

AN OLD NEWSPAPER

Recently there came into my hands a file of *The Hive*, a weekly newspaper published in this city more than one hundred years ago. It consists of two volumes, the initial number being of the date of June 22, 1803, and the last number of June 12, 1805. I suppose few of our citizens know much about this publication, though some of the volumes have been carefully preserved. Messrs. Ferd A. and Henry C. Demuth have the only full file which I have seen; but, of the second volume, one copy belongs to Miss Sue Jeffries, having come to her from Miss Susan Hambright, a daughter of William Hambright; another is owned by Mrs. Emma M. Groff; and a third is in the possession of the President of this Society. *The Hive* was a small four-page paper, in size ten inches by eight and a-half inches, and would now be scarcely considered as a respectable pamphlet.

The original publisher was Charles McDowell, and he launched his paper with the following announcement: "The first number of *The Hive* is offered to the ladies and gentlemen of Lancaster and its vicinity as a specimen. The editor or some person authorized by him will call in the course of a few days on those subscribers who have not yet paid their advances. Subscriptions will be received in this borough by Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Dickson, and by the editor at the *Hive* office, nearly opposite the sign of William Pitt, in East King street."

The sign of the William Pitt was a hotel, situated on East King street, where are now the residence of Ferd A. Demuth and the law offices of John E. Snyder and S. Z. Moore, Esqs. The old sign is in Mr. Demuth's possession, and is in a fairly good state of preservation. A photograph of it is herewith presented to the Society. The date of 1808 and the name "Henry Diffenbach" were evidently placed upon it by the subsequent proprietor. In after years, the Anti-Masonic Party had their headquarters at this hostelry, and on one occasion the complete demolition of the front of the building by their opponents, who had headquarters at what is now the Lancaster County House, bears witness to the strenuous politics of long ago. The place of publication of The Hive was called the Sign of the Bee Hive, and I have been told that it was the present Excelsior Hall property. I have, however, been unable to verify this information. It was undoubtedly somewhere in that vicinity, as it was nearly opposite the William Pitt; but I have failed to identify the location with exactness. At the top of the first issue Mr. McDowell addressed the public in insistent poetic strains:

"Be thou the first, our efforts to befriend.

His praise is lost, who stays till all commend."

On November 14, 1804, the announcement was made that a partnership had been entered into with William Greear, under the firm name of McDowell & Greear. It was also stated that the Hive office had "been considerably enlarged with a neat and general assortment of printing material," and that the firm was thereby

“enabled to execute all kinds of printing in a superior style of elegance on the shortest notice and on most moderate terms.” An interesting sketch of this William Greear, by Samuel Evans, Esq., will be found in Vol. 9, p. 327, of the reports of this Society. After two years’ existence proposals were issued for the publication “in this borough” of “a weekly newspaper to be entitled The Lancaster True American,” and the editors announced that they contemplated publishing the new journal “on paper similar in size and quality to that which is generally used for the Philadelphia daily papers, at the moderate price of two dollars per annum, payable in half yearly advances;” that it would be published independently of any interested party attachment and with special reference to the principles of truth and purity.” Thus, The Hive closed its career, and The True American became its successor.

In the olden day, a weekly newspaper contained little local news, and, in fact, very little of any kind. Here and there and at rare intervals can be found items of special interest. The theory on which newspapers were edited, so far as local happenings were concerned, was that everybody knew of the home affairs, and it was, therefore, unnecessary to print their details. The Hive followed its compeers in this respect, and even what are now considered the great events of those times we find completely ignored. You can look in vain for any notice or discussion of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, or of the crowning of Napoleon as Emperor of France in 1804. Such things were either locally unheard of, or deemed of no importance to its subscribers: and the community in which it circu-

lated. There are found in its pages essays by contributors upon a variety of subjects, chiefly devoted to morals; poems by local talent, and (here and there) by some acknowledged genius, such as Burns; a few communications to the editors, and notices of marriages and deaths. Occasionally only a news item.

We find that, "on the 7th inst. (of September, 1804), as Mr. James Cochran of this county was driving his team (the waggoner being sick) on the State Road on this side of Greensburg, in attempting to mount the saddle horse, the creature started and threw him on his head in such position that the wheels passed over his thighs, one of which was broken. This occurred about nine o'clock in the morning, the bone was not set until seven in the evening, and he died about midnight, in the 37th year of his age." On September 12, under the head of "Melancholy," it is stated: "We have been informed that on Sunday last Henry McCausland was killed at the house of William Tweed, in Sadsbury township.....by a son of Philip McGuire of the same neighborhood, in a drunken frolic;" and that there had "died on Monday, the 24th ult. (September), at the house of Daniel Witmer, at the Conestoga Bridge, a stranger, who arrived there on the preceding day, extremely ill and speechless;" that "it is thought by his papers that his name was James Stewart, that he was an inhabitant of Mifflin county, and an officer in the Militia;" that he had "left in the possession of Mr. Witmer about ninety pounds in money, a gold watch, a sorrel horse, and sundry papers, which Mr. Witmer requests the friends of the deceased to apply for and receive." The remains were interred

