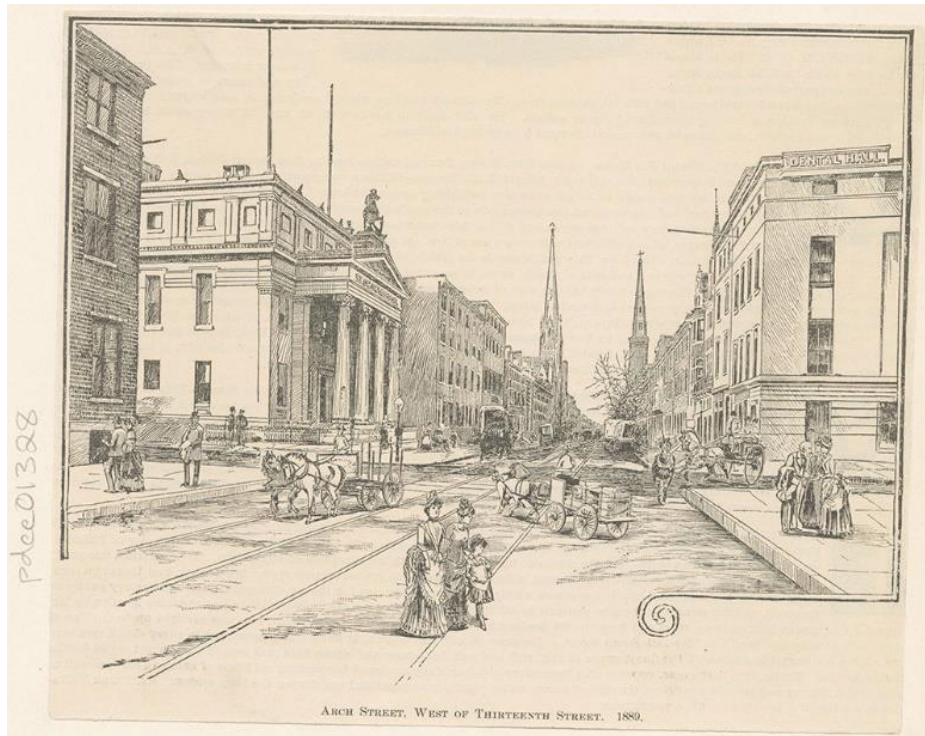
## Sites for a Walking Tour of Anna J Magee's Center City, Philadelphia



- 1 Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. Anna served on the Women's Auxiliary at Jefferson, and was a financial supporter of the institution. Her physician, James Cornelius Wilson, was Chair of Medicine at Jefferson. His interest in rehabilitation inspired Anna to establish Magee Rehabilitation Hospital.
- 2 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 19 S. 10th Street, where the Magee Family worshipped from 1830-1923. The church has honored her contributions with a magnificent stained-glass window, among other adornments.
- 3 Site of Magee home, at 465 Mulberry Street (now Arch Street), from 1843 (Anna's birth) until 1858.
- 4 Site of Magee home, at 1219 Arch Street, from 1858 until 1889.
- 5 Site of Magee home, 1720 Walnut Street, from 1889 until Anna's death.
- 6 Site of Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell's home, 1524 Walnut Street. Dr. Mitchell was a graduate of Jefferson, and famously treated victims of wounds in the Civil War. He employed electrotherapy and massage in treating his patients. He lived from 1829 to 1914.
- 7 Original site of Acorn Club, at 1504 Walnut Street. Established in 1889. Anna was an early member. "Women who value tradition and shape the future." The site is marked with a plaque.
- 8 Acorn Club, 1519 Locust Street.
- 9 Site of Dr. James Cornelius Wilson's home, 1437 Walnut Street.
- 10 Site of H. Frazer Parry's office, founding Director of MRH, 1500 Walnut Street.
- 11 Magee Rehabilitation Hospital.

