

Pontius Delare Stelle

(15 Feb 1763 – 12 Mar 1826)

Stelle. On the 10th instant Pontius Stelle, in the 64th year of his age. His friends and acquaintances are invited to attend his funeral from his late residence on 10th street on Sunday at 10 o'clock.

Pitch, Anthony S., *"The Burning of Washington, The British Invasion of 1814,"* p. 41

Former hotelier Pontius Stelle, who had fallen on hard times, agonized to an acquaintance, "I know not where to take my little helpless family."

Morris, Maud Burr, *"The Life and Times of Pontius D. Stelle,"* Columbia Historical Society, Vol. 7.

p. 53: Pontius Delare Stelle, born in Trenton, February 15, 1763, the fourth generation of Stelles in this country.

P. 54: All reminiscences of Pontius D. Stelle's childhood seem to be lost, although it was during the exciting and critical time of the Revolutionary War, but we know that he resided in Trenton in the house (still standing) at the corner of Perry and Warren streets, which in December, 1776, was taken as headquarter guard house of the Anglo-Hessian troops in Trenton under Col. Johann Gottlieb Rall. It was in front of this house that the six guns of the Hessian artillery were parked on the day of the famous battle of Trenton, December 25, 1776.

The next definite record we have of Pontius D. Stelle is in 1788, when he became a member of Trenton Lodge No. 5 of the Masonic order.

About this time and onward he is said in Raum's "History of Trenton" to have been one of the most prominent residents and was the first treasurer of the city of Trenton, being one of the officers named under the charter granted by the Legislature to the State of New Jersey, November 21, 1792. He was an active official and had large business interests in and around Trenton, of the nature of which I am entirely ignorant.

In 1793, while the city treasurer and a warm personal friend of Richard Howell, the first governor of New Jersey, Pontius D. Stelle met and afterwards married Mr. Beulah Burr Wharton, a young widow, who for some years past had assumed the social responsibilities of the governor's mansion, as her sister, Mrs. Howell, was somewhat of an invalid.

As were his father, grandfather and great-grandfather before him, so Pontius D. Stelle was also an Episcopalian (as the family has continued ever since), and the records of the meetings of the vestry of St. Michael's Church in Trenton show his election as vestryman for the years 1794 to 1799 inclusive, after which time he left for Washington, attracted no doubt by the speculative features outlined in the glowing prospectus of the new capital city which was so extensively circulated at the time in all large cities in this country and abroad too, I believe.

As I said before, Pontius D. Stelle was in no sense an official character.