

REMINISCENCES OF PARADISE

TOWNSHIP.

Before attempting to give an account of the early history and traditions of Paradise, Lancaster county, I desire to state to those especially who were present at the meeting, November 18, at the Stevens House, of the Ferree and Lefevre families, that it will be necessary for me to give a brief resume of some of the historical events which I gave then, as the early records of these families are contemporaneous with the early history of the village and its immediate vicinity, by omitting which would be like Shakespeare with Hamlet left out.

The village was given its name in 1796 by David Witmer, and it has always been a source of regret to the writer, who has suffered with many others from the continual strain of stale jokes and witty speeches the name calls forth whenever mentioned, and more especially do we censure our worthy ancestor for giving it that name when he had so much a better one at command, and should have christened it Tanawa, for reasons which will appear later.

Arrival of Huguenots.

The village dates its first advent of a citizen, other than Indian who roamed the wilds of that part of Pennsylvania, in no less a personage than Madame Ferree (a French Huguenot), of whom you doubtless have heard long before this, and her appearance soon followed her landing in this country, where she came bearing letters to the agent of William

Penn, and who advised her to seek a point in the valley now known as Pequea and also instructed her to see the King of the tribe of Pequea Indians (which was one of the few tribes that had a king) and who was then located in a grove on the banks of Pequea about one-fourth of a mile northeast of where the village now stands, and I think I can do no better than give you a short extract from a speech delivered by Redmond Conyngham in the year 1842 and who **was an** authority on the Indians and early settlers of Eastern Pennsylvania. which address was delivered before the following lyceums: The Philadelphia Lyceum, Mechanics' Institute, of Lancaster, and the Lyceum and Literary Institutes of Lancaster county, composed most of them of the leading and prominent men of that time—John W. Forney, the founder and editor of the *Philadelphia Press*, being one of the number, and it was in this same grove where this meeting was held and Madame Ferree first met King Tanawa. I quote his speech as follows:

"In the evening of a summer day when the Huguenots reached the verge of a hill commanding a view of the valley of Pequea (it was a woodland scene, a forest inhabited by wild beasts, for no indication of civilized man was near), scattered along the Pequea amidst the dark green hazel, could be discerned the Indian wigwams, the smoke issuing therefrom in its spiral form. No sound was heard but the songs of the birds, and in silence they contemplated the beautiful prospect which nature presented to their view. Suddenly a number of Indians advanced and in broken English said to Madame Ferree : Indian no harm white ; white good to Indian. Go to Beaver, our chief. Come to Beaver.' "

Tanawa.

Few were the words of the Indian. They went to Beaver's cabin, and Beaver, with the humanity that distinguished the Indian of that period, gave up to the emigrants his wigwam and the next day he introduced them to Tanawa, who lived on the great flats of Pequea. And who was Tanawa ? The friend of William Penn, who had not only been present, but had signed the great treaty, and was buried on Lafayette hill, located, as a chart which I here present shows, in the west end of the village and on which stands an Episcopal church, and where his ashes rested in peace until the Literary Society of Paradise, filling the part of resurrectionists, had them disinterred and placed what remained, namely, beads, tomahawk and a number of other Indian relics, including teeth and a part of the skull of the Indian monarch (which the writer here exhibits), in the archives of the Society, and which were purchased years after by a member of his family when the Society disbanded ; and before we pass on to the next event in the village's history I wish to state that the grave of that Indian chief was paved with flat stones on which these relics are supposed to have been placed.

There passes down through the village (as shown in the chart) a little brook crossing the old Lancaster and Philadelphia turnpike near the centre of the village, having its source about one-half mile to the south of the same and where was located the home of Isaac Lefevre, who was married to a daughter of Madame Ferree and whose parents had perished in the religious wars which had desolated France. Alone he had come to this country and located and married as stated. Their son, Daniel Lefevre, was the first

child born in the valley of Pequea. To verify the fact in connection with this little brook that near this point King Tanawa's remains were put to rest, I again quote from Conyngham, as follows:

"A number of Indian chiefs were on their way to Philadelphia to visit the Great Father (George Washington) from Ohio. Ten miles east from Lancaster, where a little brook crosses the road, they suddenly left the road, to the great surprise of the interpreter and government agent, and being asked by the agent their intention, they informed him many of their tribe had been buried there and their king and chief warrior whose grave they wished to visit." The point designated by them is that distance from Lancaster and must have been the spot where rested Tanawa, the king of the Pequea Indians, and whose grave they wished to visit, which is quite near to the point as stated.