**Fig. 2: Tour Map of Philadelphia.** Sites for a walking tour of Anna Magee's Philadelphia.

While Anna's writings make no mention of her grandmother's proximity to Anna's homes in Philadelphia, Fig. 2 (sites #3 and #4) illustrates the location of the Magee homes, and a search of the street records for those years (McElroy 1858–1865) revealed that Sarah Kneass, maternal grandmother to the Magee children, again followed her family. She moved to 1310 Arch Street in 1858, the same year the Magee family moved less than one block away to 1219 Arch Street, and she remained there until her death in 1865 (Fig. 3).<sup>17</sup> While we are unable to document the family relationships during these years, the proximity suggests that it was not merely happenstance and they were in close contact. The tranquil environment of their neighborhood where folks strolled on the streets and the horse-drawn carriages preceded the congestion of automobiles (Fig. 3). During this period the Magee sisters grew from young women, aged 26 (Fannie), 21 (Eliza), and 15 (Anna), into middle age (57, 52, and 46, respectively), and they all remained unmarried. The three brothers, although active in growing the business in coal, iron, and railroads, also remained at home, unmarried and together with their sisters. Thus, the family remained together in solidarity until their deaths.



**Fig. 3:** Arch Street, West of Thirteenth Street, 1889. Historic Street Address: 13<sup>th</sup> & Arch Streets. The lithograph depicts a view looking west on Arch Street from Thirteenth Street and shows carriages, mothers, and children in the foreground crossing to the 1200 block of Arch Street, where the Magee family resided for three decades. The background shows Arch Street west of 13<sup>th</sup>, where Sarah Kneass lived. On the left is St. George's Hall, originally the home of railroad executive Matthew Newkirk. The elegant marble mansion was designed by architect Thomas U. Walter in the 1850s. Source: *Illustrated Philadelphia: Its Wealth and Industries* (New York: American Publishing & Engraving Co., 1889), 77.

While there is no evidence of the Magee sisters' participation in Philadelphia clubs while their parents were alive, the Magee men were involved in historic, sport, and social clubs during this period and beyond. James Ronaldson Magee "was for 38 years a member of the Union League, a

member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, The Philadelphia Country Club and Rittenhouse Club etc.”<sup>11(p41)</sup> Horace had memberships in “The Historical, Genealogical and Colonial societies of Pennsylvania, the Art, Philadelphia and Germantown Cricket clubs, and [was] one of the most serviceable members of the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution, in which organization he was deeply interested.”<sup>6(p121)</sup> Frank was a member of the Rittenhouse Club, and all three were members of the Franklin Institute.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Gilded and Progressive Periods**

From 1889 forward, we start to learn much more about the Magee sisters, since this is when women of 19<sup>th</sup> century began to express their independence. While it may be unclear what the sisters felt about marriage, the life of a single upper-class daughter was one of independence, and many preferred it to an arranged marriage. They were not unusual to their time: During the Gilded Age of the late 19th century in the United States, about half of the white, upper-middle-class women “never married, choosing instead independence.”<sup>18</sup>

Following their mother’s death in 1886, the surviving men and women continued to live together, but moved to Rittenhouse Square at 1720 Walnut Street in 1889 (Fig. 4), which represented a new episode for Anna and her sisters. Rittenhouse Square was the “Perfect Place” in Philadelphia society during the middle and late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as portrayed in Nancy M. Hienzen’s delightful description.<sup>19</sup> Hienzen divided the early development of the Square into three phases: first the Bricks and Mortar (1844–1863); second the Family Years; and third the Encroaching City (1884–1913). By midcentury, the square was populated mostly by a refined gentry of old Philadelphia families, often with colonial roots, where heritage was more important

than wealth. After the Civil War, the city was transformed by industrialization as it evolved into the Iron City with the sacred triangle of iron, railroads, and coal (fig. 5).<sup>20</sup> By the turn of the century, the Pennsylvania Railroad would become the largest corporation in the country if not the world, and past presidents of the railroad, such as Alexander Cassatt, not a Philadelphian by birth, had purchased mansions on Rittenhouse Square and mixed freely with old families such as the Cadwaladers and Biddles.<sup>5,21,22</sup>



**Fig. 4:** Magee home (1890) at 1720 Walnut is the third house from the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets. All of James Magee's surviving children moved to the east side of Rittenhouse Square in 1889 and remained there until their deaths, with Anna being the last survivor, passing in 1923. Source: Moses King, *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians* (New York: 1902), 63.





