

ITEMS IN THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE CONCERNING LANCASTER COUNTY.

In the October number of 1907, the December number of 1910, and the May number of 1913, of the proceedings of this Society, I gave installments in consecutive order of local Lancaster county news from 1719 to 1746 found in the American Weekly Mercury and from 1728 to 1832 in the Pennsylvania Gazette. I now continue the chronology from the latter date in the Gazette onward.

In the Gazette of July 11, 1734, it is recorded that the weather of this region has been excessively hot—so hot that men died in the fields—and the birds of the air died in multitudes; that nothing like such heat had been known since the great heat seven years earlier.

In the issue of September 25th there is an account of a very violent storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning. It is stated that the storm blew down stacks and chimneys, uncovered houses and quite demolished many buildings. Reports were made at Philadelphia of its terrific violence at Conestoga, and from there down to the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. At Conestoga the storm occurred between 7 and 8 in the evening, about half an hour later than in Philadelphia.

In the same issue there is given the following account of the missionary efforts of the Cloister and the activity of its members in preaching to the surrounding country:

“Yesterday morning Michael Welfare, one of the Christian philosophers of Conestoga, appeared in full market (in Philadelphia) in the habit of a pilgrim, his hat of linen, his beard at full length, and a long staff in his hand. He declared himself sent my Almighty God to denounce vengeance against the iniquity and wickedness of the inhabitants of this city and Province without speedy repentance. The earnestness of his discourse which continued a quarter of an hour and the vehemence of his actions and the importance of what he delivered commanded the attention of a multitude of people. And when he finished he went away unmolested.”

In the issue of January 6, 1747, appears a notice that this sermon on the above occasion has just been published:

“Just published, ‘The Wisdom of God Crying and Calling to the Sons and Daughters of Men for Repentance,’ being the testimony delivered to the people of Philadelphia in Philadelphia Market, September, 1734, by Michael Welfare; together with some additional remarks on the present state of Christianity in Pennsylvania. To be sold by B. Franklin.”

In the issue of December 30, 1735, appears an item showing that the people of Lancaster county were, in common with the people generally in Pennsylvania, tired of paying quit rents. There is a notice which stands that the people of Lancaster county have not done their duty in this respect, and that the receiver general will sit at Lancaster town from 26th to 31st next to re-

cover the arrears; and persons owing are warned to pay up or if they fail measures will be pursued that will entail expense.

The prevalence of "lotteries" in Lancaster county as well as elsewhere in those days is shown in an item dated March 25, 1736. It is stated that "Further notice is hereby given to all persons that are inclined to become adventurers in the lottery for One Hundred Thousand Acres of land in the Province that the tickets are to be delivered at the secretary's office," etc. It is further stated that clerks will be in attendance in Lancaster and other sections with books for persons to subscribe for the number of tickets they desire, obliging themselves to pay for the same on or before June 25th.

By Order of the Proprietors,

JOHN GEORGES, Secretary.

In the issue of April 8, 1736, an idea is given of the size of river crafts in those days. It is stated that as Robert Scott was going over John Williams' Ferry on Susquehanna in a boat with eleven horses, which he had for sale, the boat capsized and Scott and a servant of Williams and three horses were drowned.

In an advertisement dated September 2, 1736, concerning a runaway servant owned by Thomas Edwards, our second chief judge of the county, the kind of clothes worn in this locality is shown. It is stated that the lad, who was about twenty-one years of age, had on a homespun linen shirt and breeches and waistcoat, a good pair of shoes and an old felt cocked hat. The captor was promised 40 shillings reward.

In the issue of February 3, 1737, the controversial correspondence between John Ross and "Countryman" Higginbotham over the Pennsylvania-Maryland boundary line, as far as it touches Lancaster county, begins. The correspondence is emphatic and illuminating, and somewhat at times profane. Those interested in a full history of the fixing of the line ought not to omit to read this correspondence.

In the issue of October 6, 1737, may be found the election returns of Lancaster county, giving the names of the candidates for Sheriff, for Coroner and County Commissioner. In those days the people elected two persons for each of these offices and the Governor selected from them the one whom he thought best. We would consider such an arrangement a fine opportunity to defeat the will of the people for the sake of private interests. These election returns are not of great importance; but if the complete history of the county is to be made up, it must be done by piecing together all the parts and fractions. The returns (at least for Commissioner) may be found in the minute book of the Commissioners of our county; but those for Sheriff and Coroner are not to be found anywhere, except in this old newspaper. The election returns for every year are here, for all the counties of the province. As a rule, the number of votes cast are not given.

