William G. Payne  
1847-1919

* Born enslaved in Virginia, October 1847
* Started catering business in Philadelphia
* Relocated to Lancaster with his wife, Hermione Dova, and his widowed mother
* Premier caterer and restaurateur in Lancaster for many years; first business at 27 East Orange Street
* Caterer & steward at Hamilton Club, ca. 1898—1906
* Ebenezer Baptist Church founder & original trustee
* Leased property at 135 East Grant Street as Lancaster Kitchen & Caterers' Supply Company, 1906 - 1914
* Married Benidene Brown Hill, a widow, formally of Washington, D.C., 1909
* Died age 72, July 29, 1919; interred, Washington, D.C.

Payne family’s business & residence  
135 East Grant Street, 1910


For more information visit https://www.lancasterhistory.org/learning-tools/ahh-markers/

Payne marker as it appears at the installation site: 135 East Grant Street, Lancaster

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The legacy of William G. Payne,
pioneering black businessman
135 East Grant Street, Lancaster, PA

Prepared as a supplement to the public tours conducted by
The African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania

April 2016/Revised May 2019

This research was used to design a permanent commemorative marker at 135 East Grant Street, made possible by a grant from the Walters/Unitarian Universalist Church Trust, an endowment from Arthur and Selma Walters to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lancaster in support of efforts that affirm the worth and dignity of all humans and that promote one universal humanity. Grantee-African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania, 2018. Administrative support provided by LancasterHistory.

Based on research by Gordon Reed, member, AAHS/SCPA
Photography & design by Randolph Harris, consulting historian & Archivist, AAHS/SCPA
The Lancaster Kitchen and Caterers' Supply Company, No. 135 E. Grant Street, is one of the most successful enterprises owned and controlled by a colored man in the State. Mr. Payne has established a reputation as a caterer, and carries a complete stock of caterers' supplies, embracing every variety of linen, china and silver service, both rare and costly. He is a skilled designer in table arrangement, and house decoration, and serves many of the wealthy throughout the country.

Directory contains an apparent error in Mr. Payne’s first name: It should be William G., not John F.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, City of Lancaster, PA, 1897. Detail, Plate 24 shows Payne’s building at 135 East Grant Street and the adjacent property to the west as a one and one-half story “Carriage House.” Also shows the property that would, by 1898, become the home of The Hamilton Club where Payne worked for 16 years. That property is marked here in magenta (indicating a brick building) as “3 CLUB Ho,” meaning a three-story private club with sleeping accommodations.
135 E. Grant St., Lancaster, PA

1910

2018

© African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania
WILLIAM G. PAYNE (ca 1847 – 1919)

Biographical Summary

By Gordon Reed
Member, African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania.

A founder and one of the original Trustees of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Lancaster, William G. Payne was eminently known as the top caterer in Lancaster for many years.

William G. Payne began his catering business in Philadelphia about a year or two prior to relocating from Philadelphia to Lancaster with his wife; the former Hermione Dova, and his widowed mother.

In Lancaster, William began a restaurant and catering business at 27 East Orange Street. As his reputation spread, William was hired as Caterer and Steward for the Hamilton Club, a position he managed for about five years.

During the year 1906, William leased the property at 135 East Grant Street and opened the Lancaster Kitchen & Caterers’ Supply Company, which he owned and operated from 1906 to about 1914 when he retired from the catering business.

William G. Payne was born in Virginia October 1847; one of eight children of Susan and (Harry ?) Payne. It is probable that his family resided in the District of Columbia prior to his moving to Addison Street, Philadelphia, not far from Rittenhouse Square.

Continued
About 1883 he married Miss Hermione Dova, a Dressmaker of Philadelphia who passed away on December 22nd, 1901 at the age of 50 years.

On September 29th, 1909 William remarried; to widow Benidene Brown Hill, formally of Washington, D. C., and whose husband had died the year prior her marriage to William G. Payne.

Being very active in the founding and formation of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, William Payne is credited as being instrumental in the building of the Church on the northwestern side of Locust Street, between South Duke and Christian Streets.

William died July 29, 1919 at the age of seventy-two years. His remains were interred in Washington, D. C.

**WILLIAM G. PAYNE - Research Delineation**

Ref. **1900 United States Federal Census**, Lancaster City, Pennsylvania - 40 East Chestnut Street (Rented house) – All in household can read, write & speak English.