**Fig. 5:** “Christmas morning – Rittenhouse Square,” an illustration published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sunday, Dec. 19, 1897, depicts well-dressed people promenading the perimeter of a snow-covered Rittenhouse Square on Christmas morning. On the left, the mounted urns mark the entrance to the park on Walnut Street at 19<sup>th</sup> Street. The Church of the Holy Trinity is shown in the distance. Source: Arthur Ignatius Keller, Artist. “Christmas morning – Rittenhouse Square [Photolithography],” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 19, 1897. Accessed via the *Free Library of Philadelphia* on Nov. 18, 2020, <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/57681>.

During this 33-year period (1889–1923), the Magee women emerged as ladies of education, scholarship, and innovation in the elite women’s organizations of the times. By the dawn of the Progressive Era (1890s), Fannie, Eliza, and Anna had matured to middle age. The era featured the momentum of women’s independence, and the Magee sisters had the financial security and confidence in their societal status to explore opportunities for expression. Their membership in women’s organizations and clubs blossomed and illustrated an early involvement in the women’s

movement in Philadelphia, in addition to their patriotic roots. Fannie, the eldest, led the way and was elected to the Colonial Dames of Pennsylvania in 1892, a year after the organization was created, and Anna followed in 1896. Each sister qualified and joined the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) shortly after its creation in 1890. Their brothers also were members of the Pennsylvania Sons of the Revolution, which had been formed only a few years previously in 1888, although it is unclear when they joined.

Anna became active in historical and genealogical societies in an effort bring recognition to the Magee family's ancestors. The publications by her sister Fannie in 1896 and by herself in 1919 have been cited previously in the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania (GSP). In 1921 Anna became active in the first woman's committee of the GSP.<sup>23</sup> The following year, in memory of her patriotic roots and the Magee family, Anna donated miniature portraits to the GSP. These portraits are also listed in the Catalog of American Portraits, a research archive of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.<sup>24</sup> These photos are currently unavailable to the public, and so this important legacy to Magee/Kneass Families must await future investigation.

Fannie and Anna also demonstrated interest in women's organizations advocating physical and artistic activities for women. Fannie served as an officer in a society of Woman Members of the Board of Trustees of the future Art Museum of Philadelphia. She was also an early member of the Sedgeley Club, which founder Margaret Corlies claimed in 1903 was the world's oldest women's bike, barge, and canoe (athletic) club.<sup>25</sup> Anna was an early member of the Acorn Club, which was established in 1889, the same year the Magees moved to Rittenhouse Square. It had the honor of being the first women's club of its kind in the country.<sup>26</sup>

Clearly these Magee women were inspired pioneers of women's independence launched from their elite historical patriotic platform to independence in the artistic, exercise, and social realms.

Fannie was the eldest in the family (1832–1916) and the longest survivor except for Anna. She preceded Anna in joining women's organizations soon after they were founded. She was also the first to publish a history of their patriotic ancestors. In 1896 Fannie published a well-documented biography of Major John Polhemus, who fought under George Washington at Brandywine, PA.<sup>7</sup> This story validated her family's patriotic roots to both Polhemus and John Hart, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Polhemus's roots were traceable to 1655 and the settlement of New Amsterdam.

It took another 23 years before her sister Anna published her own history book, a classic genealogic masterpiece.<sup>6</sup> Anna J. Magee's (AJM) history of the Kneass family, her mother's side of the family, was fascinating and further validated the Polhemus/Hart ancestry and notable patriots of the War of 1812 and Civil War. Christian (Anna's grandfather), William, and John Kneass were grandsons of the immigrant Johan Kneass from the Palinate (Germany) to Philadelphia in 1753. These ancestors are highly relevant to appreciating AJM's interest in her family tree, since she would have learned of them from her mother and other immediate family members. Anna and Fannie's grandfather was Christian Kneass, husband of Sarah Kneass. In the biography, his two brothers, John Kneass and William Kneass, are described in detail, with William earning a personal comment about his musical creations: "Several of his verses,

composed for special occasions and sung by the author [AJM], testified to his keen sense of humor and good-fellowship.”<sup>6</sup>(p110)

These biographies were evidence of the family’s historical legacy, which contributed in part to the national recognition of Washington in 1889 and the years that followed. This celebration of General Washington’s inauguration was the apex of patriotic fervor of the Progressive Era, and it must have been exciting for the women of the Magee family, especially in the newly formed patriotic organizations for women.

