

JEROME BONAPARTE IN LANCASTER

By William Frederic Worner

Jerome Bonaparte, youngest brother of Napoleon, was born in the town of Ajaccio, on the island of Corsica, November 15, 1784. He shared the fortunes of the Bonaparte family in the early years of the French Revolution. After receiving his education in the college of Juilly, he was called by his brother Napoleon, then the First Consul of France, and placed in the service of the French navy. He served as a naval lieutenant in the expedition under the command of General Leclerc to crush an insurrection of the negroes of Santo Domingo, Haiti. During hostilities between England and France in 1803, Jerome was cruising in the waters of the West Indies. His vessel was blockaded by a British war vessel, and he was compelled to seek refuge in the port of New York. He remained in America for more than two years.

In a German newspaper published in Lancaster, Pa., under date of August 3, 1803, the following news item appeared:—

“Mr. Jerome Bonaparte, brother of the First Consul of France, arrived last week at the Federal city from the West Indies. Whatever his business here may be we do not know.”

On Saturday, September 10, 1803, the borough of Lancaster, Pa., was visited by Jerome Bonaparte. He arrived in town during the afternoon and spent the night at the White Swan tavern, which at that time was kept by Matthias Slough. The White Swan hotel was then the leading caravansary of its day. In former papers I have called attention to the fact that George Washington and John Adams, when Presidents of the United States, were entertained at this old hostelry when they visited Lancaster borough.

Der Americanische Staatsbothe und Lancaster Anzeigs Nachrichten for Wednesday, September 14, 1803, contained a brief account of Jerome Bonaparte's stay in Lancaster. The following is a free translation:

“Last Saturday afternoon there arrived here from Philadelphia Citizen Jerome Bonaparte, the youngest brother of the First Consul of France; Citizen Pichon charge d' affaires to the United States, and Commodore [Joshua] Barney, in the service of the French Republic, together with other French citizens and ladies of note. They put up at the tavern kept by Matthias Slough. Some of the local inhabitants, as we hear, paid their respects to them. Jerome Bonaparte appears to be about 22 [He was 19] years of age. On Sunday they proceeded on their journey, ——— and, it is rumored that a French frigate of 44 guns has arrived at Baltimore to take him on board and convey him to Martinique, from which island, as commander-in-chief, he departed about six weeks ago (presumably to elude the British cannonade.)

“British men of war are lying in wait for him in every quarter, and if fortune does not specially favor him, it may very readily happen that he will be brought into an English port as a prisoner. At the same time, however, it may be remarked that should it come to an engagement, the French will not haul down their colors without having first put up a hard fight.”

Three months after stopping in Lancaster borough, or to be exact, on December 24, 1803, Jerome Bonaparte was united in holy wedlock to Elizabeth Spear Patterson, eldest daughter of William and Dorcas Spear Patterson, of Baltimore, Md. The announcement of the marriage caused a profound sensation not only in America but in all the capitals in Europe. It is somewhat singular, though none the less true, that Elizabeth Spear Patterson was a lineal descendant, on the maternal side, of the sturdy Scotch

Irish pioneers, who settled in Lancaster county long before the Revolutionary War. John Galbraith, grandfather of Dorcas Spear, mother of Elizabeth Patterson, was one of the early Indian traders in Donegal, Lancaster county, Pa.; while William Spear, the father of Elizabeth Patterson's mother, was collector of the some township in 1751..

After his marriage, Jerome Bonaparte remained in the United States for about fifteen months. The union was a most distasteful one to Napoleon, and it was not long until he issued an imperial decree annulling the marriage.

Napoleon subsequently made Jerome a prince of France. On July 7, 1807, the Emperor raised him to the throne of the newly created kingdom of Westphalia. In August of the same year he was united in marriage to princess Catharine of Wurttemberg. He died June 24, 1860.

Author: Worner, William Frederic.

Title: Jerome Bonaparte in Lancaster / by William Frederic Worner.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Jer^ome Bonaparte, 1784-1860.
Lancaster (Pa.)--History--19th century.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1923

Description: 127-128 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 27,
no. 7

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.27

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

=====

+++++

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