William G. Payne, Head, Married 18 years (ca 1882), b October 1847, 52 years old, b Virginia, Both parents b Virginia. Occupation: Caterer

Hermione (Dova) Payne, Wife, Married 18 years, (ca 1882) b June 1860, 39 years old, Mother of 0 children, b Pennsylvania, Both parents b Pennsylvania, w/o listed occupation

Susan Payne, Mother, Widow, b May 1830, Mother of 8 children/3 Survive, b Virginia, Both parents b Virginia, w/o listed occupation

Annie Moore, Lodger, Single, b January 1870, 30 years old, b Virginia, both parents b Virginia, w/o listed occupation

Ref. **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Death Certificates Index**, FHL Film # 1853337 & # 1011830


Ref. **THE LANCASTER DAILY INTELLIGENCER, MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1901**, (pgs 1 & 4)

(Page 1)

“Mrs. W. G. Payne, wife of the well-known caterer of Hamilton club, died at the home of her mother, in Philadelphia, at 5:30 o’clock on Sunday morning. Her maiden name was Dova, and she was born in Philadelphia, where she lived until her husband moved to Lancaster some years ago. She had been in ill health from different complaints for a long time. The funeral will take place in Philadelphia.”

(Page 4, paraphrased)

Henonie (Hermione) Payne, d 22 December 1901 at her mother’s residence: 10285 Seventeenth Street, Philadelphia. Funeral services Tuesday, from the Cherry Street Baptist Church. Interment in Merion Cemetery, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.

Ref. **1910 United States Federal Census**, Lancaster City, Pennsylvania - 135 East Grant Street (Rented) All in household can read & write.

William G. Payne, Head, 60 years (ca 1850), Married second time for less than 1 Year, b Virginia, both parents b Virginia, Occupation – Caterer, has own shop. Not indicated as a Veteran

Benidine B. (Brown) Payne, 37 years (ca 1873), Wife, Married second time for less than 1 year, b District of Columbia, Father b Maryland, Mother b Canadian French, Mother of 1 child/1 child survives, no occupation

Albert C. Hill, 16 years (ca 1894), Step-son, single, b District of Columbia, Father b District of Columbia, Mother b Pennsylvania, attends school, no occupation.

Ref. **1900 United States Federal Census, Ward 4, Lancaster, Pennsylvania**, 38 Hazel Street, Rents

David R. Hill, Head, 28 years, April 1872, Married 3 years (1897), b Pennsylvania, Both parents b Pennsylvania, Occupation: Porter, Club house

Benidene Hill, wife, 28 years, June 1872, Married 3 years (1897), 0 children, b District of Columbia, Father b Maryland, Mother b Canada

Ref. FHL Film No. 2114655, Ref. ID – cn 75685: District of Columbia Select Births (Supplemental information filed 26 March 1943.

Albert Charles Hill, b 19 February 1894, Washington, District of Columbia
Father: Alviston Gallick
Mother: Benedene (Benidene) Brown

Ref. Lancaster County Marriage License Dockets Book O, Volume 3, # 3796, 28 September 1909
William G. Payne, age 58 years, b. Richmond, Virginia, Resident of Lancaster, Occupation – Caterer. Previously married, wife died 21 December 1901.

- & -

Benidene B. (Brown) Hill, age 37 years, b Washington, D.C., Resident of Lancaster. (No occupation listed) Previously married, husband died 27 September 1908.

Married 29 September 1909 at Lancaster by Rev. Wilmer B. Williams
License Application filed 4 October 1909.

Ref. 1880 United States Federal Census, Washington, District of Columbia (Other persons listed have not been transcribed from original document)
Harrison Brown, 38 years, Head, Married, b Maryland, Parents both b Maryland
Caroline Brown, 37 years, Wife, Married, b Canada, Parents both b Canada, Occupation: keeping house

Benadine (Benidene) Brown, 8 years

Ref. 1920 United States Federal Census, Ward 7, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 520 South Christian Street (Rents)
Benadene (Benidene) Payne, Head, 45 years (b ca 1875), Widowed, b Maryland, Both parents b Maryland, Occupation: Day work for a private family
Albert Hill, son, 28 years, (b ca 1892), Married, b Maryland, Both parents b Maryland, Occupation: Waiter in a Hotel.
Ref. FHL Film No. 31329, Ref. ID- 115-102: Virginia Select Marriages
Widow Benidene Brown Payne, b ca 1878, Washington, D.C., d/o Harrison & Caroline Brown, remarried on 22 July 1926, in Fairfax Virginia, to Isaac Lee. Prob this was her fourth marriage (m Alviston Gallick; m Mr. Hill; m William G. Payne; m Isaac Lee)

Note: Widow Benidene B. Lee, b 1879 is listed on the 1930 United States Federal Census for Washington, Washington, District of Columbia, 7th Precinct

