

Biographical/Historical note

The Logan family was prominent in Philadelphia from the start of the province, serving the people in many capacities, including political, medical and literary.

James Logan, the first secretary of the colony under William Penn, was born on October 20, 1674 in Lurgan, Ireland, the son of Patrick and Isabel Hume Logan. His father was a scholar and an Anglican minister until his conversion to Quakerism. James was educated in his father's school, the Friar Meetinghouse School in Bristol. His early careers included working as a linen draper in 1687, as an assistant schoolmaster to his father from 1690 to 1693, and as the schoolmaster of the Friar Meeting house from 1693 to 1697. From 1697 to 1698, James unsuccessfully worked in the linen trade; however, in 1699, James Logan obtained a career as a secretary for William Penn, who was about to sail for his province of Pennsylvania.

Upon arriving in Pennsylvania, James Logan began his service to Pennsylvania through positions including Secretary of the Province, Receiver-General of Pennsylvania, Member of the Provincial Council, Mayor of Philadelphia, Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, President of the Provincial Council and Acting Governor. At the same time, he gained wealth through commerce, trade with Native Americans and land purchases.

James Logan was an intellectual. He was "a linguist of competence in a bewildering number of languages, a classicist who in the margins of his books crossed swords with greatest European editors, and a scientist who described the fertilization of corn by pollen, understood and used the new inventions of calculus, wrote on optics, and made astronomical observations," (*At the Instance of Benjamin Franklin*, page 32). He collected books and arranged for his substantial library consisting of nearly 2,600 volumes, the Loganian Library, to be made public upon his death. The Loganian Library, which was received in trust by the Library Company of Philadelphia, exists almost in its original entirety. According to Edwin Wolf II, historian and past librarian of the Library Company, Logan "brought enthusiasm, erudition, and a good Quaker sense of value to bear on his book purchases, [but was] however, finicky, bad tempered, over pedantic and hard," (Wolf, page 44)

On December 9, 1714, Logan married Sarah Read Smith, the daughter of Charles and Amy Child Read. James and Sarah became the parents of James, William and Hannah. Three other children, James, Rachel and Charles died as children. Sarah Read Smith Logan died on December 9, 1714 and James Logan died on September 2, 1751 at the age of 77 in his country home, Stenton, which he built in Germantown, Pennsylvania. From the time that James Logan arrived in Philadelphia, he was "an integral part of the history of Pennsylvania," (Library Company of Philadelphia, page 4).

William Logan, the son of James and Sarah, was born on July 14, 1718 in Philadelphia. At age 12, he went to England to study with his uncle, also named William, who was a doctor in Bristol, England. After returning to Pennsylvania, he worked with his father as a Philadelphia merchant. In 1741, he became the attorney to the Penn family. He was elected to the Common Council of Philadelphia on October 4, 1743 and continued to serve until 1776 when the Declaration of Independence dissolved the municipal government. He also served on the Governor's Council from 1747 until his death, in 1776. As