### **The Magee devotion to family and church**

The devotion of the Magee brothers and sisters to each other was beyond question and was obvious in those few reports gleaned from the press. On the occasion of the three sister voyage abroad, *The North American*, a Philadelphia newspaper, reported June 19, 1899, that “passengers by the Cunard Liner *Campania* for Liverpool on Saturday were Miss Eliza J. Magee, Miss Anna J. Magee and Miss Fannie B. Magee, of 1720 Walnut street...The Messrs Frank and Horace Magee, with their usual affection courtesy were on hand to wish their sister ‘bon voyage.’”<sup>27</sup>

Signs of their sibling affection for one another were also illustrated in the obituary of James R. in 1914, which reported how the death of his brother Horace affected his own health: “After the death of his brother, Horace Magee, Esq...his health became precarious. While he was always cheerful and made a good fight he never recovered from the shock.”<sup>11</sup> The obituary continues to state that he joined his sisters in establishing a memorial in Horace’s honor, adding that, according to a writer in *The Church News of the Diocese of Philadelphia*, “the love and loyalty

of this devoted family for St. Stephen's...can never be forgotten by the parishioners who worship within its walls."<sup>11</sup> This commentary on the Magee family's devotion and benefactions to the church provides another dimension of their appreciation for one another as well as to the church where they worshipped.

Wealth, art and the Episcopal faith were the fabric of elite society in eastern cities at this time, especially in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York City.<sup>28</sup> Philadelphians reflected a modesty based on their Quaker origins, but by the 19<sup>th</sup> century most upper-class Quaker families were assimilated into the Episcopal faith. Acquiring wealth was sanctified, but especially if individuals were active in supporting churches and charitable works. The Magee family embraced the Episcopal faith from the moment James and Caroline were married at St. Stephen's Church in 1830 until AJM's death 93 years later.

A visit to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church today is an artistic and historical experience that reveals the prominent role of the Magee Family, in particular the contributions that they made to honor the members of the family.<sup>29</sup>

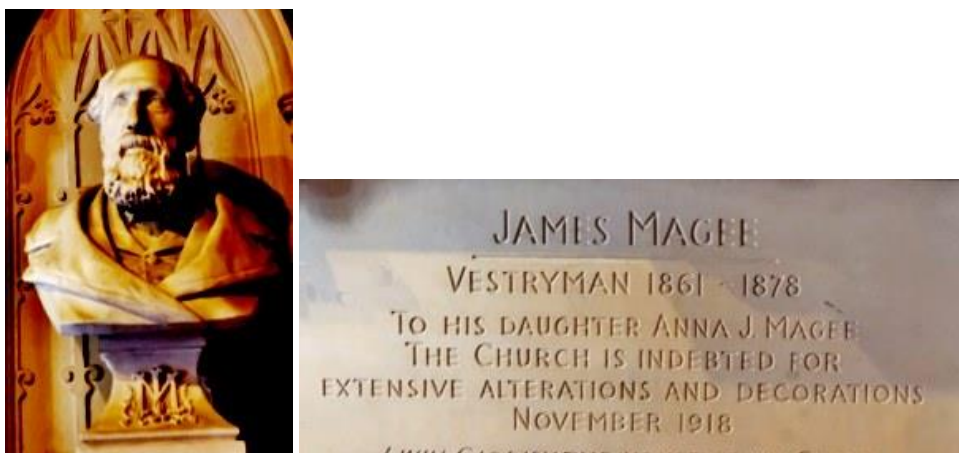
The church, founded in 1823, features stained glass windows, a mosaic over the altar, a stained glass rose window in the Furness expansion on the left wing (transept), and marble memorials and monumental baptismal font.<sup>30,31,32,33</sup>

Anna Magee's parents were married at the church in 1830, within seven years of the church's construction. Her mother and all seven children were baptized and attended services there.