The Revolutionary Period.

We now come to a later period in the history of the village and there appears no record of its having taken an active part in the War of the Revolution, 1776. Nor have we anything connecting it with the stirring events of that time. But that it was visited by the Father of His Country, George Washington, later, there is the following tradition: Stopping on his way to or from the West, and having dined at the stage hotel, he expressed a desire to see a hemp mill, which was at that time a novelty and in full operation a short distance from where he was stopping, and it was also said *he* had in view the erection of one on his plantation in Virginia. But, unfortunately, the person operating the machine, desirous of giving his distinguished visitor the full opportunity of inspecting it, removed some of the bracing, a planking of which, coming in contact with the rapidly mov-

ing machinery, created quite an excitement for a time, seriously injuring the operator and startling his guest. Again we see displayed the sound judgment and good sense of the founder of this great republic in concluding he had no use for such a machine, as I never could learn of any having been erected on his plantation at Mount Vernon. The two large conical stones which constituted the principal part of the machine can to-day be seen in the bed of the stream during seasons of low water, just below the mill, weighing, I suppose, about five hundred pounds.

We next come to the days of turnpikes and Conestoga wagons, and during that time it filled a very important position, both in its construction and management, as it was the headquarters of the section which comprised Downingtown on the east and Lancaster on the west ; and there was located the post-office and store in addition to the hotel. Here was made the change of horses and sorting of the mail, and another tradition as told the writer by the postmaster of that time was that while Mrs. Dixon was postmistress of Lancaster, in the hurry and confusion of getting the mail ready for the stage, in the early hours of the morning, her night cap, which was an indispensable article at that time of wood fires and cold houses, got mixed with the mail, and, much to the chagrin of the postmaster, rolled out with the mail for resorting. It was promptly returned by the next mail going West. There are five buildings now standing in the which were used as taverns at that time.

The War of 1812.

We now approach the second great event of the nation—the war of 1812. While there were a number of its residents and those of the immediate vicinity who took part in it, the only matter of in-

terest which I can recall as a tradition and which was told the writer by an eye witness, who was then a boy, was the passing through of a company of cavalry and artillery on its way to a point near the Canadian border, commanded by Colonel Ross. The narrator said it was an exceedingly wet day, and, something going amiss with one of the artillery wagons, a local smith was called in, and while the repairs were being made the colonel rode up to the front of the hotel and called for a glass of liquor, and while waiting for it to be brought out he kicked his foot out of the stirrup and elevating it as nearly at an angle of forty-five degrees as possible, permitted the water to run out of his boot, much to the amusement and admiration of the small boys who were present, and showing that the soldier was not then, as in later times, protected from the inclemency of the weather by rubber blanket and mackintosh. This wet day may have laid the foundation for later troubles for the gallant colonel. I see in the records of burials of St. James' Church, Lancaster, one of a Col. George Ross, who served gallantly in the war of 1812 "and died from exposure as stated in these records during the late war, in which he served gallantly, taking part in the battle of New Orleans." The date of his death was June 7, 1816. There is also a will on file in the Register's office of a Col Ross, in which he desires his remains sent to New Orleans in a cask of rum as a preservation. Embalming was not in vogue at that early day. Whether this was the same Colonel Ross as narrated the writer is unable to state, but should it have been, that wet march through Paradise no doubt helped to lay the foundation for his later ill health. It was with feelings of great sadness that the village learned later that the command under the

gallant colonel had met the enemy near the point as stated, and, using the language of the narrator, were "cut to pieces," a few returning with their commander.

Lafayette's Visit.

