

Chambersburg, Pa.

THE HOME OF DR. AND MRS. HERMAN A. GILDA

102 N. MAIN STREET

CHAMBERSBURG, PA. 17707

The property on which this house stands is recorded as having been sold in 1786 by  
 NWCORNER OF LINCOLN WAY EAST AND THIRD STS  
 Jeremiah Talbot, High Sheriff of Franklin Co., to Joseph McKenny (or McCarney), and by him

on October 30, 1809 to the Reverend David Denny for a consideration of 40 pounds. What is now the Wolfinger property was acquired by Mr. Denny by deed of April 4, 1804, and in Volume 18 of the Deed Book, is recorded a deed for what is now the King property. The Reverend Mr. Denny, who was pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Falling Spring from 1800 to 1838, evidently lived in the original house. Cooper, in Recollections of Chambersburg, describes it as follows: "The old stone mansion of the venerable Reverend Dr. Denny, located near the western corner of his lot, though showing signs that its heavy walls were giving away, was still inhabited by him in 1833. But about that time he, or his son John F. Denny, built a new brick residence east of the old stone house and a short distance back from the line of the pavement. The new house was built about where an old log house, inhabited by a shoemaker, had stood. There was no building on that side of the street or road till Messersmith's farm was reached for many years after Denny's new house was built." An interesting book of records is in the possession of Dr. and Mrs. Gilda. It contains the photostatic record of marriages performed by the Reverend Denny at Path Valley and Falling Spring between the years 1794 and 1844. One marriage of particular interest which was performed in this house is that of William Foster to Eliza Tomlinson on November 14, 1807. They were the parents of Stephen Foster.

Mr. Denny died in December 1845, leaving the house and real estate to his daughters, the Misses Margaret and Alice Denny. It was owned by them and their descendants, until sold to the Cumberland Valley Railroad in 1901. The Reverend B. S. Schneck in his book, The Burning of Chambersburg, says, "Facing the west from the Franklin railroad, the first building to the right is the residence of the Misses Denny, in a somewhat isolated position. This stands in its freshness and beauty, solitary and alone. Passing down two squares to the centre of the town, not one building and only two or three stables or barns remain on either side of this street of private residences----." There is a story that this house was spared because the Misses Denny were daughters of a minister, but Dr. Schneck does not mention it, nor does there seem to be any other written confirmation.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Riddle resided here for some years at the end of the nineteenth century before the east wing of the house was added, which was some time after its purchase by the railroad. In 1926, Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Kennedy, who had been occupying the house, purchased the property from the Pennsylvania Railroad, title having been transferred in 1919 from the C.V.R.R.Co. Dr. and Mrs. Gilda, the present owners, have lived here since 1940.