Ref. Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory for 1881, published by James Gopsill’s, Sons
(pgs 1292) William Payne, Waiter, home, 1828 Addison Street
(pgs 1292) David Payne, Waiter, home, 1828 Addison Street
(pgs 1292) Edward Payne, Waiter, home, 1828 Addison Street

Ref. Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory for 1882
(pgs 1223) William Payne, Waiter, home, 1828 Addison Street
(pgs 1223) Edward Payne, Cook, home, 1828 Addison Street
(pgs 1223) Maria Payne, Dressmaker, home, 1828 Addison Street
(pgs 1223) Susan Payne, Widow, home, 1828 Addison Street

Ref. Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory for 1883
(pgs 1162) William Payne, Waiter, home, 1828 Addison Street
(pgs 1162) Edward Payne, Cook, home, 1828 Addison Street
(pgs 1162) Maria Payne, Dressmaker, home, 1828 Addison Street
(pgs 1162) Susan Payne, Widow, home, 1828 Addison Street

Ref. Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory for 1886
(pgs 1352) William G. Payne, Waiter, home, 1825 Addison Street
(pgs 1352) Susan Payne, Widow, home, 1828 Addison Street

Ref. Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory for 1887
(pgs 1333 & 1334) William G. Payne, Waiter, home, 1825 Addison Street
(pgs 1333 & 1334) Susan Payne, Widow of William, home, 1825 Addison Street
(pgs 1333 & 1334) David N. Payne, Porter, home, 1824 Addison Street
(pgs 1333 & 1334) Edward Payne, Cook, home, 1824 Addison Street
Ref. Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory for 1888
(pg 1372) William G. Payne, Caterer, home, 1825 Addison Street
(pg 1372) Hermione Payne, Dressmaker, home, 1825 Addison Street
(pg 1372) Susan Payne, Widow of Harold, home, 1825 Addison Street
(pg 1372) David N. Payne, Nurse, home, 1824 Addison Street
(pg 1372) Edward Payne, Cook, home, 1824 Addison Street

Ref. Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory for 1890
(pg 1455) William G. Payne, Caterer, home, 1825 Addison Street
(pg 1455) David N. Payne, Waiter, home, 1824 Addison Street
(pg 1455) Edward H. Payne, Cook, home, 1824 Addison Street

Ref. Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory for 1899
(pg 1782) David Payne, Waiter, home, 1824 Addison Street
(pg 1782) Edward Payne, Cook, home, 1824 Addison Street

Ref. R. L. POLK & CO.s’ CITY DIRECTORY of LANCASTER (Continued)
1909/1910 (pg 109) Lancaster Kitchen & Caterers’ Supply Co., 135 E. Grant Street (North side), William G. Payne proprietor
   (pg 630) Lancaster Kitchen & Caterers’ Supply Co., William G. Payne, residence 135 E. Grant Street
   (pg 836 Lancaster Kitchen & Caterers’ Supply Co., 135 E. Grant Street
1911 (pg 723) Lancaster Kitchen & Caterers’ Supply Co, William G. Payne, residence: 135 East Grant Street
1913 (pg 107) – Lancaster Kitchen & Caterers’ Supply Co., 135 East Grant Street, North side, William G. Payne, proprietor
   (pg 718) – Lancaster Kitchen & Caterers’ Supply Co., 135 East Grant Street, William G. Payne, residence: 135 East Grant Street
   (pg 958) CATERERS’ SUPPLIES – Lancaster Kitchen & Caterers’ Supply Co., 135 East Grant Street
1916 (pg 730) – William G. Payne, Residence: 135 East Grant Street (Not listed as a Caterer or business)
1917/1918 (pg 741) Benidene B. Payne, Housekeeper, home 520 South Christian Street
1917 through 1922 editions list 135 East Grant Street as a “Private Garage”.
1917 William G. Payne is unlisted

Note: The “Club History” promulgated by the Hamilton Club, of Lancaster cites 37 East Orange Street as the Club location from 1889 to 1912, when they purchased the current building at 106 East Orange Street. Thus, it would appear that William G. & Hermione Payne and William’s Mother resided in the Hamilton Club building.

1899 (pg 546) Susan Payne, Widow of Harry, home 40 East Chestnut Street
   (pg 546) William G. Payne, Caterer, 40½ East Chestnut Street, residence 40 East Chestnut Street
1901 (pg 575) William G. Payne, Caterer & Steward: Hamilton Club, residence: 40 East Chestnut Street
   (pg 751) CATERERS – William G. Payne, 40½ East Chestnut Street
1905 (pg 583) William G. Payne, Steward, Hamilton Club
Ref. *1888 (J. E.) WILLIAMS’ ANNUAL LANCASTER CITY DIRECTORY
There is no William G. Payne listing.