The next event of interest was the visit of General Lafayette and I will quote from the Lancaster *Intelligencer* of Tuesday morning, August 2, 1825, as follows: "The cavalry having formed as an escort the whole moved on to Paradise from Slaymaker's Hotel in Salisbury, where they halted a few minutes at David Witmer's ; and the General, having alighted, was introduced to a crowd of ladies and gentlemen of Paradise, who were waiting his arrival." The marble horse-block can to-day be seen in passing through the village, on which the distinguished visitor alighted from his barouche. And I will state here that the hill known as Lafayette hill, mentioned in the early part of this article, received its name at that time from the fact that it was there a company of cavalry encamped awaiting the arrival of the General to escort him to Lancaster.

Then we arrive at the construction of railroads and when turnpikes and stage coaches were on the wane, and again we find the village taking a forward position in it as a means of transportation. The railroad, as all doubtless know, was built by the State and completed in the year 1834. Steam was not then used, the motive power being horses, and the seventh car which turned a wheel on what is now known as the Pennsylvania railroad came from a siding in that village bearing on its side the legend, "Witmer, Paradise," and so continued until a year or two after the Pennsylvania Company purchased the road from the State. The number of cars had by that time increased to forty, were very much larger,

painted a light buff, bearing the same name, and were known along the road as the "Paradise Line." Of course, long prior to this horses had been superseded by steam, the State furnishing the motive power and the individual furnishing the cars and paying a toll for the use of the road.

The village from its early date took a great interest in schools and educational enterprises. There was an excellent school owned and conducted by Mr. Fetter at what is known as Oak Hill, a beautiful residence at the eastern end of the village and now owned as a summer residence by J. Hay Brown, of this city. Next there was a seminary under the management of the Episcopal Church, Rev. Dr. Killikelly being the Rector, and it gathered into its fold pupils from as far west as St. Louis, east as far as Boston, north as far as Northern New York and south as far as the Carolinas. A large academy was also started there and both flourished until the late war closed all institutions of that kind.

Prominent Residents.

The village can boast of having sheltered for a time a number of distinguished individuals, many who afterward became connected with great events elsewhere. It was here that the manuscript of that beautiful song, "The Old Kentucky Home," was sung and commented upon before it had been turned over to the publishers to be given to the world. Mrs. Buchanan, the wife of Rev. Edward Y. Buchanan, brother of the president, and Rector of the Episcopal Church, was a sister to Stephen J. Foster, who was also a musician. She received the manuscript from her brother for her criticism and approval, and the writer remembers hearing several of the musically-inclined villagers practice it with a melodeon accom-

paniment and, of course, giving it a very favorable criticism. J. Hays Linville, afterwards connected with Captain Edds in building the great St. Louis bridge, and who had become a civil engineer of note, had charge of a school there for a time ; also, a sister of the district attorney who tried and convicted John Brown, and the village can also claim as a resident for a time an editor and proprietor of one of Lancaster's evening papers. It can also claim as a citizen Dr. Carl Merz, who, as all know, was a celebrated writer and composer and who left Paradise to take charge of a much more extended field in the West.

The head and manager of that band of wandering minstrels, the McGibeny Family, which have amused and interested the children as well as those of riper years in almost all the large cities, had his home there for a time as an instructor in the academy previously mentioned.

Its Only Newspaper.

There was a paper published there, which I here present, and which had quite a large circulation for a time. It was named the *Paradise Hornet*, and this copy bears the date of May 18, 1822. I make no comment as to its appearance and contents. You must be the judges. There is a file of them, I believe, at the Historical Society rooms, in Philadelphia.

I now close the narration of events and tradition of the village. Of later years its history has been similar to that of many others in the county—old families and names have disappeared and their places have been filled by new people and new enterprises ; so that one looks in vain for the old familiar names and places and turns away feeling as Goldsmith so beautifully portrays in his deserted village, a stranger among what were years past familiar scenes, and surrounded by those

who are too busy with the events and happenings of to-day to give much heed to those of the past; and perhaps it is bast so.

Author: Witmer, A. E.

Title: Reminiscences of Paradise Township / by A. E. Witmer.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Huguenots--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County.
Paradise (Lancaster County, Pa.)--History.
Paradise Township (Pa.)--History.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society,
1896-97

Description: [150]-159 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 1,
no. 5

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.1

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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