Furthermore, all are memorialized by gifts to St. Stephen's. The family contributed the church's first two figurative stained-glass windows, hung together vertically in the transept in 1879–80, the bottom one in memory of their father and the top for sister Caroline (Carrie) who died in 1861.<sup>34</sup> The siblings honored sister Eliza with a new organ in 1907 (since replaced) and sister Fanny with the dramatic chancel redecoration by Louis C. Tiffany, surrounding the 1888 mosaic “reredos” of the *Last Supper* that honors their mother (Fig. 6), that currently commands the east wall.<sup>35,36</sup> A marble portrait bust of James Magee, placed originally between the Magee windows in the transept and the altar, commemorates his many years as a vestryman (1861–1878) (Fig. 7). The marble bust was later moved to the lobby when the transept was added and moved to the church vestibule after 1918, where it currently resides.



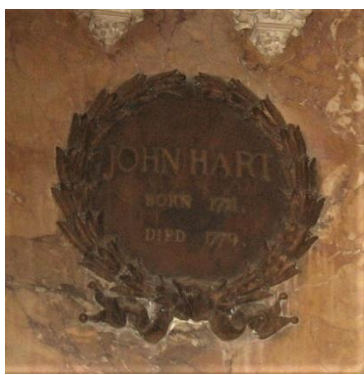
**Fig. 6:** Mosaic over altar in honor of Caroline Axford, wife of James Magee. This mosaic, located over the altar at St. Stephen's Church in Philadelphia, was installed following the death of Anna's mother in 1887. Photograph by the author (JFD).



**Fig. 7: A.** Stone Portrait Bust of James Magee. **B.** Stone description of James Magee.

Currently located in vestibule of St. Stephen's Church in Philadelphia. Photographs courtesy of Suzanne Glover Lindsay.

On the transept wall opposite where the James Magee portrait bust was first placed, a plaque commemorates John Hart, signer of the Declaration of Independence, an ancestor of James' wife, Caroline Axford (Kneass) Magee (Fig. 8).



**Fig. 8:** Plaque, John Hart (1711–1779), at St. Stephen's Church in Philadelphia.

Photograph by the author (JFD).



Finally, the church recognized Anna for her contributions to the needy with a stained glass window close to the entrance.<sup>37</sup> This window fittingly portrays Anna J. Magee's legacy in its symbolism, which directly relates to the establishment of the Magee Rehabilitation Hospital to serve the needy of Philadelphia in recovering from medical illness (Fig. 9).



**Fig. 9:** Stained glass window of Dorcas, recognizing AJM for founding Magee Rehabilitation Hospital, which serves the needy of Philadelphia in recovering from medical illness. Photograph by Brian Kemper, courtesy of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Philadelphia.

### **Anna Magee's Will and legacy**



As Anna grew older, she lost each of her six siblings, without the comfort of any child of her own, and with the awareness that her family would end with her own death. Her Will was thus of great importance to her, and it makes clear her desire to memorialize her family and its role as a force for good in the world.

The Will was written in 1916, and was modified 16 times in the ensuing seven years. It is detailed and precise, naming more than 50 beneficiaries, between individuals and institutions, including many health care and service institutions, and making several bequests in honor of family members. Individual beneficiaries include 12 cousins, and numerous friends and associates, including Dr. James Cornelius Wilson. Institutions designated in the Will include St. Stephen's Church, with funds to be used for the perpetual care of her family memorials in the church. Jefferson Hospital and 14 other health care institutions were named.

The Will is precise as to Anna's wishes. St. Stephen's could not use any of her bequest to erect or expand buildings and her bequest to Jefferson would be withdrawn should it merge with The Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. The very last stipulation she made, in the codicil of July 10, 1923, was: "I direct that my father's picture now in the front parlor of my home and my mother's picture in the second story back bedroom of my home shall be placed permanently in the memorial to the Magee Family to be known as "The Magee Memorial Hospital for Convalescents" which I have established in my Will."

This last reference is to Anna's most noteworthy and humanitarian legacy: the allocation of significant funds for the creation of "Magee Memorial Hospital for Convalescents," a medical institution that would provide rehabilitative care to the poor of Philadelphia.