in the burial ground of the English Presbyterian Church. John Bradburn, who maintained a circulating library, about December, 1803, gave notice that "those who return books safe have double chances for a second reading," and that "the subscriber having lent the following books to certain individuals of this Borough, which they have not returned, he hath become desirous of having them once more in his possession." Attached is a list of the books. In the subsequent year he publishes a second card earnestly requesting "those persons who have borrowed books from the subscriber to return them as soon as possible, as he intends shortly to remove from the Borough." In one issue, "One Dollar Reward" is offered because there was "lost on Sunday evening last, between Witmer's Bridge and Binkley's Mill, on the road leading to Strasburgh, a green umbrella," which whoever found was to deliver to the printers and receive the reward; and, in another, Mr. Bernard begged "leave to inform the ladies and gentlemen and the public in general that he had for sale at the house of Mr. William Ferree, Sign of General Washington, in East King street, an extensive assortment of dry goods, consisting of silk and cotton stockings, shawls, ribbon, silk gloves, silk handkerchiefs, spangled shawls, plain shawls, pin cushions, suspenders, and pearls of all colors; likewise an elegant assortment of jewelry of good gold, ornamented combs and hair-neck laces, Paris fashion." It can be surmised the fate which would befall the modern newspapers with general advertisements for two years of this scant number. It may be interesting to some to know the location of the sign of General Wash-

ington. It was a two-story stone building on the south side of East King street, immediately west of what was then the banking house of The Farmers' Bank of Lancaster, now Farmers' Trust Company. In fact, it was the property lately purchased by Albert Hupper, confectioner. The dimensions of the lot were then as they are now, thirty-two feet two and one-quarter inches on East King street, with a depth of 136 feet. In 1803 the property was owned by Stephan Martin, who by will proven May 25, 1804, devised it to his wife, Catharine Martin. It was afterwards, in 1823, sold to David Miller, known to local fame as "Devil Dave Miller," and the purchase price was \$2,550. It was recently sold to Mr. Hupper for \$51,000.

The cause of education receives attention. James Ross, "the professor of the Latin and Greek languages in Franklin College, gives, with the approbation of the principal, notice that the examination in these will begin on the 22nd of this instant (September, 1803), at nine o'clock in the morning and at three in the evening." That "the vacation commences on the 23rd and ends on the 8th of October. Exercises begin promptly on Monday, the 10th." This James Ross was the author of "Select Fables of Aesop" in Latin and English. The book was published in 1804 by Burnside & Smith, on North Queen street. A copy, and perhaps the only one in existence, is in possession of the writer. On September 28, 1803, Francis A. Latta, Charles Cummins and John Waugh certify that "By appointment of the Presbytery of New Castle, met at this place, we this day visited the school under the care of Messrs. John Riddle and James McCulloch, and consider it incumbent upon us to declare

our opinion that the specimens which the pupils gave of their proficiency are alike honorable to the teachers and to them. We cannot forbear to add our wishes that gentlemen of talents and zeal employed so usefully may receive encouragement and support proportioned to their exertions and their merit." The school room of Mr. McCulloch was on North Queen street. In it, on Saturday evenings, at six o'clock, during the winter of 1803-1804, met the Lancaster Polemic Society. They discussed various questions of State, among which was: "Have the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania a right to declare a law of the Commonwealth unconstitutional and void?" The meeting determined the question in the negative; but time and the Courts have long since reversed the finding. Another question submitted was: "Is novel reading useful or pernicious to the fair sex?" It was determined that it was pernicious. In 1804, George Correl made it known that he would "attend young ladies and gentlemen at their respective homes a few hours in the day on moderate terms for the purpose of teaching English grammar according to the system of Louth, Ash, Davis or Murray."

The senior publisher was evidently a susceptible young man. One of his first essays is a "Panegyric on the Married State," and scattered through both volumes are evidences of his inclinations. The motto appearing at the beginning of the second volume indicates his purpose to be:

"To wake the soul to tender strokes
of art;
To raise the genius and to mend the
heart."

It is to be hoped that he accomplished his object; but the pathway

would seem to have been not a bed of roses. The subscription price was two dollars per year, payable half-yearly. Subscribers were equally slow then, as now, in paying their bills; the agents were also a source of trouble; and the publisher was in distress. Notice is given that "such of our agents as have received money on account of The Hive are requested to forward it as soon as possible;" also, that "those who write to the editor by mail must pay the postage of their letters, otherwise they will not be attended to, as he is determined not to release them." In another issue, it is stated that "the young gentleman who withdrew his name from The Hive subscription list last week on the plea of its being too dear is respectfully informed that it is published on the same conditions as those mentioned in the proposals, and that we could not afford to print it on more reasonable terms without materially injuring ourselves. We wish him to observe that printers must live as well as paper-makers."