In the issue of December 15, 1737, there is an account of a great earthquake at Annapolis and New Castle. The account states that it was also felt at Conestoga, 100 miles distant, where "some clouds at the same time were seen to waver and dance, disappear and appear again, in an uncommon manner. Three or four evenings successively after the earthquake an unusual redness appeared in the western sky, continuing about an hour after sun set."

In the issue of May 21, 1738, there is a list of unclaimed letters for Lancaster county people of Donegal, Pequea, Octoraro, Salisbury, etc. In the November 2 issue a much longer list is to be found.

In the issue of April 10, 1740, there is an explanation of the stage route from Trenton to Brunswick, giving an account of the regularity and cheapness

of the conveyance. The stage wagon went twice a week from Trenton Ferry—Monday and Thursday—and back every Tuesday and Friday. The advertisement states that the “wagon will be covered over so that passengers may sit easy and dry, and care will be taken to deliver goods and messages safe. To encourage people to travel and to send goods by the said wagon the following low prices are fixed: Every passenger, 2 shillings and 6 pence—merchant goods 2 shillings per hundred weight. Household goods, boxes, etc., at the cheapest rates. The same to be performed by

WILLIAM ATLEE,
JOSEPH YEATES.”

Slavery in Pennsylvania did not extend alone to the negro race. An advertisement in the issue of June 26, 1740, states that “a Dutch servant man and his wife are to be sold for two years and eight months; also a genteel riding chair, a tencord flat, with new sails and rigging and a fishing boat. Enquire of the printer.”

In the issue of August 14, 1740, there is a notice that “all persons who have suffered from the late enlistment of servants in Lancaster county and in Philadelphia, Bucks and Chester counties, shall immediately make the same known to the constables of the several districts who have orders to transmit the same to Philadelphia to the committee of grievances appointed by the Assembly.”

In the issue of October 9, 1740, there is a list of public officers elected. Among them appear as assessors for Lancaster county: James Smith, Andrew Work, James Murry, Francis Reynolds, Robt. Harris and John Reynolds; and as County Commissioner, Robt. Barber.

In the issue of January 15, 1741, there is a long list of unclaimed letters for people of Lancaster county. In them many local dwelling places or supposed dwelling places are mentioned, viz: Wrightstown, Donnigal, Conestoga Road, Piquea (Care of Sarah Brown) one was addressed “to be held at John Postlewaits,” also Octoraro, Pextan, Salisbury, etc. There is one to Geo. Gibson, “the store keeper at Pequay.” Some of those named as addresses are new and not on the assessment lists.

In the issue of April 9, 1741, there is an account of a great local snow storm as follows:

“We hear from Lancaster county that during the continuance of the great snow, which in general was more than three feet deep, great numbers of the back inhabitants suffered much for want of bread; that many families of new settlers for some time had little else to subsist on, but the carcasses of deer found dead or dying in the swamps or runs about their houses. And although they had given all their grain to their cattle, many horses and cows are dead, and the greatest part of the game in the woods are dead, that the deer which could not struggle through the snow to the springs are believed to be all dead and many of those which did get into the savannas are also dead, ten or fifteen being found in the compass of a few acres of land. The Indians fear the winter has been fatal to the deer, turkey, etc., in the northern parts, that they will be scarce for many years. We also hear that a young woman in Derry township attempting to get home, about a mile—as soon as she came within sight of her father’s house turned out the horse which she had borrowed from her neighbor as he directed her, but not being able to make her way through the snow she threw off her clothes and attempted to return in the horses footing, but after much struggling as appeared by her tracks, she was frozen to death.”

In the issue of October 7, 1742, are found the election returns for the

province. Those for Lancaster county are: Commissioner John Allison; Assessors, Jacob Huber, John Wright, Jr., Andrew Work, Benjamin Chambers, Hugh Bale and John Brandon.

In the issue of November 24, 1743, appears an item stating that "a new map of the province of Pennsylvania is begun and a great part of it finished," whereon will be delineated with the greatest exactness the several counties, townships, towns, rivers, creeks and highways with the situation and extent of the principal mountains as far as the province is yet surveyed. The river Delaware will be laid down as far as it bounds the province, and the river Susquehanna with its tributaries near 200 miles beyond the inhabitants.

"A map of each county is also intended by a greater scale in which every tract of land will be described according to the original survey, and the names of the purchasers inserted. By William Parsons, Surveyor General of said Province."

There is no evidence that I am aware of that any such map was published. A careful search should be made to ascertain whether or not it was ever completed.