### **Anna's inspiration for Magee Rehabilitation Hospital: Dr. James C. Wilson**

Anna's devotion to her church and family after the turn of the century extended to medical education and service, and particularly to Jefferson Hospital. In addition to her membership in newly created women's patriotic and civic organizations, such as the DAR, CDA, and the Acorn Club, she joined the Woman's Auxiliary of Jefferson Hospital in 1909. This was shortly after the new Jefferson Hospital was opened at 111 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street only one block south of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Over the next 11 years, her participation expanded to membership in more than 5 subcommittees and vice-chairman of the Nurses Home Committee (The Nursing School).<sup>38</sup>

During these years, Dr. William Schmidt, a pioneer in the specialty of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, joined the Jefferson Medical College and Hospital. While it is unclear that Anna knew Dr. Schmidt personally, it is well documented that her inspiration for rehabilitation was the former Chair of Medicine at Jefferson Medical College, Dr. James Cornelius Wilson. Dr. Wilson was Anna's personal physician and her devotion to Jefferson is documented in Dr. Wagner's three-volume history of Jefferson Medical College.<sup>39(p241-3)</sup> She endowed the Magee Professor of Medicine in 1917 and, in memory of her parents, she created the endowment which resulted in the Magee Rehabilitation Hospital (MRH). In gratitude, Jefferson commissioned her portrait, which is on permanent loan to MRH and graces our opening page (Fig. 1).<sup>40</sup>

Anna had chosen her personal physician well since he was the premier clinician of his time and was free of administrative responsibilities. Likely she began to seek care from him during her role on the Women's Auxiliary, shortly before he retired. Wilson had served as chair of the Department of Medicine for 20 years (1891–1911), and although he retired for health reasons, he lived for additional 27 years until age 91. His close friend Sir William Osler was regarded by many as the greatest physician of all time (Fig. 10).<sup>41</sup>



**Fig. 10:** Drs. James Wilson and William Osler in 1896. Source: *Thomas Jefferson*

*University – Tradition and Heritage*. ed. Frederick B. Wagner, Jr. Paper 9, 1989, 244.

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/wagner2/9>. Image courtesy of Thomas Jefferson University.

On Wilson's advice, Osler recommended his former student, Dr. Thomas McCrae, to succeed Wilson as Chair of Medicine, and Thomas McCrae subsequently became the first Magee Professor. Anna's influence not only extended to the Magee Professor of Medicine at Jefferson. Her codicil established that her physician, James Cornelius Wilson, would serve on the Magee Rehabilitation Hospital Board of Trustees, succeeded by the Magee Professor, in perpetuity.<sup>39(p244)</sup>

Wilson's vision of rehabilitation and his documentation of his influence on Anna is illustrated in his lecture to the College of Physicians of Philadelphia in 1924.

“Anna Magee, the last of her immediate family, has left a large bequest “to commemorate her name by rendering lasting service to the poor and increasing the usefulness of the hospitals in her native city, Philadelphia.” To accomplish this purpose, she has expressed the desire to found and endow an institution to be called the “Magee Memorial Hospital for Convalescents.” Her will is very explicit as to the organization and management of the institution, and the wording of the codicil, dated February, 1917, bearing upon this bequest is very remarkable, since at that time neither she nor the friend with whom she took counsel concerning it had any knowledge of the Burke Foundation. It is to be hoped that the trustees of her estate will not be prevented by the requirements of the law from allowing the interest of the principal sum, together with the reversion of various life interests, to accumulate until a sufficient amount to fully carry out the wishes of the testatrix has been reached.”<sup>42</sup>

Anna's legacy was this vision of the future medical needs of Philadelphia and her determination to honor Jefferson physicians and the Magee family.

## **Conclusion**

Anna Magee, the last member of her family, died on December 12, 1923. Much of what we have learned of her life prior to the Progressive era came through inference based on where she lived

and her references to her relative's business, artistic, and scientific interests. However, Anna emerged as an independent person in the 1890s, when she entered middle age. Her pride in her patriotic roots is robust and her entrance into newly formed women's clubs demonstrates an independence with authority and determination. This determination to recognize her family members for posterity is essential to her legacy. Her vision to create a rehabilitation institution to restore quality of life to her fellow Philadelphians and honor her parents is her most enduring legacy.

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