The marriage and death notices contain many familiar names. Thus, on July 31, 1803, appear notices of the deaths of Miss Maria Ross, eldest daughter of Gen. James Ross, in her twenty-first year; of William Musser, in the fortieth year of his age; and also on September 3 of Charles Frederick Heinitsch, druggist, in his sixty-sixth year. In the issue of June 28, 1804, it was mentioned that Jacob Sheaffer, merchant, who was esteemed as a good neighbor and an honest man, had died in the fifty-eighth year of his age; on September 12, that Brigadier General Benjamin Mills, "an early active, uniformed friend of the American Revolution," had died in Mount Joy township; and on Febru-

ary 5, 1805, notice was given of the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Slaymaker, wife of Henry Slaymaker, in the thirty-third year of her age. About the same time is noted the death of James Ross, son of General James Ross. It is stated that he was on his passage from Washington, North Carolina, to New York, and in attempting to go ashore at the castle in company with a passenger the boat got into the breakers, and both were drowned.

On September 28, 1803, William Haverstick, Jr., was married to Miss Catharine Musser, daughter of George Musser, by Rev. Dr. Henry Muhlenberg; and on June 22, Samuel Bethel, Esq., to Miss Sally Hand, daughter of the late General Edward Hand, by Rev. Mr. Clarkson. On December 28, Mr. Chester C. Smith was married to Miss Ann Hubley, daughter of the late Bernard Hubley, and on January 11, 1804, Mr. Daniel Dinckel, of York, to Miss Rebecca Steinman, daughter of Mr. Frederick Steinman. On Thursday evening, April 11, 1804, Mr. Jacob Demuth was married to Miss Elizabeth Eberman, by the Rev. Mr. Reinicke; and on May 10, 1804, General Franklin Davenport, of Woodbury, New Jersey, to Miss Sarah Barton Zantzinger, daughter of Paul Zantzinger, Esq. Miss Zantzinger was a granddaughter of the Rev. Thomas Barton, the rector of St. James' Episcopal Church before and at the time of the Revolution. Mr. Barton left Lancaster because he was unable to support the new government. He joined Howe's army as a Chaplain, and afterwards died in New York and was buried in St. George's Chapel. When he left he was possessed of considerable real estate, among which was a lot called "Barton Garden," containing in front on East Orange street 64

feet 4½ inches and in depth along Lime street 245 feet. It was afterwards known as the Botanical Garden of Christopher Marshall. Part of this lot was owned by Judge J. Hay Brown, who has just sold it. Under an Act of Assembly passed at Lancaster on April 1, 1778, P. L. 123, it was provided that any person, except those guilty of treason or misprision, who should choose to sell his real estate and retire out of the estate, and should apply to the Executive Council before the following first of June, might receive permission to make conveyance of the same. In accordance therewith Mr. Barton made application to the Executive Council, and, on May 30, 1778, under the hand of the Honorable George Bryan, Vice President, and the great seal of the State, authority was given to him to sell his real estate within ninety days to any person whatsoever. Thereupon he, on August 26, 1778, made a deed in fee simple for the above-mentioned lot to Paul Zantzinger, his son-in-law.

On September 12, 1804, Dr. James Ancrim and Miss Rachel Steele, daughter of William Steele, of Drumore township, were married by Rev. Mr. Martin; and it was announced that, on November 1, 1804, Mr. Ceasar Rodney Wilson, late of Dover, Delaware, was married at Wilkes-Barre to Miss Harriet Tracey, of Norwich, Connecticut. It can be supposed that Mr. Wilson was related to Ceasar Rodney, of Delaware, the signer. On November 18 appears the notice that Mr. Conrad Doll had married Miss Molly Graff, daughter of Andrew Graff, Esq., who was then Associate Lay Judge of this county. About February, 1805, Captain Slough married Miss Polly Graeff, daughter of Jacob Graeff; Mr. John Long (John F. Long, well-known to all

of us) to Miss Polly Hager, daughter of Christopher Hager; and on March 20, 1805, Mr. Edward Mott to Miss Faithful Slaymaker, daughter of Amos Slaymaker, Esq. Capt. Slough, mentioned above, was the son of Col. Matthias Slough. Like his father, he was a leading inn-keeper in this city. He died in 1839. Appended to another notice is the impressive couplet:

"Hand in hand
To church they walked, the loveliest
pair."

This about completes the summary of our review. It has been truly said that the lapse of twenty-five years makes trivial things of the past entertaining. A new generation has appeared, to whom they are again new, and those to whom they were once familiar even recall these bygone recollections with interest. In progression does that interest increase with the passing of a century.

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