In the issue of January 11, 1744, there is an item which shows that the local custom of "barring out the teacher" was a very old custom thirty years ago. The article is as follows:

"From Lancaster county we hear that a country schoolmaster, who had been barred out by the scholars on the breaking up for the Holidays attempting to force his way into the school, one of the lads rashly thrust a hanger through a crevice near the door, and wounded him so that he died in a few hours."

The older people of our day remember very well the custom in some of the remote parts of the county, of barring out the teacher when school adjourned for the Christmas season, and not allowing him to come into the school room unless he "treated" the pupils. It was a very rough performance and a good many thrashings and dismissals, and meetings of the directors to adjust the matter, generally followed.

In the issue of July 12, 1744, an item appeared: "Friday last his Hon. or the Governor returned to town from 'Newtown,' in Lancaster county, where the treaty was held between the Indians of the Six nations and the governments of Virginia and Maryland, which we hear ended happily to the satisfaction of all parties." The strange part about this item is that Lancaster, well known by name for nearly a score of years before, should have been called "Newtown" by the intelligent editor of the Gazette.

In the issue of December 6, 1744, appears a long account of the attempt to burn Conrad Weiser in his own residence in Tulpyhocken. Full particulars are given, and the method of entrapping him by fastening the door of his house so that the family could not get out, and the placing of straw about the building and then lighting the same. A person named Adam Haines with whom Weiser had a difficulty, and whom Weiser caused to be arrested for a crime, was accused by Mr. Weiser. A reward was offered for his arrest. This house was saved, though considerably damaged. From the account it appears that the fire had crept under the roof and was rapidly burning it. About 150 years later this old house was finally burned to the ground, at the hands of an incendiary.

On January 15, 1745, it is noted that Edward Smout was appointed ranger for Lancaster county for 1745.

Under date of May 2 of the same year it is set forth that "A petition was presented to the Assembly praying that the upper parts of Philadelphia county

above McCall Manor with part of Lancaster county be erected into a new county which was referred to further consideration at the next sitting."

There were several attempts to cut off considerable portions from Lancaster county, which failed. Finally that part west of the Susquehanna River was erected into York county.

In the issue of May 16, 1745, there is an account of the treachery against the English inhabitants of one of the half breed Indians. He was a child of an Indian and a Frenchman, and was a powerful local factor in early times here in our county. The account states that "Two of the Indians are returned empty handed from Allegheny, having been plundered of all their goods, skins and servants, by Peter Chartier who had with him six Frenchmen and five or six hundred Indians, men, women and children, who were about to move to Canada, to a tract of land appointed for them to settle on by the French in a fork above the second branch of the River Wabash. This Chartier is a late deserter from this province; he is said to be one of the sons of Sieur la Salle's man and a Shawanee Indian woman. He had a plantation in Lancaster county, but having early in the spring procured from our merchants a considerable quantity of goods he declared for the French and set up the French colors before his door at Allegheny, having, as he says in a letter to one of his former acquaintances, accepted a commission from the French King."

In the issue of July 24, 1746, there is an account of three young female prisoners breaking jail at Lancaster—Ann Gutney, 13 years old, committed for murder; Jane McCoun, about 20 years of age, committed for murder, and Mary Porter, committed for a felony and liable also to the death penalty. Not less than half a score of women were hanged in our county before the Revolution—most of them for murder; but several for burglary, etc.

About this time the war spirit was awakened in the province and in our county. King George's War involved Spain about 1744 and France about 1748. An item on this subject appears in the issue of July 31, 1746, as follows: "Our companies designed for the expedition are now complete; and we hear from Rhode Island, Maryland and New Jersey, that the several companies from those provinces are also full."

At this point also begin references to the wonderful religious awakening caused by Rev. Whitfield, throughout the entire Atlantic sea board. He preached in Lancaster county and it seems also in the town above. It is stated that on Sunday 20th Whitfield preached twice to great audiences. When we consider how this faithful servant, not yet 32 years old, has for about 10 years labored in the vineyard, with an infirm constitution daily declining, and has triumphed over preachers and pamphleteers, we can agree with Dr. Watts that he is a man raised up by the Lord, etc."

Scores of the preachers and many prominent pamphleteers attacked Whitfield with great vehemence; and many churches were in an uproar because of his powerful preaching.

In the issue of September 11, after describing a list of sermons he had finished, it is stated that "To-morrow a week by 11 in the morning he designs preaching at Mr. Bronson's furnaces; and the Sunday following at Lancaster if his way be clear."

