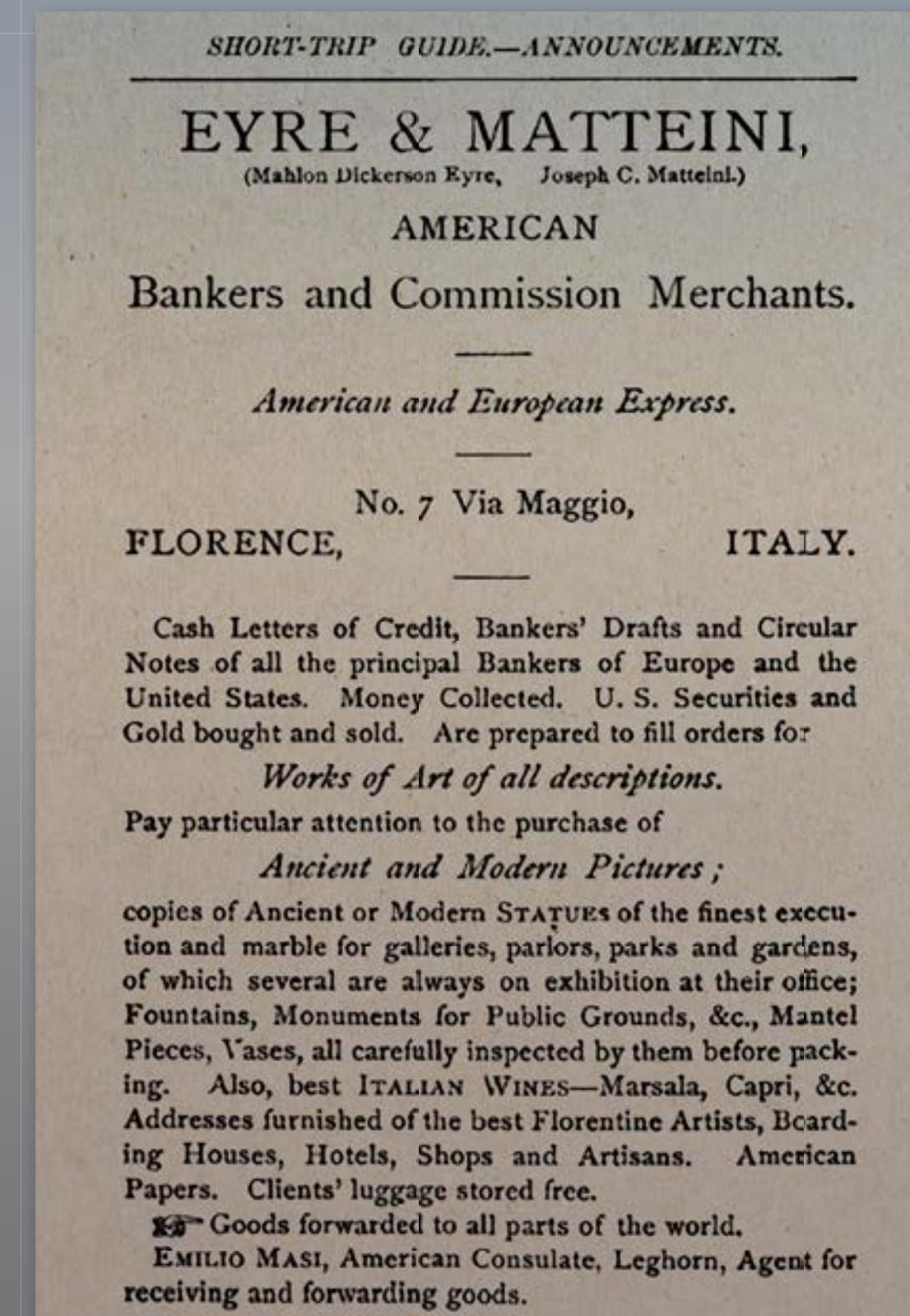


Centennial, Bicentennial

This marble statue imitates the iconic Emanuel Leutze painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware*. It boasts a travel log far longer than the short river crossing it celebrates, which preceded the Revolutionary War victories in Trenton. The custom-made statue arrived in Philadelphia in 1876 from its place of carving in Florence, Italy, taking up a place of honor at the Centennial Exhibition in Fairmount Park. The City of Trenton eventually acquired the sculpture and installed it as a monument in Cadwalader Park in 1892. The statue made one last trip to its present-day home here in Mill Hill for America's Bicentennial in 1976.



Advertisement for Mahlon Dickerson Eyre's Italian art and wine export business. Image credit: Morford's Short-Trip Guide to Europe, 1872.

Mahlon Dickerson Eyre was a prominent Philadelphia-born art merchant who frequently sold Italian-made replicas of ancient statues. Around 1875, he commissioned this 14-foot-tall Washington statue from an uncredited Italian sculptor. He then shipped it across the Atlantic along with 13 other pieces he aimed to display and sell at Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition. Ten-million visitors viewed the Washington sculpture, which was hard to miss, centrally placed at one of the fair's main crossroads. Yet, Eyre failed to attract a buyer.

In early 1889, two Trenton councilmen purchased the Washington sculpture at auction for only \$300, a fraction of Eyre's original asking price. The outcome could have been very different. Washington and Lee University in Virginia was prepared to offer \$1,000, but in a stroke of bad luck the college's bidder arrived at the auction five minutes too late.



City park playground instructors posing at the base of the Washington statue, July 1943. Image credit: City of Trenton, *A Celebration of Cadwalader Park*, 2002. Background: Emanuel Leutze. *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851. Image credit: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The heroic statue arrived in Trenton in April 1889 in time for its display at the city's train station when President Benjamin Harrison passed through on his way to New York for a centennial celebration of Washington's first presidential inauguration. Three years later in 1892, Trenton officially unveiled the statue in Cadwalader Park with Washington standing atop a new pedestal.

After nearly 84 years at Cadwalader Park, the sculpture made its final journey here to the South Montgomery Street plaza in Mill Hill. The motive for relocating Washington was planning for a bicentennial event honoring Trenton's part in the American Revolution. At a cost of \$12,000, the statue, covered in protective padding, quietly made its way here in the bed of a truck in May of 1976. The city held an official rededication ceremony a few weeks later.



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