

This ant is well established on the Swarthmore College campus at the present time and is abundant under the walls and walks about Parrish Hall. It lives also in and about the Benjamin West House on the campus, the house where the celebrated painter was born in 1738. The house itself was built about 1724. The ants are here nocturnal during the winter months and scavenge over the ground floor for food, being warmed by basement heating pipes. In April and May workers appear regularly in large numbers on the pavement stones outside. They appear at the same time outside Parrish Hall and other buildings, emerging from under pavement stones. A room of the two-year-old Animal Wing of the biology building became infested with this species in October 1964.

These swarms engage in the well-known combats described by H. C. McCook (1878, 1879). His accounts and specific determinations leave no doubt that the habits of this ant have not changed in the approximate 100 years since he returned from participation in the Civil War to become a minister in Philadelphia. Ironically, the chief notoriety of these ants "is due to their martial instincts. Hundreds, even thousands of them are often seen waging battle with great ferocity and persistence. One battle, which was noted close by the wall, within the enclosure of a church on Broad Street and Penn Square, was prolonged for a period of two weeks and several days. . . ." The combats that he described as taking place in May, 1879, occur regularly on the Swarthmore campus in the same month. They may take place as early as late April and may extend into June. Foëx, quoted by Donisthorpe (*loc. cit.*), described an extended combat between thousands of ants that took place on the grounds of the University of Zurich, starting April 24, 1870, and lasting more than a month.

A modern study of this unusual and recurrent type of behavior would appear to be worthwhile, since no one has really explored the reasons for these conflicts. A possible hypothesis is that adjacent colonies increase in size until their territories meet or overlap. This expansion and increased seasonal activity results then in fighting.