In the issue of May 28, 1747, we get a picture of the effect of enticing bound servants to leave their employers to join the military forces. It is there set forth "Deserted from Captain John Deimer's company Wm. Echard born in Germany, about 33 years old, and lived in Lancaster—also Nicholas Fye, a German, who lived in Lancaster—also John Snow, Dennis Carroll, Roger Mountain, John Burns, and Philip Campbell, all Irishmen who lived in Lancaster, and Anthony Bushong who lived in Lancaster."

In the issue of November 26, 1747, there is an account of the forming of an "Association for Our Common Security and Defense Against the Enemy." This meeting was held at Walton's School House, and 500 men signed their names. A little later 1,000 had subscribed. A scheme of lottery was fixed on to raise money for the public general service. The great point made was that our Province being Quaker was "nearly naked of defense." The full form of the association is set forth here, covering columns.

In the issue of December 3, the activities of Chester county in the same project are set forth in glorious terms and at large, and in the issue of January 26th the Lancaster county's members in these Associations is heralded in the following:

Captain, Hugh Patrick; Lieutenant, Thos. McDowell; Ensign, Thomas Grubb. In the issue of March 8th the officers are: Captains, Gabriel Davis and James Gillespie; Lieutenants, Robert Ellis and James Gilchrist; Ensigns, Edward Davis and Samuel Jamison; and in the issue of March 22, Colonel, Benjamin Chambers; Lieutenant Colonel, Robert Dunning; Major, Wm. Maxwell; also the following captains: Richard O'Cain, Robert Chambers, Jos. Cunningham, John Chambers, James Silver, Chas. Marrow, Geo. Brown, James Wood, James M. Seir, Matthew Dill, Benjamin Chambers, Robert Dunning, William Maxwell, and Samuel Crawford. The following were lieutenants: Wm. Smith, Andrew Findley, James Jack, Jonah Holmes, Tobias Hendricks, James Dysard, John Mitchel, John Potter, John McCormick, Wm. Kendle, Andrew Miller, Chas. McGilli, John Martin, and Wm. Rowland. The following were Ensigns: John Millebell, John Leser, John Thompson, Watts Davis, Jos. Emerson, John Anderson, Adam Hayes, John Randal, Saml. Fisher, Moses Starr, Geo. Brenner, Robt. Meck, James Wilkey, and Richard McDonald.

In the issue of April 28, 1748, the following captains and other officers are accredited to Lancaster county: Captains, Samuel Anderson, James Galbraith, Adam Reed, John Galbraith, James Armstrong, James Graham, James Pattison, Jedediah Alexander, John Smith, John McKeoun, David McClure, Thos. McKee, Robt. Baker and Thos. Harris, and Lieutenants are: John Woodside, James Sample, John Crawford, Wm. Allison, Alex. Armstrong, John Purgyes, High Whitford, Wm. Cunningham, James Anderson, Thos. Foster, Robt. Smith, Wm. Mitchell and James Smith. Also the following Ensigns: John Barclay, John Harris, John Young, Nath. Little, John Dougherty, Wm. McMille, Thos. Mitchel, James Smith, Jas. Conder, James Tinney, Andrew Boggs, Wm. Baskell, Henry Rennick, and John Wilson.

In the issue of June 9th, 1748, contains the following as officers for Lancaster county: James Gillespie, Colonel; Samuel Anderson, Lieutenant Colonel, and James Mitchel, Major. Captains, Andrew Gregg and James Snodgrass, and Lieutenants, Wm. Crawford and John Alexander, and the Ensigns, Samuel Simpson and John Snodgrass. The latter are almost likely from Martic township.

In the issue of July 28, 1748, there is an account of a treaty held at Lancaster with the Indians between the Twigtwees and the Shawanese. The latter were apparently fearful at this time that they would be dealt with severely for their former treachery. The article concludes, "Had the war continued a few years longer probably the greatest part of the French Indians would have been brought over to the English interests, and the trade accordingly would have fallen into the hands of the British."

This brings these items down to the close of the year 1750.

Author: Eshleman, Henry Frank, 1869-1953.

Title: Items in the Pennsylvania Gazette concerning Lancaster County / by H. Frank Eshleman, Esq.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Pennsylvania gazette.
Newspapers--Pennsylvania--History.
Lancaster County (Pa.)--History--18th century.
Lancaster County (Pa.)--Social life and customs--18th century.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1918

Description: 21-26 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 22, no. 2

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.22

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

=====

+++++

Institution Name
Institution Address
Institution Phone Number
Institution E-mail Address