

A Colonial Drawing for Halloween, or Isaac Norris and his Skeleton Will

Around the year 1678, Thomas Norris, a Quaker and merchant from London, emigrated to Jamaica to escape religious persecution. To add insult to injury, he was killed during the earthquake which sank the famed pirate city of Port Royal, on June 7th, 1692. Thomas' son Isaac, who lived in Jamaica as a small child, was residing in Philadelphia at the time, acting as his father's business agent.

After his father's death, Isaac made Philadelphia his permanent home, where he became a successful merchant and politician and married Mary Lloyd. By 1718, he constructed Fairhill, a large mansion and estate in the Northern Liberties section of the city. Regrettably, the British burnt this building to the ground on October 4th, 1777, during the Battle of Germantown in the Revolutionary War.