Ref. J. E. WILLIAMS LANCASTER CITY & COUNTY DIRECTORY FOR 1890
(pg 170) William G. Payne, Caterer, home 27 East Orange Street

Ref. J. E. WILLIAMS’ LANCASTER CITY DIRECTORY FOR 1892
(pg 275) William G. Payne, Caterer, *39 North Duke Street, home 27 East Orange Street. *39 North Duke Street was the address of the Hamilton Club
(pg 392) CATERERS – William G. Payne, 27 East Orange Street
(pg 460) William G. Payne, 27 East Orange Street

Ref. J. E. WILLIAMS LANCASTER CITY & COUNTY DIRECTORY
1896 (pg 340) CATERERS - William G. Payne, 27 East Orange Street
   (pg 245) William G. Payne, Caterer, 27 East Orange Street, home same

Ref. THE LANCASTER DAILY INTELLIGENCER, WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, 1919 (pg 2)
“OBITUARY – William G. Payne, died Tuesday morning at 11 o’clock in the County Hospital, aged 72 years. Deceased was a well-known caterer of this city, being a resident here for the past thirty years (since 1889) and a steward at the Hamilton Club for many years. He was born in Virginia and was a son of Harvey (Harry) and Susan Stanard Payne. At one time the deceased was engaged in business on East Grant Street and was one of the founders of Ebenezer Baptist church. His wife, a brother David N., of Philadelphia, and two sisters survive, Mrs. Maria (Payne) Kennedy, Washington, D. C. (b ca August 1862 Richmond, Virginia, w/o William Morton Kennedy) and Mrs. Betty Washington, of New York city. The body will be sent to Washington, D. C. today, where the interment will be made on Thursday.”

Ref. District of Columbia, Select Births and Christenings, 1830 – 1955; Family Search, Salt Lake, Utah (Inserted information relating to Maria Payne Kennedy & husband William Morton Kennedy in the article above)

Ref. THE NEW ERA – LANCASTER, TUESDAY, JULY 29, 1919 (pg 2)
“OBITUARY – Death of William G. Payne; A well-known caterer; had been in failing health for some time; He came to Lancaster and started the catering business in which he continued for a number of years; He was connected to the Hamilton Club; He engaged in business for a short time on Grant street. One of the founders of Ebenezer Baptist Church and instrumental in the erection of the place of worship on Locust Street.”

Ref. PENNSYLVANIA DEATH CERTIFICATE # 75970, of 1919
William G. Payne, Married,
Date of birth unknown; about 72 years old (Hospital) records. (ca 1847)
Died 29 July 1919 Lancaster County Hospital, Lancaster Township, Pennsylvania where he had been a patient for eleven days.
Father: Harvey (Harry) Payne
Mother: Susan Payne
Former residence: Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Occupation: Caterer
Informant: Mrs. Maria Kennedy, Washington, D.C. (His sister)
Burial: 31 July 1919 Washington, D.C.

Ref. LANCASTER COUNTY DEED BOOK I, Volume 17, Page 47,
10 October 1903
Grantor: A. M. Howe, of Pittsburgh, formally of Lancaster (Thought to be Rev. Howe, who was originally from Altoona, and previously served as Minister of Ebenezer Baptist Church before being succeeded by Rev. Taylor M. Davis, in June 1903.)
Grantee: William J. Payne, A legally appointed Trustee of Ebenezer Baptist Church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania
A property on northwest side of Locust Street, between South Duke & Christian Streets, was conveyed.

Conrad & Carrie Sower, of Lancaster City granted possession of a property on northwest side of Locust Street, between S. Duke & Christian Streets to Albert M. Howe on 9 August 1901, who took title in his name, for the use of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Ref. Deed Book O, Volume 16, Page 494). Albert M. Howe signed and executed a Declaration of Trust that he would make a deed to the Ebenezer Baptist Church whenever it was incorporated, or make a deed to the Trustees whenever they desired.

Ref. LANCASTER COUNTY DEED BOOK X, Volume 17, Page 446
24 July 1905, Recorded 1 August 1905
Grantor: William G. Payne, Trustee
Grantee: The Ebenezer Baptist Church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania
A property on northwest side of Locust Street, between South Duke & Christian Streets, was conveyed.
Death of William G. Payne

This morning at 11 o’clock the death of William G. Payne, formerly a well known caterer, of Lancaster, occurred at the County Hospital, the cause being exhaustion. Deceased was seventy-two years of age and had been in failing health for some time. Some years ago he came to Lancaster and started the catering business, in which he continued for a number of years. He was connected with the Hamilton Club and after severing his stewardship with that organization he engaged in business for a short time on East Grant street.

Mr. Payne was one of the founders of Ebenezer Baptist Church, and was instrumental in the erection of the place of worship on Locust street. In addition to the widow, a sister, living in Washington, survives.

THE DAILY NEW ERA, Lancaster, PA
Payne’s tenure at The Hamilton Club of Lancaster

Club’s centennial commemorative booklet reproduced here with permission
Payne’s tenure at The Hamilton Club of Lancaster, continued

Club’s Centennial Commemorative booklet reproduced here with permission

The Beginning

The Hamilton Club is more than just stone and mortar. More, even, than its recognition as one of the important landmarks of Lancaster, situated as it is in a quadrant formed by Duke and Orange Streets. First Presbyterian Church is to the east, the old St. James’ Episcopal Church and its elegant elms lie to the north, and Lawyers’ Row is to the south, facing the old and new of the Lancaster County Court House to the west.

It is all and none of these things, really, that has made the Hamilton Club a representative of excellence in Lancaster since its emergence a century ago.

It is the members who, since the beginning, have been—and are still—the Hamilton Club.

Comprising many of Lancaster County’s leading citizens, the Hamilton Club, through its membership, has contributed in many ways to the growth and well-being of both Lancaster City and Lancaster County since 1889.

From the beginning it has been endowed by men distinguished in business and the professions: attorneys and physicians, architects and engineers, merchants and manufacturers, bankers and farmers; also the builders and developers, the visionaries and the entrepreneur. The Hamilton Club numbers some of each on its membership rolls. This is what makes it the club that it is.

As the Hamilton Club celebrates the successful completion of the 100th year of its existence, it looks back on a period of many ups and a few downs, but with a consistent strength that has enabled it to always land on its feet.

It has flourished through a remarkable century of accomplishment, largely because of a strong membership that has remained true to the tenets adopted by the founding fathers back in 1889.

The idea of a club was first envisioned at a meeting of a group of men who had been gathering from time to time at Reigart’s Old Wine Store at 40 E. King Street in center city Lancaster. They met there to discuss, informally, various topics of the day, including the state of the nation, politics, sporting events and happenings in the Lancaster of that era. Their conversations were no doubt similar to the discussions at the Hamilton Club, and at all such clubs today.

In that year of 1889, the winds of change that would sweep over the nation in the following century were slowly building on the horizon.

The Loyal Staff

Excellence in service has been a hallmark of the Hamilton Club from the very beginning.

It was established with the decision to utilize the services of William G. Payne as a steward and caterer in that first year of the club’s existence.

At the time he operated what was undoubtedly Lancaster’s finest catering service. His business was conducted from a building on East Grant Street, close by the club’s first home.

Payne, who had been born into slavery, came to Lancaster from Philadelphia. He had been well tutored in the social amenities of the period.

During his 10 years as caterer, he provided the staff to operate the club’s dining operations. His organization also handled the many banquets, receptions, wedding parties and other miscellaneous dinners at the club.

Upon his resignation in early 1906, the club employed its first manager, John W. Forney, but it continued to use an outside caterer for its dining needs.

Forney’s resignation in 1906 brought George W. Carman on the scene. Carman would serve as steward, in charge of all club operations, for 15 years.

His long and outstanding service to the club was recognized upon his retirement, because of ill health, in 1923, when the club presented him with a gold watch and a substantial cash gift.

Gerald Ilkin was another outstanding steward, serving from 1926 until 1941, when he entered military service.

The club’s first steward-manager was Thomas Chaffriller, Jr., who came aboard in 1956. He served for eight years during a period when major improvements were being made to the club.

Chaffriller was succeeded by T.W. “Robbie” Robertson, who served from 1964 to 1970.

Charles E. “Gene” Cummings, Jr., was named steward-manager in 1970, and for the next 15 years the club was most successful under his supervision. Members had high praise for his friendliness and service.

Frank H. Klinger succeeded Cummings, serving from 1985 to 1987.

The current manager, Jack W. Heitz, began his association with the club in February 1988. A retired lieutenant colonel of the Army, Heitz was assistant manager of operations at Hotel Hershey prior to joining the club.
1896 Yearbook, Oriflamme
Franklin & Marshall College
Google Street View images from Google Earth, accessed April 11, 2016.